

**Maria Dolores Fernández-Redondo
Manasvi Menon
Nicole Rosner
Andrew Simmons**

FISH ISLAND

URBAN ECOTONES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Olympic and Legacy Park in the northern end of the Lower Lea Valley is currently the largest construction site in Europe. It is one of many large-scale redevelopment projects aimed at addressing London's housing shortfall and commercial space needs. Our site is one of the fringe sites around the Olympic project.

We have examined the social and spatial deprivation of Fish Island and developed a spatial understanding of the area's threats and advantages. We subsequently identified the nature of our 'problem' and explored intervention strategies that addressed the key issues. The issue concerning the role of industry and how its associated activities can exist in urban residential areas is at the core of the debate surrounding the future of Fish Island. Like much of the Lower Lea Valley, Fish Island is characterised by infrastructure and industrial land – much of it essential to the functioning of day-to-day London. However, as an area on the 'fringe' of the Olympic legacy plans, with all its improvements to transport connectivity and added greenspace, many of the pressures affecting similar industrial landscapes throughout Greater London and other large cities are occurring on Fish Island at an accelerated rate.

Our approach has sought to balance the high-level pressures, potentials and realities with the fine-grained and overlooked – the social spaces of the construction workers very much a part to the local employment base and the thriving community of artists housed in Fish Island's Edwardian-era factories and warehouses. The development pressures and key objectives we identified throughout the course of the project informed and guided our understanding of working landscapes, and allowed us to determine an appropriate focus for intervention.

The emerging and unifying design concept is the Greenway as an 'urban ecotone.' Ecotones are transition areas between different ecological communities. An urban ecotone can be understood as emphasising connection rather than separation, between neighbouring communities and systems. As places of interaction and opportunity, an urban ecotone can serve as a shared cultural landscape to mediate interaction with different natural and social systems.

Fish Island can be a testing ground to explore new ways of accommodating natural growth – one that can retain and consolidate industry, while allowing residential growth, all along a green spine that links it to the nearby transport and commercial hubs, and green network. Our strategy mediates between regional regeneration forces and local needs, promoting a landscape in which to both work and live.



Given the complex mix of uses and users interacting with and within fish island, we have chosen the concept of urban ecotones to clarify the various forces at play. "Ecotones are transition zones between adjacent ecosystems. In urban environments they emerge as contentious sites located between disparate or opposing forces: where industry meets the river; where community uses and industrial uses collide; where public and private interests merge. These areas are often the unconsidered result of infrastructural improvements and building developments yet have the potential to be critical cultural and ecological mitigators." (WE DESIGN, 2008)

FISH ISLAND CONTEXT

From the Victorian-era waterways in the north and east to the A12 motorway to the west, the geography of Fish Island is a landscape historically defined by infrastructure and the pioneering industry which depended on it. Whilst the encircling infrastructure remains a working feature of its landscape, Fish Island's historical role as a place of local employment and industrial services necessary to support the workings of larger metropolitan London remains uncertain.

A stone's throw from Fish Island, over the Hackney Cut Canal and Old Ford Lock, sits the Olympic stadium and with it the site of the largest regeneration project in Europe. With the announcement of London's winning the 2012 Olympic bid and the forthcoming decision to place the Olympic park in the Lower Lea Valley, land owners and speculators anticipate increases in residential property values due to Fish Island's favourable waterfront areas, and its proximity to the Olympic Legacy Park and the new Stratford town centre and International Rail terminal. By 2010, speculative developers drew plans to convert most of Fish Island's former wharf sites to high-end residential

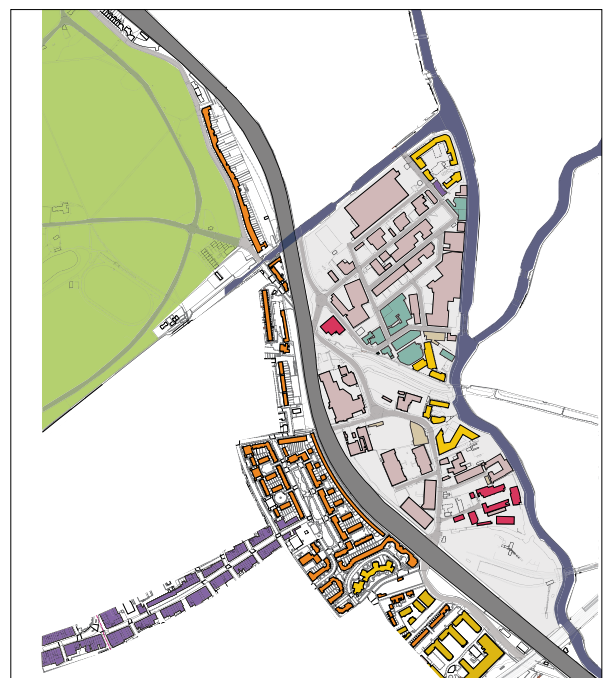
compounds. While some have been built as 'live-work' units, planning permission has prevented any further residential construction from being approved given the sensitivity over the dwindling of industrial land sites in Greater London.

In spite of the encroaching development around Fish Island, the infrastructural barrier of the A12 motorway and the strategic industrial land use have allowed for the unlikely co-location of many of the light industry businesses that the Olympic Development Authority (ODA) allowed to remain after their environmental cleansing of the area. Derelict industrial buildings have been re-appropriated by an active artist community, with studios in former Edwardian-era factory warehouses of strong architectural character unique to twenty-first century London. However, the land use issue remains a significant ongoing debate between the local London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) advocating for mixed-use residential both for higher tax revenues and for social housing – and the Greater London Authority (GLA) – recognising the scarcity of industrial land in the city and the potential of future Green Industries. A key challenge in has been to respect the rationale for industry, whilst recognising the site as a place for production as well as living and learning.



Natural and Built Assets

- Waterways
- - - Canal Footpaths
- Greenway Embankment
- Victoria Park
- Future Olympic Park
- Borough-defined Conservation Area (Building register, building forms, streetscapes)
- Old Ford Lock



Study Area

- Mixed Use: Commercial and Residential
- Residential: Affordable Housing
- Residential: New Developments
- Residential: Other
- Creatives
- Light Industrial and Business
- Construction
- Derelict Industrial

INDICES OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION & ALTERNATIVE DEPRIVATION ASSESSMENT METHODS

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation is an evaluation system comprised of specific ‘deprivation’ indicators that determine areas in most of special programmes and funding schemes. Patterns of deprivation fall into seven domains, each domain describing the extent to which that type of deprivation is prevalent in a specific area or super output area (SOA).

While Fish Island lies at the intersection of three SOAs, the majority of the population contained in these areas lies outside of the Island. At the time of the last census¹ in 2001 there were no registered residents on Fish Island and its only occupiers were light industrial workers who populate the site during the day but resided elsewhere. Deprivation data

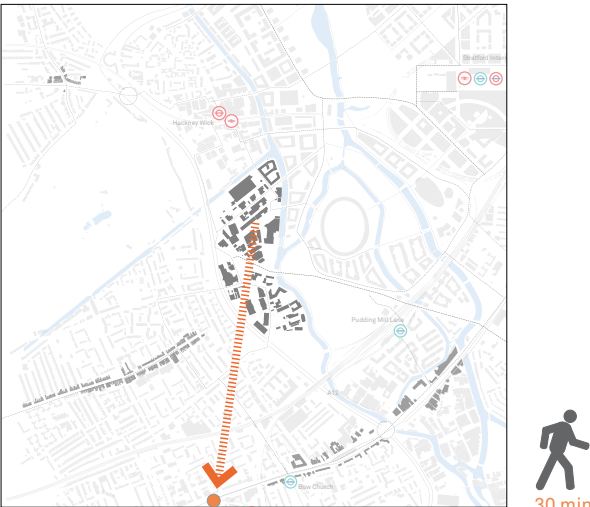
relates to residential deprivation – those individuals who live within a SOA – and not those who commute to a SOA for work. Hence, with the exception of Roman Road, the Deprivation Index (obtained from 2001 Census data) is not an accurate indication of the current population, most of which has moved onto Fish Island in the last five years. A better sense of the ‘deprivation’ on Fish Island can be assessed spatially by examining where and how much social infrastructure exists in and around the site. The lack of social infrastructure is a current weakness of the site. Individuals who reside and work on Fish Island identified several infrastructural problems that add to the perceived ‘deprivation’ of the area, including a lack of adequate bus routes, impenetrable roads and dangerous crossings, inadequate transport connections to schools and places of work, lack of parking spaces, and lack of grocery stores and other amenities.

Spatialising Deprivation

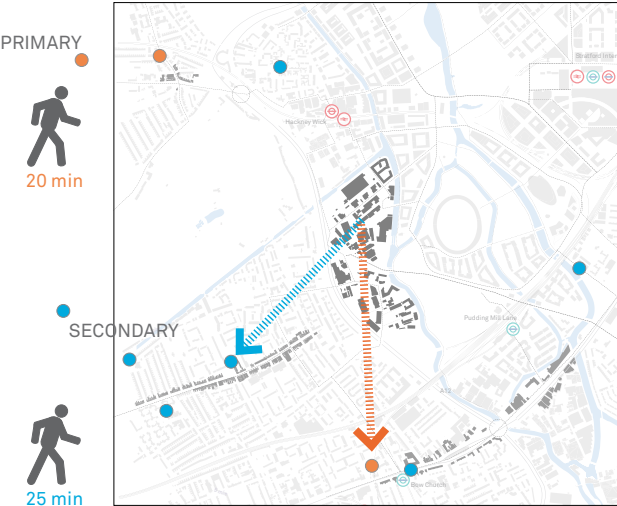
Doctors/Clinics



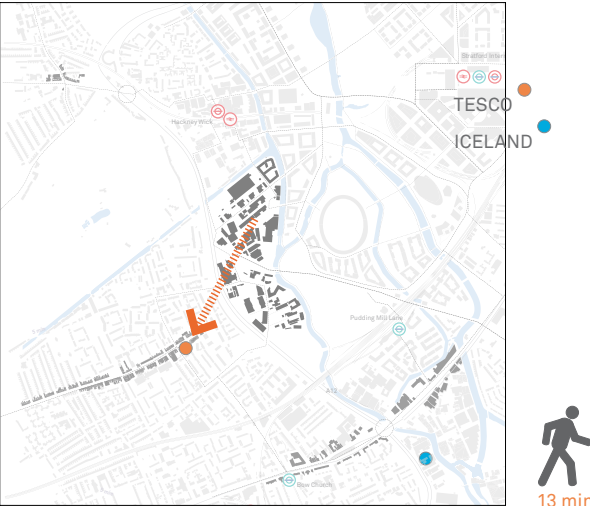
Hospitals



Schools



Grocery Stores



METHODOLOGY

We used a qualitative methodological approach combining two methods – participant observation and in-depth interviews – to reach a better understanding of the relationship between the site, its communities, and its geography. Our site and survey analysis was two pronged: we examined the physical landscape of Fish Island and surveyed community groups and key stakeholders to better understand how people interact with their physical surroundings, and the different forces and interests shaping the site.

In our spatial analysis we surveyed the physical landscape to identify the natural and built assets on site, and how Fish Island connects to the surrounding areas such as Hackney Wick and Pudding Mill Lane. We sought to understand whether Fish Island is figuratively an ‘island,’ or whether it is integrated into a broader East London network. In our survey of approximately 75 people who live and work on the Island, we asked a series of questions to understand what brings people into Fish Island, what types of activities occur within the Island, and the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the area. Finally, we asked individuals to map their daily routines on the Island to get a better sense of the spaces they inhabit. Our qualitative analysis was enhanced with over one hundred hours of participant observation at selected locations. We bolstered our analysis with conversations with key experts and officials.

RESULTS OF SPATIAL ANALYSIS

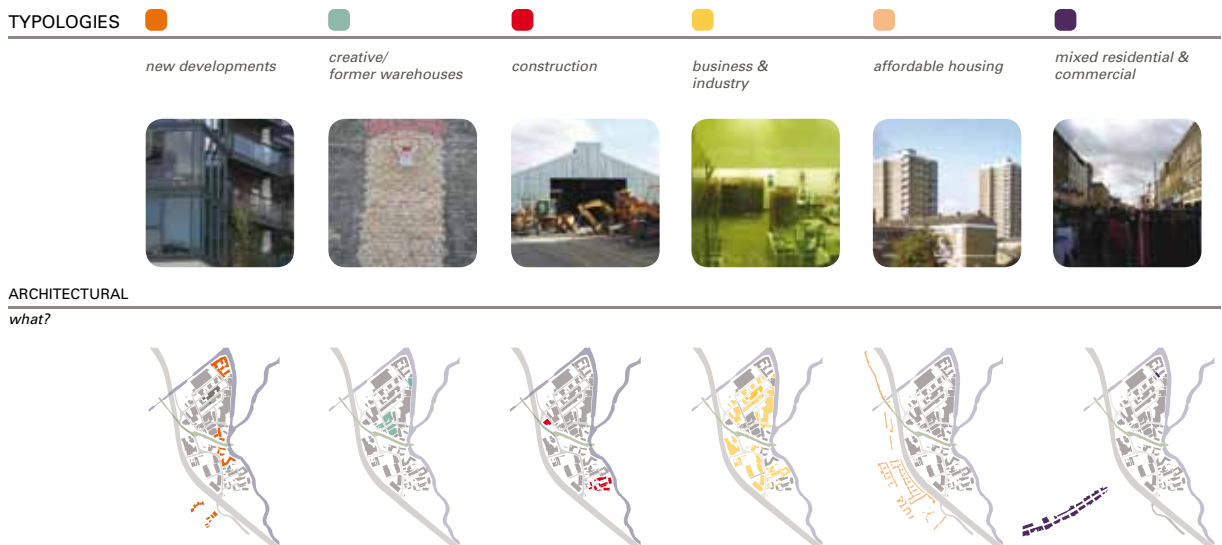
Fish Island is connected to the surrounding areas by several key natural and built assets, such as Victoria Park, the canal network that defines the northern and eastern borders of fish island, the pedestrian and cycle paths that line the canal, and the Greenway – an elevated pedestrian and cycle path built over the Northern Outfall Sewer that functions as a green boulevard and will soon become an important connection to the new Olympic Legacy Park.

In contrast, much of the current infrastructure that defines the spatial experience on Fish Island, namely the roads and bridges, has left the site internally disjointed and physically severed from its surrounding areas.

However, despite – or perhaps due to – these infrastructural and architectural barriers, the communities on Fish Island have managed to create their own social spaces and a sense of place. Yet, with the exception of the Greenway that is mostly used as a thoroughfare by passersby, all key open public spaces lie outside of Fish Island. While the communities that use Fish Island overlap spatially, they congregate in distinct meeting places that do not intersect such cafes and pubs.

We used these observations to create the spatial criteria for our design. The connection between the northern and southern parts of Fish Island has to be improved and the Greenway has to be ‘activated’ so that it does not function as a physical barrier. Furthermore, the Hackney Wick, Roman Rd and Pudding Mill Lane connections should be strengthened because they are tied to current communities and employment hubs.

The wide variety of spatial typologies in Fish Island



Problem Areas



The different forms of spatial barriers

Barriers

- Porous
- Non-porous

Problematic Connections

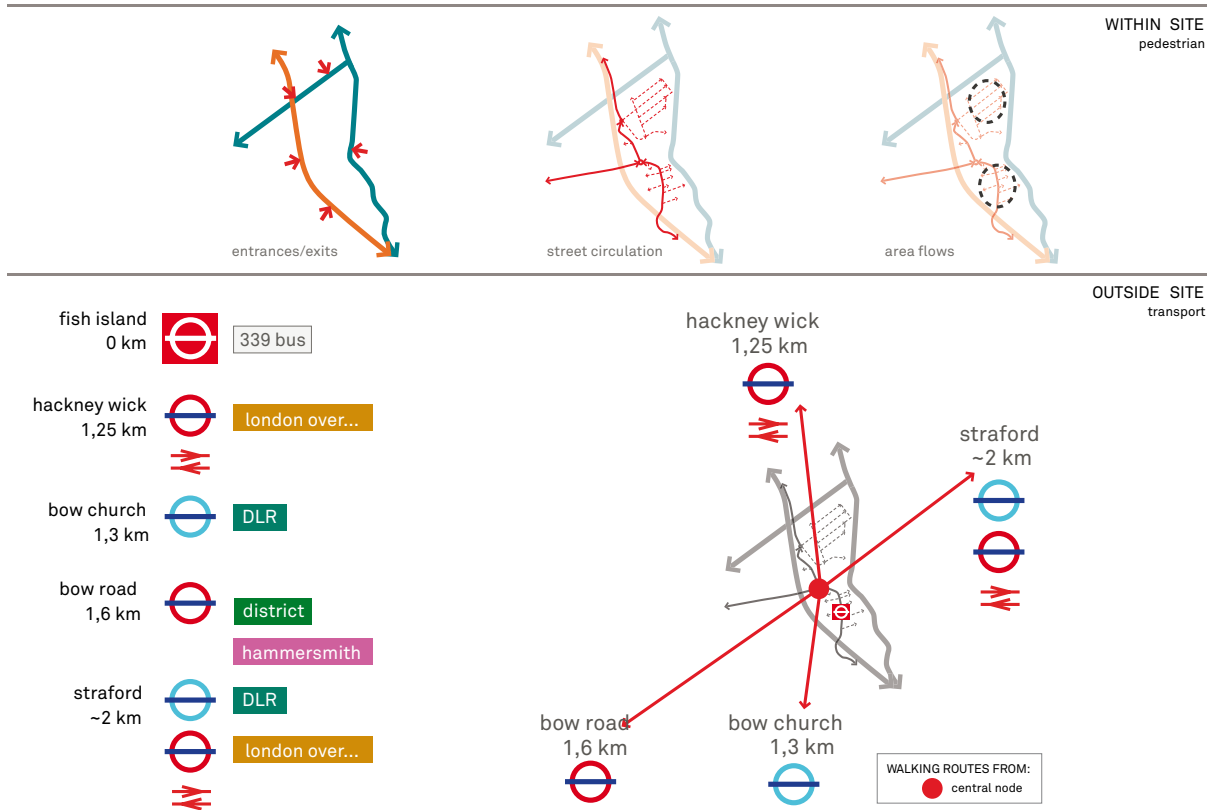
- Linkages
- Dead End Streets

Severence

- External
- Internal



Circulation & Flows

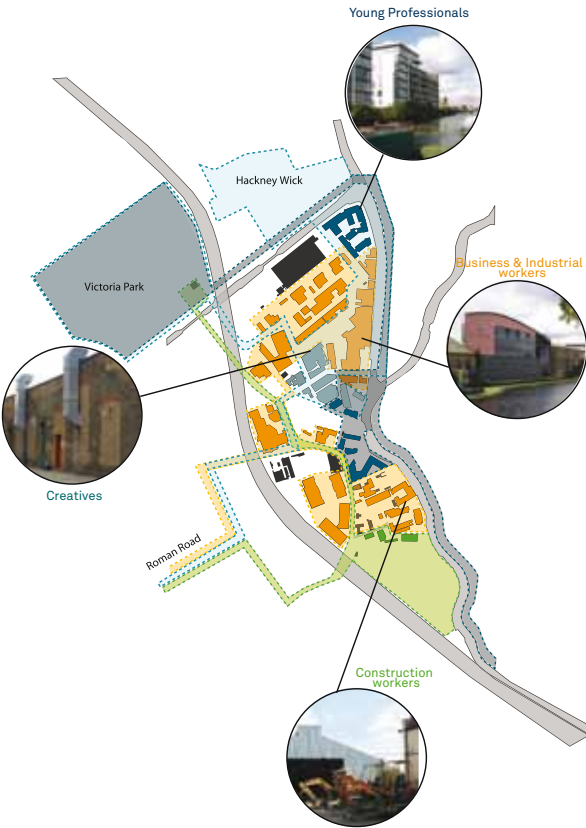




Key Public Spaces

- Inside Fish Island
- Bordering Fish Island
- Outside Fish Island
- Future

Activity Mapping



Meeting places



the cart
workers & creatives



top o' the morning
blue collar workers



the counter
creatives
young professionals



the lighthouse
young professionals
previously workers



franco's cafe
roman road residents



forman restaurant
visitors

GREEN OPPORTUNITIES

In terms of employment, the GLA's Green Enterprise District Report identifies Fish Island as a site for a future green science cluster and green industrial park. Our spatial analysis clarified that Fish Island is a key link between two green systems – Victoria Park in the west and the future legacy park in the east. Fish Island has an opportunity to link green technology with green spaces. This, combined with our understanding of green technology, formed the foundation of our Green Strategy.

A Green Strategy, which links green assets spatially, and which explores the social, environmental and economic roles of the green system



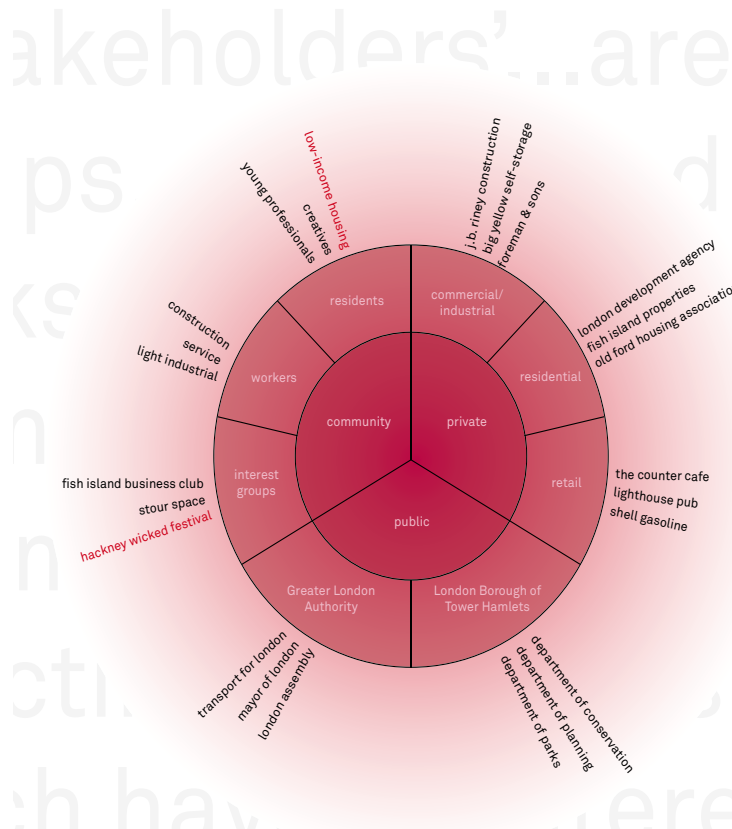
RESULTS OF STAKEHOLDERS ANALYSIS

We interviewed community groups, residents and workers, government officials, and a variety of individuals on site. We divided our list of stakeholders into two groups: those who have controlling interests on our site – that is, they can directly impact policy and the way Fish Island operates because of their legal status, and those who are directly affected by land use policies but have no official role to play in deciding and implementing these policies. Amongst those interviewed, the balance between industry and housing appeared as the most contentious issue.

Fish Island is completely zoned strategic light industrial. However, when we went to the site and interviewed people, we realised that the actual land use was quite different from that stated in the official zoning. Typically, one acre of industrial land is worth one million GBP, but an equal acre of residential land would be worth 8 million GBP today (Participant Interview, 23.10.2009). Many industry landowners have realised that they can increase profits if they sell their land when its zoning changes from Strategic Industrial to Residential, and land-owners are waiting for an opportune moment to sell and take advantage of rising residential prices. The complexities of these dynamics on site compelled us to undertake a detailed stakeholder analysis to better understand the motives and interests of various groups on Fish Island.

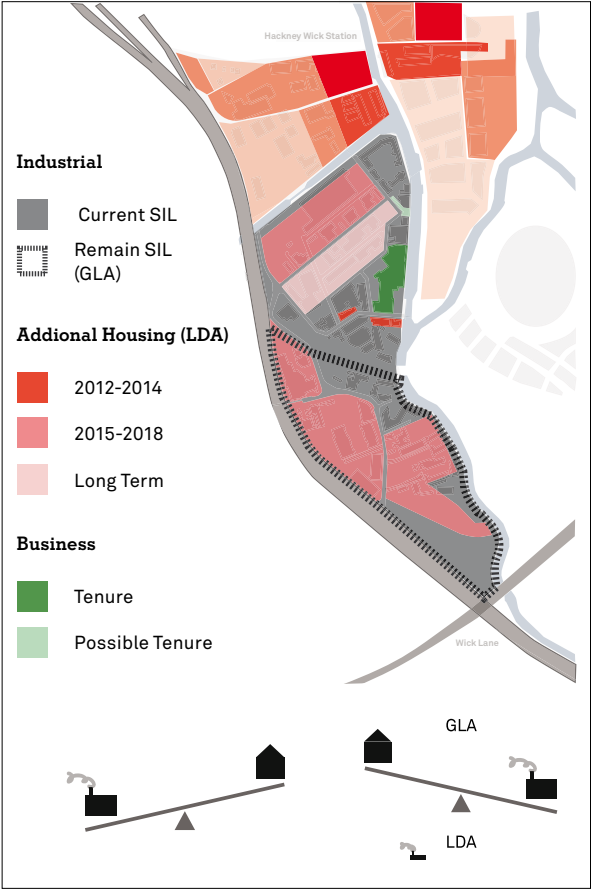
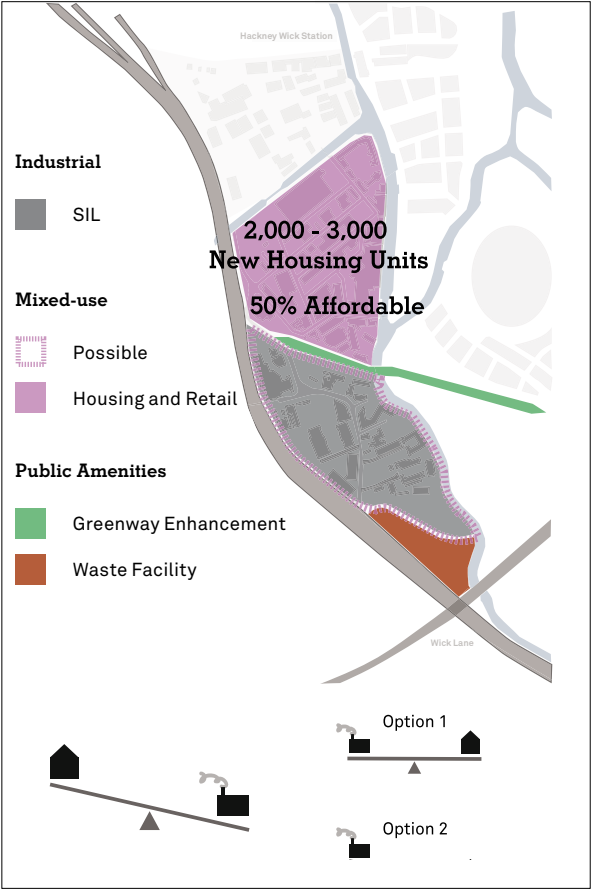
Mapping Conflicting Stakeholder Visions

Interviews with individuals from the Greater London Authority (GLA) and London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) revealed tensions regarding the land use of Fish Island's future development. According to a LBTH Councillor, there is still a pervasive sense of uncertainty around the Olympics and how it will impact the area, especially with respect to housing and services. "At the Council level we are uncertain about which initiatives will be implemented. We want 50% of the housing to be affordable but the GLA has its own set of goals. How we will accomplish all of this remains to be seen." (Participant Interview, 17.11.2009). The GLA proposes that Tower Hamlets increase its Total Housing Stock by 33% in the next ten years.



London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH)

Greater London Authority (GLA) /
London Development Agency (LDA)

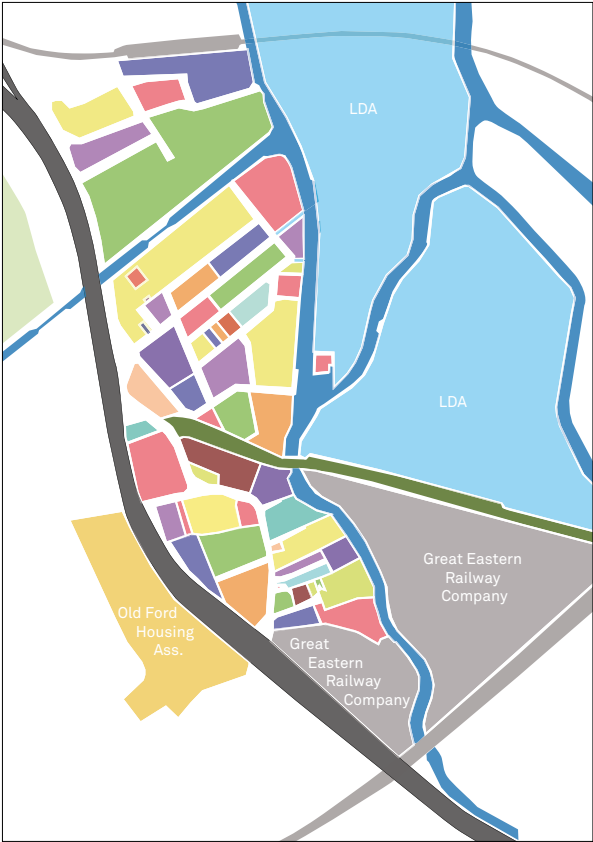


Considering its current industrial land use and vacant lots, Fish Island is the only location in the Borough where a large portion of this housing could be placed. If this is the case, then Fish Island would need to see a 300% increase in its Total Housing Stock, of which 50% would be affordable. This is at odds with the GLA objectives, which identifies the site as a Strategic Industrial Location but the GLA's October 2009 response to the LBTH proposal recognises grounds for compromise: "The Mayor's emerging Olympic Legacy Supplementary Planning Document will provide a strategic approach to the consolidation and retention of industrial land surrounding the Olympic Park. As such it is not possible at this stage to agree on the boundaries of north, mid and south Fish Island identified in the core strategy" (GLA, 2009, pp.3-4). Complexity of Current Property Dynamics Balancing the local demand for housing with the city government's need to retain industry led to a key aspect of our urban design strategy.

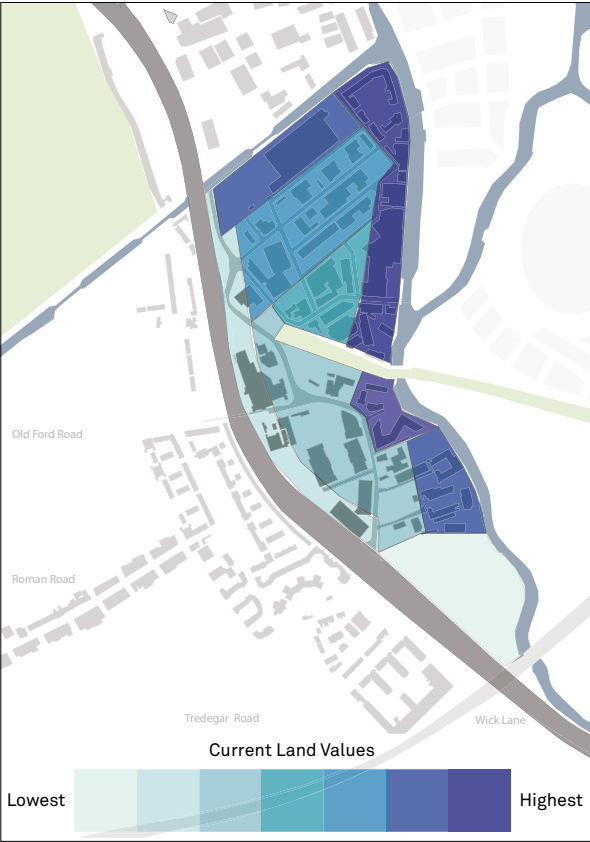
However, the landownership pattern in Fish Island is very complex. One landowner we interviewed, a high profile business owner, stated, "I hired my own architect who has created a plan for my land, which includes additional housing and a canal walk that maximises views of the Olympic Park." (Participant Interview, 23.10.2009). Generally, the landowners we interviewed were concerned with land use control, traffic management, infrastructure, and nearby development proposals. We coupled the land ownership map of Fish Island with an analysis of land values on the site to understand the incentives and motivations of landowners.

In addition, we interviewed community groups, including residents of Fish Island and Roman Road, the live/work community (artists), and industrial employees. We began to realise that despite our initial impression of Fish Island as isolated, it is not actually an 'island' in the figurative sense, but is connected to the activities and people in the surrounding areas. For example, the artist community that occupies 276 studios on Fish Island is strongly linked to Hackney Wick, whose artists occupy another 334 studios. These connections are supported by the key natural and built assets on our site but are also encumbered by various problematic features of the current infrastructure.

Land Ownership



Projected Land Values



INTERVIEW MAPPING

We used our participant observation, in depth interviews, stakeholder analysis, and spatial analysis to conduct a SWOT analysis of our site to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats that are relevant to Fish Island. The most predominant themes that emerged from our SWOT analysis, and that reappeared throughout the course of our interviews, include the following perceived threats and advantages.

KEY FINDINGS

Our spatial, stakeholder, and SWOT analysis led us to define key issues and objectives for development:

- Conflicting visions between the GLA and the LBTH for the future use of the site
- Unpredictable market and economic conditions mean that investment and construction can be stagnant and complicate future programming
- Fragmented land ownership and uncoordinated development make it difficult to implement a unified vision or large-scale intervention, but also adds to the likelihood of Fish Island maintaining and enhancing its diverse character
- Opposing stakeholder interests would make it difficult for the different communities and stakeholders to come together with a shared vision

- Dead zones and impermeable spaces occur due to fencing and lack of investment especially around infrastructure works including the Greenway and along the A12 motorway
- Lack of public space means that many of the residents and workers gather in private or outside of Fish Island and outsiders are only attracted to the site for a specific purpose or to pass through
- Few employment opportunities as many of the industrial businesses are fledgling and many land plots are underutilised
- Given Fish Island's proximity to the Olympic Legacy developments, land speculation is leading to gentrification pressures on the vulnerable communities and industries.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Take advantage of Hackney Wick and Pudding Mill Lane stations.
- Improve connections to Hackney Wick Station, areas west of A12 motorway, and Victoria Park.
- Increase public access and improve use of Hertford Union Canal, Hackney Cut Canal, the River Lee and the Greenway.
- Provide more open spaces within Fish Island
- Explore how to extend the Greenway from the Olympic Park to Victoria Park.
- Seek to consolidate light industry and allow mixed-use employment and residential to occur in North Fish Island.
- Explore opportunities for industry to continue.



FISH ISLAND
RESIDENTS/WORKERS

ROMAN ROAD
RESIDENTS

FISH ISLAND
WORKERS

VISITORS

URBAN DESIGN CONCEPT

Given the constraints, opportunities and pressures, we arrived at an urban design concept for intervention that is flexible enough to allow for multilayered transformation with incremental growth but which still needs to be coordinated by both the public and private sectors. On a macro level, we identified the Greenway as an opportunity to bridge the Olympic and Stratford regeneration initiatives to support local growth. On a micro level, the Greenway can provide a needed public space and function as a catalyst for growth.

The Greenway embankment acts as a physical and psychological barrier, severing Fish Island in two halves. Due to the fact that many users and uses are in close proximity to the Greenway's hard edges, we see an opportunity for the Greenway to create a new kind of public space – an urban ecotone. An ecotone is a transition area between different ecological communities. In *Ecopolis: Architecture and Cities for a Changing Climate* (2009), Paul Downton introduces urban ecotones, a concept that allows us to define disparate places by their “degree of connection” rather than their “separation” (Downton 2009, p.436).

The urban ecotone concept allows us to rethink the Greenway's infrastructural function as a sewer and footpath. It strikes a balance between circulation – the movement of people and waste – and stasis, serving as a needed open space in Fish Island, a shared cultural landscape to mediate interaction with different natural and social systems.

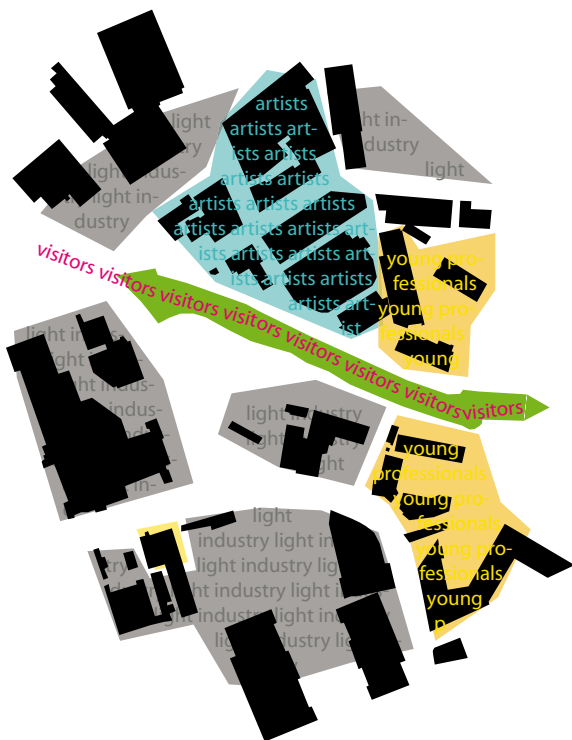
URBAN INTERVENTIONS

Intervention Legacy Context

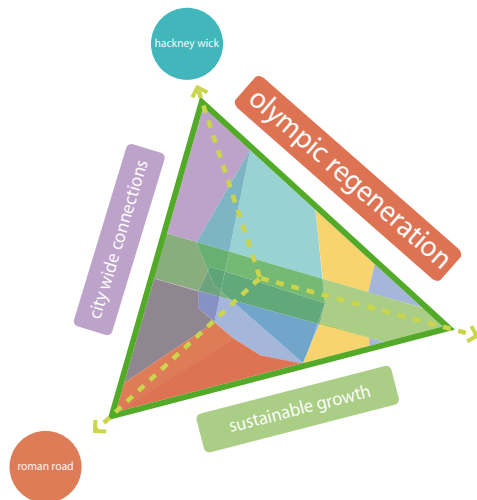
The Olympic Quarter development is expected to have between 2700 to 3240 housing units (LMF, 2009, p.12) and the future Crossrail station will be located north of the Great Eastern Railway. Pudding Mill Lane Station (DLR) and the future Pudding Mill Development, located on the south side of the railway, are expected to have between 800 to 960 housing units and over 60,000 square meters of employment and retail space (LMF, 2009, p.12).

A key change in the Olympic development Agency's (ODA) plan for the Olympic Quarter would be to move the planned Olympic Loop Road which current plans and sections show running between the building and the Greenway (LMF Olympic Quarter Area Brief, 2009). In order to allow residents direct access to the Greenway, we propose to move the road behind future housing.

For the games in 2012, Bow Midland Yard East will be the site of the warm-up track, but its future is unclear. Some of the yard will be required for 2 to 3 years from the Crossrail tunnel. However, we propose as a transitional use, to transform the remaining 9 hectares into an Agro Tech Park and Demo Centre, with green fingers extending to the Greenway. We have proposed to place staggered housing or office buildings along the south-end of the Greenway with entrances placed at the Greenway level to maximise views and engagement with this area. We envision a dynamic boulevard scattered with allotments and gardening plots, housing and office units, the Old Ford Nature Reserve, and the River Lee Navigation – an urban ecotone.



Fish Island has a diverse mix of uses and users that do not overlap



The diagram illustrates a network of urban and industrial zones, with 'ecotones' at the center. The nodes and their connections are as follows:

- hackney wick** (blue circle) is connected to **olympic regeneration** (green banner) and **ecotones** (central cluster).
- olympic regeneration** (green banner) is connected to **hackney wick** and **ecotones**.
- pudding mill lane** (purple circle) is connected to **ecotones**.
- roman road** (orange circle) is connected to **ecotones**.
- ecotones** (central cluster) is connected to all other nodes and contains various sub-labels:
 - mixed use** (purple)
 - artists** (purple)
 - young professionals** (orange)
 - canal** (purple)
 - light industry** (grey)
 - institute** (blue)
 - local change** (blue)
 - sustainable industry** (red)
 - ecotones** (multiple instances)
- sustainable growth** (green banner) is at the bottom, connected to the **ecotones** cluster.

- 1 Gravitational Centre
(with Materials Centre and Agro-tech Park)
- 2 Greenway Extension, North Fish Island
- 3 Greenway Boulevard

'GRAVITATIONAL CENTRE'

In our urban design concept, the Greenway has both logistic and experiential functions. It functions as: a public space that is a gravitational centre for locals and visitors; a pedestrian and cycle thoroughfare that is a key connection point in East London's green network; a key access point to the centre of Fish Island; and a buffer against Olympic Legacy Park traffic. The Greenway's elevation, four meters above the island, allows Fish Island residents living along the thoroughfare to remain unencumbered by foot and cycle traffic, however the activities in the public space remain easily accessible.

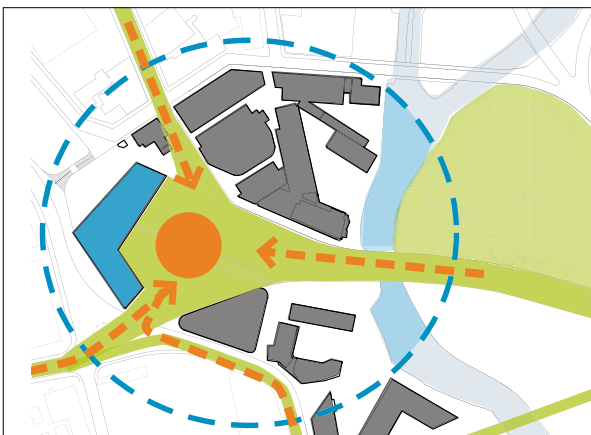
The Greenway currently has two access points on Fish Island. The western access point lies at Wick Lane – where a path of stairs leads down to Dace Road, the site of many of Fish Island's artist studios. At the eastern access point, the Greenway passes over the River Lea through the Olympic Legacy Park and Pudding Mill Lane station extending 7.2 km to Beckton. Approximately four meters high, the Greenway has strong vantages to Canary Wharf, the Olympic Stadium, and the industrial heritage area. Besides the two entrances to the Greenway, its entire perimeter is fenced, spatially severing it from its surroundings. The Greenway ends abruptly on a busy thoroughfare that is unsafe for cyclists and pedestrians. Furthermore, the Greenway's impermeability makes connections to Victoria Park and the Roman Road area dangerous and difficult as pedestrians and cyclists have to use the pavement along Wick Lane.

One of Fish Island's greatest assets is its active artist community. The artists on Fish Island are part of a larger network of creatives that extends south from Hackney Wick, a corridor that is said to be the most concentrated artist community in Europe. Fish Island's several hundred artists include sculptors, painters, industrial designers, and architects. Fish Island has 276 studios (Muf Architects, 2009), and while there are a few media and advertising firms and design practices, it is important to clarify that our definition of 'creatives' in this context refers to those individuals who live and work within the same unit, and frequently possess additional jobs or sources of income to maintain their livelihood, as a result, they are one of the most vulnerable communities existing on Fish Island. The creative community (as we define it) is concentrated north of the Greenway in the conservation area and in some of the new housing units such as Iron Works and Omega Works. While we understand that there will be natural population shifts as the area becomes more developed and some of the artists may choose to move elsewhere, we think it is important to recognise the potential to integrate their innovative uses and adaptations of the space into future designs for the area.

Proposed Greenway activation



Focus Area
Gravitational Centre



The artists can provide a key link in activating the Greenway and add to the vitality and dynamism of the area. There are several reasons why we would like to maintain creative space on Fish Island (NFASP, 2008):

- Artist occupation of former industrial buildings in London is a historical tradition dating back to the 1960s. Fish Island has a conservation area that cannot be demolished for Olympic development and where most artists on the Island currently live, so designating these areas for creative purposes would not dramatically shift the tides
- There is a lack of sufficient affordable studio space in London and waiting lists and occupancy levels are high (studios in London currently provide space for 2,000 studios, but more than 3,500 artists are on the waiting list)
- 30% of studios and 58% of studio space in London are in Tower Hamlets, so there is a reason to continue focusing on this borough for studio space. Both the Greenway and conservation area can be used as a vehicle to maintain a vibrant creative community in the area. They function as a site of potential employment (teaching classes, selling work), a community space to showcase artwork, and a space for people to convene and socialise.

Location of artist community



Two factors impact the artists' demand for housing: co-location (living near other artists) and affordability. Our goals are two-fold: to encourage policy and practical support for sustainable, affordable artists' workspaces through spatial design, and to provide security for studio tenure through partnerships with Regional Social Landlords (RSLs), commercial developers, and other partners. We suggest both a financial and political strategy to achieve these goals. Maintaining creative space on the Island cannot be achieved by one government organisation or community group alone, and its success hinges on the support of various actors, both public and private.

Financial Strategy

- Form sub-regional partnerships involving various stakeholders such as London Thames Gateway Corporation, Mayor of London, Arts Council England, Host Boroughs Cultural Partnership Board, and Hackney Wicked Festival to agree on lease/tenure.
- RSLs such as Acme Studios should work in conjunction with housing associations to provide affordable housing specifically for creatives.

Political Strategy

- Use Section 106 (Town and country Planning Act of 1990) to propose an 'art zone' to secure long term renting & leasing agreements. Building restrictions lower land value, making it ideal for low cost live & work spaces.
- Form a collective to provide services such as networking, research, and support activities for artists working in the area.



Stour Space
A local artist-run social enterprise



The Counter Cafe
A meeting place for the creative community

SKILLS TRAINING CENTRE

The Greenway Institute should create and reinforce Fish Island as a public destination. The programming of the institute should identify existing local skills, forge partnerships with suitable local firms with which necessary investment can be attracted, and make use of existing infrastructure. We propose an anchor institute near the Greenway to provide vocational skills training to local residents and thereby address the employment deprivation that we identified earlier. The hospitality and retail industries are predicted to be a key aspect of the London economy, particularly with the Stratford Regeneration. Fish Island would be an ideal location for a culinary and hospitality institute, due to its close proximity to Stratford, and if any proposals for urban agriculture along the Greenway are implemented (including introducing the former Manor Garden Allotments that were displaced from the Olympics). This program would also be attractive in how it can interact with the Greenway and the existing food industries on Fish Island, including Forman's Smoked Salmon factory. A retail space could specialise in selling food prepared by the students and this income could support the school and reduce the tuition costs or whatever funding it receives. Linking point between employment hubs in the east, west, and north.



Healthy living centre activity

Greenway as future space of interaction, transaction, transition and interface



GREENWAY EXTENSION, NORTH FISH ISLAND

One of our proposed interventions is to address the unsafe Wick Lane underpass connection to Victoria Park by diverting the pedestrian and cycle path through the site along Smeed Road until it reaches the Hertford Union Canal. While slightly less direct, Smeed Road has less vehicular traffic at intersections and improves the connection towards Hackney Wick station. This also creates an interesting opportunity to redevelop some of the underutilised plots along Smeed Road and introduce a hybrid typology that can allow for consolidated light industry service, commercial, retail, or residential. This gesture would make active use

of the transitional area in the north and west part of Fish Island that is considered the less desirable, since most private investment is going into Fish Island East and the waterfront properties. This could be achieved by introducing a typology that provides flexible programming depending on the demand for industry, residential or commercial. The 2006 report "Industry in the City" for the LDA and GLA says that "such buildings can be conceived within a transitional strategy, this creates the long-term possibility of introducing housing to an industrial area where it is currently unsuitable" (LDA 2006, p.38). The report gives several primary conditions for this flexible building typology, including floors between 3 and 5 meters that allow sheds with high ceilings to be converted into different floors (LDA 2006, p.38-39).



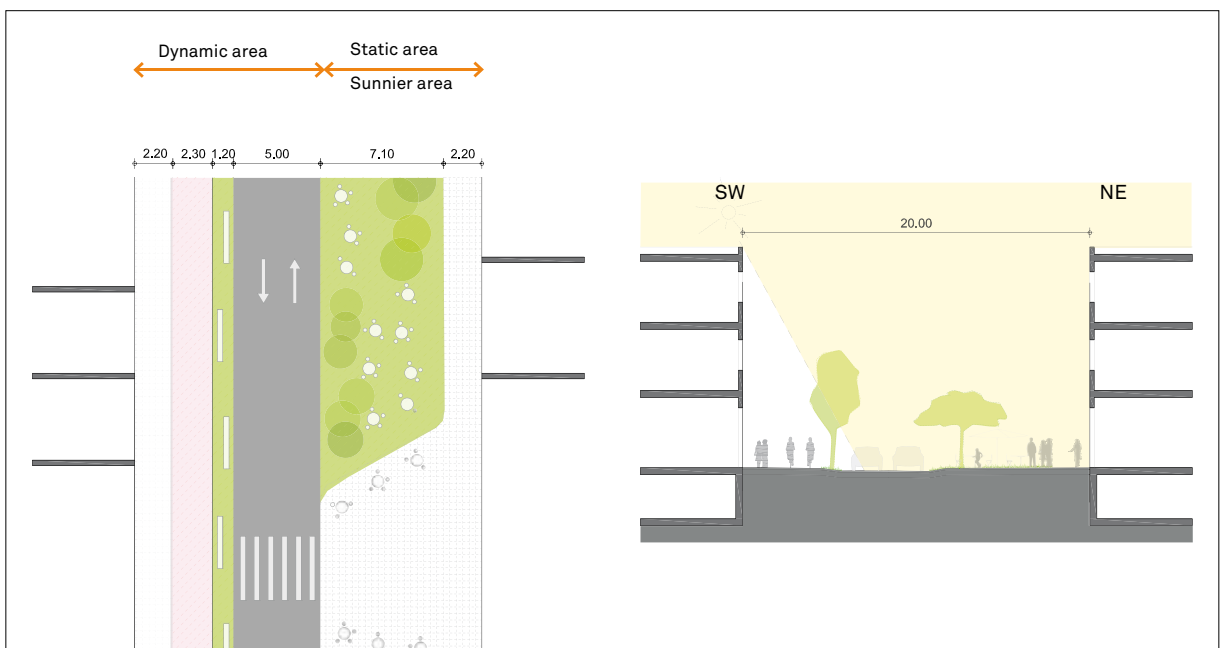
Intervention
Greenway and Smeed Road extension



Existing industrial typology



Example of mixed-use typology



Proposed Section
Smeed Road

GREENWAY BOULEVARD

A key part of our strategy involves making the Greenway connection between areas to the east of Fish Island, such as Pudding Mill Lane and Stratford Town Center, a thriving site so that it functions as more than a thoroughfare but an area of prospering activity. This green channel strategically connects to the gravitational center of our site, the Agro Tech Park and Demo Centre on the site of the Bow Midland Yard (East), the Skills Training Institute, and the Conservation area, creating a symbiosis of activity in the area. The Greenway, the most direct path from Pudding Mill Lane station to the Olympic stadium area and Fish Island, will see increased use with the future Legacy developments. We propose putting residential entrances at the Greenway level, creating an auto-free boulevard that allows local residents to engage easily with the streetlife. Through our series of interventions we hope to unlock the Greenway as a working landscape that mediates between every use on the local and regional scale.

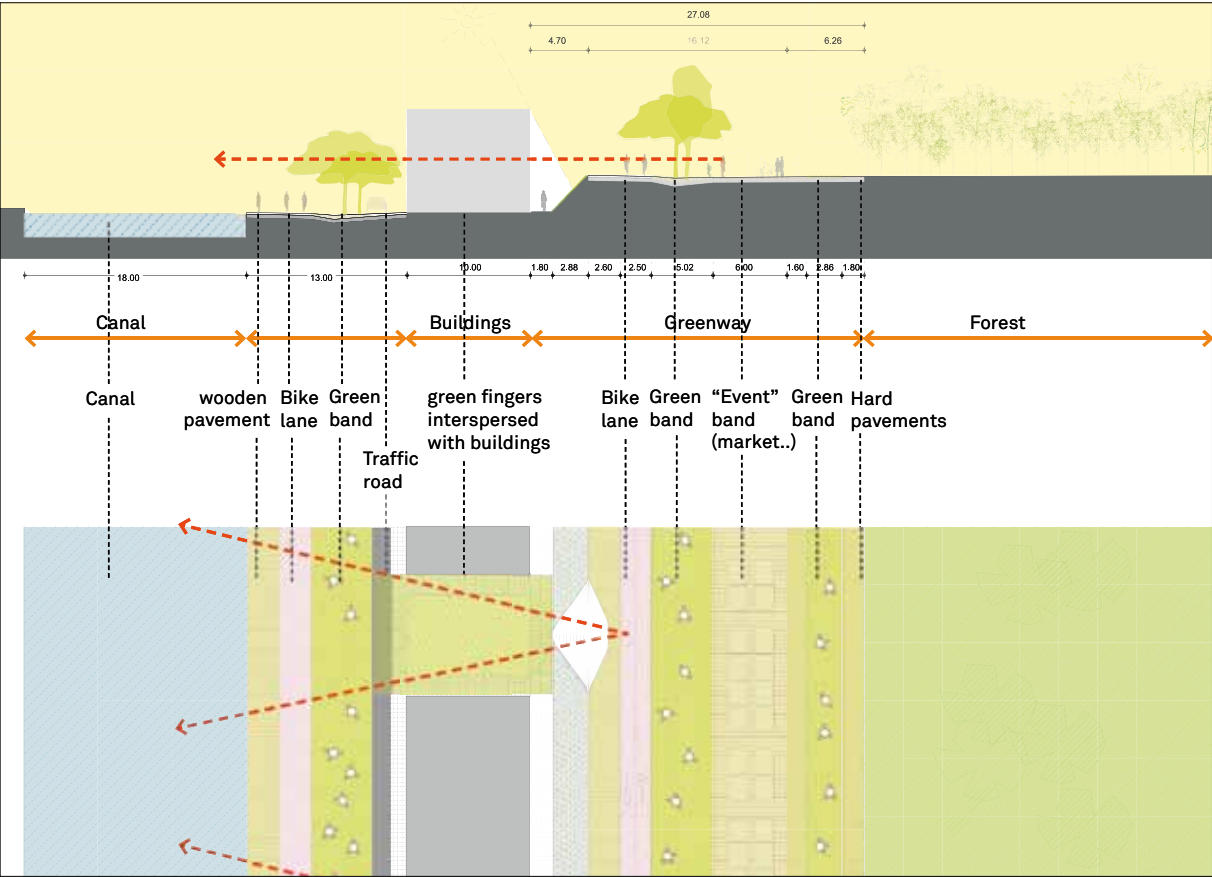


View towards greenway



Dace Road Stairs leading to Greenway

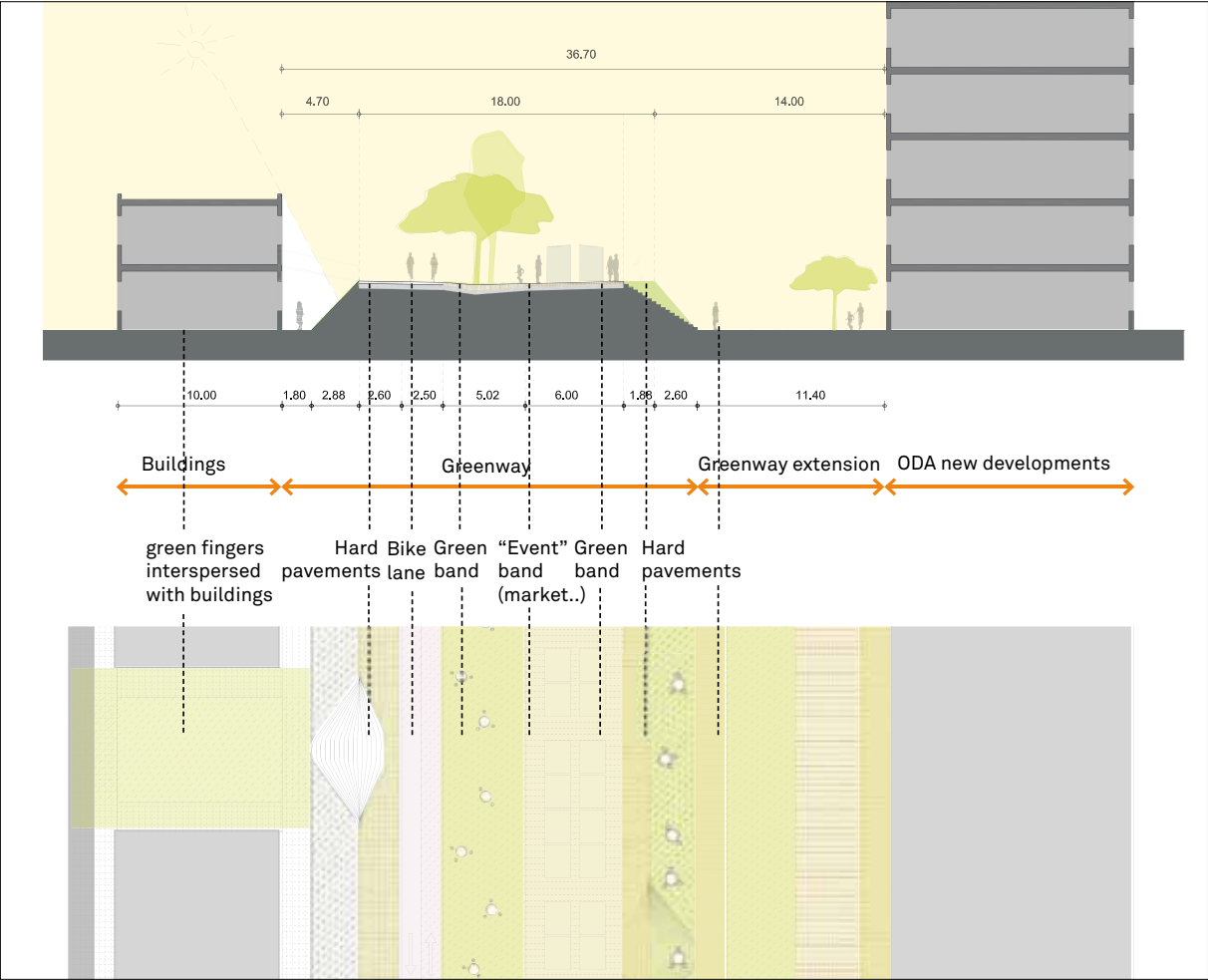
Explains relationship to the Greenway (a)



View of the proposed Greenway

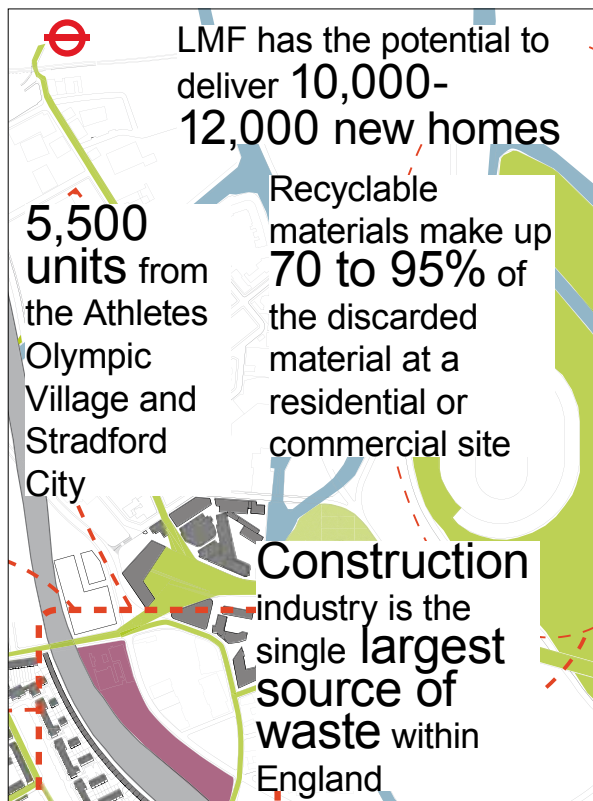


Explains relationship to the Greenway (b)



MATERIALS REUSE CENTRE

The activities around the Olympics directly impact our site and our design strategy capitalises on the opportunities it provides. The construction materials re-use centre that we propose is one way to take advantage of opportunities from the Olympic development while providing employment and support to the GLA's proposal for green industry on Fish Island. Currently, the construction industry is the single largest source of waste within England, and recyclable materials make up 70 to 95% of the discarded material at a residential or commercial site. A construction materials re-use centre has the opportunity to recycle the materials from the deconstruction of 5 500 units from the Athletes Olympic Village and Stratford City and provide material for the 10 000 to 12000 new homes that the London Masterplan Framework (LMF) proposes. This center would recycle building materials from Olympics disassembly projects through salvage, sorting and resale as well as educate and train local residents about these sustainable initiatives. Furthermore, the LMF proposes 10,000 to 12,000 new homes, many of which will be constructed near our site and will require construction material. One possible location for the re-use centre is on a plot of land that is adjacent to the A12 highway, a part of our site that has the lowest land value. This would act as a buffer against the A12 and would allow for lorries to easily access highway networks.



Materials reuse centre serving different communities in Fish Island

AGRO-TECH PARK

One of the key objectives of our strategy is to address the Olympics' strategy to build a sustainable legacy and showcase green initiatives in the city. We propose an agro tech park and demo centre to develop, adapt, and showcase new green technologies and create a site of green entrepreneurship for small businesses through flexible leasing and business support services. The Tech Park can have a research and development component in areas such as new organic breeding techniques for allotment gardening, food safety, plant health testing, and post-harvest technology activities. The showcase component of the Park would educate the public on new sustainable practices in agriculture and inform both professional and non professional horticulturists.

Agro-tech park



Location of the Agro-tech park

The lack of connections to surrounding areas, nearby employment hubs and impractical internal road networks were identified as major challenges that emerged from our stakeholder analysis. Any changes to the existing transportation routes must work in tandem with our urban design and intervention strategy, including the preservation of a creative area and the implementation of a skills training institute and Agro Tech Park and Demo Centre. We propose adding transport routes to connect to Pudding Mill Lane and Hackney Wick stations in the near vicinity, extend existing bus routes, improve connections to the mixed use developments on Smeed Road, and make the Skills Training Institute near the Greenway and the Agro Tech Park and Demo Centre to the east of the Hertford Union Canal more accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.

Phasing for our interventions and green strategy accounts for both flexible organic growth and the GLA's Olympic Legacy plans. Development on the present site is clustered on the northwest part of Fish Island, which contains the existing high-end residential compounds, and in the west on Roman Road high street, which consists of both housing and retail.

Our first phase takes into account ODA & LDA Legacy developments such as the conversion of temporary Olympic facilities on Fish Island East, across the Hackney Cut Canal, into housing, with up to 1,200-1,440 new units planned and approximately 20,000 square meters of employment and retail space (LMF, 2009, p.12); the Fish Island artist cluster currently in the heritage area will be secured through architectural conservation status; and a Skills Training Institute will be introduced at the base of the Greenway.

Phase Two focuses on development around our strategic interventions. This includes improving road connections, new Greenway extensions, and introducing a flexible mixed use typology on Smeed Road. This will create a vertical axis for growth that accommodates light industrial services, retail and/or commercial uses as needed. Housing and an Agro Tech Park and Demo Centre will be introduced in the area to the east of Fish Island, just south of the Greenway.

In the second part of Phase Two market demand, changes in social & physical infrastructure, and increased housing & commercial development will lead to growth in the transition areas that bridges existing communities.



Existing access points



Proposed access points

CONCLUSIONS

Our vision for Fish Island is one that seeks to balance the high-level influences and pressures on the site with the fine-grain everyday realities of the individuals who live, work, and engage with the area. Our focus areas and programs for intervention have been guided by our understanding of the site as a working landscape, one that mediates between several opposing forces – preservation and renewal, industry and housing, private retreats and public spaces. Our proposals, which include a skills training institute, a materials reuse centre, an agri-demonstration park, and Greenway extension, are intentionally flexible to allow for natural growth. Furthermore, our Greenway strategy transforms what is currently a sewer and cycle path into a new kind of public space. Our intervention strategy for Fish Island values the transition areas between different ecological communities and regards Fish Island as a shared cultural landscape comprised of different natural and social systems that are defined by their connections rather than their hard edges.



References

- Architectural History Practice (AHP) (2006) [report for EDAW Ltd] *Hackney Wick and the Old Ford Area Characterisation Study and Assessment of Key Buildings*, available from: www.hackney.gov.uk/characterisation-study-and-assessment.pdf
- Booth, C. Charles Booth online archive, available from: <http://www.booth.lse.ac.uk/>
- Community and Local Government (CLG) (2007), *Indices of Deprivation*, available from: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/ighbourhood-renewal/deprivation>
- Crossrail (2009), *Crossrail Context Report* (Prepared for London borough of Newham), available from: <http://www.crossrail.co.uk/construction/crossrail-and-the-community/crossrail-context-reports>
- Design for London (DfL) (2009), *Housing Intensification in Seven South London Centres*, available from: <http://www.designforlondon.gov.uk/uploads/media/SEVEN-200903final-report.pdf>
- Downton, P. (2009), *Ecopolis: Architecture and Cities for a Changing Climate*, London: Springer.
- Drivers, J. (2009), *Residential Trends: East London 2009*, available from: <http://www.djdeloitte.co.uk/img.aspx?CID=2290462&LangID=1&DocId=36318&DocVersion=19136&log=1&filename=dj36318v19136>
- EDAW, Maxwan Architects et al. (2008), *Hackney Wick and Fish Island: Baseline and Key Issues Report*, available from <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/baseline-and-key-issues-report-april-2008.pdf>
- EDAW, Maxwan Architects et al *Hackney Wick and Fish Island Masterplan: Stage 2 Report* [Draft 17, 10.2008], available from <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/stage-2-report-october-2008.pdf>
- EDAW. 2008. *Hackney Wick Fish Island Masterplan: Consultation Report*, available from: http://www.hackney.gov.uk/preliminary_consultation_report_june_2008.pdf
- Greater London Authority (GLA) (2009), [Letter to Tower Hamlets Council, 29.10.2009] *Planning Report PDU / LDF30/LDD09/03*, available from: <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/idoc.ashx?docid=abde853c-984a-4ea2-9612-9da440e66245&version=-1>
- Hackney Council (2009), *Local Development Framework: Hackney Wick: Draft 1 Action Plan*, available from: <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/hackney-wick-aap.htm>
- Legacy Masterplan Framework (LMF) Olympic Quarter Area Brief (2009), [Produced for London Development Agency], available from: http://www.legacy-now.co.uk/userfiles/file/LMF_Olympic%20Quarter_Public%20consultation%201.pdf
- Legacy Masterplan Framework (LMF) Summary Report (2009) [Produced for London Development Agency] *People and Places: A Framework for Consultation*, available from: [http://www.legacy-now.co.uk/userfiles/file/LMF_Volume%201_SUMMARY_Public%20consultation%20\(updated\).pdf](http://www.legacy-now.co.uk/userfiles/file/LMF_Volume%201_SUMMARY_Public%20consultation%20(updated).pdf)
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets (2009), *Fish Island Conservation Area: Character Appraisal and Management Guidelines*, available from: <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/idoc.ashx?docid=da81f1a8-a3ca-4c7f-8ec1-95918693c3ad&version=-1>
- London Development Agency (LDA) et al. (2009), *Green Enterprise District: A Concept for East London*, available from: http://lda.odgers.com/docs/090511_GED_Booklet.indd.pdf
- London Development Agency (LDA) (2006), *Industry in the City*, available from: http://www.designforlondon.gov.uk/uploads/media/Industry_29-08-2006.pdf
- Mayor of London (2007), *Lower Lea Valley: Opportunity Area Planning Framework*, available from: <http://legacy.london.gov.uk/mayor/planning/docs/lowerleavalley-pt1.pdf>
- Mayor of London (2008), *London Plan Supplementary Guidance: Industrial Capacity*, available from: <http://legacy.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds/spg.jsp>
- MUF Architects (2009), *Creative Potential: Hackney Wick and Fish Island*, available from: http://www.designforlondon.gov.uk/uploads/media/Creative_industries_mapping_July_2009.pdf
- National Federation of Artists' Studio Providers (NFASP) (2008), *Artists' Studio Provision in the Host Boroughs: A Review of the Potential Impacts of London's Olympic Project*, available from: http://www.nfasp.org.uk/media/doc/NFASP%20Olympic%20Summary%20Report%20Dec%2008_final98.pdf
- Olympic Development Authority (ODA) (2009), *Towards a One Planet 2012 – London 2012 Sustainability Plan*, 2nd Edition, available from: <http://www.london2012.com/documents/locog-publications/london-2012-sustainability-plan.pdf>
- Tower Hamlets Council (2009b), *Fish Island Community Session Report*, available from: <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/idoc.ashx?docid=64ff4797-3106-4827-b0d4-f66de6d786a0&version=-1>
- Tower Hamlets Council (2009c), *Local Development Framework: Core Strategy*, available from: http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/851-900/856_local_development_framework/core_strategy.aspx
- Tower Hamlets Council (2009d), *Fish Island: A Rationale for Regeneration*, available from: <http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/idoc.ashx?docid=e8939f33-8d7c-40e3-86ec-3747a08932e0&version=-1>
- We Design, We Build. *Mitigating NYC's Contentious Sites* [Exhibition flier], available from: <http://wedesign-nyc.com/firm/images/ecotones%20-%20postcard.pdf>