

Green Infrastructure: Collaborative Placemaking

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Introduction

This project discusses green infrastructure in Elephant & Castle, in the borough of Southwark in Central London. This neighbourhood includes a wide variety of visible green infrastructure. 1 | These include green roofs and green walls, which provide aesthetic value and environmental benefits, as well as green technologies such as solar panels and wind turbines. We acknowledge the importance and impact of these forms of green infrastructure to environmental and public health. However, within the context of urbanism, the green infrastructure that has the most obvious and complex impact on our daily lives is undoubtedly green space, whether that space is as small as the often-ignored roadside median greens or as large as a city park, these spaces play dominant roles in our experience of cities.

We begin by discussing various approaches for defining and evaluating green space. Next, we introduce the context of Elephant & Castle as a neighbourhood in transition. We then address the problematic of green placemaking in this contested neighbourhood, followed by proposing a political intervention to reconcile this fragmentation and establish an inclusive, empowering process of green placemaking. We conclude by discussing the implications of this project on the physical, social, and political understandings of green infrastructure.

Defining and Evaluating Green Space

We define green space in the urban context fundamentally by the presence of plant life, whether that be a garden's biodiversity or a field's groundcover. However, this intuitive definition becomes far more complex when issues of ownership and accessibility are taken into account. For example, there are clear distinctions between

1 | Examples of Green Infrastructure in Elephant & Castle

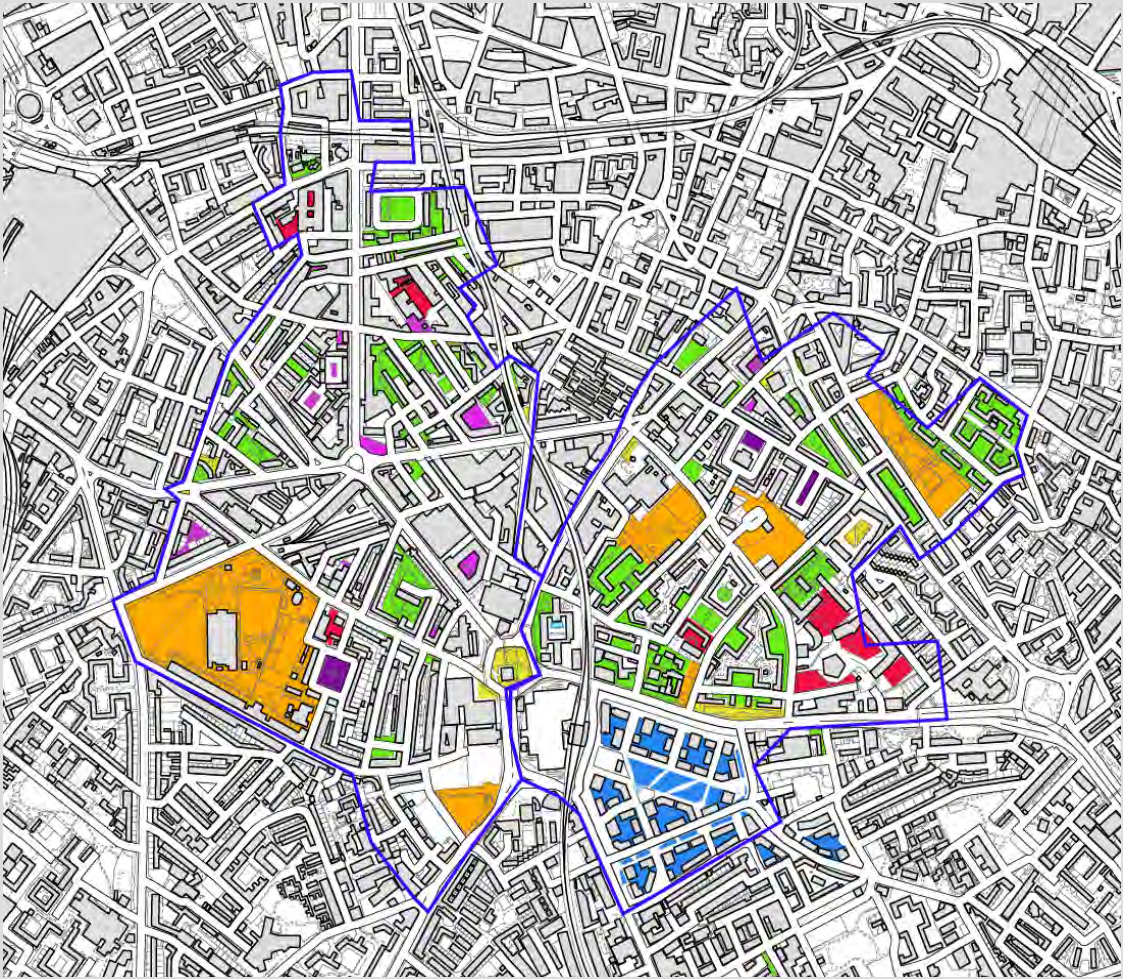


Green Technology

Green Space

2 | Uses vs. Access Typology of Green Space

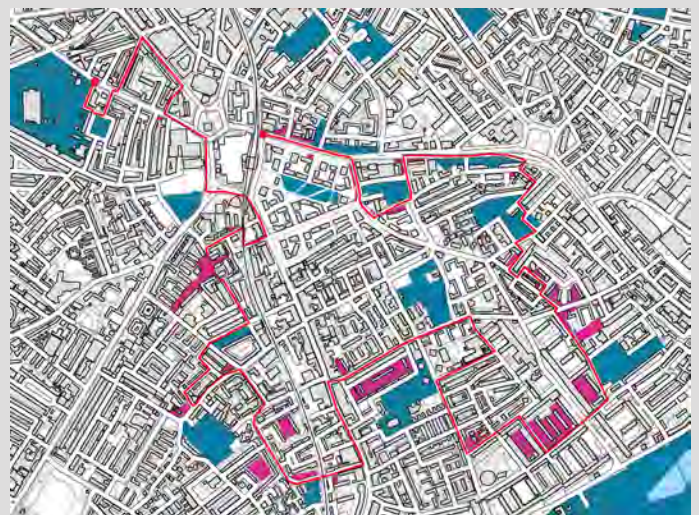
		Usage		
		Low		High
		←	-----	→
Access	Unrestricted	Empty	Leisure	Recreation
	Open	Open Green	Landscaped Green	Functional Park
	Public	Open Green	Landscaped Green	Functional Park
	Semiprivate	Council Green	Council Green	Council Green / Schoolyard
	Private	Green Roof	Terrace	Schoolyard
Restricted	Innaccessible	Green Roof		



the front lawn of a private residence and a sports pitch in a public park, but the difference between a grassy roadside median and a stretch of green alongside a housing estate is somewhat less obvious. The typology and accompanying map in 2 | represent our earliest attempt to categorise green spaces according to usage and access, the former being based on features such as benches and playground equipment, while the latter explains whether anyone can use the park versus exclusive groups such as residents or schoolchildren. This typology is useful for answering questions regarding who uses green spaces and for what purpose, but it fails to address why these spaces are valuable in cities.

Conversely, typologies of green space in the literature focus on the functions of green space: one such typology defines public parks by their provision of ‘education, pleasure and recreation’ whereas ‘attached green spaces’ linked to ‘industrial,

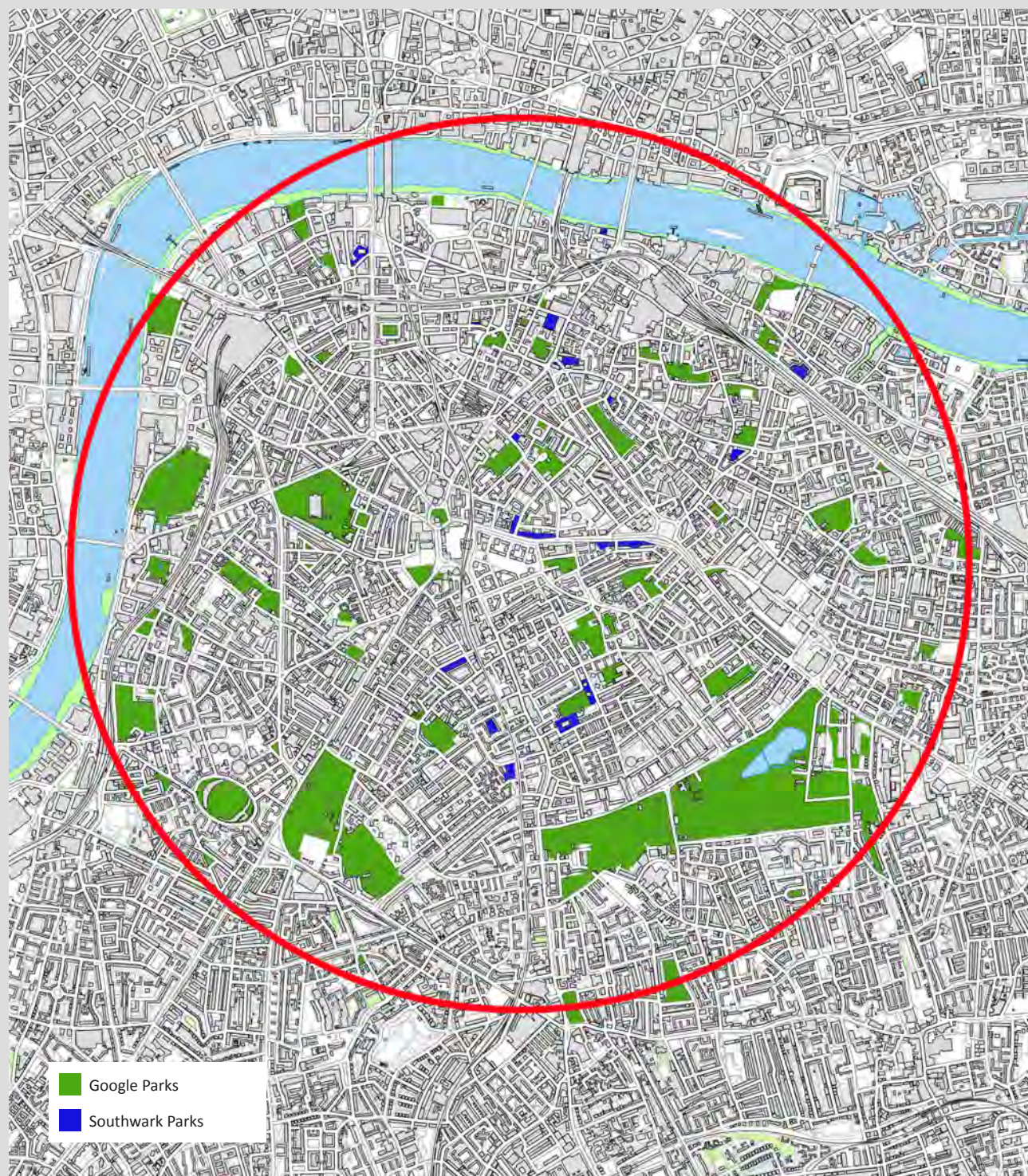
3 | Diversity of Green Spaces in Elephant & Castle experienced along a walk



Incident Greens

Southwark Parks

4 | Defining Green: Google Parks vs. Southwark Parks

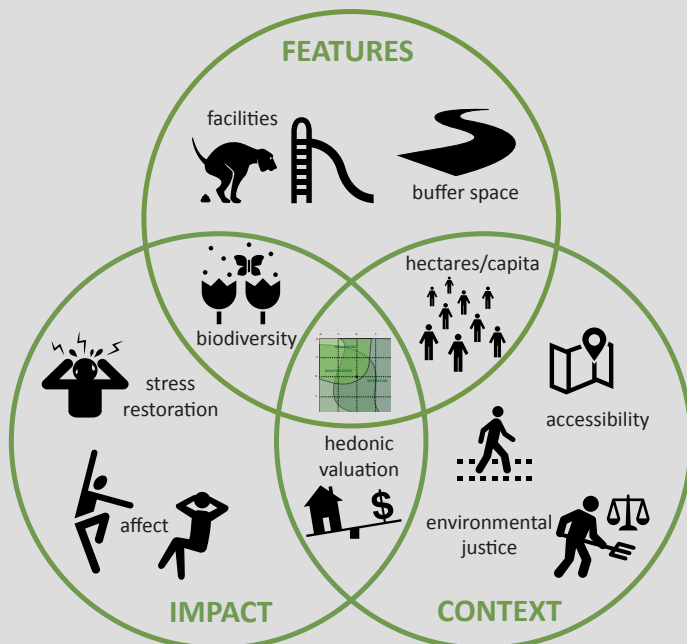


commercial, utility' or 'residential' land serve primarily aesthetic and environmental functions. 6 | While these distinctions are significant to the maintenance of green space, their effect on the experience of green space is minimal: a tree provides just as much shade regardless of whether its roots lie in the public or private realm, and a flower is no less beautiful nor less alluring to pollinators if planted by a citizen rather than a government contractor. This is not to suggest that ownership of green space is irrelevant to urbanism: public versus private ownership may determine acceptable uses of space and users' ability to advocate for or make improvements to it, and we will return later to this theme of green placemaking.

Though definitions of green space seem straightforward, in practice they present surprising inconsistencies. One such disagreement is demonstrated in 4 | where parks listed on Southwark council's website but omitted from Google Maps are coloured blue. This discrepancy highlights the difficulty of formulating a clear definition for particular types of green spaces. It is also significant that public parks tend to be the only green spaces formally recognised by these sources, while publically accessible playgrounds connected to housing estates and small, incidental green spaces are seldom included. These unrecognised spaces tend to be smaller than parks, but they are quite prolific in urban settings like Elephant & Castle as shown in 3 |, and they demonstrably improve mental health. 7 |

These many complications in understanding green space highlight the challenge of formulating clear definitions. However, while such an exercise is academically stimulating and philosophically interesting, these questions are less essential to the everyday user's experience of these spaces than their outcomes. Ownership of green space is most impacts urbanism to the extent that it determines the quality of care the

5 | Evaluating Green Space



6 | Kong, F. and Nobukazu, N. (2006) 'Spatial-temporal gradient analysis of urban green spaces in Jinan, China', *Landscape and Urban Planning* 78(3), pp. 147–164.

7 | Peschardt, K. and Stigsdotter, U. (2013) 'Associations between park characteristics and perceived restorativeness of small public urban green spaces', *Landscape and Urban Planning* 112, pp. 26–39.

space receives, the process by which spaces are maintained and improved, whether citizen feedback is adequately incorporated, and the types of uses permitted in the space. This leads us to our next enquiry, which is how green spaces are evaluated.

There are many different approaches for evaluating green space in the literature. Some rely on phenomenological, qualitative assessments by users whereas others quantify the value of these spaces. We have grouped the measures encountered in our literature review into three mutually inclusive categories shown in 5 | . The first category contains indicators based on features of green spaces, such as a census of facilities provided including playground equipment and sports pitches. 8 | Another approach is to analyse buffer space between different features and between trees, which could impact active versus passive use of the space. 9 | Measures evaluating context focus on how green space relates to its surroundings rather than on the green space itself. Indicators in this category include measuring walkability to residential areas or assessing environmental justice by comparing the distribution of trees relative to disadvantaged racial and ethnic clusters. 10 | Impact indicators aim to capture the experience of being in or near green spaces. These frameworks are often subjective and collect qualitative, sensory perceptions of green spaces or ask users to report their perceived stress alleviation. 11 | Many indicators fall between these categories, incorporating elements from two or more of them. For instance, hedonic valuation is a technique that measures the increase in market value of residences due to proximity to green space. 12 | Measures of ecological biodiversity combine the feature of plant-life in green spaces with the impact on avian and pollinator populations. 13 | An indicator of particular importance is hectares per capita, which combines park size with residential density. This measure is particularly problematic, as it presumes that bigger is better when valuing green spaces and therefore accounts for quantity of green space without considering quality. In the context of a transitioning neighbourhood like Elephant & Castle, relying on hectares per capita to determine future investment in green space could perpetuate disparity, a problem to which we will return in the following section. Importantly, our literature review reveals that green spaces in the urban context are diverse as are approaches to understand and evaluate them. We therefore feel it is important not to rely on any single indicator when valuing green space, but rather to combine multiple measures.

8 | Shores, K. and West, S. (2008) 'The Relationship Between Built Park Environments and Physical Activity in Four Park Locations', *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice* 14(3), pp. e9–e16.

9 | Goličnik, B. and Ward-Thompson, C. (2010) 'Emerging relationships between design and use of urban park spaces', *Landscape and Urban Planning* 94(1), pp. 38–53.

10 | Heynen, N. (2006) 'The Political Ecology of Uneven Urban Green Space: The Impact of Political Economy on Race and Ethnicity in Producing Environmental Inequality in Milwaukee', *Urban Affairs Review* 42(1), pp. 3–25.

11 | Grahn, P. and Stigsdotter, U. (2010) 'The relation between perceived sensory dimensions of urban green space and stress restoration', *Landscape and Urban Planning* 94(3–4), pp. 264–275.

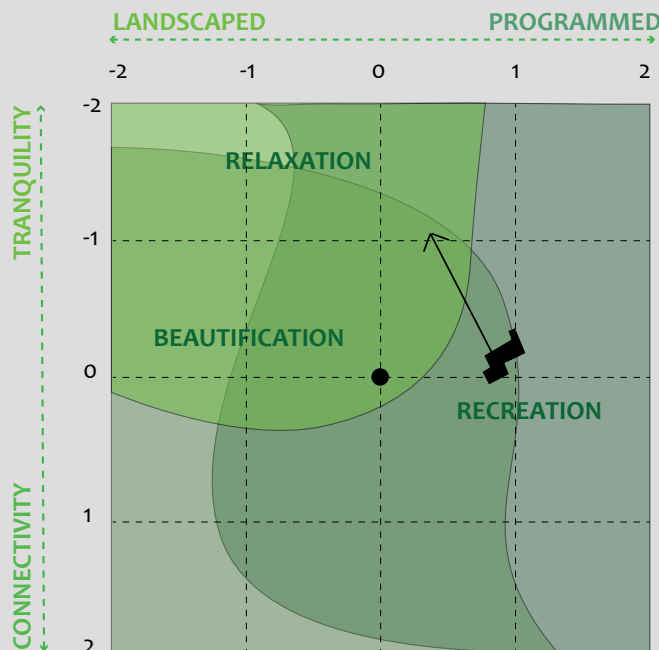
Peschardt, K. and Stigsdotter, U. (2013) 'Associations between park characteristics and perceived restorativeness of small public urban green spaces', *Landscape and Urban Planning* 112, pp. 26–39.

12 | Morancho, A. (2003) 'A hedonic valuation of urban green areas', *Landscape and Urban Planning* 66(1), pp. 35–41.

13 | Sandström, U., Angelstam, P. and Mikusiński, G. (2006) 'Ecological diversity of birds in relation to the structure of urban green space', *Landscape and Urban Planning* 77(1–2), pp. 39–53.

To reflect this complexification of the valuing of green space and the importance of encouraging the production and use of different kinds of green spaces, we formulated a new typology keeping in mind measures of features, context, and impact. This new typology shown in 14 | employs Likert scales to subjectively measure the feelings produced by green spaces. It has two dimensions. The first deals with the features of the park, ranging from landscaped to programmed, and aims to capture the benefits of both a quiet, relaxing space to enjoy versus an exciting, stimulating space in which to get active. The second dimension - connected versus tranquil - deals with the relationship between a green space and its broader context. It highlights the allure of a green space whose disconnection allows an escape into nature, as well as the appeal of a green space that allows one to enjoy the vitality of a city rushing past. This typology makes no suppositions about which kind of green space is most desirable, as each of its four fluid corners can be successful. As seen in 15 |, there is a great diversity of green spaces present in Elephant & Castle, which we will now explore in depth.

14 | Interactive Typology



This park makes me feel (value = x-coordinate)

- ☐ Very relaxed (value = -2)
- ☐ Somewhat relaxed (value = -1)
- ☒ Both relaxed and excited (value = 0)
- ☐ Somewhat excited (value = 1)
- ☐ Very excited (value = 2)
- ☐ Neither excited nor relaxed (value = 0)

I wish this park was (horizontal arrow vector)

- ☐ A lot more relaxing (value = -1)
- ☒ A little more relaxing (value = -0.5)
- ☐ Both more relaxing and exciting (value = 0)
- ☐ A little more exciting (value = 0.5)
- ☐ A lot more exciting (value = 1)
- ☐ Fine as is (value = 0)

I use this park because it has (value = y-coordinate)

- ☐ Lots of nature (value = -2)
- ☐ Some nature (value = -1)
- ☒ Both nature and equipment (value = 0)
- ☐ Some equipment for activities (value = 1)
- ☐ Lots of equipment for activities (value = 2)
- ☐ Neither nature nor equipment (value = 0)

I wish this park had (vertical arrow vector)

- ☐ A lot more nature (value = -1)
- ☒ A little more nature (value = -0.5)
- ☐ More of both nature and equipment (value = 0)
- ☐ A little more equipment for activities (value = 0.5)
- ☐ A lot more equipment for activities (value = 1)
- ☐ Fine as is (value = 0)

Green Space in Elephant and Castle

Elephant & Castle is undergoing substantial redevelopment. At its centre, the Heygate Estate, a massive council housing estate built in the 1970s, is being replaced by Elephant Park, a luxury tower complex developed by Lend Lease. Although some former Heygate residents were rehoused in the adjacent Strata Tower, the vast majority was displaced southwards and eastwards. 16 | Whenever displacement and redevelopment coincide, the disadvantaged are most likely to relocate. This is captured statistically in 18 |, which shows changes in education rates among adults over ten years. Across London and Southwark Borough, the least educated are leaving while more educated residents flock to the city, and these trends are dramatically more pronounced in the immediate vicinity of Elephant & Castle.

15 | Character of Parks in Elephant & Castle

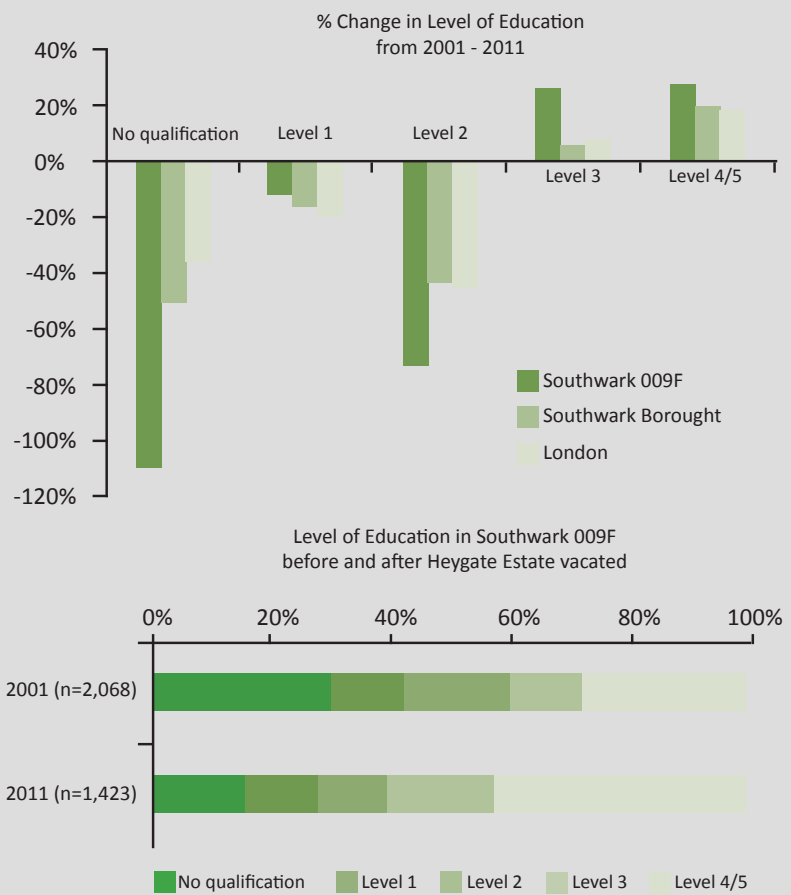


16 | Elephant Amenity Network (2013). *The Heygate Diaspora - 35% Campaign*. Available online at <http://35percent.org/blog/2013/06/08/the-heygate-diaspora/> [accessed 10 February 2016].

17 | Southwark Council (2012) *Elephant and Castle: Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF)*. London: Southwark Council.

This narrative of displacement has important implications for green space, particularly in light of Southwark Council's over-reliance on hectares per capita. 17 | The first phase of Lend Lease's redevelopment was the construction of Trafalgar Place on the site of the former Wingrave Estate. Trafalgar Place notably has twice as many units as did Wingrave, and Elephant Park will similarly house far more families than lived in Heygate. 19 | If the population increases without any change to the amount of green space, hectares per capita in the area will correspondingly decrease. This means that over-emphasis of this singular indicator would necessitate the council to invest further in green space nearest to the areas that are already receiving significant investment at the cost of improving green spaces in neglected parts of the neighbourhood. The result would be the prioritisation of green spaces predominantly used by wealthier residents and ignoring spaces used by those who are less well-off, which would perpetuate inequality. This potential pitfall by examining capacity changes in local schools is demonstrated in 20 |. As the figure shows, private schools in the

18 | A Neighbourhood in Transition (Kitson, R. (2013) 'Heygate Estate's last resident is forcibly evicted by police', Evening Standard. Available online at <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/heygate-estate-s-last-resident-is-forcibly-evicted-by-police-8928643.html> [accessed 10 February 2016].)

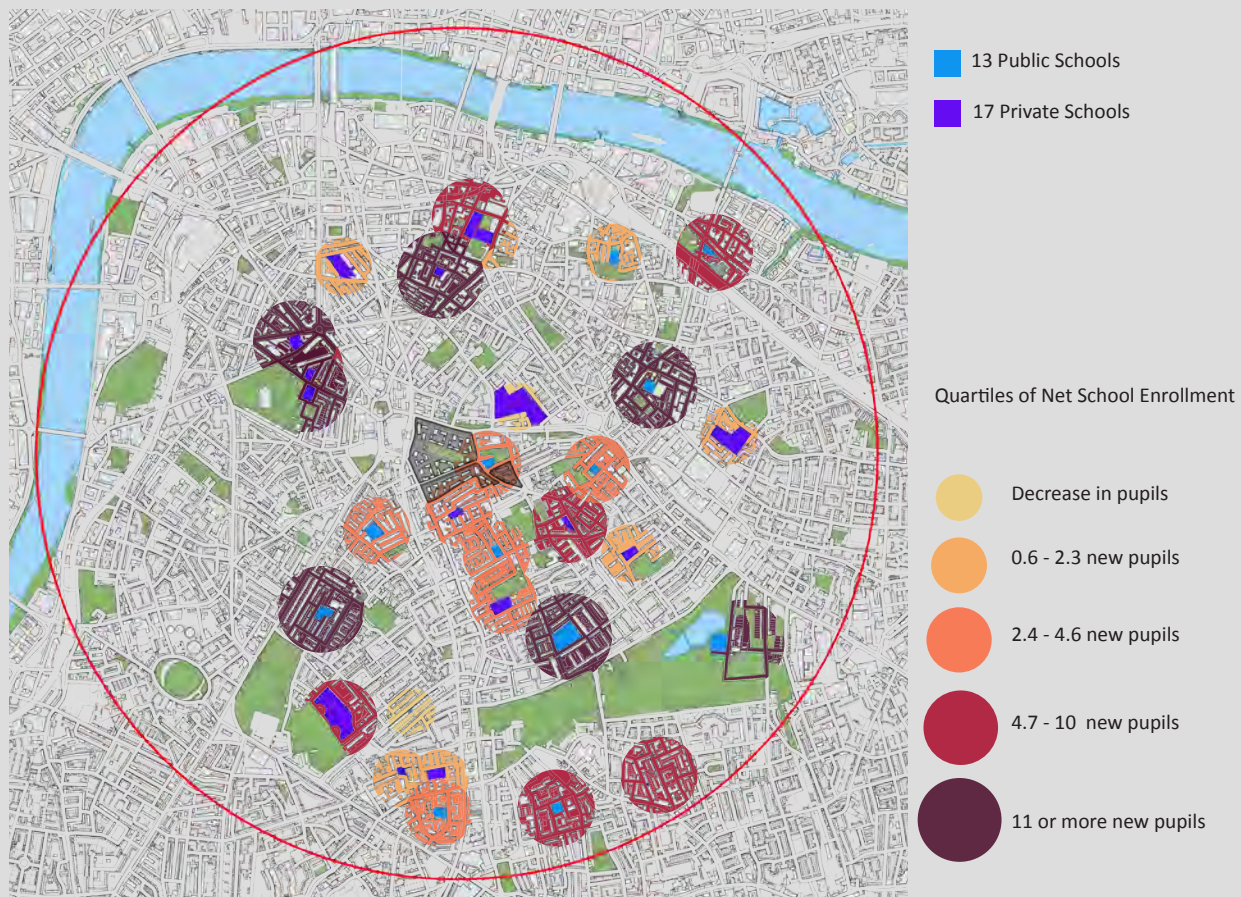


19 | Friends of Victory Community Park (2016) Interview; conducted as part of the fieldwork.

area are seeing enrolment increases nearest to the areas of redevelopment, while public schools are increasing in the southeastern portions of the neighbourhood, matching the aforementioned pattern of displacement from the Heygate Estate. Consequently, investments in green spaces in areas of increased residential density will disproportionately serve those who can afford to pay for private schools, neglecting green space near those who cannot.

Alongside this narrative of displacement and disparity is a misconstrual of the placemaking occurring in Elephant & Castle. Redevelopment often places transformative power the hands of the state and the developers. Promotional material for the Elephant & Castle rebranding, such as that in 21 | emphasises this, particularly in the context of green placemaking. While it is true that both Lend Lease and Southwark Council have roles to play in the creation, maintenance, and improvement of green spaces in Elephant & Castle, this sort of marketing masks the active efforts of grassroots movements in the neighbourhood. Prior to Lend Lease's involvement,

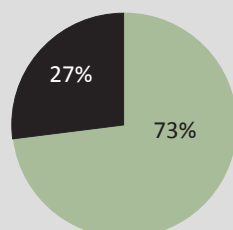
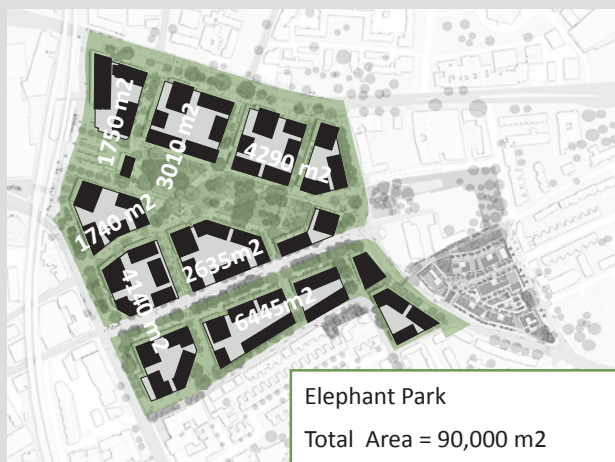
20 | School Capacity Analysis (Authors, based on Ofsted Data Dashboard (2016) Find a Data Dashboard. Available online at <http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk> [accessed 10 February 2016].)



21 | Promoting a Green Neighbourhood (Lend Lease (2011) Elephant & Castle Regeneration. Available online at <http://www.lendlease.com/europe/united-kingdom/projects/elephant-and-castle-regeneration> [accessed 12 May 2016].)

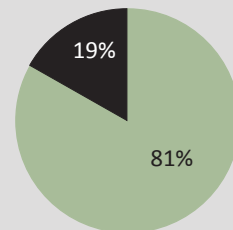
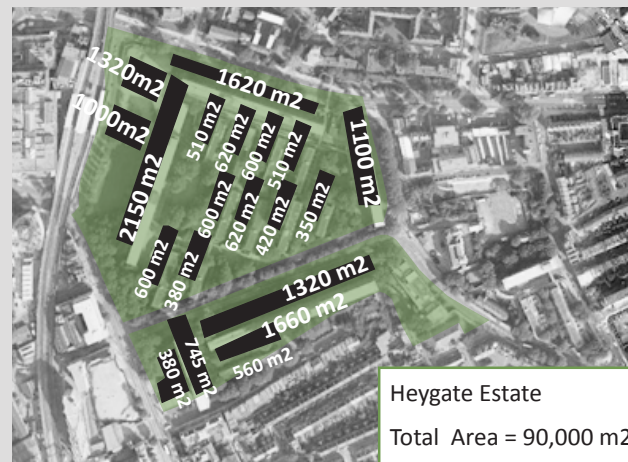


22 | Measuring Green Space in the new Elephant Park



■ Total = Open/Green Space 65,790 m²
■ Total = Built Space 24,210 m²

23 | Measuring Green Space in the former Heygate Estate



■ Total = Open/Green Space 72,935 m²
■ Total = Built Space 17,065 m²

Cut Across: Diverse Infrastructures



Canal and Waterway Infrastructure: Lea River Boat Locations

Railway Infrastructure: Site Comparison

ELEPHANT & CASTLE REGENERATION



KINGS CROSS REGENERATION



Elephant & Castle was already a very green neighbourhood. This is highlighted in 22-23 | where the amount of built versus green space on the former Heygate Estate is compared against the plan for Elephant Park. As the figure shows, Heygate actually included more green space than its replacement.

More significant than the misconstrual of the quantity of green space already present in Elephant & Castle is the portrayal of Lend Lease as the active power in greenifying the neighbourhood. Elephant & Castle is host to many grassroots organisations with missions involving green space. These include the Friends of Southwark Parks, each of which is dedicated to the care of an individual park; Green Links who create safe routes between parks; Guerrilla Gardeners who beautify small, neglected green spaces alongside roads; and Mobile Gardeners who occupy vacant land with educational urban gardens. Lend Lease, to their credit, have supported the initiatives of these organisations by funding estate beautification projects, consulting the organisers of these groups in designing their own parks through the Park Advisory Group (PAG), granting a five-year lease on their yet-to-be-developed lot for a community garden, and providing signage for Green Links. However, this makes Lend Lease the enhancer of these green placemaking efforts, not the driver.

Even the council, despite its ownership of the public parks, cannot claim to have created these green spaces. Time and time again, we have heard anecdotes about resident-led efforts to found new parks for their children to play in, to beautify the council property around their homes, or to preserve trees and other green space slotted for development. One such anecdote comes from an interview with the Friends of Victory Community Park:

Street and Pavement Infrastructure: Comparison of Price of Full English Breakfast



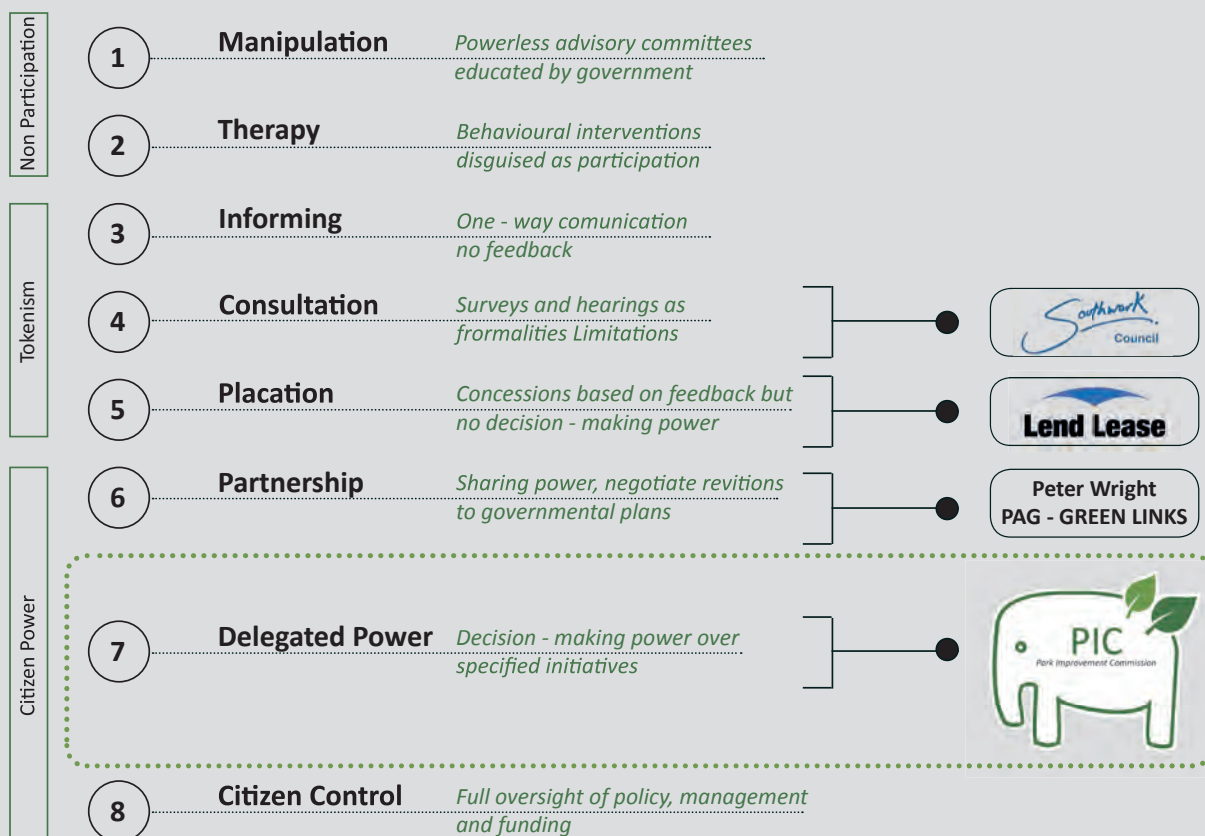
Social Infrastructure: Seen in Somers Town

“The people in that block; the people in the street where I live, Balfour Street; the people in the next street going down that way, Henshaw Street; and a big council housing block that was just over there all got together and campaigned to have the space – the derelict land after the tenement houses came down – turned into somewhere where their children could play safely. Because apart from that, the children were hemmed in by Rodney Place, which is quite a busy road; New Kent Road, which is a highway; and the rest of Rodney Road down there. So they were stuck in here with nowhere to play”. 24 |

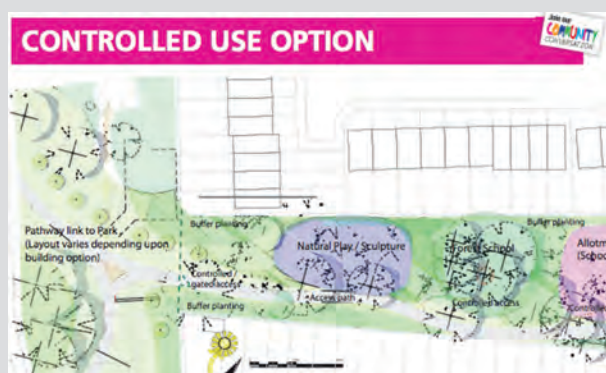
25 | Guerrilla Gardeners Intervention (Guerrilla Gardening (2008) Blog April–May 08. Available online at <http://www.guerrillagardening.org/ggblog14.html> [accessed 8 February 2016].)



24 | Friends of Victory Community Park (2016) Interview; conducted as part of the fieldwork.



27 | Southwark Council Citizen Participation (Southwark Council (2016b) *Help us improve Southwark Park*. Available online at http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200073/parks_and_open_spaces/3710/help_us_improve_southwark_park [accessed 10 February 2016].)



This anecdote demonstrates that even green space owned and maintained by Southwark Council often results from bottom-up grassroots movements rather than top-down state establishment.

As in the case of Friends of Victory Community Park, many of these organisations formed through Tenant and Resident Associations. Others, like Green Links, formed through the partnership of multiple organisations, and almost all came into being in response to an unserved need in the community, often providing something that was lacking be it safe space for children to play or safe routes to get them to that space. Others formed to beautify neglected green spaces. An example of their mission can be seen in 25 | : it shows a council-owned green space on the roundabout at Elephant & Castle that was poorly maintained by the council and restored (illegally) by Guerrilla Gardeners. Whether they grew out of other organisations or out of an unserved need in their communities, these grassroots organisations should be recognized for their green placemaking efforts, not masked behind developer propaganda and council ownership.

Problematic

In transitioning neighbourhoods, particularly ones where less-educated residents are displaced by privileged newcomers, concerns are often raised regarding how to reconcile the ‘old’ identity and occupants of the neighbourhood with the ‘new’. In the context of green space in Elephant & Castle, we share similar concerns, particularly because the level of engagement between the council and the neighbourhood’s longtime residents is insufficient. To explain this problem in depth, we turn to Sherry Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation. 26 |

Arnstein’s ladder ranges from full citizen control to manipulation, where advisory committees are formed not to give advice but to be educated about the government’s agenda. 28 | The central rungs are what Arnstein calls ‘tokenism’ where citizens participate to a certain extent but have no decision-making power, nor any guarantee that their input will be taken into account. Based on our examination of the council’s engagement related to green space, we place them on the fourth rung: consultation. They have online surveys and hold hearings to collect feedback. However, they do not publish the results of their surveys or the minutes of their hearings. 29 | Consequently, though they collect feedback, there is neither accountability nor transparency to ensure that input is incorporated or even considered in their plans.

Lend Lease falls one rung deeper at placation. Their Park Advisory Committee, composed of proactive members of the community, has a voice in designing Elephant Park’s green spaces. However, final decision-making authority over its implemented still rests with Lend Lease. 30 | Many grassroots organisations, including Green Links and Friends of Southwark Parks, are far more transparent in their incorporation of member opinions into their projects and even go so far as to treat all

28 | Arnstein, S. R. (1969) ‘A Ladder of Citizen Participation’, *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 35(4), pp. 216–224.

29 | Southwark Council (2016) *Help us improve Southwark Park*. Available online at http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200073/parks_and_open_spaces/3710/help_us_improve_southwark_park [accessed 10 February 2016].

30 | Wright, P. (2016) Interview with Peter Wright; conducted as part of the fieldwork.

voices, including those of children, as equally valuable. 31 | However, although these organisations have a deep level of engagement, their lack of partnership with the council means they have no power over the council-owned green spaces they advocate for. Our intervention aims to foster an even deeper level of engagement: delegated power. This depth will be achieved by transferring decision-making authority over green spaces to the community and by ensuring people have an equal chance to participate in green placemaking regardless of their level of education.

Southwark Council's greatest shortcoming in citizen engagement is their disenfranchisement of Elephant & Castle's longtime residents. The surveys they conduct regarding green spaces typically involve complicated diagrams such as those in 27 | . This severely limits feedback to a simple poll rather than inviting further input to determine priorities. Furthermore, these diagrams are difficult to understand. Overwhelming visuals coupled with alienating language used by the council in both their surveys and hearings intimidates the less educated residents of Elephant & Castle, who are consequently too intimidated to participate:

“They have a perception that if they go to a meeting – and I’m putting words in other people’s mouths – it’ll be middle class, there’ll be wine on the table, they’ll talk in words I don’t understand, they’ll want me to write something and I can’t spell. It’s this whole myriad of things, and the walls getting taller.” 31 |

Furthermore, not only do these hearings exclude those who feel disenfranchised, they also occur on an unrealistically short timescale. The turnaround time between announcing a hearing or workshop, holding it, and implementing change is so rapid it does not leave time for sufficient discussion of varying viewpoints, nor for any process of revision and further feedback to occur. Deep engagement requires both time and trust. It requires establishing a rapport to allow for open, honest dialogue, and it requires making participants feel included rather than intimidated through tactics that facilitate comfortable sharing of views without shaming them for being unable to write or speak well. 32 |

This lack of engagement, coupled with an over-reliance on hectares per capita measure, will only result in further segmentation in Elephant & Castle. The areas around the development will continue to see investment in their green spaces, while the privileged, educated new residents will feel comfortable advocating for their needs with the council. Simultaneously, the proactive grassroots organisations will continue to pick up the council’s slack in the southeastern parts of the neighbourhood still largely populated by longtime residents; however, without authority over their local green spaces and without reliable sources of funding, they will be unable to protect the spaces they care about from becoming neglected or, worse yet, sold off for development. To alleviate this disparity, we propose a political intervention that implements deeper, transparent engagement between the council and the community

32 | Wright, P. (2016) Interview with Peter Wright; conducted as part of the fieldwork.

Wilson, S. (2016) Interview with Head of Community Development, Lend Lease; conducted as part of the fieldwork.

31 | Wright, P. (2016) Interview with Peter Wright; conducted as part of the fieldwork.

and that transfers decision-making authority over green spaces to the people that use them.

Intervention

The significance of fostering dialogue in which all voices involved are heard can never be over-emphasised. This applies not only to green space, but also to municipal infrastructural placemaking in general. In an ideal democratic platform, everyone should have the opportunity to partake and work towards a viable common goal.

In the case of Elephant & Castle, decision-making authority lies in the hands of Southwark Council and Lend Lease. These two parties formally signed an agreement in 2010, establishing a 15-year deal declared to be “not just about bricks and mortar”, but rather, “using property as a catalyst for a wholesale regeneration of the area”.³³ However, one might argue that the voice of the community is absent in this agreement. Lend Lease is a private developer, and is not obliged to meet the demands of community members, except at their own discretion. Participation at the community level, other than stipulations prescribed in a Section 106 Agreement, is not compulsory.

The council, as a municipal entity, is more accessible to the community by default; however, they lack the capability to handle the wide range of complex social dynamics in the community. A community-based association would be better equipped to articulate these social complexities, as its members would be more familiar with explicit details and better able to compile these grievances in ways that would be more easily palatable by the council or the developer.

There are many grassroots organisations devoted to green placemaking in Elephant & Castle. In ³⁵, the dense social network between these groups is clearly visible. The majority of partnerships in this network rely on trust and working relationships between personal contacts. While these relationships are powerful, they can quickly dissolve. They depend heavily on individual capabilities rather than a sustainable set of procedures. Consequently, if a key member within the community were to move away, the impermanence and vulnerability of this network would be exposed. PAG, acting as the catalyst between developer and community, is among the few institutionalised partnership between these parties; however, it is merely a temporary body which discusses one private park-to-be.³⁴ The only true example of a durable, systematic community-council partnership is with the Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs) who receive funding via the Tenant Fund.³⁵ The TRAs-council relationship is a functional and workable example of how the members of the community, by way of open discourse, have decision-making power over allocated council funds. This example can serve as a useful model for other community-council relationships.

³³ | Southwark Council (2010) *Elephant regeneration agreement formally signed*. Available online at http://www.southwark.gov.uk/news/article/193/elephant_regeneration_agreement_formally_signed [accessed 10 February 2016].

³⁴ | Lend Lease (2014) *Elephant Park: Park Advisory Group - Elephant & Castle*. Available online at <http://www.elephantandcastle-lendlease.com/news/park-advisory-group-invitation-members> [accessed 10 February 2016].

³⁵ | Southwark Council (2016) *Tenant and resident associations*. Available online at http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/1012/council_tenant_involvement/737/tenant_and_resident_associations [accessed 10 February 2016].



Mission

- Plan and carry out specific improvements/additions to green spaces
- Provide a democratic platform for participatory engagement
- Foster a sense of ownership over publicly accessible space



Authority

- Formally represent members' interests in all matters related to green space
- Decision making authority over allocation of Park Fund
- Capacity to autonomously implement small-scale improvements
- NOT Responsible for general maintenance and upkeep of green space



Funding

- Quarterly budget from council's Park Fund
- Can negotiate for additional funding for specified projects
- Can seek outside funding in form of grants



Membership

- Democratically elected officers
- Open to anyone with interest in local parks
- No residency or age requirements



Engagement

- Ongoing process of participatory research
- Monthly events (workshops, meetings, walkabouts, etc.)
- Outreach to promote inclusion of the disenfranchised



Partnership

- Collaborate on improvements to council greens (TRAs)
- Negotiate for improvements publicly accessible private parks (Elephant Park)
- Coordinate events with Friends of Parks and other stakeholders (NGOs)

This brings us to the crux of our intervention: establishing the Park Improvement Commission (PIC), as seen in 42 |, which will fill the gaps that currently exist by institutionalising the relationship between the council and the community (similar to the TRA model), and creating a sustainable model that ensures full accountability in green placemaking efforts. The strength of our intervention lies in its ability to engage the numerous bodies involved in a positive and productive manner, seamlessly connecting the major (and minor) actors, to formulate a well-informed set of decisions in a way that empowers the disenfranchised. The components of PIC are detailed in 36 |. Decision-making on improvements will take place in an inclusive way, actively engaging the community. A steady and continuous budget will allow for sustainable, small-scale improvements with additional funding negotiated as needed. Ultimately, these acupuncture interventions will add up to a significant whole. As the Head of Community Development at Lend Lease acknowledged, a few swings and trees can inject substantial ‘personality’ to a park. 37 | Similarly, minor changes implemented in Salisbury Square Park, including a flowerbed, path, and play area, transformed this space from an under-utilised field to a beautiful, beloved park. 38 | The impact of these small changes are exemplified in 43-45 |. These interventions would not cost much, yet the difference they will make to green spaces is substantial, transcending the basic physical addition of objects by altering the meaning associated with the space and its surroundings. After all, “Intervention is all about revitalization, an indispensable way of making an organism function and change”. 39 |

PIC will not interfere with pre-existing practices of park maintenance conducted by the council. Rather, its focus will be extensive community outreach, including monthly events and workshops and collaboration with council TRAs, private sector groups and NGOs. This will be complimented by a website with mobile device capabilities, as seen in 46 |, providing extensive information about on-going projects in neighbourhood green spaces and the organisations involved and providing users with interactive means to engage with community members, such as opinions on projects, forum discussions, or surveys using our interactive typology among other tools.

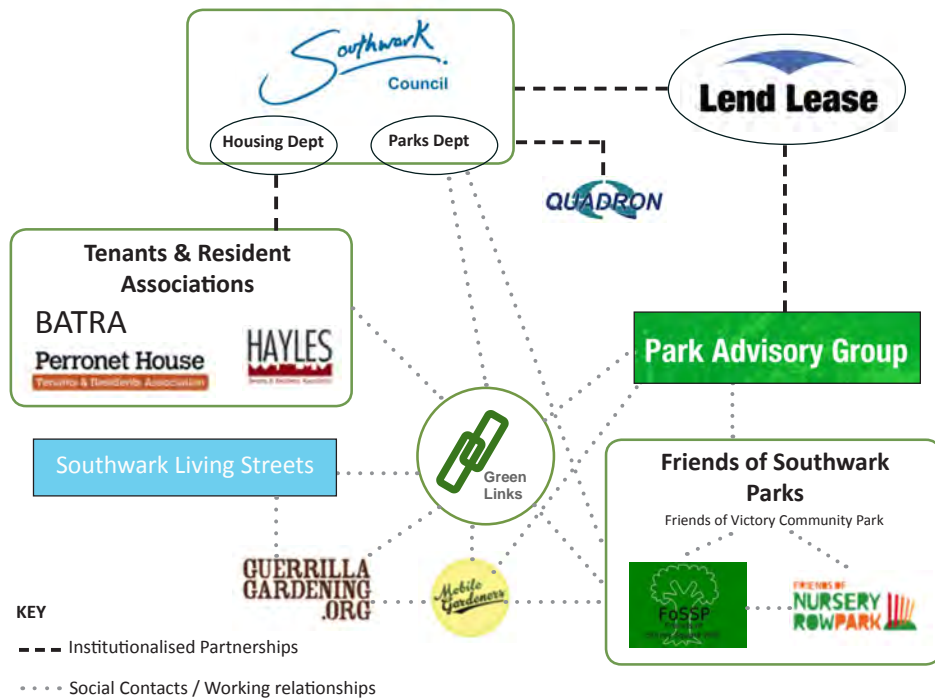
To highlight the potential of a functional relationship between community and public sectors, we draw from the successful partnership between the Taipei City Government and the Treasure Hill urban farming community. Once a derelict and neglected part of the city with a history of social activism, its recovery started with small-scale urban acupuncture changes administered by the locals and a group of architecture students. 40 | This evolved into a process of reinvigoration, with the participation of the city government, in conjunction with local and international artists, collaborating with the local organic farmers at Treasure Hill, by way of hosted on-site events such as outdoor movie nights, art lectures and exhibitions to facilitate creative and artistic involvements in the community. 40 | This partnership can be viewed as a triumph in community preservation, whose strength lies in the close-knit and open coordination between the city government and community members to patiently build trust over the long term, and establish a sense of empowerment among the stakeholders.

37 | Wilson, S. (2016) Interview with Head of Community Development, Lend Lease; conducted as part of the fieldwork.

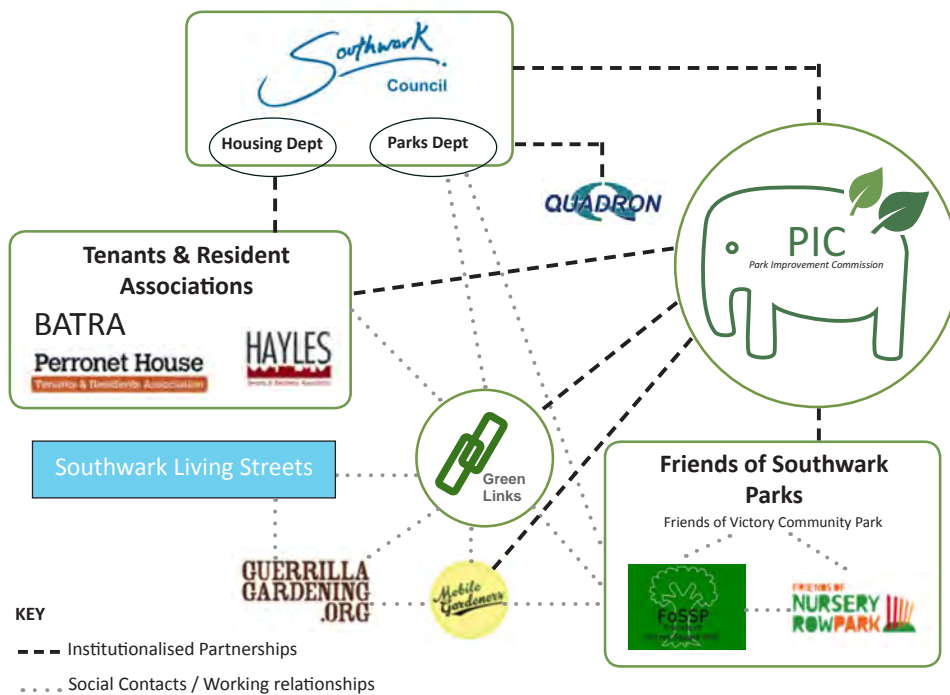
38 | Wright, P. (2016) Interview with Peter Wright; conducted as part of the fieldwork.

39 | Lerner, J. (2014) *Urban Acupuncture*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, on p. 1.

40 | Taipei City Government (2016) *Treasure Hill*. Available online at <http://english.tch.gov.taipei/ct.asp?xItem=155349&ctNode=15315&mp=111002> [accessed 10 February 2016].



41 | Current Structure of Green Placemaking Organisations



42 | Future Structure of Green Placemaking Organisations



43 | Physical Green Infrastructure: Acupuntural Urbanism



44 | Physical Green Infrastructure: Acupuntural Urbanism



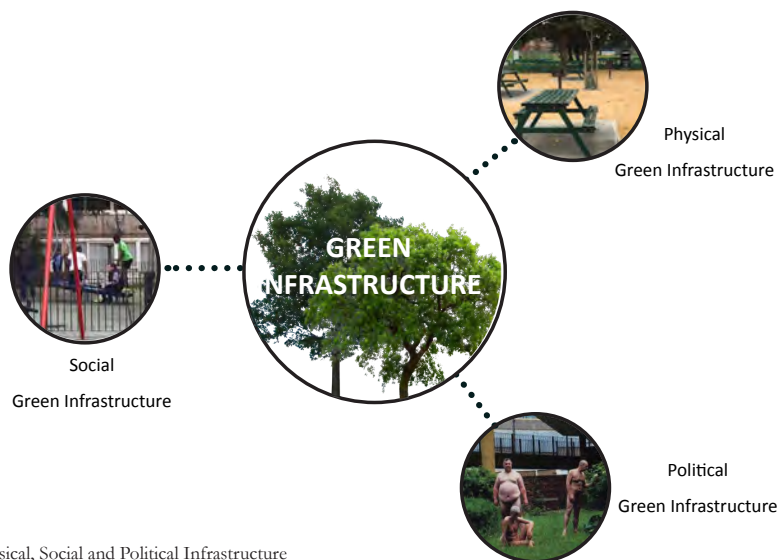
45 | Physical Green Infrastructure: Acupunctural Urbanism



We should bear in mind that successful models of government-community engagement are scarce, and limitations to an intervention such as PIC do exist. The involvement of multiple voices, for instance, can lead to difficulties in reaching a consensus when collective decisions need to be made, slowing down the process of change. Also, as expected with any project, funding is always a concern. Incremental changes can be completed even with small budgets, and we believe it is in both the council's and the developer's long-term interest to provide continuous financial support for PIC, as any success in the community realm will bolster both their reputations. We believe that this period of transition provides a unique opportunity to implement an intervention like PIC. The proactive grassroots movements provide the momentum necessary to overcome the challenges of establishing PIC, the presence of developer investment and Section 106 agreements can be put towards the start-up costs of PIC, and the projected increase in council tax thanks to the construction of so many luxury homes can sustain PIC for generations to come.

Sociopolitical Life of Green Space

There is a longstanding assumption that infrastructure is “normally invisible” and that it only “becomes visible when it breaks”. 48 | Southwark Council's approach to the management of green space certainly fits this perception of infrastructure as invisible until broken: their surveys and projects are carried out only after the identification of a problem, such as dog owners' failure to cleanup after their pets. 49 | Our analysis of the green space in Elephant & Castle, however, has revealed that infrastructure can be visible, especially when it is working. Green space is not merely physical. It has dynamic social and political lives with important implications for urbanism.



47 | Physical, Social and Political Infrastructure Diagram

48 | Leigh Star, S. (1999) 'The Ethnography of Infrastructure', *American Behavioral Scientist* 43(3), pp. 377–391.

49 | Southwark Council (2016) *Dogs in parks*. Available online at http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/200073/parks_and_open_spaces/3169/dogs_in_parks [accessed 10 February 2016].

This multifaceted reading of infrastructure is displayed in 47 | . Similarly, small-scale acupunctural improvements like those carried out by PIC will have social and political impacts as well as physical ones.

The social life of infrastructure can be seen in the sense of community it creates. Green spaces are not only places for people to play or relax. They are also places where they encounter and connect with other people. Just as residents of major cities identify their neighbourhoods based on the nearest transit station, so too do the residents of Elephant & Castle identify their communities based on their local parks. By giving these park users authority over green space, there is an opportunity to greatly enhance this social aspect of infrastructure by fostering a feeling of ownership over public space. In cases where grassroots organisations have persisted to acquire grant funding and council permission to make changes to Salisbury Row Park, this is precisely what has happened: children who chose their own playground equipment became protective of ‘their’ space, attended gardening and clean-up events, and continued to preserve it into their teenage years. 50 | The children whose parents fought to establish Victory Community Park on their behalf now bring their own children to play in the beloved space. 51 | In these ways, green infrastructure is more than just physical. It becomes a hub of social life and the heart of a community.

Once a community is formed around the establishment, protection, improvement, or use of a green space, and once that community feels empowered by their ability to advocate for and implement changes to that space, green infrastructure has the potential to take on a political life as well as a physical and social one. The political life of green space is no new concept. Parks have historically served as sites of political protest, most famously in the form of the Occupy movement worldwide. Elephant & Castle is also no stranger to political action around green space: in the transition from Heygate to Elephant Park, there have been a series of protests to protect the aged trees on the land including naming the trees to humanise them and a memorable naked sit-in. 50 | The political life of green infrastructure, however, goes beyond political action within the green space itself. Rather, the act of empowering a community to fight for and improve a green space can spill over into other realms. In the case of Salisbury Row Park, having a body of citizens organised around the park allowed them to make substantial changes to roads and pavements in their community, ultimately resulting in a more walkable place to live. 50 | The political life of green infrastructure, therefore, goes beyond the green.

In conclusion, we feel that Elephant & Castle presents a unique opportunity to maximise the social and political benefits gained from empowering users of green space. This project will not only ensure that the voices of both ‘new’ and ‘old’ residents of Elephant & Castle are heard, it will also help to reconcile these voices in the formation of one cohesive but diverse neighbourhood with unique, quality green spaces. If successful, this project can serve as a framework for community-led green space in transitioning urban neighbourhoods around the world.

50 | Wright, P. (2016) Interview with Peter Wright; conducted as part of the fieldwork.

51 | Friends of Victory Community Park (2016) Interview; conducted as part of the fieldwork.