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## INTRODUCTION

The Pembury Estate, located in the Hackney Central ward of the Inner London Borough of Hackney, is infamous for its levels of deprivation and inequality, and has been portrayed in the media as a dangerous place, especially after playing host to some of the 2011 riots. Although these two pictures were taken just 50 metres from each other, they provide two very different views of the Pembury Estate. This juxtaposition of the Hegelian ‘abstract negativity’ manifest in the violence of the riots and the seemingly staid apolitical effects of community gardening on the estate, questions how space could become an active mediator of a new political statement.

The recent adoption of the Localism Act (2011), which aims to increase autonomy at the local level through the use of the Neighbourhood Forum and Plan, demands rethinking local politics and decision-making. If the right to the city, in Lefebvrian terms, is the “need to restructure the power relations that underlie the production of urban

space,” the decentralisation of power to local government and communities asks how local people engage in the transformation of their inhabited space (Purcell, 2002: 101-2). The Localism Act can be seen as failing because it does not support the creation of a social space where the ‘collective power of the masses’ shapes urbanisation through the “right to participate directly in all decisions that produce urban space” (Hodkinson, 2012: 516). This participation offers the “right to appropriate” and ensures that public space is produced in consideration of “use value, and not the exchange value” (ibid).

The mono-functional introversion of the Pembury Estate is a clear statement of the goals of public housing in the past century. The equal society envisioned by Modernist social housing has become a physical dystopia of uniformity and static organisation of buildings, creating pre-constructed subjectivities. ‘Common land’ for everybody has been transformed into a collection of fenced and empty green



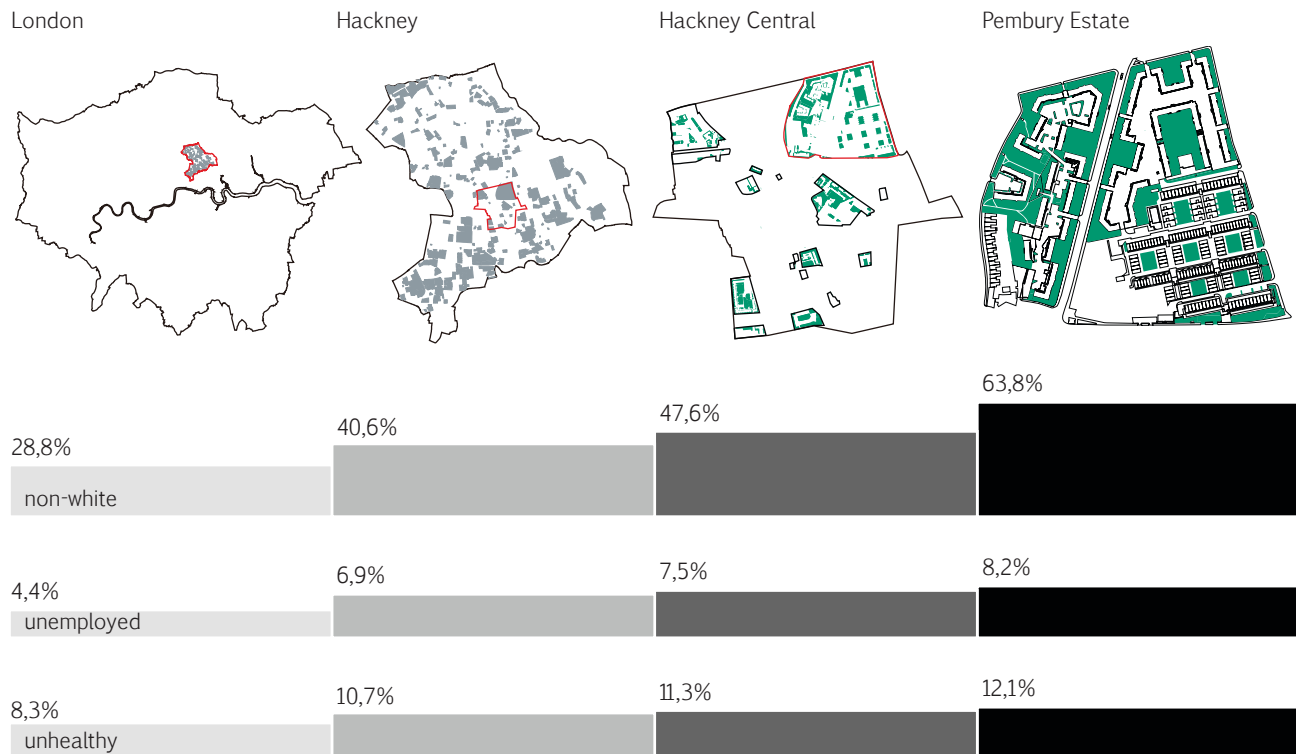
△ 01 2011 London's Riots on the Clarence Road, Hackney  
△ Source: <http://www.leonneal.com>

△ 02 The Pembury Gardening Club  
These two photographs, taken 50 metres apart, display the proximity of riot violence to gardening initiatives

spaces, a ‘no man’s land’. These vast parcels of land could offer a chance for the creation of a ‘social space’ where ‘inhabitants’ can express their desires by finally shaping their own subjectivities (Lefebvre, 1970). The green space on the Pembury Estate can act as a blank canvas to challenge these new urban ‘local’ politics and represents an opportunity to reframe the right to the city as a “matter of jurisprudence” (Deleuze, 1996).

For us, ‘holding common ground’ means supporting the practice of ‘local politics’ in a way that challenges the Localism Bill by building a formal framework for citizens to organise and actively participate in the political decisions about the spaces they inhabit. This project seeks to use the Pembury Estate to promote the idea of the ‘right to the city’ in that tenants and residents are empowered to follow their desires to shape their space by exploiting gardening initiatives to these ends. To investigate the realities of and explore the possibilities for the Pembury Estate we employed various research methodologies,

including literature review, stakeholder interviews, observation, organisational analysis, and census and historical data. The Pembury Estate is home to a relatively higher percentage of ethnic minorities, unemployed, and unhealthy people as compared to London, Hackney, and Hackney Central. Through our analysis and proposal we explore how gardening as an everyday practice can take on political meaning, especially for those populations with less access to more formal methods of political participation. Consequences of this reach beyond the Pembury Estate and we seek to imagine possibilities for the estate, the borough, and London. We have developed a framework that is open and flexible and can achieve successes even in the case that specific projects fail. For us, the ‘local city’ is the starting point to experiment with new politics and new ways of managing resources on estates to give local residents more influence in decision-making processes about their communal spaces.



### 03 Location of social housing estates in London and social statistics on different scales

Black indicates social housing estates. These also illustrate large amounts of green space on the estates.  
Source: UK Census

## ANALYSIS

The physicality of the Pembury today can be traced to the political and architectural environment of the era in which it was built; today it embodies many characteristics of estates that have become ingrained in the London landscape. By exploring the intentions behind green spaces on these estates we hoped to gain insight into how they have evolved into the spaces they currently are; this means attempting to grasp the relationship between intentions and reality, and then discovering the possibilities of a radical reimagining of the decision-making processes for open space and, hence, the spaces themselves. To this end we explored the physical arrangement of space on the Pembury Estate, the existent politics of the estate, and the correlative limitations and potentialities of the gardening trend.

Contrary to what takes place in the 'garden cities,' the verdant areas will not be divided into small unit lots for private use but, instead, dedicated to the launching of the various communal activities that form the extensions of the dwelling.

(Le Corbusier, 1973: 70)

### Intentions

The combination of height and open land can be understood as a single system and a reaction to the slum conditions that Modernism encountered at the beginning of the last century. In an effort to clear the slums after the Industrial Revolution, the British government tried to increase housing density by encouraging the building of flats at least four storeys high. The Greenwood Act (Dunleavy, 1981) in 1930 promulgated this effort and encouraged the development of the Pembury Estate. The new 'high-rise' buildings provided sufficient density to allow for an increase in formal green space surrounding the buildings. Despite the good intentions of Modernism to provide 'public' space, these spaces formed in the space between high-density buildings ended up with "less and less specific use-value" and even "no positive value at all" (Dunleavy, 1981: 77); Scott (1998: 121) considers these voids as "boundless, empty spaces avoided by potential users".



### △ 04 London Modernist Housing Landscape

This collage illustrates how the Modernist housing typology of the Pembury estate is not unique and is visible throughout London.



## Realities

Through analysis of the Pembury Estate we tried to understand the relationships between both the home and street and the buildings and their adjacent voids of open space. Analysing the open spaces in terms of their accessibility and visibility helps us better comprehend the potential activation of each through pilot projects. The main physical factors that influenced the visibility and accessibility of these spaces were fences, doors and windows.

The three sections of the Pembury Estate—the north-east, south-east, and west—each have a different building typology and style. The five-storey buildings on the north-east and west sections, built in the 1930s, largely fit the Modernist architecture model and are accessible from a keyed ground-level door. The sides of the buildings with doors opening onto paved spaces allow no direct access into green space from the buildings. The car park in-between buildings is publicly accessible, but can be considered semi-public, acting as a central circulating space for residents, but rarely functioning as a pedestrian thoroughfare for non-residents.

Fences surround almost all the green space on the estate. This fencing functions to control flows of people, driven partly by what Hodkinson (2012: 500) identifies as “the ‘fear’ of, and the need to exclude, segregate and control the criminalised poor”. The sides of buildings that have only windows face green space and have no access to it. This perceptible difference between visual and physical access affects perceived safety and the friction between adjacent public and private spaces is manifest in the window grating along these border zones, more prevalent here than on the inside-facing windows.

The permeability between the public street and semi-private estate roads does not translate to the green spaces on the estate because they are not accessible, and do not provide a transition from street to home. On the estate there is no gradation between ‘public’ and ‘private’ even though it might appear that the green space is a barrier because of its disuse. In fact, these spaces are usable but have no distinct function or purpose. This problem with defining boundaries is identified by Massey (1994: 8), who says, “places do not have boundaries in the sense of divisions, which frame simple enclosures”. Yancey (1974: 76) argues that lack of semi-public space prohibits the development of community. This illustrates how important social interactions are to creating comfortable spatial gradations. Respecting the natural gradation between public and private space offers potentials for activating inclusive space on the estate.

- ① five-storey modernist buildings
- ② two-storey buildings built later
- ③ site of the Pembury Circus, where currently construction of twelve-storey mixed-use development is underway



## 05 Aerial picture of Pembury Estate

Both sides of Pembury Road are surrounded by green space on the Pembury Estate. Other cafes and shops, allowing for intense social interactions, are located on the eastern side of the estate on Clarence Road.

The problems with the physical structure and layout of the estate become transparent in relation to the interaction with the residents and users of the space. Flipping the problem to find a way of understanding what is actually happening, we spoke to residents. Even though there is upwards of 25,000 square-metres of green space on the estate, there is still a prevailing perception of less available space, as exemplified through resident responses on green space such as “what green space?” When asked about the possibilities of gardening on the estate, responses were “Yeah, it would be nice, but where” (personally conducted interviews).

There are two competing realities among residents: not perceiving usable green space on the Pembury Estate and residents having unique and creative ideas for future green space uses. Frustrations echo in the land-use decision process between residents and the Peabody. To further explore this disparity between the residents and formal action, it is necessary to look at the actors and structures that shape these processes.

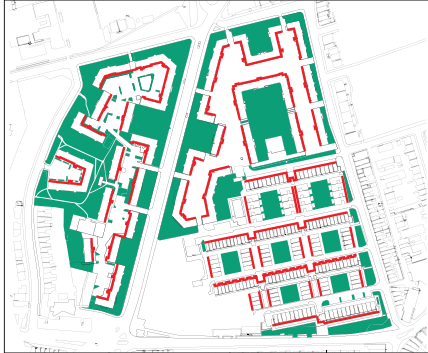
Peabody Trust is the landowner and manager of the Pembury Estate. Established in 1862, the Peabody Trust is one of the oldest and largest housing associations in London, managing almost 20,000 properties that house almost 50,000 residents. The Peabody Trust, as stated in its mission, aims to “make London a city of opportunity for all by ensuring as many people as possible” have a “good home,” that “evokes personal pride,” “a real sense of purpose,” through “regular endeavour,” and a “strong feeling of belonging,” that “grows from active involvement”. The Trust maintains an office on the estate that manages resident issues and works as a liaison between the residents and the larger decision-making hierarchy of the Trust.

The Pembury Estate Tenants and Residents Association (PETRA) is a formal constitution-based association of residents that holds regular meetings and represents residents’ interests to the Peabody Trust. Any tenant or resident of the estate can become a member and has a vote on the issues discussed. Less formal residents’ organisations are also at work on the estate. These loose associations do not have formal rules, but in the case of the gardening club, have been granted the responsibility of the allotments on the estate. We recognise that the residents that make up these associations have a unique and deeply personal knowledge of the estate.

The interviews conducted with the Pembury residents and members of the PETRA revealed particular frustrations with the decision-making processes. The estate land-use application and decision-making processes are not currently transparent, and while the employees at the local estate office are well-versed in the specific issues of the estate, they are not empowered to make decisions. Decisions must be passed up the Peabody management chain, where staff, who are not familiar with estate-specific issues or the actors on the estate make the decisions that directly impact the residents. As this staff is susceptible to high levels of turnover, a disconnect occurs when the decision-maker leaves but does not pass on all pertinent information to their replacement.

Interviews also revealed that PETRA is perceived as too powerful. Because there is a small number of people who have the time and interest to attend meetings and stand for officer positions, the personal agendas of this small group of people tend to dominate. PETRA is also considered not powerful enough because the Peabody is not required to respond to decisions made by PETRA, which has merely a consultative role with the Peabody. Dissecting gardening as a strategy allows reconsideration of the role these organisations play in decisions about land-use on the estate.

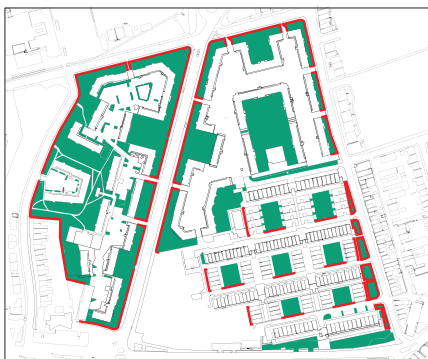
Doors



Windows



Fences



## △ 06 Doors, windows, and fences

The top image shows where the doors on the estate are located, the middle image shows where on the Pembury only windows and no doors are located, and the bottom image shows fences. Almost all the green spaces are surrounded by fences and some along Clarence Road are completely fenced off.

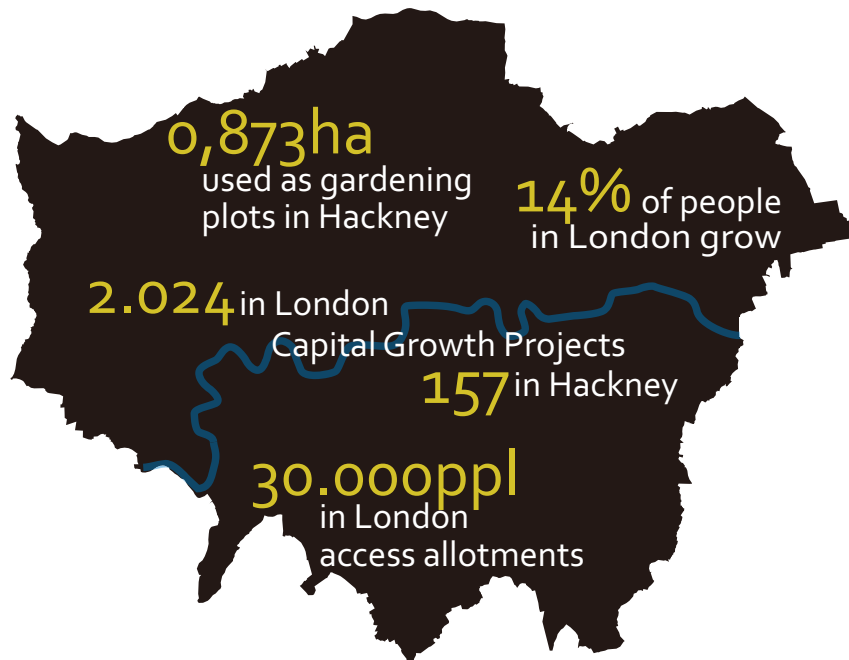


## Strategy

Gardening offers a physical interaction between participant and space through manually inputting earth, water, energy, and time over a period of days, weeks, seasons and years; this contribution of time and energy does not need to be standardised for every participant—gardening allows for participation by people with widely varying degrees of interest and committable time. Gardening hardly requires a high skill set since basic human abilities satisfy most involvement, and as most of these skills necessary in gardening are highly tactile, the gardening practice is inherent sensual. In this way, any age group, from kids to elderly people, can get involved in the different phases of the food-growing cycle and be key actors in connections with other groups, as observed by the gardeners.

Even though most of the residents cannot access private gardens, many Peabody Trust residents identified the value of trees and green spaces and wanted to see more of them. As estate resources are scarce, leaving little for the administration of green space, we highlight the necessity for our intervention to involve residents in the management of those spaces. Within this framework, gardening as a strategy could offer many benefits to the residents and the Peabody Trust.

The multitude of initiatives and organisations that deal with gardening and urban food production in London are part of a larger urban gardening trend with a large amount of available national funding. We explored organisations and



conducted interviews with architects and gardeners active in Hackney and involved in estate-gardening projects. This analysis raised issues about the political discussion related to these green spaces. The most contentious issue is the landowner leasing plots to groups, such as a gardening group or a community organisation, without necessarily consulting residents. The interviews with the gardeners highlighted how the absence of a formal framework for project development leads to high disappointment among residents, lack of tenant engagement, and lack of long-term organisational commitment. This analysis also highlighted how organisations' expertise in community involvement, training and access to funds make them important stakeholders in the delivery of projects.

Through a reimagined organisational relationship between the Peabody Trust and the residents, as active actors in the future intervention process, the general threat of gentrification is largely neutralised. The future tenants' formal involvement makes the community on the Pembury more resilient and politically active in the decision-making process on the estate. Since the Peabody Trust is a not-for-profit organisation, it is not allowed to sell properties and, considering that almost 20 per cent of the Pembury estate housing is freehold properties, if the Peabody sold

some of the gardens to the ground floor freeholders, the residents would be democratically consulted to make this decision. This ability of the system to balance different stakeholder positions contributes to the resilience of our programme, in that it can withstand many different forces and even possible failures.

It is important to stress that, despite gardening receiving many criticisms for being an activity that fosters consensus within a post-political society, we consider the radical history of gardening in the UK as an important point when dealing with social housing politics. Crouch and Ward (1988) define the history of allotments as both "peasant and proletarian", a practice that contributed to blurring class lines during the First World War. As part of people's everyday life and shared experience, gardening transforms space and thereby shapes people's individual and collective identity:

People relate collectively through places and things of their shared culture, and emerging from that activity, they share the way that landscape is created.

(Crouch and Ward, 1988: 17)

## 07 Gardening facts in London and Hackney

Illustrates the fad for gardening in figures.

Sources: London Council, 2013.

## INTERVENTION

If our project for the Pembury Estate is about how we can re-imagine estates' resource management through an alternative vision of the open green space, then tackling the issue with these residual spaces means balancing local resident power with the Peabody Trust's power in decision-making processes. Our proposal progressively tests residents' desires and imagination in different spaces to provide them with tools to formalise their negotiations with the Peabody Trust and reclaim their 'public' space: the space they live in and dwell on daily. The Peabody Trust would launch a preliminary series of pilot projects as temporary testing grounds for creative spatial and social uses, allowing for resident involvement and testing of fairly radical ideas with little risk of failure due to their size and temporary nature. Three different sites will be leased to selected organisations. After four months and input from residents, three other plots on the different sections of the estate will be handed over to the residents for the purpose of starting their own gardening projects. We envision our strategy to be capable of activating 10 to 20 per cent of the green spaces on the estate in one year. This year-long commitment will result in physical transformation, inevitably changing the political structure of land-use consultation and decision-making processes.

The intervention will be coordinated by the Peabody Trust in a way mutually beneficial to both the Trust, through fulfilling its mission, and the tenants, through further satisfaction with the Trust and activation of spaces for further use. Even if the value of the land did increase through provision of gardens and gardening activities, the Peabody Trust itself cannot gain a profit through selling the properties. Peabody, however, would not bear complete financial responsibility. We envision a scheme that relies on support from residents, outside organisations, and grants.

Our intervention activates a semi-public space where residents can establish their sense of collective and individual ownership of public space through minimising space belonging to no one and maximising the "informal control" of these spaces between dwelling units (Yancey, 1974: 77). This does not necessarily need to be addressed through the built form and can be addressed through vegetation, since "the presence of natural elements—trees, grass, and flowers—in outdoor spaces at urban public housing might have many of the same effects that a semiprivate architecture does" (Coley et al., 1997: 471). Furthermore, "the availability of natural settings may attract residents to common outdoor spaces, thereby



### △ 08 Layers of proximate and visible space to each building

Analysis of which green and paved spaces are proximate and visible to each building. The map on the left shows one association, while the map on the right repeats this process for each building.

leading to more frequent contacts among neighbors and a greater sense of territoriality over those spaces” (ibid: 471). Residents, regardless of class, ethnicity, or employment status, would receive the tools to decide whether or not to join the project, to support it or lobby against it. Within this framework, ‘local city’ indicates the

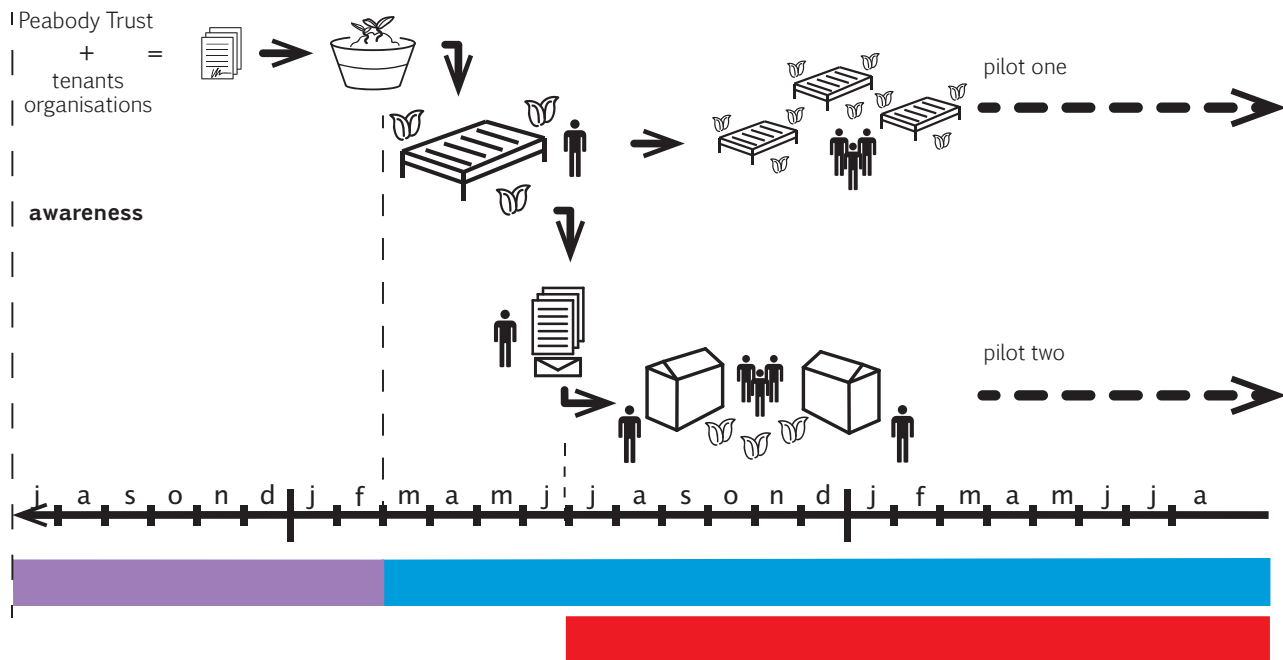
starting point for exploring new politics for social housing estates (Purcell, 2006). The small initiatives will be part of a coordinated intervention, the objective of which is to provide solid ground for negotiation between residents and the Peabody Trust and aid the expansion of the initiative to other estates in London.



#### △ 09 Overlaying proximate and visible space

By shading and overlapping each green space with a building, the map above shows that while most of the paved spaces are proximate and visible to more than one building, most of the green spaces are proximate and visible to only one building. From here we drew associations between buildings and their approximate green spaces. Each building can associate with a space of green land, allowing different spatial breakdowns for the gardening initiative.





#### △ 10 Timeline of interventions

△ This timeline depicts the pilot projects and what time-span they occupy in conjunction with each other.

#### △ 11 Project distribution on Pembury

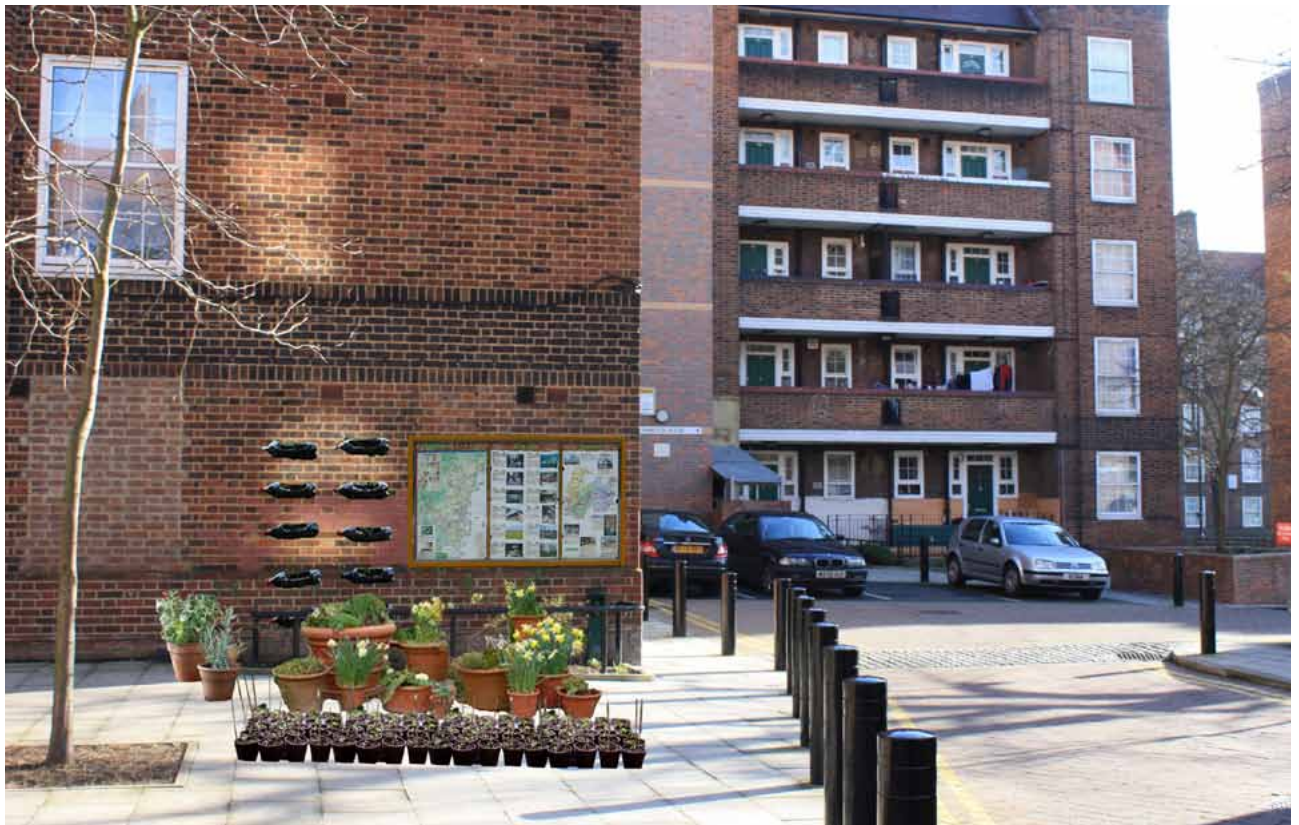
△ This map of the Pembury Estate shows how the pilot projects will be located around the estate with the colours correlating with those in the timeline above.

## Awareness

The first portion of the project anticipates the work necessary to establish the two pilot projects and provides time for informing residents and inviting feedback. Approximately six months before the anticipated launch of the first pilot project in March, an open call would garner interest from outside organisations wanting to have a plot of land or host a regular event at the community centre. Through these events, organisations could showcase the possibilities of gardening on estates, with differing types of installations in different spaces around the estate. The organisations would sign a contract for one year and be responsible for the costs associated with their project, and would, if necessary, be required to return land

to the Pembury in the original state. These stipulations set the rules of the game for use of the land by these organisations, and require regular feedback from both them and the residents.

Generating awareness is also crucial at the first stage of intervention. About a month before installations open in March, the project is promoted through informational displays, including planters with signs describing the project, that are placed around the estate in visibly central locations to inspire residents to imagine the possibilities, provoke participation in the project, as well as encourage feedback.



### △ 12 Raising awareness

This collage illustrates how the planters and information boards will be placed around the Pembury estate. These are designed to be placed in highly residentially trafficked areas to increase awareness for the growing initiatives and provide small opportunities for activity with the plants and others.

### Pilot One

As winter ends and spring begins, the first pilot project is launched. The goals for this year-long portion of the project include involving residents and various groups of residents in the possibilities of gardening in the open spaces, while also asking for feedback and listening to concerns. This is the beginning of space becoming a mediator. To achieve these goals we propose a temporary physical installation in the two types of spaces: a highly visible but fenced space on the Clarence Road and a highly physically accessible space inside the Western section. A large opening event would build interest, as would monthly workshops. We envision the various organisations distributed over the two spaces,

depending on their characteristics and the benefits they could bring to community involvement and knowledge, with the community centre acting as a bridge for the east-west connection through the estate, hosting weekly events and training courses. The Growing Communities would lease one or more plots on the Clarence Road as a way to test the role of fences in food production for a vegetable box scheme; the Shoreditch Trust and Transition Finsbury Park would start their gardening project in the open space with the People's Kitchen hosting weekly meals in the Community Centre.



### △ 13 How outside organisations get involved

This collage shows how the spaces might look when the outside organisations become involved with the estate and the residents. These organisations would gain space on the estate but involve the residents themselves through growing and seeding projects and gardening workshops.



The organisations would be required to provide regular feedback to the Peabody on participation, concerns, successes, and new ideas. A formal evaluation of this phase would be carried out in two steps. Step one is initiated after four months when the Peabody, perhaps as part of their annual survey to the Pembury residents, would gather project opinions and ask interested groups and residents to participate in pilot two. After another eight months, a second survey would assess whether to make pilot one permanent, issue changes, or even withdraw the project completely.

## organisations

## strengths

## limitations



solid balance sheet  
long lasting projects  
**business model**  
established network  
training and selling

outside participation  
**hierarchical structure**  
diversity of participants  
availability of land



diversity of projects  
dedicated office/staff  
**strong funding**  
well defined focus  
external partnerships

evaluation of projects  
**prescriptive projects**  
funding sources  
relationships between projects



funding from PACT  
**transition network**  
works with other community groups

insecure land  
**limited diversity**  
rely on volunteers  
small core group



financial self sufficiency  
**participant diversity**  
marginalised populations  
small events bring many people

future space security  
**no dedicated space**  
equipment  
rely on donations

#### △ 14 How outside organisations get involved

Different types of organisations that are active in food-growing and production. These organisations are very different to one another and, therefore, bring different potentialities to the Pembury Estate.



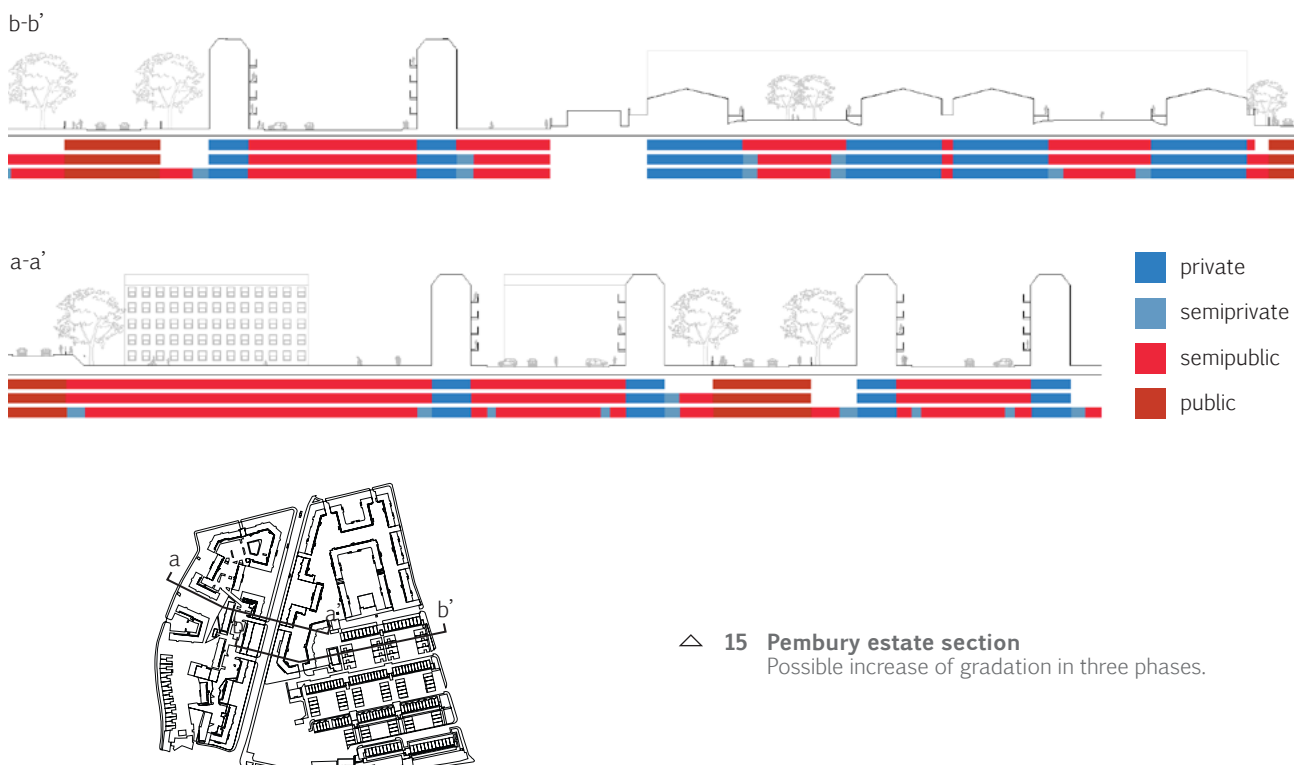
## Pilot Two

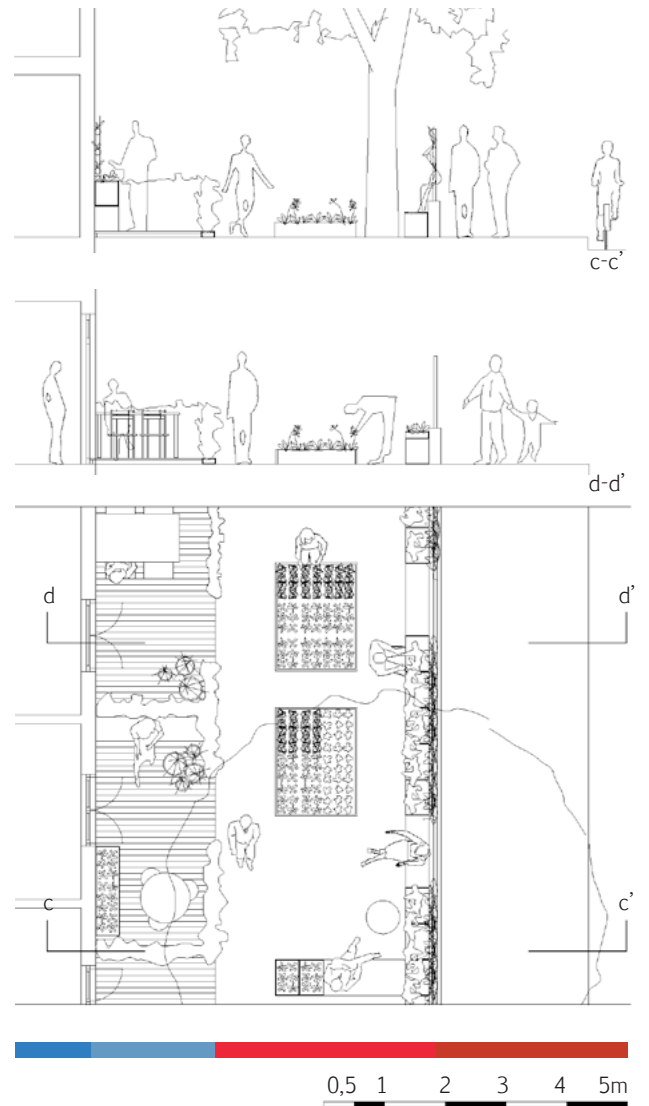
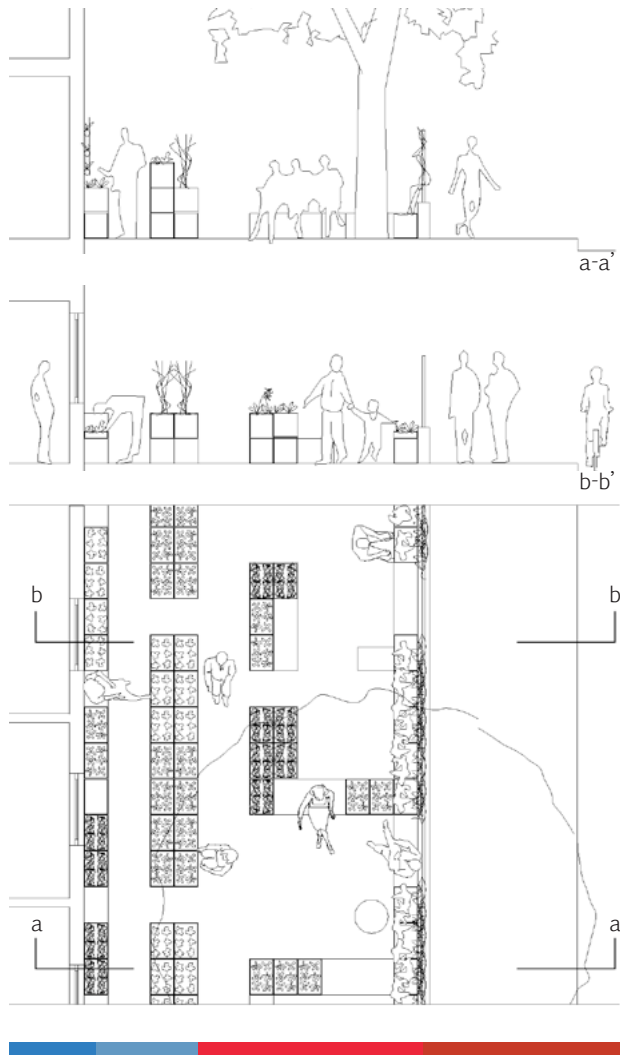
After experimenting with space and receiving training and knowledge through pilot one, interested residents would be directly involved in the second series of pilot projects. The Peabody would examine survey responses from the first projects and select one site for each of the three sections of the estate. Choosing completely different spaces allows for various layouts of space and tests the limits and potentialities that those physical configurations embody at both a spatial and organisational level. Interested groups (gardening clubs, women's groups, or kids' workshops, for example) would also be considered and linked to the projects. The overarching objective of this phase is engaging residents' imagination to implement creative solutions for introducing a gradation from public to private space. The residents would have the freedom and the tools to craft an interpretation of how the semi-private and semi-public space could look. To achieve this, the gardens are conceived of as temporary by using crates and other temporary containers allowing easy reconfiguration and rearrangement to accommodate various uses and locations or even be removed completely at the end of the pilot project.

Each household would be limited to eight square-metres of space so that, even if each flat received a plot this size, 60 per cent of the green space on the estate would remain

available for communal use. Besides gardening and food-growing, this phase of the project is flexible enough to allow for different functions such as kids' play areas, sitting areas, barbeque pits, dog parks, herb and zen gardens, and the like. The tenants will be required to pay particular attention to the border zones and implement specific solutions near the buildings and along the border between the semi-public garden and the street. As a general rule, high fences and opaque partitions would be prohibited in order to maintain the collective character of the space and avoid individual subdivisions.

The agreements between the Peabody Trust and the tenants set rules both on design and organisational structure. These contracts represent the first step towards a formalisation of residents' legal power in land-use decisions. The residents involved in pilot two would be required to meet at three month intervals with each other and at six month intervals with the residents' association to provide written feedback and photographic material that shows the progress of the space transformation. In these fora, they could express concerns, share best practices, suggest changes, or celebrate successes. This formal review of the social and spatial outcomes of the project would help inform an evaluation of conflicts and the opening of new sites to other groups of tenants.





### △ 16 Section for temporary growing

Section showing various arrangements of temporary growing available through the use of crates. These temporary structures foster social interactions through the gradation of space, allowing for semi-private back gardens and semi-public growing beds.

### △ 17 Section for permanent growing

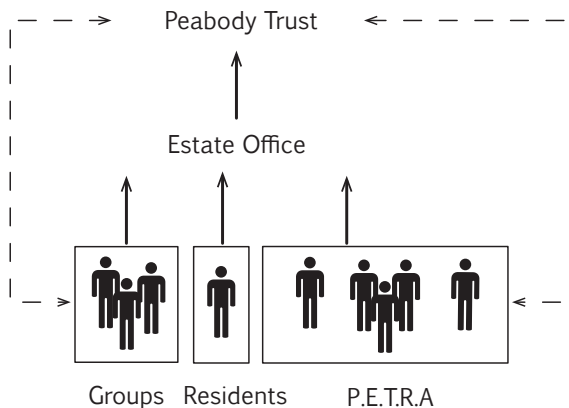
Section showing a more permanent situation that still retains the spatial gradation. The semi-private back gardens and semi-public growing areas are still prevalent but the structures enforcing the gradation have become more permanent.

## The future

After one year, this project could transform spaces and practices on the estate by instating processes that could continue into the future. This change in gradation would already be discernible, as a rhythm emerges along the stages of the pilot project. We do not expect activation of all, or even a majority of, the green space on the Pembury but can imagine scenarios that would allow for different outcomes, even in similar spaces, depending on how people make democratic decisions regarding their space. There is even a possibility that gardening might never be fully successful and the spaces would be returned to their current state. Regardless of the specific spatial outcomes, however, the intervention could acknowledge successes if residents gain increased influence in and understanding of the land-use decision-making process.

These potential scenarios lead to questions about the scale of possible changes and the impact of this new organisational logic on future development. To think about this we need to imagine the development of the Pembury Circus occurring in five to 10 year's time. The Pembury Circus in the section of the estate that is under development for the construction of new mixed-use high-rise tower. What would the challenges be for the architect and how would the new spatial organisation inform the design? How would people be consulted?

Our project fits well with the mission of the Peabody Trust, fostering further paths of resilience that can possibly withstand the addition of the Pembury Circus. This project has impacts on various scales; because there are many estates around London with the Modernist typology and the problems that come along with it, this project has the potential to seed other estates and extend beyond one borough. What would be the impact of scaling up to a spatial and political level?

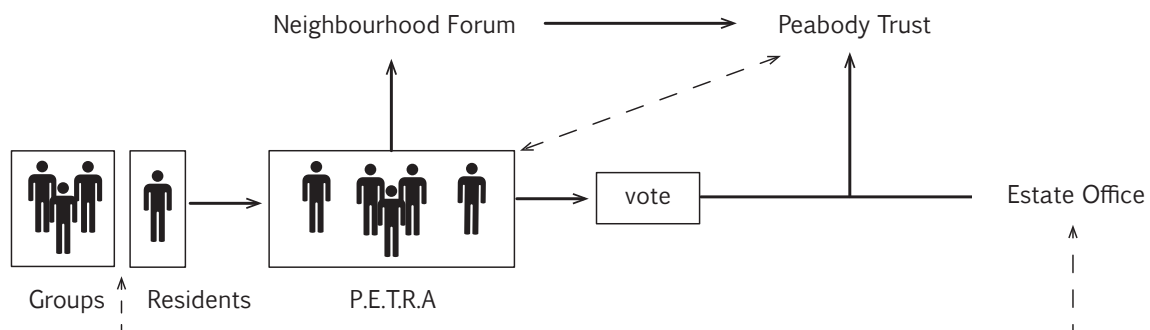


### 18 Current organisational structure

This diagram shows the current political organisation of the process of resident interaction with the Peabody. This structure is very hierarchical and the residents must work up the organisational ladder to impact decision-making on the estate.

### 19 Future organisational structure

This diagram shows the organisational structure that we foresee through our intervention. This structure is much more lateral and involves the residents and groups together with the Pembury Estate Tenants and Residents Association (PETRA) and the Peabody Trust.



## CONCLUSION

Our initial question about ‘locality’ asked how one could be political at the local level outside of the formal political arena. An investigation of the Pembury Estate found that the common space is underused and empty, but ultimately a hallmark of Modernism. We endeavoured to bridge the gap between the intentions of public housing and the present reality by redressing the spatial logics of Modernism, while acknowledging the shortcomings of the Localism Act. We proposed the use of gardening to foster social interactions to create semi-public and semi-private common spaces. Employing a pilot project model allowed for experimentation in the process of formalising resident participation in the land-use decisions. Rather than understanding space through traditional measures of economic investment, we propose a new kind of investment, where meaning and value are attached to space through heightened engagement with it. The ultimate legacy of our intervention is to use space as a mediator to engage people on estates in decision-making about physical transformation of their green spaces. This, however, is not

simply a gardening project but a programme that privileges social space over abstract space. The re-appropriation and active participation in the transformation of those residual spaces could offer an alternative and imaginative vision for a broader discussion on the politics of social housing estates in London and beyond.

As the capacity of individuals and organisations grow, complex interconnections formed in the common space of the estate extend out beyond the immediate proximity of the Pembury and join with similar entities on other estates in Hackney Central and London. These different groups, organisations and spaces benefit from being part of a larger network as their spatial and social connections flourish. We envisage a blossoming like that of a rhizome. Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 21) state that the “principal characteristics of a rhizome” are that the “rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature”. The idea of a rhizomatic structure, like the ‘orchid and the wasp’ in nature, refers to the concept of multiplicity and mutualism; a horizontal system that denies the hierarchical arboreal systems of relations.



### 20 The rhizome

Our intervention on the Pembury Estate is not isolated. The organisations that come onto the Pembury from around Hackney and London link with the residents of the Pembury to form the beginnings of a rhizome. These connections between people and organisations both within the Pembury, within Hackney and even in a wider context will expand to form rhizomatic connections.



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## 21 Future possibilities

Our intervention allow for a more open future conception, taking into account: the Pembury Estate, this intervention in a wider city context, and future development of the estate through the Pembury Circus. These gardening initiatives are still prevalent but are balanced by the social interactions in the spaces.

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