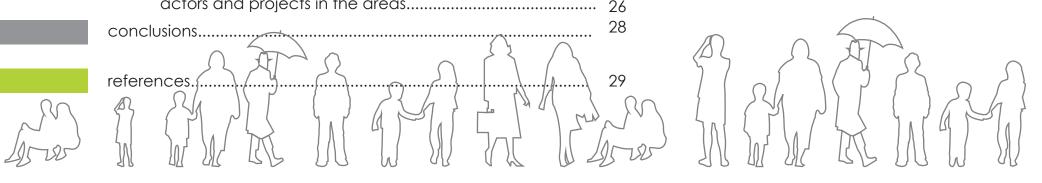


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executive summary

This development brief presents a vision for the three areas of study in Newham; North Woolwich, Albert Island and Beckton. Based on a holistic analysis for the study area, this brief introduces a parallel vision that is people-driven; placing at the centre not only the local residents of Newham, but also existing stakeholders and influential actors allowing for a future that is built on coexistence, mutual exchange and inclusion. The brief introduces two main strategies as entry points for intervening; breaking physical and social barriers as well as reactivating neglected public spaces to re-engage the community in reimagining the future of the neighbourhood.

introduction

Newham is composed of a complex system of typologies that is undergoing a series of development projects that will surely have a great impact on the current residents of the area. With a series of recent developments in the vicinity, such as Canary Wharf and the Olympic Park in Stratford, the area is now pegged to be the next area with potential for redevelopment. The history of the area and the presence of the docks give the space a unique characteristic which currently seems disconnected from the current reality.

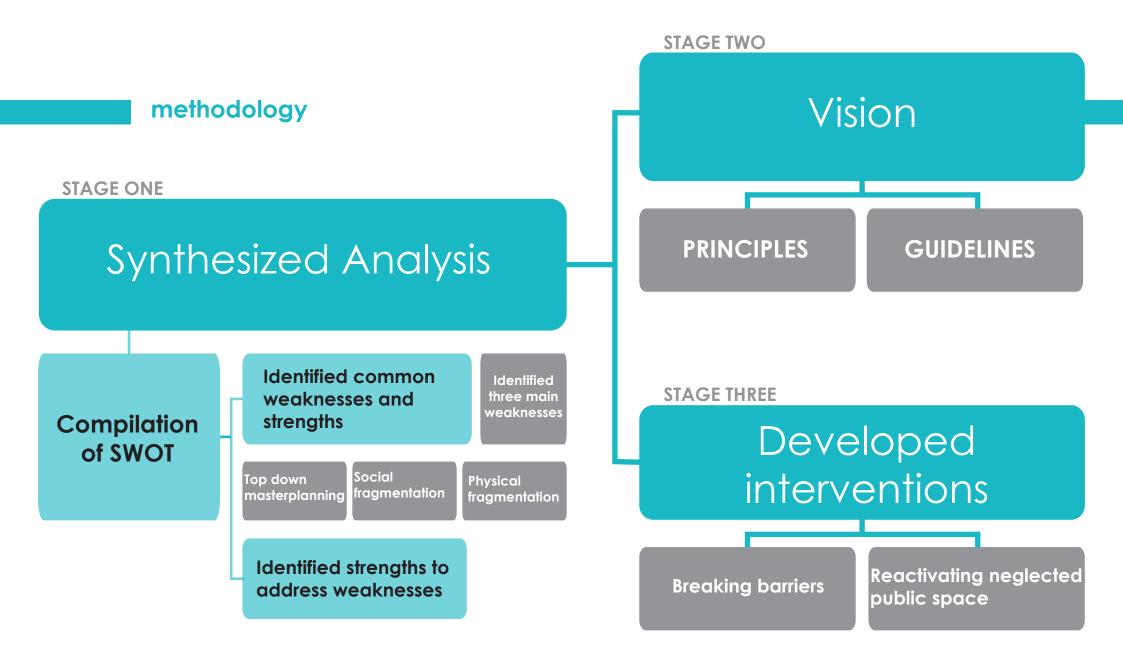
The areas under analysis in this report are primarily three:

- 1. North Woolwich, characterized by the varying residential typologies and open spaces.
- 2. Albert Island, which is seen as an industrial zone, disconnected from its surrounding realities.
- 3. Beckton, primarily composed of University of East London and all its required amenities such as student residences and open spaces.

A fourth area that is often disregarded is the river Thames that relates to all three spaces previously mentioned.

This report is composed of a number of sections that reflect the way in which the brief was compiled. Firstly, an analysis based on the six lenses was combined into a list of strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats that were identified for the whole area. This SWOT was then re-analysed and filtered into two sections; weaknesses that were commonly identified throughout the different lenses, and potential cracks and opportunities that the site presented us with.

From this condensed analysis of weaknesses and potentials, the vision of what we wanted to achieve started to develop and four main principles were identified. These four principles were then further developed into a set of guidelines which covered a vast number of ideas of what we wanted to achieve with the site. Once we focused our vision more specifically, the guidelines were reduced and interventions were developed, keeping the principles in mind.

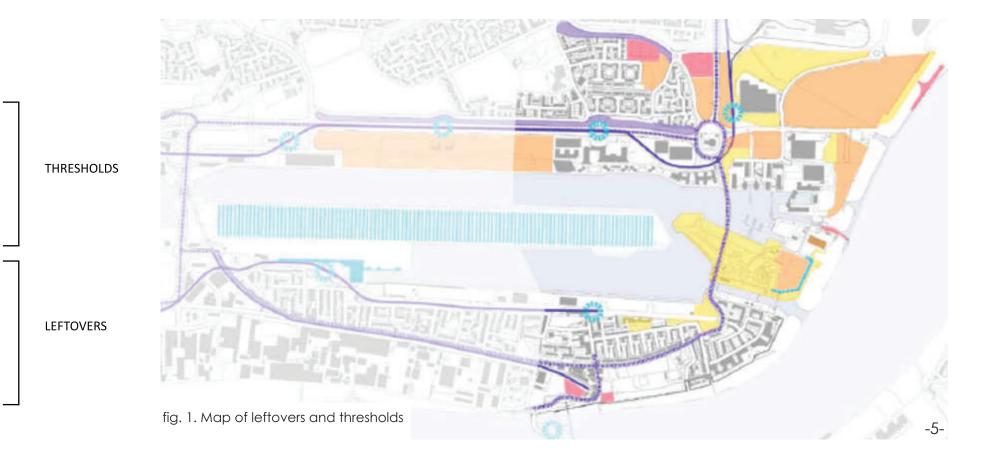


All six lenses pointed to a critical analysis of the site's connectivity between areas, the use and hierarchy of space, and resident's perception of how Newham serves them.



Physical Fragmentation

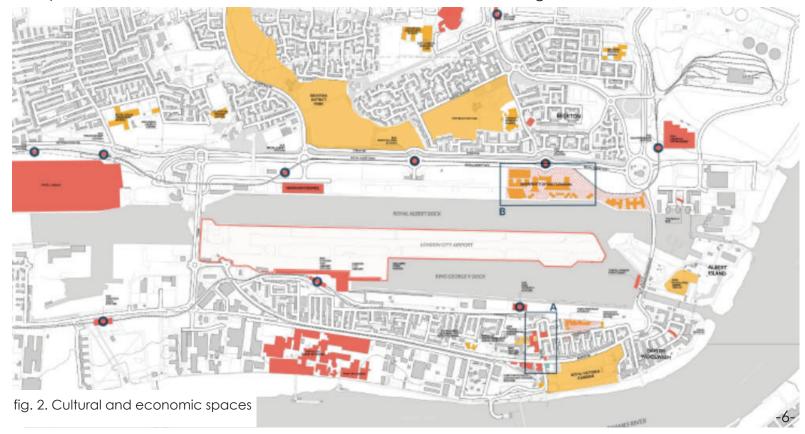
Common throughout the various lenses was an existing physical disconnect between the three main areas. Although all areas have a connection to the water the area is under utilised enabling disconnect. Moreover, the spatial priority of the area ranges between the sizes of the buildings and the service of the different locations. The availability of public transit is much more noticeable along the North Woolwich and Beckton site where as Albert Island is mostly accessible solely by pedestrian traffic. However overgrown pathways and unmarked signs create an unwelcome environment that is mostly designated for workers. North Woolwich is a residential neighbourhood with mainly mid range-sized buildings. Beckton seems to be developing the largest and highest buildings apparent on the site of UEL.



Social Fragmentation

The analysis suggests that fragmentation also exists socially, separating the local residents with the new businesses moving into the area as well as the University of East London. The analysis also suggests the existence of virtual barriers between the three different areas, preventing social exchange between the local residents, UEL's students and new businesses. Moreover, although some areas are publicly accessible, they are intimidating to the locals as they target certain groups and exclude the others, contributing to the social fragmentation of the study area.

Moreover, growth rates for the areas were differing from each other in size, land use and population. While Beckton continued to appear the most developed, being adjacent to ExCeL and Newham Council and having UEL on site, Albert Island seemed to show the most neglect from the town. Yet, this area seems to have an importance to the area as it connects Beckton to North Woolwich. Therefore, with surrounding areas receiving most of the attention in buildings, land use, economic needs and transportation, Albert Island remains under utilised and under managed.



Economic Activity (commercial, transport, local shops)

Cultural Activity (education, leisure, recreation)

Overlapping Activities (private education, commerce inside educational infrastructure, religious activities inside community centres)

Top-down master-planning

Finally, our analysis suggests that although the development vision for Newham attracts new businesses to the area, that can generate income opportunities to the residents, these plans seem to target the coming businesses rather than the local residents. Although the Newham council's vision stresses on community participation as a fundamental aspect in its development vision, this doesn't show in the proposed development plans as they seem to adress outsiders rather than the local residents of the site. The council generated a people's panel to engage the community through surveys and meetings, however these haven't been effective as they did not attract people's interests.

Analysis of the area and the impact on residents suggests that Newham underserves the residential areas compared to the commercial areas. Across all the areas residents were unanimous about feeling the area is underutilised however it has potential. Interviews conducted suggest the people in the area see a lot of potential and appreciate the available resources. By enhancing the spaces residents' use in the neighborhood provides a starting point for development of Newham.



fig. 3. Regeneration plans

fig. 4. Regeneration plans for the area

PHYSICAL FRAGMENTATION

Existing physical barriers and controlled spaces

Lack of connection between the three areas

Underused and abandoned public spaces

Difficult pedestrian and public experience

Lack of public spaces and activities for different age groups

Lack of connection with the docks and river front

SOCIAL FRAGMENTATION

Area becoming a social stigma

Lack/ unseen of community organization

Income and education disparities

Public spaces excluding minority groups

TOP DOWN MASTER PLANNING

Privatization and large scale developments

threat of gentrification

Top-down development plans/ excluding the locals

Considerable amount of designed public spaces

Area is well served in terms of transport infrastructure

The availability of the river as a big public space

Relatively young population

Historical value: docks

UEL as a strong asset

Site included in the London walk: pathways in Albert

Island

Regional transport system: airport

Good quality of existing housing

Presence of heritage sites and conservation areas

GLA green enterprise zone

Developing links with UEL

People's panel: initiative by Newham council

POTENTIALITIE

principles and guidelines

The principles and guidelines were developed after a thorough analysis was carried out on the weaknesses of the site and the potential strengths that could be used as entry points.



principles



Enablement

Providing the locals with tools to support them in creating their own initiatives, listening their voices and building on small scale bottom-up initiatives.



Connectivity

Breaking physical and social barriers between and within the areas to enhance the existing networks and involving various stakeholders.



Exchange

Triggering links between key actors who have an active presence in the area to generate catalytic partnerships based on pre-existing assets.



Inclusion

Positioning the locals at the centre of the development process and regeneration of the site, to foster a sense of belonging.

guidelines



Supporting and triggering small scale, bottom-up development initiatives that involve the locals.



Creating transitional spaces to connect the three areas.



Reactivating neglected public spaces and promoting activities that accommodate for existing cultural diversity and different age groups.



Transforming the area into pedestrian and cycle friendly spaces.



Developing links between local stakeholders to create social and physical networks.



Reusing existing abandoned buildings as potential sites for community activities.



Revitalizing the connection with the riverfront and the docks as the element that physically connects the three sites and make the riverfront more accessible.

Building coexistence in Newham

Our vision proposes bridging the current developments with the reality of the local residents, our vision revolves around building a society in which each one not only coexist, but also benefit from the different existing socio-economic groups.

Whilst the new imposed master plan of the Royal Docks seeks to attract international support, our vision seeks to integrate the local reality of the residents by breaking the existing barriers; both the physical and virtual, engaging the locals with their neighbourhoods through reactivating neglected public spaces as well as building new links with existing actors and stakeholders.

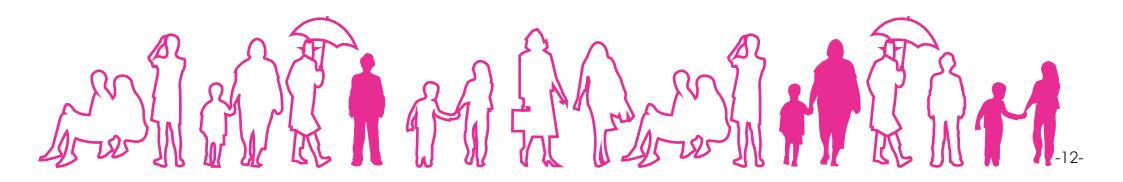
Therefore, our strategy is based on two entry points for intervening:

- 1- Breaking physical and virtual barriers: based on our synthesised analysis, we perceive the three areas as disconnected. Although we acknowledge the different identities of the three areas (North Woolwich, Albert Island and Beckton), we perceive connectivity and exchange as two fundamental principles for coexistence in Newham.
- 2- Reactivating the neglected public spaces: Although the study area has a considerable number of public spaces, these spaces are mostly underused or neglected. Our vision proposes reactivating those spaces to re-engage the residents with their neighbourhood. Community engagement is thus built on the strengths of existing actors and stakeholders to reuse public spaces, building new relationships between different actors and eventually starting a dialogue about the future of Newham that is built on the locals' sense of ownership and belonging.

vision

interventions

The interventions were classified in two broad categories which stemmed from the weaknesses identified in the analysis, and the opportunities which fed into our vision. Each intervention is strongly connected to the principles and guidelines. The principles are illustrated using colours near the name of the intervention.





Our interventions are classified in two categories:

Breaking (physical and social) barriers

a. cycle network

b. building social links with UEL

Reactivating neglected public space

- a. reactivating the riverfront
- b. including new activities
- c. reactivating neglected spaces

Breaking (physical and

From the analysis, we conclude that there is a great disconnection that is both felt and seen on two separate levels.

(note: guidelines are listed in order of importance)

a. Cycle network

As previously mentioned, the physical disconnection in the area became evident through all six lenses of analysis. From this, a system of cycle paths was introduced which would promote better physical connectivity between the three areas. Building on the master plan, the intervention proposes to extend these paths to the residential areas for improved safety, as well as Albert Island for recreational purposes.

Guideline 4: Connecting the spaces by introducing better pedestrian and cycle friendly networks.

Guideline 3: Reactivating neglected public spaces and introducing activities that accommodate for existing cultural diversity and different age groups.

Guideline 2: Creating transitional spaces to connect the three areas.

b. Building social links with UEL

At a more psychological level, a virtual barrier was also felt between the University campus and its surroundings. Building on the density of knowledge found at UEL, the second intervention seeks to build social links with UEL by setting up programs of outreach which would invite residents onto campus. This would not only engage the university as an important actor in the area, but also break through the virtual barrier that surrounds the university. This could also be achieved by reusing abandoned spaces in North Woolwich and in so doing, bringing students into the area.

Guideline 5: Developing links between local stakeholders to create social and physical networks.

Guideline 6: Reusing existing abandoned spaces as potential sites for community activities, such as leftover spaces and abandoned historical sites.

Guideline 3: Reactivating neglected public spaces and introducing activities that accommodate for existing cultural diversity and different age groups.

Cycle Network

To achieve enhancing the riverfront and incorporating physical connections between the neighborhoods to develope a clearly essential defined cycle network. Current Newham plans include the cycle routes that do not have well defined access points for the users in the neighborhood. Therefore we plan to include cycle routes that better address the local neighborhood. Incorporatina cycles routes throughout the residential streets will increase ease of access to the three site locations. North Woolwich, Albert Island, and Beckton.



Existing Cycle Route Proposed Cycle Route Proposed Cycle Sign Proposed Cycle Lockup





This intervention will aim to enhance the health of the neighborhood and encourage engagement in activities developed along the cycle route. Newham Council's vision for 2030 stresses the importance of resilience in a community. Part of this vision emphasizes enhancing locals health with the intention that "helping people maintain good health forms a major part of our wider ambition to reduce health inequality between our residents and those of other London boroughs" (Newham London 2013, 13). Therefore to continue the development of a resilient community cycle routes connect the users while simultaneously encouraging a healthier Newham.

Designing cycle routes throughout Newham will be the beginning of this intervention. However, allowing residents ease of access to cycle on roads is less effective if this intervention only includes established paths. Therefore creating signs and having convenient locations to lock up bikes along the route is essential to linking the route with locations such as the riverfront, the pier, and the neighborhood.

-15-

Cycle Network

Signs will direct users to the attractions located throughout the area. Main local stops on this route will be located at the park, pier, and square in North Woolwich, the pier on Albert Island, and the UEL campus. Additional lockup sites will be located at the DLR stations in accordance with the Newham vision (CITE). Along with these main stops there will be signs located throughout the cycle route that depict travel times and distances between these main landmarks along with major attractions in the surrounding area such as the Olympic park, ExCeL, along with other locations encouraging those in the neighborhood to bike to these sites.

Incorporating a clear cycle net work that engages the many developments throughout th Newham area will allow the connection to be enhanced. An important route through Albert Island connects the Beckton to Woolwich while engaging with the piers and the riverfront. The development of this path is especially important to the connection of these three sites. It will additionally give importance back to Albert Island that has become overgrown and abandoned throughout the previous years. This particular cycle path will also be solely devoted to those who travel on foot and on bike. This gives importance back to the locals who wish to travel their neighborhood without mobilised transport.



Cycle racks, bike symbols, and directory road maps will be included in this intervention as simple visible elements that show the distinction of what the network is and where it is able to take the user. Therefore users can feel safe both when they use the bike and at there destination when they need to secure the bike.





Building social links with UEL

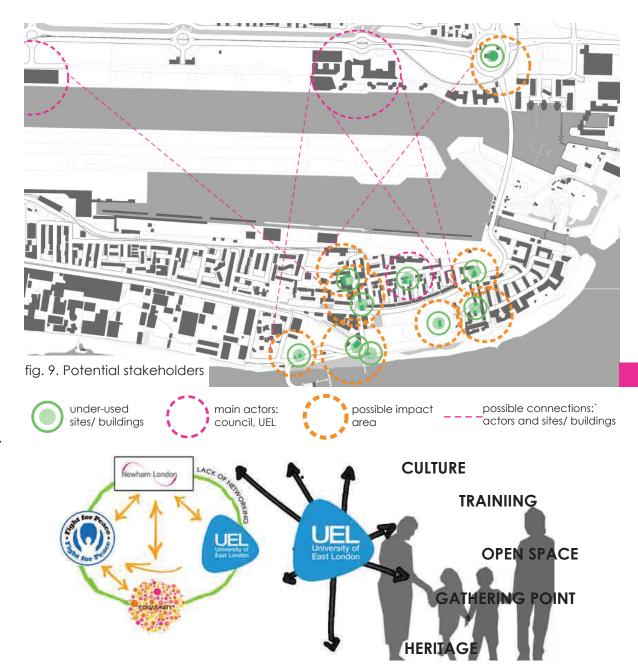
The University of East London (UEL) have a strong presence in the area of Beckton. It is also, somehow, the image of the regeneration that has been taking place in Newham. This Institution has managed to revive an area that was virtually abandoned but this existence is not perceived as an open space for the community. The main reason is that the users are not actually from Newham.

We identified the presence of the UEL as an opportunity in the area for these reasons:

- 1. It is a place of production of knowledge that can be shared in the area.
- **2.** It is a place of concentration of high level of infrastructure that can also be used for the community.
- **3.** Already have a network with different stakeholders of the area.
- **4.** Have a strategic position within the area: well connected, open areas and a strong relation with the river. How to demolish the physical and virtual barriers? The idea is to reinforce the social responsibility of the University East London creating partnership with the local actors and the council, expressed in different types of activities for the community.

The Council is the only actor that can create the space to gather the different actors that this network needs. We identified key actors that are present in the area:

- 1. Local community with lack of organization.
- **2.** Fight for Peace: an organization which has a clear aim however have limited impact on the community
- 3. Other individual stakeholders



A University that recognize their social role improving the surrounding environment, opening its facilities to public and training residentes of the area.

Building social links with UEL

In that sense there are a number of actions that could be taken. In the first place to create new links with existing actors and breaking the virtual barriers that perceive the University as a private space:

- 1. Courses open to the community such as: English, Computer, Basic Economy, Marketing for the local entrepreneur, etc. These courses also can be done in the neighbourhoods, especially in the places that were identifying as abandoned. This recovery of abandoned buildings could be an interesting starting point to engage the community.
- 2. Open the facilities to the community. Here is where we identify a big opportunity to produce a turn in the relation between UEL and the context.

The examples are many:

- Open library involving actors such as Book for London, to provide the books.
- Open café and spaces for leisure. Activate cultural activities in the area.
- Activate the riverfront.







fig. 12. Opening university: activities for residents



Reactivating neglected public spaces

From our own analysis of open and public spaces, we identified that there are a number of spaces that could be better used by the residents. An important element that was identified was the disconnection with the riverfront; a strong asset to the area that is greatly linked with the history of the docks. It was identified that the spaces could be strengthened using existing actors that could facilitate in engaging the residents with the redevelopment of the spaces.

(note: guidelines are listed in order of importance)

a. Reactivating the riverfront

A series of micro-interventions would be introduced along the riverfront that would recreate the relation between the river and the neglected spaces.

- **Guideline 7:** Revitalizing the connection with the riverfront and the docks as the element that physically connects the three sites and make the riverfront more accessible.
- Guideline 3: Reactivating neglected public spaces and introducing activities that accommodate for existing cultural diversity and different age groups.
- **Guideline 1:** Supporting and triggering small scale, bottom-up development initiatives that involve the locals.

b. Including new activities

Another way of engaging with the river is to bring activities and organizations to the area that are already active in other parts of Newham. This is illustrated through the intervention of the floating cinema that would help to build a sense of acknowledgement for the residents.

Guideline 5: Developing links between local stakeholders to create social and physical networks.

Reactivating neglected spaces

Other spaces were also identified through North Woolwich, Albert Island and Beckton that could be considered as neglected and therefore potential spaces that may be given new uses for the residents. A new approach to this would be to engage with new actors that may bridge the gap between the residents and the planning processes.

- Guideline 3: Reactivating neglected public spaces and introducing activities that accommodate for existing cultural diversity and different age groups.
- Guideline 5: Developing links between local stakeholders to create social and physical network.
- **Guideline 1:** Supporting and triggering small scale, bottom-up development initiatives that involve the locals.

Reactivating the riverfront

The aim of this intervention is to create a system of micro-spaces along the riverside in order to enhance the relation between the river and the sites. This system is designed to connect different interventions of the area in a number of different ways:

1. Allocation of kiosks for small commercial activities administered by local people.



fig. 15. Kiosks for commercial activities



fig. 16. Cultural and sporting activities in the docks



2. Inclusion of cultural and sporting activities and events in the riverfront and river with UEL's collaboration. This micro-intervention attempts to bring life to the waterfront of UEL and strengthen the relationships between students and residents.



fig. 17. Introducing fishing platforms

3. Introducing fishing platforms in specific points along the riverfront in order to create small spaces that attract people and complement the other activities proposed for the riverfront.

Reactivating the riverfront

- **4.** Allocation of stairs or outdoor theatres that can be used to support river activities and enjoy scenic views. These spaces are located strategically in the area in order to have access to the events in the river and also have link with the small commercial activities.
- historical information about the Royal Docks, maps of the area and their relation with London's history and their transformation through time. The aim of micro-intervention is to highlight the spirit of the area and its large historic value.
- 5. Historic points: creation of a space with 6. Reuse the piers as new gathering points that include recreational activities and allow the access to the river. This point of the intervention brings new capital in to the area and creates new job opportunities for local people. The activities proposed for the piers complement the reactivation of the riverfront.



fig. 18. Creating links with the river

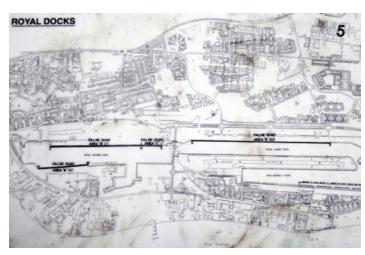


fig. 19. Historical points along the docks



fig. 20. Regeneration of piers

In addition to this intervention that addresses the reactivation of the riverfront, we propose another intervention that emphasises the relation between river and the sites. To reach this purpose, we create an alliance with one of the many actors that work in the river and canals of London. This intervention is an example of the actions, events and programs that could potentially be introduce in the area.

Including new activities

Floating cinema

The aim of this intervention is to reconnect the sites with the river by the creation of new gathering spaces along the riverfront and on the piers. Additionally, the intervention aims to link the residents with existing networks or initiatives that work to improve the public life in river and canals of London.

Portvillion is one ambitious art project acting in some of the most popular public spaces of London. This mobile inflatable pavilion presents a diverse program of cultural activities and explores the possibilities for temporary, large scale public art. In 2011, the project extended its action camp to the canals and river through the construction of The Floating Cinema.

The Floating Cinema was developed by Somewhere, a collective of artists, and designed by Hackney based architects Studio Weave. Its main aim was to navigate the waterways that connect the boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Newham, Waltham Forest and Hackney with the new Olympic Park, hosting events, activities and also tours into the Olympic Park.



Map showing points of action of floating cinema

Currently, the Floating Cinema organizes workshops, tours, events, drop-ins, talks, movie projections, etc. The brief to the artists participating in Portavilion and Floating Cinema according to the variety of approaches through the parks, green spaces and now waterways, include the following themes.



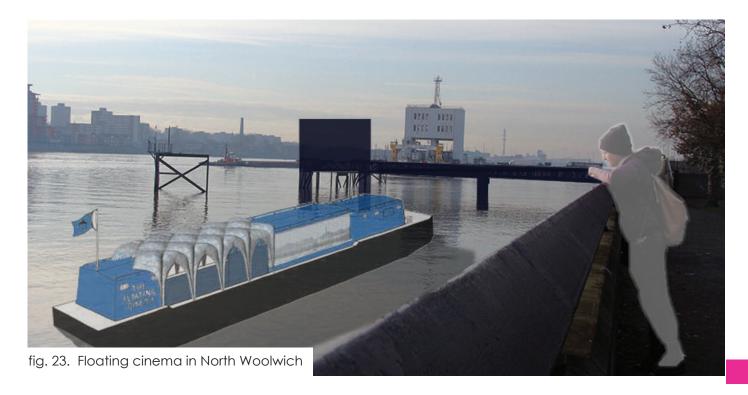
- Current projects of the floating cinema
- New spaces to reactive the area / complementary to the cinema
- Potential points of action of the floating cinema



Including new activities

Floating cinema

- **Inspiration:** artworks that are stimulating and thought provoking.
- Connection: creating a sense of identity and connecting different public spaces and small people-based initiatives across the city.
- **Recreation:** artworks that are fun, interactive, and pleasurable creating places to meet, talk, play.
- **Environment:** acknowledging the importance of urban open space and its impact on the quality of urban life.



Through this alliance with existing programs of development created by the residents of London the area can incorporate new activities for the residents of the area and reactivate the urban spaces located along the riverfront. Moreover, the council could include in the master plan designed for this area small spaces that reinforce the urban life and bottom up initiatives of development.



fig. 24. Current activities held by the organization

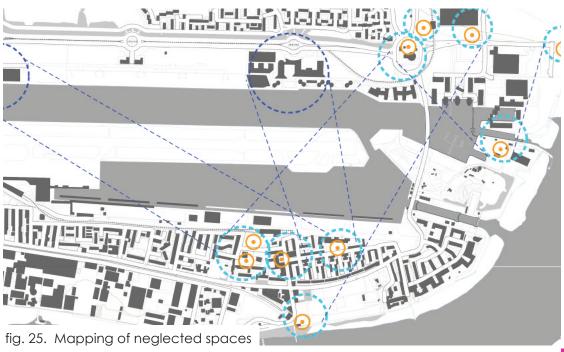




Reactivating neglected public spaces

In response to the present and future developments that might exclude the locals in the decision-making process, this intervention aims at involving the local residents in re-imagining their neighbourhoods. The intervention aims at reclaiming the neglected, under-used public spaces, through collaborating with existing community organisations and NGOs in Newham and have been working with the residents.

Many of the public spaces in the 3 study areas can be considered as leftovers that are rarely used by the residents. Although some redevelopment efforts took place to design those places, these developments did not have sufficient results. This intervention proposes giving back those spaces to the inhabitants, deciding on how they should be re-used. This will eventually be a catalyst to reclaim the sense of ownership and belonging to the neighbourhood, as well as enhance existing community networks and relationships. Moreover, through such small-scale projects, a dialogue about the bigger picture of the development of Newham will be triggered; positioning the locals as responsible of their own future.









possible connections:` actors and public spaces





26. Activities led by Momentum

You don't have to move out to move on

Based on our research, there are several NGOs and voluntary organisations working with the local residents to create a new vision for Newham that is led by the locals. One of those organisations is Momentum. "The Momentum Project is a voluntary organisation that hopes to connect East London communities with the sustainable businesses that are moving into the area." (Momentum Newham, 2014).

Momentum has initiated projects in different places in Newham, from workshops to campaigns and events. One of these events is the "Oasis Game Newham" where the Royal Docks residents chose to regenerate an abandoned outdoor space in their neighbourhood and transform it into a social place (Momentum Newham, 2014). Workshops for designing the layout of the space, dancing and lunch events and finally implementing the design were included in the process.

Reactivating neglected public spaces

To kick-start the intervention, an acupuncture approach is proposed. Choosing an existing public space and partnering up with one of the existing organizations working in the neighbourhood in order to regenerate an existing public space with the residents. This space will be a start point that can then be extended to different neglected spaces in North Woolwich, Albert Island and Beckton. This approach can expand, building on the experiences gained by the locals, through regenerating their existing public spaces, to build a new parallel vision of Newham.

The Pier Parade square is suggested to be the first pilot project in this regeneration scheme. The square, being located in the heart of north Woolwich neighbourhood and close to the DLR station, has the potential of being reclaimed as a social hub as it used to be in the past. This intervention proposes an alternative to the regeneration plan that took place in this square and didn't have an impact. Instead, this proposes giving it back to the residents. Through collaborating with other organisation for example Momentum) that have established relationship with the locals to reimagine and regenerate the square.







Actors and projects in the area

Engaging with existing actors and stakeholders became an important factor in developing our interventions. They represent a potential resource that could benefit the area. The following are a few examples of potential actors that the council could partner with when engaging with the residents.



The Legacy List Independent charity to support legacy of 2012 Olympic games.



Bloomberg Supports the Legacy List in suporting innovative arts and cultural projects.



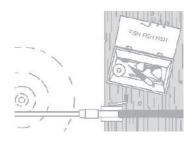
Canal & River Trust
Charitable trust having
ownership of the waterways
and docklands.



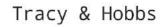
Arts Council England
Develops and invests in artistic
and cultural experiences that
enrich peoples lives.



The Canals Project
Artworks along canals that
reflect the location and history
of the canals in innovative ways.



Fish Fish Fish Artist-led intergenerational engagement project aiming to bring interest to waterways.



Tracy & Hobbs
Moving image commission for the floating cinema and UP projects.



UP Projects
Non-profit art organization challenging perceptions of what art can be.



Community Empowerment Networks National education charity that supports children, young people, parents, families etc.

Actors and projects in the area



New Choices for Youth East London charity running a range of community projects relevant to the evolving needs of children and young people.



Newham Action Against Domestic Violence Small charity supporting adults and children to leave abusive relationships.



Fight For Peace
Uses boxing and martial arts
combined with education and
personal development.



Momentum Project Aims to connect East London communities with sustainable businesses that are moving into the area.



University of East London
Public University in London
Borough of Newham specialiing
in research and sport.



Newham Council Main local authority of the London Borough of Newham.



Somewhere
Multidisciplinary art organization
which aims to enrich public realm
with creative ideas-actions.



Conflict & Change
Voluntary organization building
bridges of understanding within
and between communities in
Newham



Care in Mind Charity tackling mental health and supports locals in securing employment. This brief introduces a new vision for Newham, one that puts in its center the local users as well as other stakeholders in the area. Our vision is to build coexistence; accommodating for the current development changes that are taking place in Newham. Hence, a parallel vision for Newham is presented, one that acknowledges the challenges that face its residences in their everyday life and builds for inclusion and coexistence through mutual benefit between all existing stakeholders. Physical and social fragmentation as well as top-down master planning were identified as three main issues from the previous analysis phase through the six different lenses. Therefore, this brief outlines connectivity, enablement, exchange and inclusion as four main key principles that govern our strategies.

This was approached through two main strategies that were later developed into several interventions; breaking physical and social barriers and reactivating neglected public spaces. Through these two strategies we developed several interventions that are based on connecting the three areas; physically and socially, mutual exchange between different stakeholders, enabling the locals to be in charge of reimagining the future of Newham through regenerating their public spaces and finally having an inclusive development strategy that positions all stakeholders as central to the process of development.



Momentum Newham, "You Don't Have to Move out to move on" [ONLINE] Available at: http://momentumproject.org.uk, [Accessed 14 March 2014]

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BU1. Transforming local areas: Urban design for development

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