

ROYAL DOCKS - LONDON DOCKLANDS  
**SILVERTOWN QUAYS**

**BUILDING NETWORKS**  
TRIGGERING INTERACTION

THE BARTLETT - DEVELOPMENT PLANNING UNIT  
BUILDING AND URBAN DESIGN IN DEVELOPMENT MSc  
BU1: TRANSFORMING LOCAL AREAS  
**CREATING A CRITICAL DESIGN RESPONSE**

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# INTRODUCTION

Newham is a vibrant place, enriched every day by the presence of a diverse community and environment. During the last decade it has seen the effects of regeneration, new infrastructures and services (DLR; Cross-rail; e UEL campus; the Siemens building) are being introduced to the area and transforming habitation and livelihood dynamics.

The Silvertown Quays master plan arrives to the area as a solution to revitalize and recover the symbolic and economic value of the place. Although regeneration is necessary to reinsure the life of cities, the economic aspect, predominant in the project, can act against the interest of the residents of the area, having an impact on land prices, cost of life, and limiting the access to housing solutions middle and lowest income people.

This report presents an analysis of the area, showing its opportunities and challenges, and tries to propose solutions to reach balance actions that benefit the newcomers and the current inhabitants of the place. Having a more people oriented approach, the projects implemented in the place are supposed to have bigger impacts in the area and should allow its inhabitants to engage in practices able to infuse the area with vitality and to engage people with practices to increment the activity in the area and propitiate the appearance of spaces for dialog and social interchange.

# SYNTHESISED ANALYSIS



Image of the current Silvertown Masterplan

## THE SILVERTOWN QUAYS MASTER PLAN

With the goal of transforming London into a global city, the London Borough of Newham has positioned himself as a very important piece puzzle. The city is spreading eastwards and Newham is in the heart of the economic growth of the city. “Newham will be a vibrant, dynamic, cohesive and ambitious Borough that maximises the opportunities for transformation and regeneration that come from the Olympic and Paralympic Games, excellent transport connections, a wealth of development land and wider subregional growth”. (Newham core strategy) Most of that growth will be focused on the urbanization of the ‘Arc of Opportunity’ that will act as a bridge between the new and old, connecting Newham with central London, and positioning itself as a point of attraction for “world class and local residents” (Newham core strategy).



Image belongs to NorthUrbanism.com

The Royal Docks area is one of the main swathes of development within the “Arc of opportunity” and it is surrounded by 6 important projects that are supposed to escalate the potential growth of the area. One of those being the Silvertown Quays masterplan, the strategy under which the plan is being developed contemplates “1) Developing the Royal Docks as a world-class business destination 2) Creating a place with its own centre of gravity and a clear identity; 3) Making the Royal Docks a place of choice to live and; 4) Creating a unique and high quality waterfront urban quarter with a strong sense of place” (Mayor of London, Mayor of Newham, 2011).

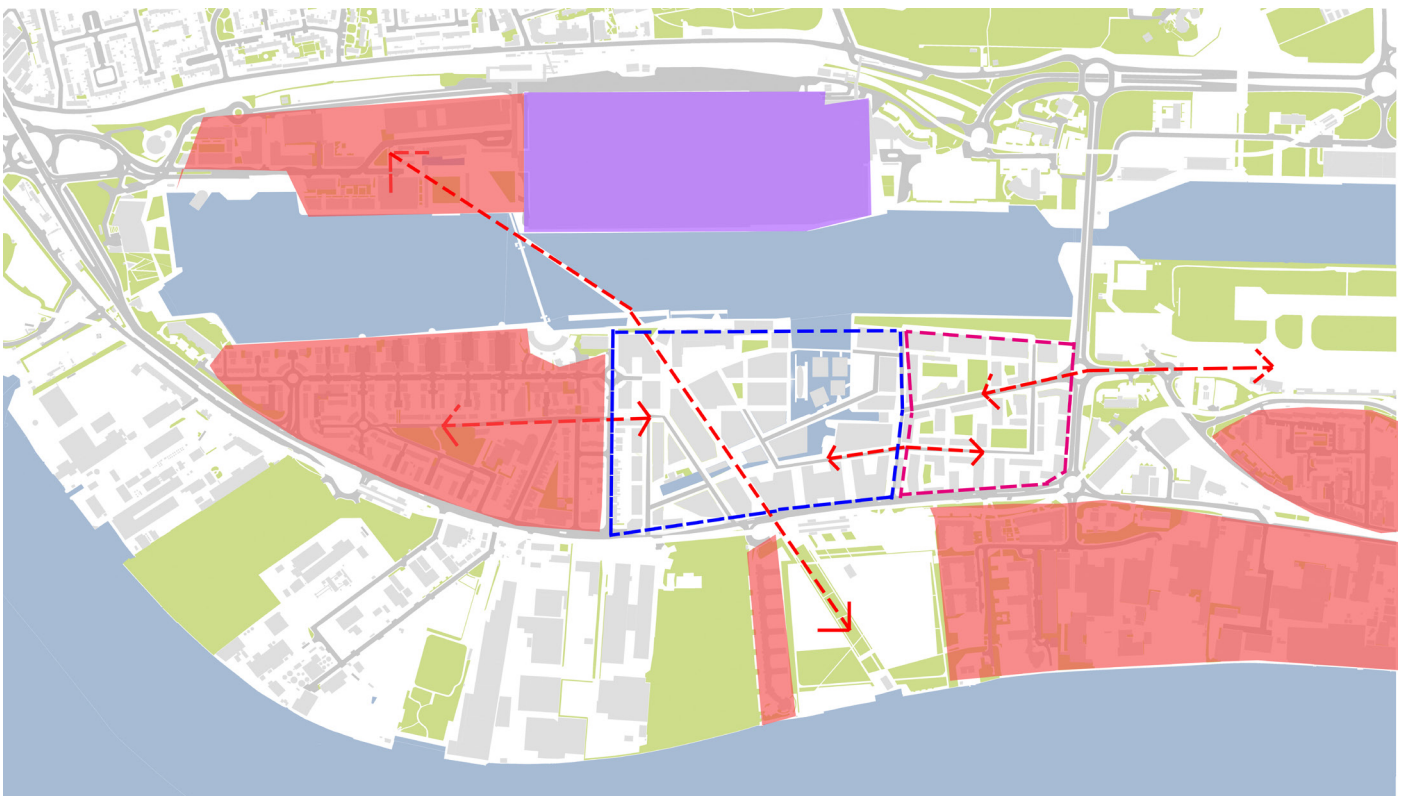


The Millenium Mills building

Although there are laudable intentions under the masterplan vision, like the creation of up to 21,000 jobs and up to 3,000 homes, the project is market driven “Silvertown Quays will be an innovative and attractive new waterside destination with homes, restaurants, commercial buildings and local shops, aiming to attract major global brands and businesses, revitalizing the heritage of enterprise and creating a bright future for the Royal Docks” (Master plan vision). This could affect and even worsen the existing spatial and social dynamics in the area.

Questions like for whom is the project? and who will benefit from it? arise, although an amount of affordable houses will be built, there is no clarity about the housing schemes, a portion of them are going to be classified under the “Affordable” category, which means that the lowest income group of the population is not going to be able to access the project.

The Silvertown quays masterplan tries to improve the area qualities by targeting different groups, but it lacks cohesion with the neighbor areas. The project might turn into a new island of development, isolated from the other residential areas.





DLR structure

## THROUGH SIX LENSES

### INFRASTRUCTURE & MOBILITY

The mobility patterns and infrastructural development of the area are mostly west oriented.

Transport infrastructure **fragments** this area, and divides the residential areas into several isolated islands.

### PUBLIC AND OPEN SPACES

Water based public and open spaces provide great potential and opportunities to create new **connections** among the different plots in this area.

The ineffectively utilized spaces **segregate** the living areas from other structures. Due to the lack of supporting facilities and activities, some public spaces become inactive.

### CULTURES AND ECONOMIES

At present it seems very difficult to live and work in the area. Not being able to live and work in the same place makes community growth and interaction more difficult.

There is a **diverse** community living in the area.

### HOUSING AND DWELLING

Although some areas present **mix** of uses in general the residential use is predominant, depriving some areas of the possibility of a more active and extroverted relationship with the public spaces.

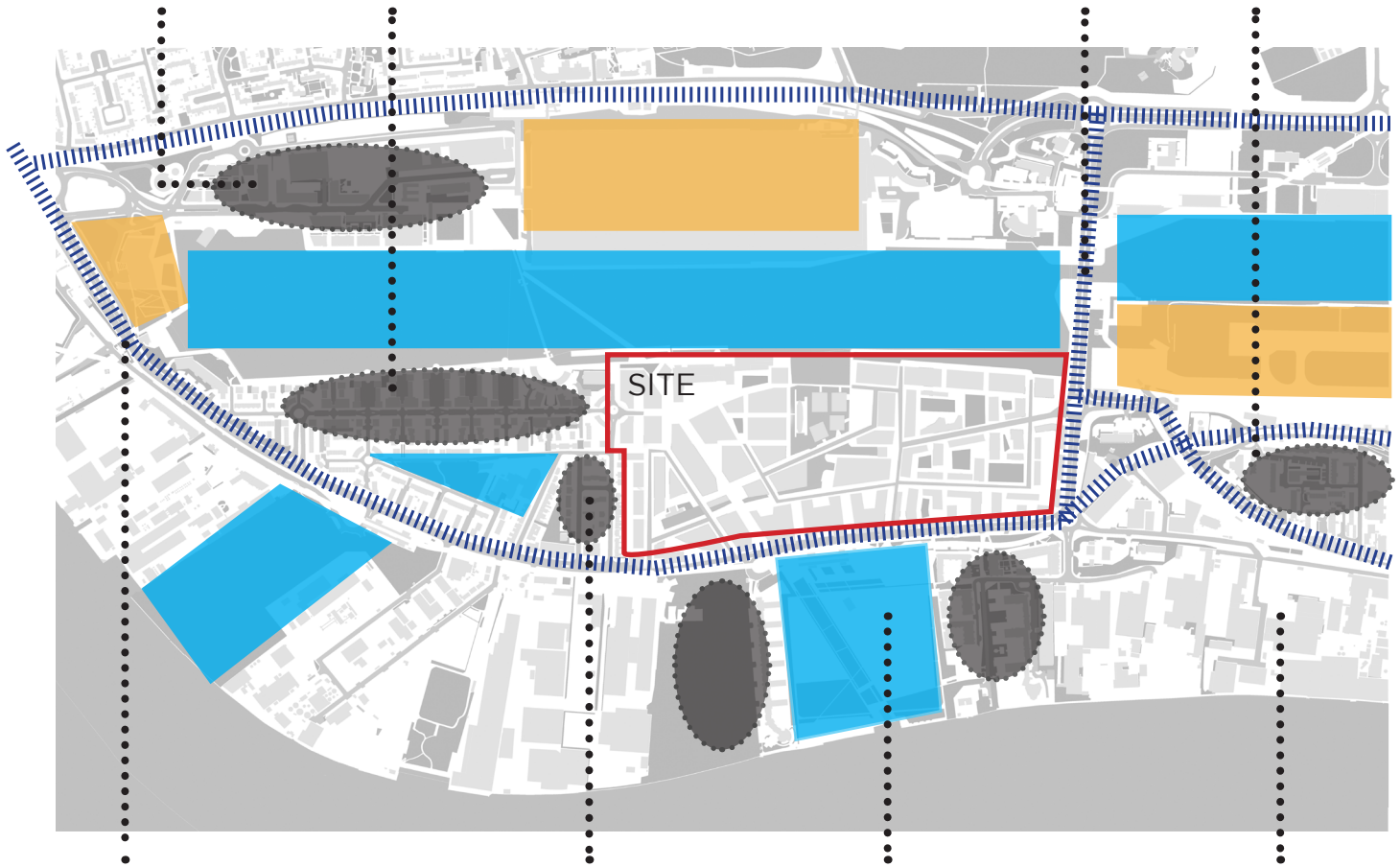
### LANDMARKS & URBAN FABRIC

At present it seems very difficult to live and work in the area. Not being able to live and work in the same place makes **community growth** and **interaction** more difficult.

### LEFTOVERS AND THRESHOLDS

Leftover places represents the **barriers** (social, economical, political) between the city and the inhabitants of Newham.

# THE DYNAMICS



## LEGEND

- ||||| Transport Segregation
- Inactive Open Space
- Enormous Infrastructure
- Fragmentary District





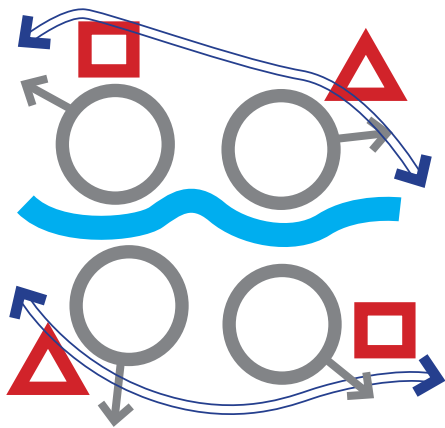
Housing North Woolwich

Silvertown Quays development faces both challenges and potentialities. From the analysis we could extract the next three:

## THREE WORDS OF ANALYSIS

### LANDMARKS & INFRASTRUCTURE

The existing landmarks and infrastructure connects local areas to the city, yet creating islands inside.

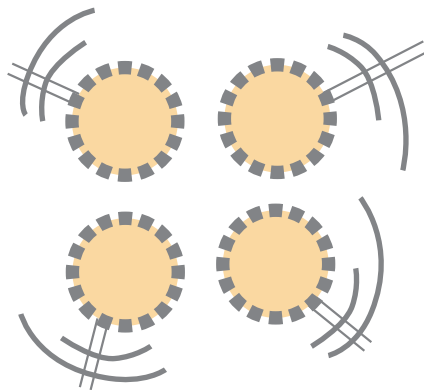


### FRAGMENTATION

The existing landmarks and infrastructure connects local areas to the city, yet creating islands inside.

### LIVELIHOODS & TRANSIENCE

Temporary life influenced by housing typology for married couple with high income and level of security.

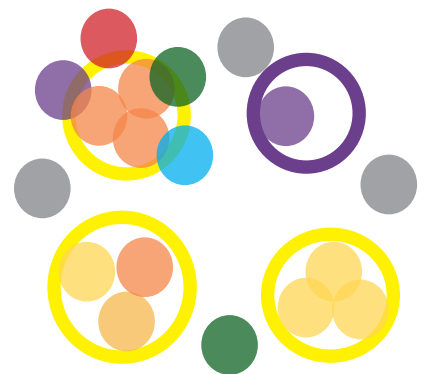


### IDENTITY

Temporary life influenced by housing typology for married couple with high income and level of security.

### BUILDING TYPOLOGY & CULTURE

Imbalanced mix-uses in the area. Diverse culture of people have not yet been optimized in activities.



### DIVERSITY

Imbalanced mix-uses in the area. Diverse culture of people have not yet been optimized in activities.

## CHALLENGES

# POTENTIALITIES & weaknesses

## POTENTIALITIES

## WEAKNESSES

FRAGMENTATION

The location has good connection to city, which may be convenient for living/work

The central location of the site has the opportunity to connect other areas

A resilient inclusive community in the future

Equipment such as the church, and the harbour have a symbolic meaning for the local residents, whilst the DLR stations are important due to the possibility of connection with the city

Urban transport infrastructure fragments the area

Fragmented residential areas

Leftover places represents the barriers (social, economical, political) between the city and the inhabitants of Newham.

IDENTITY

Supportive view in general from local residents towards new development in silvertown

Large quantity public and open space

Transitory living in existing residents with lack of community activity caused low sense of belonging

New employment opportunities

Government plans to offer a variety of housing typologies

Some areas in neighborhood is considered unsafe for residents (also lack of public activity)

DIVERSITY

Housing typology diversity

Young population

Single residential use in some areas increase the inactivity patterns

Cultural diversity



A look to the west

# BUILDING NETWORKS

## Triggering interaction

We envision silvertown Quays as a catalyst for social integration and sustainable growth. An even platform, capable of influencing and transforming positively the cotidianity of their inhabitants through the construction of links that are able to close the existing gaps in the area.



# PRINCIPLES & GUIDELINES

# BUILDING NETWORKS

## Triggering interaction



### PROMOTING DIVERSITY

To develop mix use solutions providing with that different options to increase the vitality of the area through the connection between the built environment and the human activity.

To promote the coexistence people from different social, cultural and economic backgrounds.

To provide a wide range of housing solutions that guarantee the arrival to the area of different types of families.



### DILUTING BORDERS

To transform the existing physical barriers into visually attractive elements able to provide a platform for local interaction and opportunities for integration.



### CREATING LINKS

To transform currently abandoned buildings into attraction points that connect the project with the surrounding areas.

Create flexible spaces that increment the activity and vitality in the area, encouraging the interest of locals and outsiders.

To extent and generate corridors in order to provide a network that integrate the project with its neighbors.



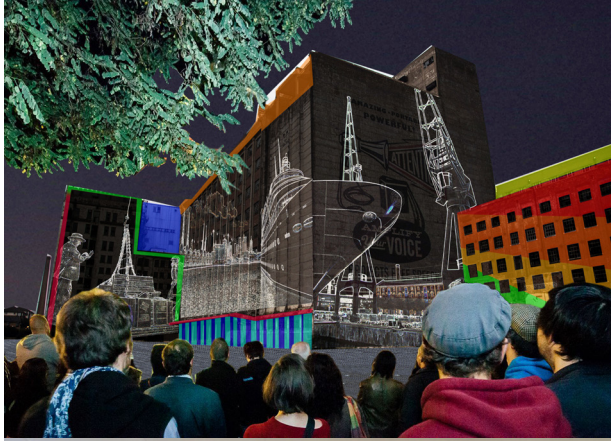
### APPROPRIATING THE SITE

To use public spaces as triggers of memory creation and place appropriation.

# BUILDING NETWORKS

## Triggering interaction

# SITES & OPPORTUNITIES



RECLAIMING THE MILLENIUM MILLS  
HOUSING NEWHAM  
PEOPLE + ARTS  
MOBILE BOXES  
RUN THE DOCKS  
GREEN DOCKS  
FLEA MARKETS

# BUILDING NETWORKS

## Triggering interactions

**GREEN DOCKS**

**PROMOTING DIVERSITY**

To develop mix use solutions providing with that, different options to increase the vitality of the area through the connection between the built environment and the human activity.

**HOUSING NEWHAM**

To promote the coexistence people from different social, cultural and economic backgrounds.

**RUN THE DOCKS**

To provide a wide range of housing solutions that guarantee the arrival to the area of different types of families.

**MOBILE BOXES**

**DILUTING BORDERS**

To transform the existing physical barriers into visually attractive elements able to provide a platform for local interaction and opportunities for integration.

**COMMUNITY FLEA MARKET**

**CREATING LINKS**

To transform currently abandoned buildings into attraction points that connect the project with the surrounding areas.

**RECLAIMING THE MILLENIUM MILLS**

Create flexible spaces that increment the activity and vitality in the area, encouraging the interest of locals and outsiders.

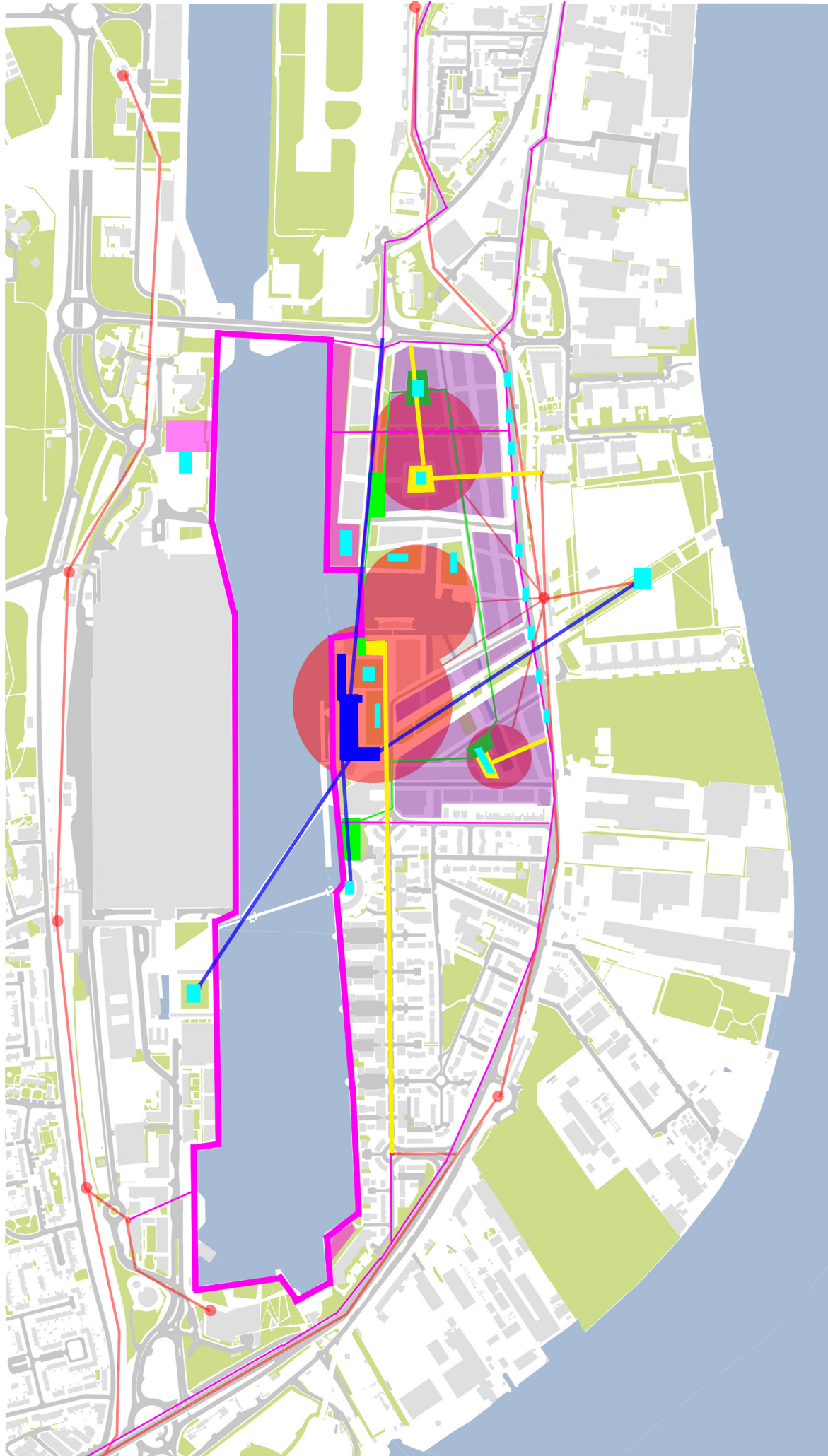
**PEOPLE + ARTS**

**APPROPRIATING THE SITE**

To extent and generate corridors in order to provide a network that integrate the project with its neighbors.

To use public spaces as triggers of memory creation and place appropriation.





- RUN THE DOCKS
- PEOPLE + ARTS
- MOBILE BOXES
- HOUSING NEWHAM
- RECLAIMING THE MILLENNIUM MILLS
- GREEN DOCKS
- COMMUNITY FLEA MARKET



## ACTORS

### Local authorities:

Leisure and culture council services



### Local community:

Community hub of residents (Britannia village, North Woolwich and, Silvertown Quays for public events)



### Private sector:

CSR of developers and investors.



### Art communities in East London:

London University of East London (art, design, and communication students), Labern+Lloyd and partners, eat work art community, Arts Council England, art4space, create-london, Assemble Studio



The Millennium Mills building is a visually and historically strong landmark in the area, it is located in the center of the development in a strategic location, next to the Docks and with possible links to different residential zones, an aspect that gives it the potential of becoming a catalyst for activity in the area.

The appropriation of this place involves opening the surrounding areas to foster activities able to strengthen the relationship of the people with the area through the recognition of an object and at the same time trigger dialog and social interaction.

Besides of becoming a large community center, the Millennium Mills will be used as an intelligent tool for social engagement. The walling of this abandoned building will be used as a large projector for video mapping and movies. Residents who are living in the site will feel a stronger sense of Royal Dock as a place to live and to love. The concept of the site is to co-create dialogue as a holistic place to create a livelihood for different income groups and residents.

# ENVISIONING NEWHAM'S HOUSING



Housing crisis has become a main issue for the City of London. East London and especially Newham as one of the most deprived areas in UK, and those reflect in the housing provision for local people, especially social housing. Envisioning Newham Housing is a platform for collaboration between government, private developers, and housing associations to propose a solution for housing issues, by co-creating a combination of different housing typologies and to accommodating different income groups.

## ACTORS

### Greater London Authority



### Local authorities:

Newham Housing council services

### Local community:

Local residents and upcoming residents



### Private sector:

Private developers



**NGO'S:** Housing associations, National Housing Federation, Housing cooperatives



Envisioning Newham Housing attempts to eliminate the fragmentation of housing development by mixing different housing typologies with complementary housing schemes in terms of ownership (own or rental houses). Diverse residents would inhabit the new development, which would promote diversity of Newham population in terms of culture and economy. Mixed communities are seen as a way of “tackling deprivation by reducing the additional disadvantages that face families when they are concentrated in poor neighbourhoods” (Berube, 2005). “The experience of established mixed tenure communities is that owners and renters regard each other as ‘ordinary people’. It expressed itself in the attitude towards tenure mix, which was considered to be a ‘non-issue’” (JRF’s Mixed Income Communities Programme, 2006).

# PEOPLE + ARTS



## ACTORS

### Local authorities:

Transport institution (TFL-DLR)



### Local community:

Community hub of residents (Britannia village, North Woolwich and, Silvertown Quays for public events)



### Private sector:

CSR of developers and investors.



### Art communities in East London:

London University of East London (art, design, and communication students), Labern+Lloyd and partners, eat work art community, Arts Council England, art4space, createlondon, Assemble Studio



Transforming infrastructure from barrier to media for promoting Royal Docks attractions is the aim of People + Arts. Using inactive spaces in DLR station surrounding Royal Docks as artworks to promote the activities in Silvertown in order to bring people inside the area and surrounding area. By advertising public activities in strategic meeting point as DLR stations, People + Arts intends to transform the local areas from introvert to extrovert thus increasing visibility of existing potentials.

East London is the largest Cultural Quarter in Europe, with over 150 galleries and 13,000 artists based in the area; and yet it is also home to communities with some of the lowest levels of cultural engagement in the UK (createlondon.org, 2015). People + Arts seeks opportunities for creative communities to meet Royal Docks initiatives in engaging wider public audience by marketing activities through art publication and events. By constructing dialogues between local residents and art communities, identity and diversity of Royal Docks could be visible as well as potential of East London itself.

# MOBILE COLORFUL BOXES



## ACTORS

**Local authorities:**  
Transport institution (TFL-DLR)



**Local community:**  
Community hub of residents (Britannia village, North Woolwich and, Silvertown Quays for public events)



**Private sector:**  
CSR of developers and investors.



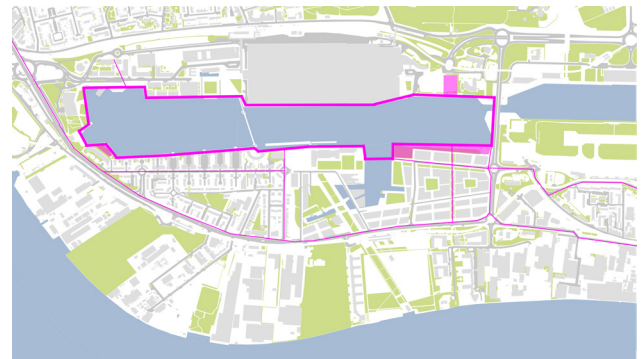
**Art communities in East London:** Universities and artistic groups.



Mobile Colourful Boxes proposes to bring back the identity of the space. The use of container aims to re-emerge memories and create the 'old days' character of Royal Docks everyday life. The portability and modularity of the container makes it transportation easier. Therefore, they can be located in different places during different periods according to the need to activate. For instance, at common times, they can be set under the viaduct of the DLR, to create a relationship between the two sides of that road. Meanwhile, on weekends or holidays, they can be moved to the open spaces around the docks or in the parks, gathering residents from different communities.

The container could be used as gallery or art studio to attract public attention at city scale. Responding local needs, the container can be used for multiple uses. The flexibility of uses in container could re-activate spaces in the local area as well as trigger ideas for local residents to appropriate spaces and share the experience together.

# RUN THE DOCKS



## ACTORS

**Local authorities:**  
leisure and culture council services



**Local community:**  
all different groups of residents



**Local NGO's:**  
Active Newham



**Private sector:**  
Royal Victoria Docks Watersport Centre, CSR of developers and investor



**Sport/outdoor communities:**  
Beckton Parkrun, Par-



Newham has a slightly bad score for the health aspect ([londonpovertyprofile.org.uk](http://londonpovertyprofile.org.uk)). London Newham Council has the task of promoting healthy behaviours in the Newham's Health and Wellbeing Strategy ([newham.gov.uk](http://newham.gov.uk)). Royal Victoria Docks itself has seasonal event such as sailing and water boats activities in summer ([royaldockstrust.org.uk](http://royaldockstrust.org.uk)). These seasonal events can be complemented by daily sports such as run or walk, individually or collectively. Further development of the outdoor activities can engage other potential communities such as Beckton Parkrun or parkour communities.

Run the Docks aims to re-activating spaces around Royal Victoria Docks with sport activities. The strategy is creating links through jogging track (or simply dog walking route) and initiate a communal activity in waterfront plaza or green areas with outdoor work out facilities (outdoor gym). This healthy lifestyle could create sense of place for local residents to their living environment and stimulate activities in public space. Furthermore, facilities and planning activities can encourage them to do exercise and socialise whilst outdoors in parks.

# GREEN DOCKS



## ACTORS

### Local authorities



### Education institutions.



### Local NGO's:

Grow up London, zero carbon food, farm London, Active Newham.



### Private sector:

CSR of developers and investors.



### General public/residents:

community garden network, volunteers, and small emerging enterprises.



Grow-up Docks is an initiative to nurture the spirit of urban agriculture, by growing of plants and raising of animals using local residents resources, such as organic waste as compost and waste water for irrigation. From the issue of sustainable living to green economy, Grow-up Docks could be integrated with London's potential, which has 70 street markets with the National Market Traders Federation and has 27 farmers' markets (London Development Agency, Health and Sustainable Food for London, The Mayor's Food Strategy, May 2006).

Promoting diversity by enhancing existing communities in Royal Docks and upcoming residents with in Silvertown Quays, Grow-up Docks could be an entry point of meeting local residents through educational activities engaging children, parents, and volunteers. The output of Grow-up Docks could be regular events such as weekly farmer's market or Green Docks Festival. Further development of the activities can create partnership with local NGOs, private sectors, and local authorities (at this point Grow-up Docks would be supported by the city's own policies and plans). Potential benchmarking for Grow-up Docks in London are Middlesbrough and Stoke Newington.

# FLEA MARKETS



## ACTORS

**Local authorities:**  
Newham business council services



**Local community:**  
General public/residents



**Private sector:**  
CSR of developers



**NGOs:** Active Newham



Community Flea Market is a project that aims to activate spaces in the local area, providing platforms and a networks for local people to interact and communicate. As a community-based project, the Community Flea Market involves all of the community residents and encourages people to participate. As one of the most deprived borough in East London, Newham faces problems like having the second highest unemployment rate ([londonpovertyprofile.org.uk](http://londonpovertyprofile.org.uk)) and high poverty number and life expectancy, which is lower than the London average ([newham.info](http://newham.info)). Community Flea Markets could be opportunity to create spaces for small enterprises to look for business opportunities supported by workshop or training activities.

This project contributes to the communication among all the people living in the community. On the other hand, it saves both time and money for the ones who settle down or move away. At the larger scale, the influence would be widely expanded once the market takes shape. Not only local people, but also people living outside the community would be attracted and take part in this activity involuntarily. In this way, the connection between community and outside might be enhanced and the identity would also be increased naturally at the same time.



# CONCLUSION

Our design response is based in our vision of an active and connected space, which generates opportunities of interaction between the site, its surroundings, residents and visitors.

Taking into account the current plan of regeneration of the site, considering its organization, priorities and objectives, we have suggested to produce a balance between the economic development of the area and the potential social processes of its inhabitants. Reactivating historical buildings and open spaces as points of attraction, thus promoting external and local interest and engagement with the area. In order to integrate a wide range of residents and its possible capabilities, different strategies were developed, such as environmental, educational, commercial and art activities. All of them are supported by a campaign which attempts to reinforce the identity of the place at different scales. In terms of the structure of the current plan, a liberation of the main axis of connection between the place and its surroundings were proposed, as well as a reduction of the building's density. It was important to include as part of the housing policies, the integration of different flat's typologies (number of family members) and dweller's target within the organization of the buildings, thus to guarantee the heterogeneity of the residential groups.

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