

MSc City Design and Social Science Students 2010-11

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THE CITIES PROGRAMME

The Cities Programme at the London School of Economics is an innovative centre for graduate teaching and research on urban issues. The Programme focuses on the relation between the physical and social structuring of cities and urban space. We see design as a mode of research and practice that shapes urban environments, responds to urban problems, and connects social and material forms in the city. We take a multi-disciplinary approach to these issues, drawing on expertise and insights from the social sciences, architecture, urban design, engineering, planning and other fields. The faculty team includes social scientists and political theorists, architects and urban designers, transport and environmental experts. Our MSc City Design and Social Science aims to foster critical and committed urbanists who can engage across these disciplinary boundaries, and have a positive impact on the making of cities in the future.

The City Design Research Studio is the centrepiece of the Master's programme, promoting an understanding of the city as a social as well as a built environment. In 2010-11, the Studio went down 'High Street 2012'. From Aldgate in the west to Stratford in the east, we traced the different qualities of the street, shaped as it is by diverse populations, uneven economic conditions, and changing physical forms. Rejecting on one side simple beautification strategies that would treat this corridor as a shop window for London 2012, and on the other a tendency to see the fragmented high street as a 'failed' retail corridor or flawed civic space, we took the site's piecemeal character as a cue to look for the different kinds of urban space a high street might be. Students worked together in interdisciplinary groups to analyse their stretch of street, and to propose inventive strategies for urban intervention. We are proud to present their work as the basis of this publication.

Fran Tonkiss
Director, Cities Programme

