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LOCAL PUBLICS

I. INTRODUCTION

The A1, the longest numbered road in the United Kingdom, leads from the City of London to Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland. To journey the A1 from end-to-end would mean travelling 410 miles over the course of almost 10 car-bound hours. Yet, along the first 800 yards of this road one can find all the intensity of modern city life. Starting at St. Paul's, one manoeuvres through crowds of tourists, besuited bankers and beautiful people all buffered by bright lights and the bold noises of black cabs and brash Boris bikers. Couriers rushing always onwards, gears fixed and frames light, are alternately sheltered and squeezed by bendy buses. Pedestrians edge forwards pushed through canyons of steel, glass and old imperial stone by the crowds around them. Soon before them rises a grey concrete circle with a wall of traffic noise. And behind it the Brutalist evil or Modernist brilliance of the Barbican.

But after the Barbican, beyond this 'Gift to the Nation', turning east after a few hundred yards, we enter a peaceful, more local area, the turf of residents. This sudden change and the diversity of space it represents reflects the presence of difference and the power of the public city to reorient itself for its own benefit and ours.

i. Our Research Area

Clerkenwell is one of the most socially and economically intense areas of London, yet while its profusion of creative agencies and close proximity to London's technology cluster and the City make it easy to characterise as an area typical of a global city, it also accommodates a significant and strongly-rooted residential population. We have focused on the area north of the Barbican - bounded by the traffic arteries of Beech Street, Goswell Road and Old Street, as well as the quieter Bunhill Row - which, concentrated within the Peabody estates of Whitecross Street and the Golden Lane Estate, houses a large proportion of these residents (see fig. 2).

In total, the Barbican, Golden Lane and Peabody Estates accommodate approximately 6,500 people with a range of socio-economic circumstances in mixed tenure properties (see fig. 6). As well as the residential population, the area is also crossed by a substantial working population who arrive via the Barbican, Moorgate and Old Street tube stations as well as numerous bus routes (4, 55, 56, 100, 243, N35, N55). Alongside the Barbican Arts Centre and the performance venue at St. Luke's, the area is also home to Moorfields Eye Hospital, the London College of Fashion and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, each of which draw further people into the area. Perhaps surprisingly given the intensity around it, this area remains an extremely popular residential location within London, which includes a substantial elderly population and a large proportion of families. We believe this is a consequence of the area's ability to balance pockets and, more specifically, 'micro-pockets' of high and low

intensity and it is this duality which drew us to the area. The first part of this investigation is an analysis of how this process works in practice.

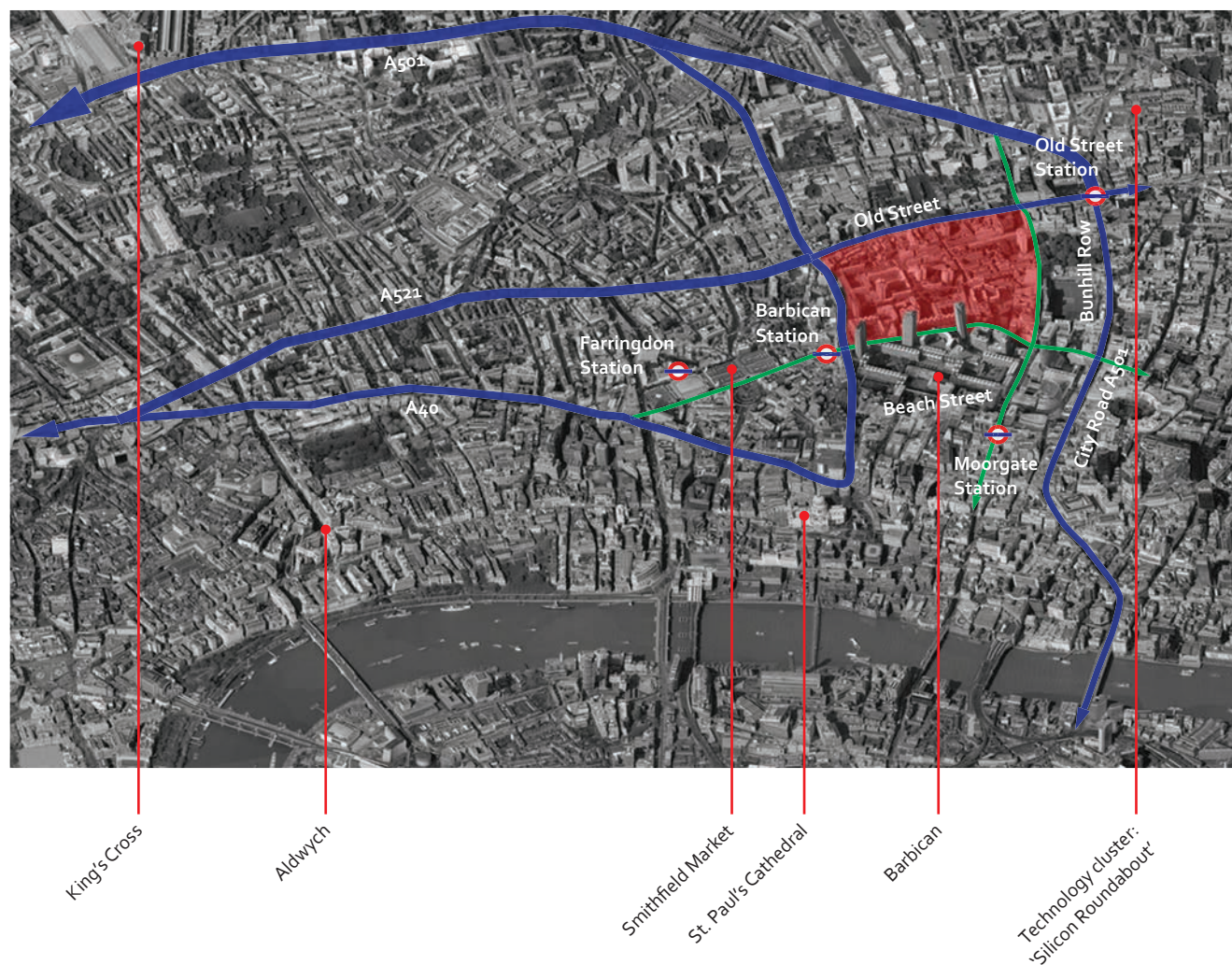
ii. The Public City

The public city is a place which through the variety of the qualities of its spaces can provide its occupants with a number of reasons to remain outside their own spaces, i.e. their home, the office they work in, the gym to which they pay a membership fee. As such, space cannot be classified as simply public or private; seen in its social context, a given space will have a number of owners, often simultaneously. The way in which people choose to do what they do and the way the physical and social structures of space restrict people's choices, mean that ultimately the city itself is drawing a line between what is public and what is not public. Put another way, how public can a city be if one can only enter it under certain circumstances, when looking for a specific experience or a member of a defined group? To create a public city, urban form must provide places of activity and respite; formality and informality; civic, local and communal order. If an individual can be comfortable in public space, regardless of their need or mood, they can be considered to live in the public city.

iii. Understanding the Needs of Embedded Populations

We believe the varieties of space and order in our area are intuitively grasped by its occupants and that the gradient of intensities is such that people can readily locate spaces which meet a wide range of needs; it is this gradient of intensities that allows a rooted, often elderly residential population to coexist with a throng of commuters and a wide range of daytime occupants. However, while our study area is approximately the same size as the Barbican and currently exhibits a similar sense of enclosure and distance from its surroundings because of its strong edges, these edges are inevitably more permeable than those of the Barbican, which is protected by its elevation above street level. This permeability is important because the balance of intensities that makes the area successful today is likely to be threatened by the residential and commercial growth planned for the area (see fig.3). At this moment in time, the planning framework for the area does not acknowledge the needs of the area's embedded population in the face of the growth planned for the area.

The objective of this investigation is to articulate a sense of the Public City defined by intensity of space and which recognises the complex arrangement and balance of space necessary to ensure an area remains economically vibrant, socially stimulating and, as importantly, a place of respite and comfort. The research we have conducted has demonstrated to us the importance of local knowledge and neighbourhoods being able to share space



in such a way as to articulate their existence as a group. If such a group is visible to planning authorities, it is then feasible that they could explain to its planning body the micro-level structures of space and organisation that make the space they occupy their Public City. Without their own clearly identifiable shared space, such groups are unlikely to gain representation in formal planning processes. To demonstrate the practical implications of this conclusion, the second part of this investigation demonstrates how these considerations would shape an intervention in our study area.



Fig. 1 (Above): Research Area Defined by Important Traffic Seams
Research area shown as an 'island' within these seams. The only two North/South routes in this area are also shown (Golden Lane and Whitecross Street, West to East)

Fig. 2: Research Area in the London Context
Research area highlighted in red and set in context with significant major roads and landmarks that surround it

II. RESEARCH AREA ANALYSIS

Our analysis of the area operates on three levels: the formal view provided by planning documents and census data; the 'informed outsiders' perspective which we ourselves provide as researchers, and the 'bottom-up' view held by the people who live and work in the area. We intend to show that the design of public space can be more sensitive and effective when it acknowledges the richness and particularity with which space can be understood when described by people who are embedded within it. When space is understood as a composite of each of these perspectives, it also becomes easier to conceive of interventions that operate beyond the merely physical.

i. Planning Context

This area is split between two local authorities: the Barbican and Golden Lane estates are within the boundary of the City of London; the Peabody estates are within Islington. Both sets of estates are anomalous within their local authorities: the Barbican and Golden Lane estates constitute over 50% of the residential population of the City of London; the Peabody estates are within an area of Islington containing over 70% of the borough's commercial space. Goswell Road is managed by London's transport authority (TfL, 2007) and together with Old Street these roads both act as strong boundaries to our area and further complicate a planning context which already needs to accommodate the needs of each borough's respective Housing and Planning departments.

Against this background must be placed the London Plan and the inclusion of this area both within London's Central Activities Zone (LDF, Core Strategy, 2.8.3) and its designation as a City Fringe Development Activity Area. Our area is in the vicinity of the new Crossrail station at Farringdon which will make the area one of the best connected in London, but which is of historic importance and faces planning constraints that will prevent it being able to absorb the growth expected as a consequence. Significant commercial and residential growth is therefore expected in the 'Bunhill and Clerkenwell' area and, consequently, it is covered by its own Area Action Plan (2011). However, this plan does not refer directly to the estates in question and we believe this demonstrates a failure of the formal city to acknowledge a residential population and planning context which are, respectively, anomalous and highly complicated. The City of London's plans for this area are concerned only with street enhancement, which we do not believe addresses these broader issues.

Following Lefebvre, we believe people shape and are shaped by urban form and, as such, have a 'right to the city'. In this respect, we see the needs of the residents of the estates in our area as being neglected by the formal city as represented by planning authorities. Unless the perspective of residents and regular users can gain a form of representation in formal planning processes their spatial needs will not be protected as plans are made to accommodate growth.

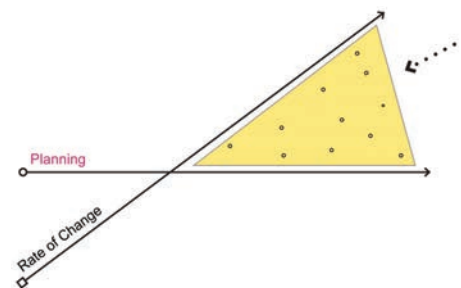


Fig. 3 (left): Policy Map

Diagram showing the complexity of the various policies relevant to the research area
Source: Publica (2010), Whitecross Street estate report

Fig. 4 (above): The Planning Gap

Our aim is to address the communication gap between planners and residents

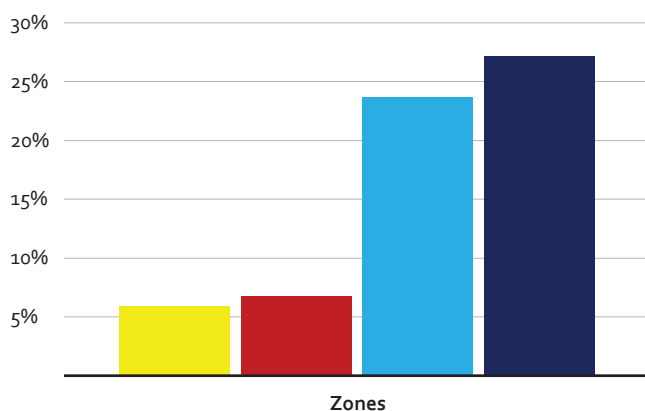
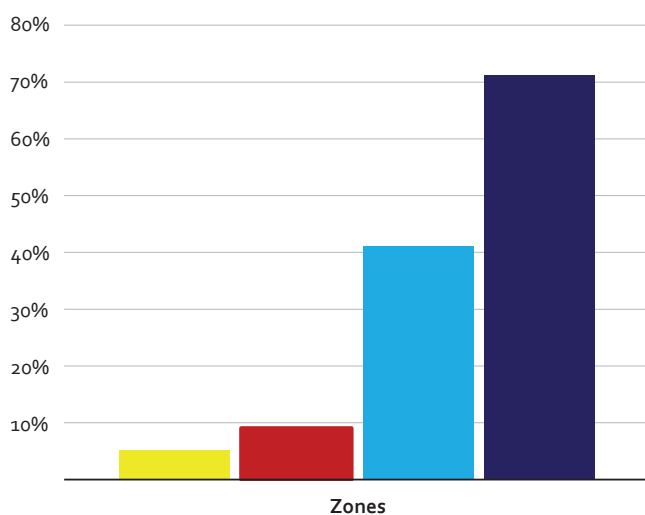
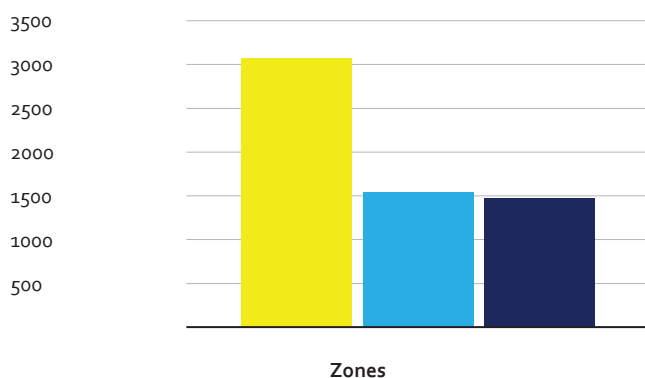


Fig. 5: Total Population of the Research Area
Source: UK Census 2001

Fig. 6: Proportion of Social Rented Flats Super Output Area, Lower Layer
Source: UK Census 2001

Fig. 7: Qualifications Super Output Area, Lower Layer
No qualifications
Source: UK Census 2001

ii. Socio-economic Context

Comparing the estates in our area as closely as census data allows, three key conclusions can be drawn:

1. The Peabody Estates houses 10-12% more people in the 0-16 years of age category than either other estate (by proportion of total estate population). Both the Peabody Estate and Golden Lane Estate are home to more people in the 65+ category than the Barbican (and London as a whole). The Peabody Estate also houses significantly more families.
2. The level of educational attainment is markedly lower in the Peabody estates and significantly exceeds the London average for people with 'No qualifications'. Furthermore, the proportion of people whose approximated social grade is classified as 'On state benefit, unemployed, lowest grade' is much higher in the Peabody Estates (see fig. 7 and 8).
3. The proportion of social rented housing is substantially higher in the Peabody Estates despite the City of London having made efforts to maintain an approximate ownership balance within the Golden Lane Estate (see fig. 6).

If one were to characterise the area as a whole based only upon census data, it would appear to have a significant division between its North (Golden Lane and Peabody estates) and South (Barbican estate), as well as a noticeable, but much weaker division between the Golden Lane and Peabody estates.

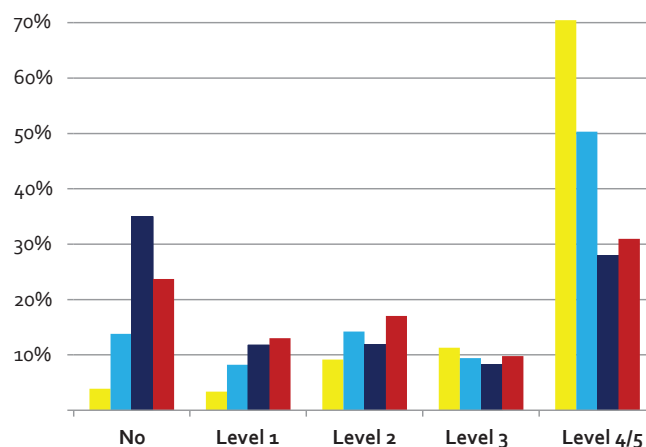
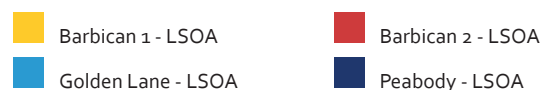


Fig. 8: Social grade
Source: UK Census 2001

KEY



iii. 'Socialising Lynch'

"Analysis shows that a relation (always social) determines its terms, and not to the reverse, and that each individual is a locus in which an incoherent (and often contradictory) plurality of such relational determinations interact."

De Certeau (1984: xxii)

'Publicness' in a city is created by the spatial concentration of various different, known and unknown, actors; it is the interaction between these different actors which means spatial organisation requires a gradient between public and private. As such, while the 'stranger' is an everyday part of the city, we organise space such as to ensure we most often encounter difference when we expect and welcome it. The 'right to the city' in this context defines who is allowed to adapt, appropriate and adopt a space.

De Certeau uses the term 'bricoler' (de Certeau, 1984: xiii) to explain this process of practical transformation in everyday life. To use de Certeau's terms, our area of study exhibits both 'Strong' owners (Planning authorities) who see the estates as simply artefacts from pre- and post-war developments, and 'Weak' owners (Residents, the Daytime Population) who use the area day-to-day and for whom the architectural merits of the place are often secondary to the utility of the area. Throughout this investigation we have seen ourselves as occupying a middle-ground between these two positions; one which allows us to examine the area free of the constraints of planners and with a broader perspective than residents.

In the quote above, de Certeau draws attention to the way in which space is constituted by people's use and perception of it rather than by formal labels or intentions. As such, the 'planner's image' of the city stands in contrast to that of an everyday user. We have sought to trace the 'cultural accumulation' that occurs in space, and the relationship between spaces in a given area, as understood by the people who use them. It is our belief that an articulation of social space by its users enhances one's understanding of an area's ability to balance intensities.

In an effort to complement existing perspectives on our area (the formal, top-down view of planning authorities; our view as 'informed outsiders') with a bottom-up sense of place which might provide representation for residents and regular users, we developed an interview programme based upon Kevin Lynch's work for *The Image of the City* (Lynch, 1960) and his ambition to map a city's legibility through the eyes of its inhabitants. However, we have focused more explicitly on the way in which space is defined by its social role. This combination of approaches is important because it allows us to focus on people's evocation - rather than notation - of space, while still producing a formal map which can complement the methods already used by planners. Just as importantly, it makes explicit a degree of self-reflexivity that can be lacking from Lynch's investigation: our mapping of the area is a conscious amalgamation of the perceptions of all those involved in the process, ourselves included.



III. METHODOLOGY

i. Interviews

Over the course of a three-month period we have conducted one-hour 'mapping' interviews with 12 people and a similar number of shorter, informal interviews. Taken together, this sample is broadly representative of the key groups within our area:

- Golden Lane residents (x7)
- Peabody residents (x5)
- Estate employees (x4)
- Estate Resident's Committee representatives (x1)
- Peabody Trust management (x2)
- Guildhall students (x4)
- Teenage children (x4)
- Elderly residents (x5)
- Commuters (x5)

Several of these groups overlap and our work should be considered a preliminary study rather than an exhaustive stakeholder engagement process. However, we do believe these interviews have sufficient breadth to give a composite social image of the area and the interactions between its component parts. Participants were contacted through a combination of impromptu conversation, 'snowballing', flyers and notices pinned in key public locations, including the management offices of the estates, and we attempted to balance self-selection where possible.

Each interviewee was asked to answer a series of questions about their neighbourhood and how they used it as a social space. Furthermore, in the formal interviews, participants were asked to draw their neighbourhood (or neighbourhoods in cases where the participant felt the need to use more than one scale) as a representational map. The intention here was to identify which social groups overlapped and where, as well as to identify any spaces of particular importance that we as outsiders may not have identified (for examples see fig. 10 - 18).

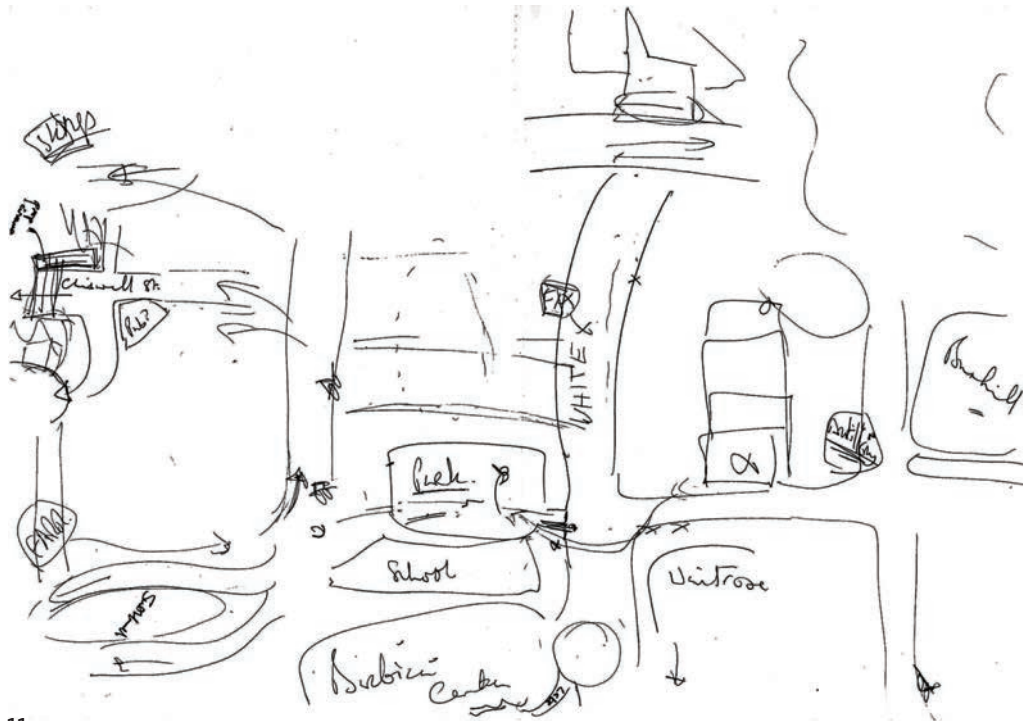
Fig. 9 (opposite page): The commuter seam

The seam leading through Golden Lane estate links Old Street to the Barbican tube station

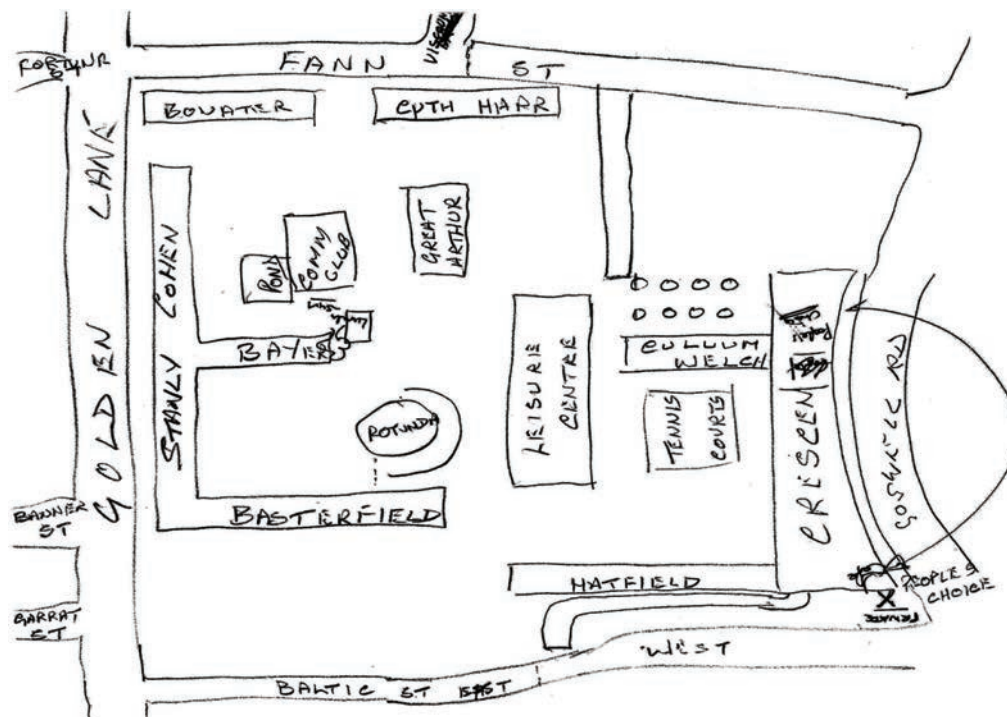
Fig. 10 (right): Pat's tree

An example of a map drawn by one of our interviewees. Shows a bounded sense of the neighbourhood limited to his housing estate





11.



12.

Fig. 11 and 12: Maps drawn by interviewees

Some examples of maps drawn by residents in the area. Some maps show a very bounded sense of the neighbourhood limited to a couple of streets, while others zoom out onto the greater London context.

ii. Key Conclusions from Interviews

1. There is minimal contact between the residents of the Golden Lane and Peabody estates. Golden Lane residents identify themselves much more closely with the residents of the Barbican, although some of our interviewees considered Barbican residents to be 'stuck up'. The Peabody Estate is seen as an entirely separate entity and there is some discomfort caused by Peabody residents using Golden Lane's facilities, in particular the Community Centre.

These conclusions are interesting because they are not what one would expect from socio-economic data alone. It seems that, for example, the Golden Lane Estate attracts what one might consider 'typical' Barbican residents who find the Golden Lane Estate is more affordable.

2. Despite evidence of facilities being shared, neither the Resident Associations nor the managing bodies of the three estates have any meaningful contact with one another. This is especially pertinent in the case of the Barbican and Golden Lane estates, which both fall under the purview of the City of London, but are managed by separate entities.

The lack of representation for this area in formal plans is a product of the borough boundaries, but is compounded by the lack of interaction on the ground between social and civic groups.

3. The student population of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama is almost entirely disconnected from the estates that neighbour their school with none of our interviewees showing any experience of the area beyond visiting Whitecross Street and, occasionally, Fortune Street Park. Even in cases where a route through the estates would provide a more direct route to the Guildhall School, this was not appreciated or considered desirable.

The realisation of the very narrow sense of the area held by the students of the Guildhall School has informed our sense of certain areas having a broadly 'civic' quality which co-exists with more locally-based 'communal' pockets and, also, pockets of retreat and reprieve.

4. While the balance of intensities in this part of London is recognised and appreciated by some residents, this is not uniform. The difference in scale between the interviewees' maps was often extreme, with some maps covering most of London and others restricted to the estate itself. While for some interviewees the area offered a welcome place of respite, for others the social balance of this area constituted their entire range of social experience (see fig. 11 and 12).

The cosmopolitanism that is immediately obvious within this area is not universal and the balance of intensities that we are investigating must serve a range of perspectives, with different places meaning different things to different people - and even the same people in different moods or circumstances.

5. The residents of a place understand it on a scale of such intimacy that it is beyond the appreciation of outsiders, however careful their observations. A good example of this was provided by the long-standing former Assistant Manager of the Golden Lane Estate who, in response to our final question about where he would choose to eat a sandwich, immediately identified a nondescript tree outside his office. On further investigation, it transpired that this choice had nothing to do with either the proximity of the tree to the office (practical), the view it offered (aesthetic) or its position on the major route through the estate (social) - rather, the tree remains in the sun until 1pm, even in the winter (see fig. 10).

This confirmed the idea that a bounded appearance of a space on a map will not necessarily match the social sense of the space as appreciated by a resident.

6. There is a widely acknowledged lack of public space which can be appropriated by teenage children and the elderly. This emerged in regard to the elderly residents of the Peabody estates who, in contrast to their peers in the Golden Lane Estate, drew maps which demonstrated a far more spatially constrained social world and were more reliant on the programmed activities of the estate's community centre. With regard to teenage children, it was a highly contested topic of conversation as to whether 'gangs' operated in the area. The balance of opinion was that rather than being active 'gangs', the groups of children to which some residents referred were no more than local teenagers with nothing better to do than hang around in public.

While our study area successfully balances intensity for many groups, that does not mean that the public city as it is currently constituted offers sufficient variety to successfully accommodate all of its members. Furthermore, considering the extent of planned commercial growth in the area, one must also recognise the potential future impact of a growth in consumption-based commercial spaces upon the wider balance of intensities and the ability of non-consumers to feel comfortable in public space.

iii. 'Pockets' and 'Seams'

In parallel with the interview process, we continued to develop our own understanding of the area as 'informed outsiders'. As such, our conceptualisation of the public city is based upon 'pockets' and 'seams'. This is a subjective interpretation of the city, but one which allows for a clear elucidation of the variety of qualities that space can accumulate:

Pockets are public spaces where activity is inherently static; people sit or linger in a specific area rather than move through it.

Seams are public spaces which have an inherent dynamism; people consciously move through or across them.

We have identified six qualities of space for both 'pockets' and 'seams'. This methodology is informed by the 'richness' we encountered during both our initial analysis of space in the area and the early rounds of interviews. Our awareness of this 'richness' prompted us to investigate each space as a collection of gradated qualities. Fundamental to this approach was a desire not to quantify these qualities, but rather to use them to try to capture the sense of the space. The resulting spectrums of intensity help facilitate the understanding of the area as an experiential whole with a richness which can be lost in more quantitative approaches. Similarly, although the qualities of the pockets are clearly affected by the functions of their nearby buildings, we decided to focus on a qualitative understanding of the area, rather than replicate the kind of quantitative survey work which is already carried out by planners.

Pockets

Qualities evaluated:

- Permanence of occupants
Are occupants primarily residents or visitors?
- Connectivity/Access
How easy is the space to locate and occupy?
- Scale/Size
Evaluated in a relative sense
- Intensity
Does the space draw people in, allow a neutral social state in public or preserve privacy?
- Changeability
How much does the intensity and physicality of the space change through the course of a day?
- Social role
A gradient from 'Civic', in the sense of a place imbued with some kind of 'meaning', to 'Communal' to 'Respite'

Seams

Qualities evaluated:

- Functional/speed/movement
The way in which people move along the seam, rather than the speed per se
- Connectivity/Access
How easy is the space to locate and occupy?
- Proportion/Scale
Evaluated in a relative sense
- Intensity
Does the space draw people in, allow a neutral social state in public or preserve privacy

By mapping the area in this way, one can begin to see the relationship between these spaces and how an intervention in one space affects the balance of the whole. The ability to look at our study area as a collection of fine-grained spaces allows us to see the variety of related spaces that allow its occupants to successfully accommodate the intensity around them.





Fig. 13 - 18: Relevant Places Mentioned in the Interviews
Whitecross Street market; Fortune Street Park; allotments in the Peabody Estate; common areas in Garden Lane and Peabody estates

iv. The Role of Golden Lane

A macro view of the balance of intensities within the area also draws attention to the peculiar status of Golden Lane, which is the only North-South street in the area aside from Whitecross Street (see fig. 19 - 20). Golden Lane is a neutral space defined by its absence of qualities and was notable for holding no particular significance to any of our interviewees. It also raised a number of difficulties as we ourselves attempted to categorise it as a 'pocket' or 'seam'. In this respect, it is helpful to draw a contrast with Whitecross Street (see fig. 23 - 26).

The buildings on Golden Lane foster only minimal interaction with the public space around them and consequently the area fails to hold any significant street life. Golden Lane is clearly not a 'seam' in any meaningful sense and, as such, we have characterised it as a 'non-linear street': it has a beginning and an end, but it is not defined by the small amount of traffic (pedestrian and vehicular) that travels along it. However, it is Golden Lane's very absence of qualities that ensures it plays an important role in this area as a 'decompressor' which provides a counterpoint to the intensity and overt publicness of Whitecross Street; its function within the wider system is to provide a state of neutrality. As such, by 'decompressor' we do not mean a space which by its own qualities helps people to 'decompress' (as, for example, a number of the area's small gardens do), but rather it is a space which by its very lack of qualities people can choose to retreat to simply as a place with no formal or informal rules or authority. It is this status as a 'non-managed' space which has led us to think of Golden Lane as the site of an intervention intended to help mitigate the aforementioned 'planning gap'.



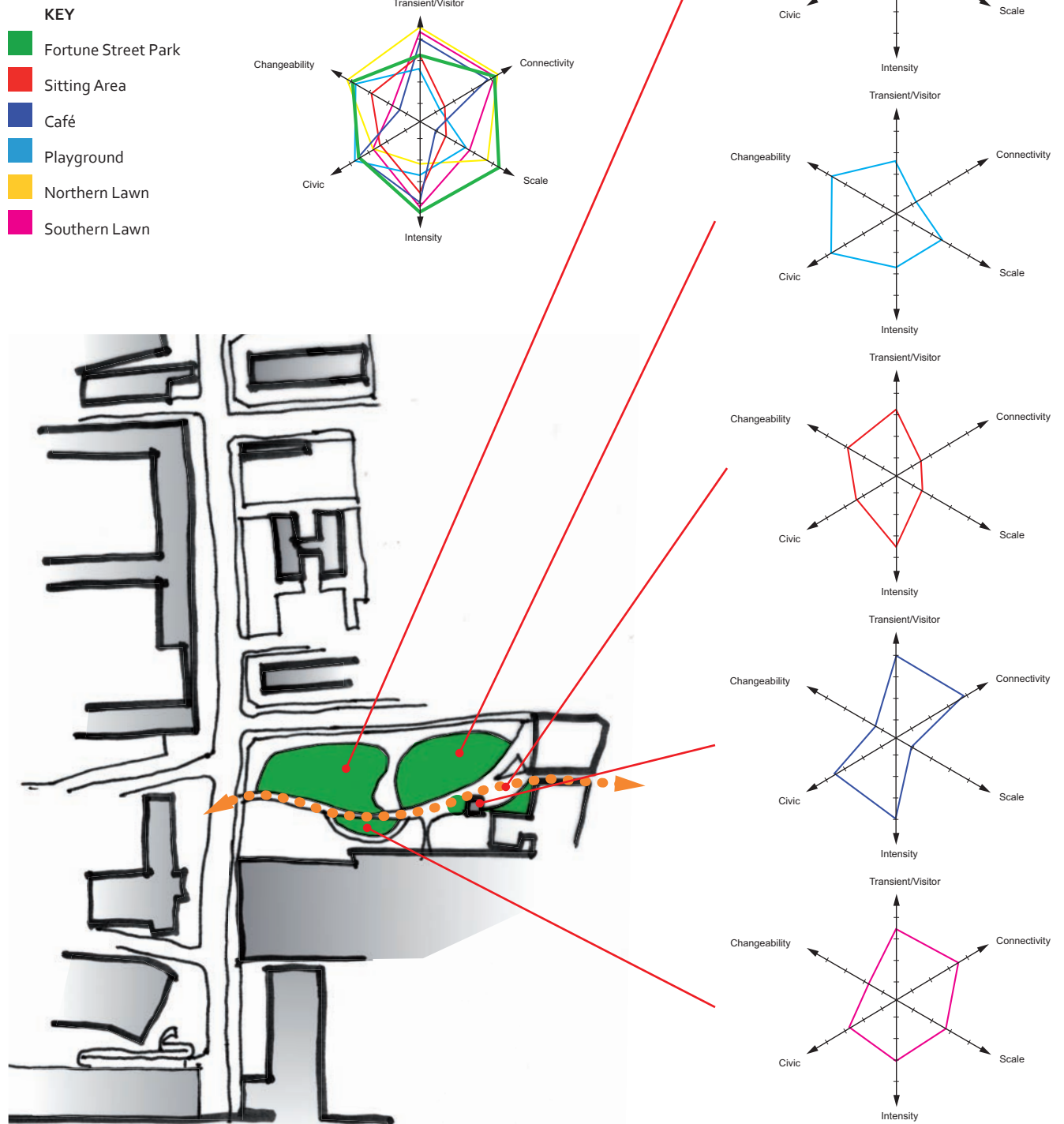
Fig. 19 and 20: Whitecross Street and Golden Lane

Fig. 21: Map of all Residents' Pockets and Seams
Revealed through the Lynch-interviews. Pockets in red, seams in blue



Fig. 22: Analysis of Fortune Street Park.

Demonstration of our qualitative analysis method. A qualitative evaluation of space reveals different micro-pockets, each with a unique set of qualities and serving different uses. Similar analysis was conducted for all pockets and seams in the area



IV. INTERVENTION

As already discussed, our study area has a substantial embedded residential population, but their need for a Public City characterised by a variety of spaces of subtly different intensities is not addressed in the planning framework intended to control the growth forecast for the area. We believe it is unrealistic to expect the planning framework already in place to be substantially altered to accommodate the needs of the residents in our area. As such, we intend to use physical design as a catalyst for normative ends; if residents are demonstrably committed to a space, it is more likely to be protected from the forces of change encroaching upon it. Golden Lane is ideally suited to such a strategy of 'getting your claim in early' and establishing group identity because of its present lack of 'owners'. Our proposed interventions are built upon three principles:

1. Golden Lane is best understood as a collection of pockets - rather than a seam - because while people cross Golden Lane, they very rarely travel up or down it as a street in its own right. If shaped sensitively and with due consideration for the existing 'pockets' and 'seams' related to them, Golden Lane's 'pockets' could take on qualities which would allow them to fulfill social roles which are currently lacking in this area; in particular, providing facilities for teenage children and the elderly. It is important to note that the design interventions proposed for these 'pockets' are not aimed exclusively at these groups, but would rather aim to establish specific qualities which would be broadly attractive while also addressing these deficiencies (in other words, any design intervention should be driven by the pursuit of qualities of space, rather than the narrow satisfaction of the needs of a specific group or groups).

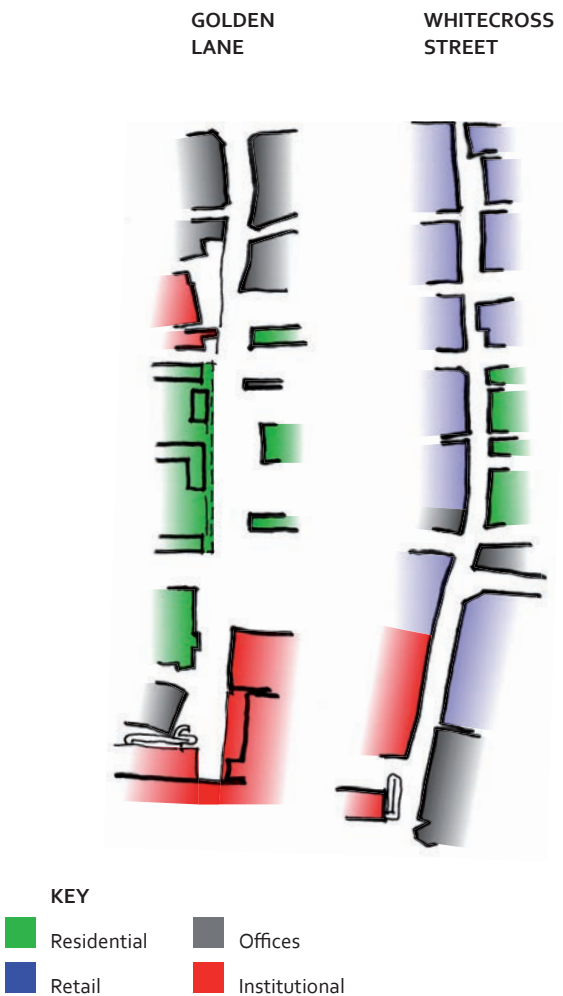


Fig. 23: Groundfloor Uses
Whitecross Street is characterised by open commercial uses (i.e. retail), while Golden Lane is mainly residential and other restricted uses (offices, school)

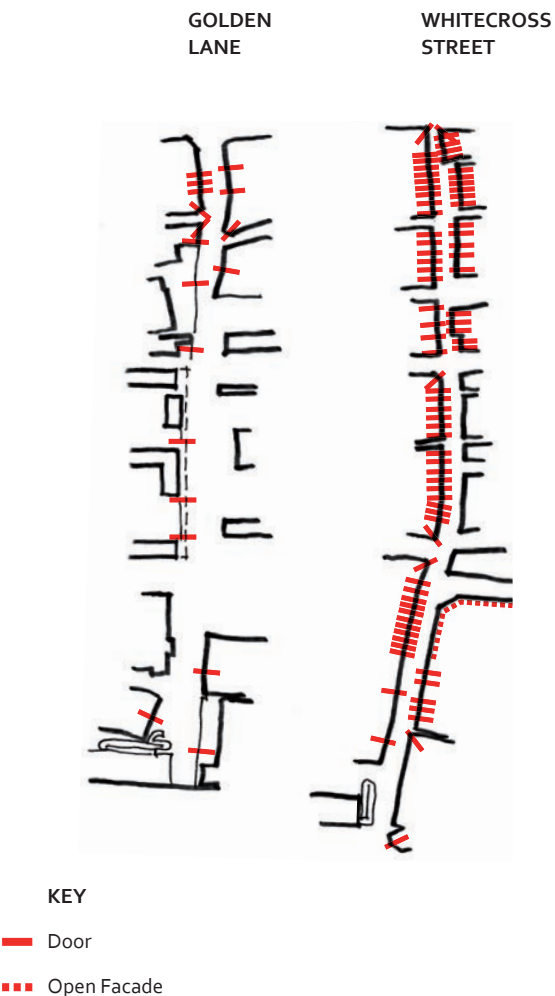


Fig. 24: Entrances Opening onto the Street
Whitecross Street is dominated by active shopfronts while Golden Lane has very few direct connections between the street and the surrounding buildings

2. It is important to recognise the richness of understanding uncovered by our bottom-up approach to research. We believe this richness stems largely from the different ways in which a resident engages in 'bricolage' (de Certeau, 1984: xiii). As such, our intervention should not only be physical, but should also facilitate the growth of spatial qualities instigated by the residents themselves over time. We believe Golden Lane's 'pockets' are open to two non-physical modes of activation:

- Procedural: Adjustments to formal rules which provide greater flexibility in terms of usage; for example, extending the opening hours of Fortune Street Park.
- Temporal: Event-based intervention that is temporary or seasonal; for example, the allocation of space for use by residents at specific times.

3. Most importantly, any intervention should seek to engender qualities with a higher valence than, for example, Pat's tree. This is important because people will inevitably leave an area over time and, as such, placing too much value upon their individual 'pockets' would be to risk focussing too closely on the micro scale. More positively, it is only by the creation of spaces in which many people feel able to participate - whether directly or indirectly as, say, observers - that one can hope to develop the kind of widely-based and visible attachment to place which could act as a constraint upon development.

The following proposals should be seen as illustrative of the type of intervention that is in keeping with the conclusions we have drawn from our research.

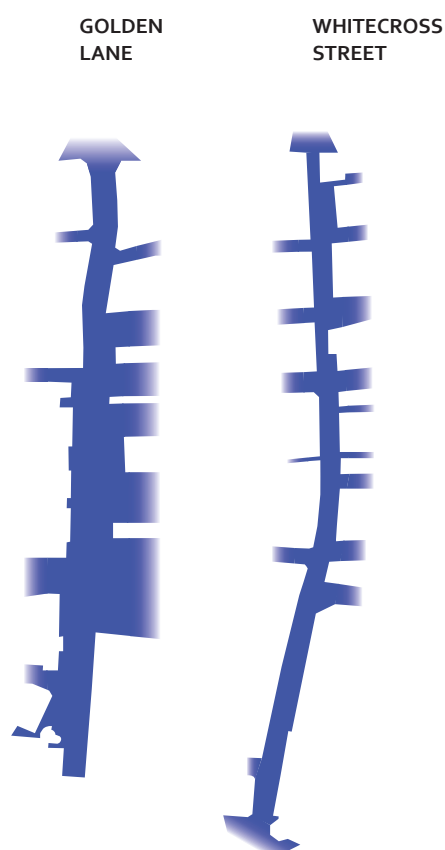


Fig. 25: Open Space Between Buildings

Whitecross Street is clearly defined as a linear street by its adjacent buildings, while Golden Lane is spatially undefined and non-linear.

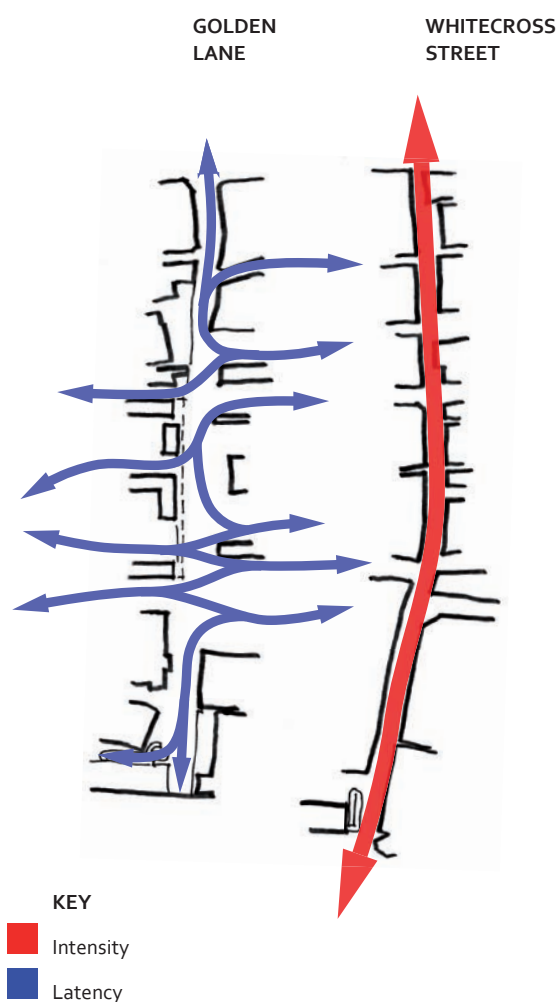


Fig. 26: Golden Lane as a 'Decompressor'

Golden Lane is most often crossed horizontally, while Whitecross Street is usually traversed along its vertical axis

Buffer

Characteristics:

- Use of adjacent buildings:
Commercial (offices)
- Acts as a bottleneck discouraging exploration of Golden Lane/Old Street
- Feels like 'vacant' space, very little activity

Objectives:

- Function as a buffer between the area of intervention and Old Street
- Protect Golden Lane's private residential character from visitors external to the neighbourhood
- Maintain low intensity/quietness of Golden Lane to allow appropriation by residents

Interventions:

- None on the street itself
- Potential to temporarily block traffic from entering into the 'residential pocket' (e.g. evenings, weekends)

Residential pocket

Characteristics:

- Use of adjacent buildings:
Residential (housing estates)
- Fractured and set-back facades, spatially undefined, wide, more a 'pocket' than a 'seam'
- Blank facades, few entrances onto the street; weak connection between street and buildings
- Sits upon borough and estate boundaries

Objectives:

- Quiet area belonging to local residents, particularly the elderly population
- Social space that allows integration without active participation
- Strengthen connection between the estates

Interventions:

- Reduction of car-use to one lane (one-way), treatment of the whole street to use it as a shared space
- Seating areas that allow observation of the street
- Allotments for community gardening

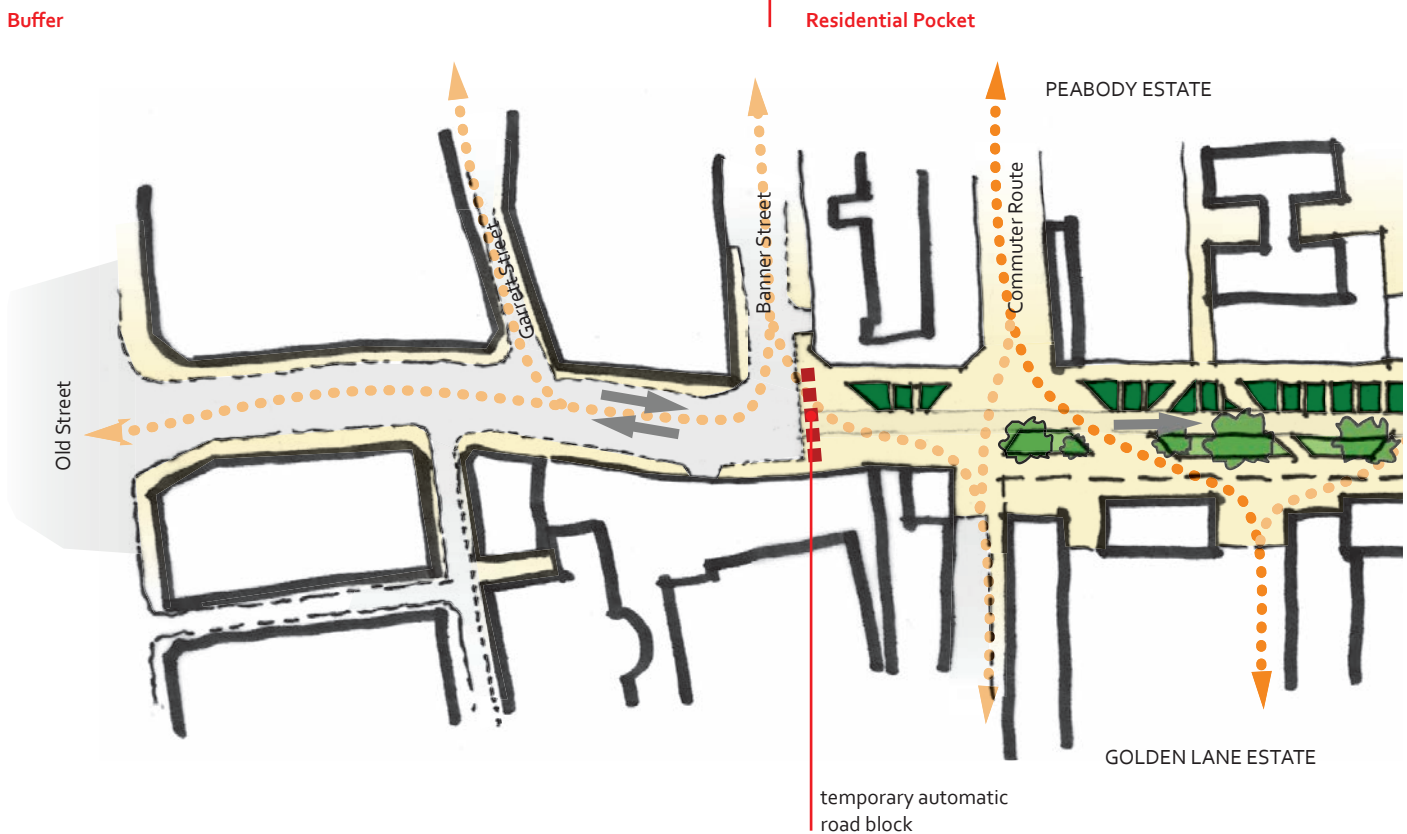


Fig. 27: Intervention Strategy and Proposal for Golden Lane

Communal pocket

Characteristics:

- Adjacent to Fortune Street Park and the Golden Lane Campus (combining a primary school, a children's centre and a school for children with physical disabilities)
- Significant transient pedestrian activity

Objectives:

- Communal area for active uses, especially young people
- Link to Fortune Street park

Interventions:

- Reduction of car-use to one lane (one-way)
- Temporary sports field and/or half-pipe
- Temporary bleachers to provide seating for spectators and to prevent balls entering Beech Street tunnel

Buffer

Characteristics:

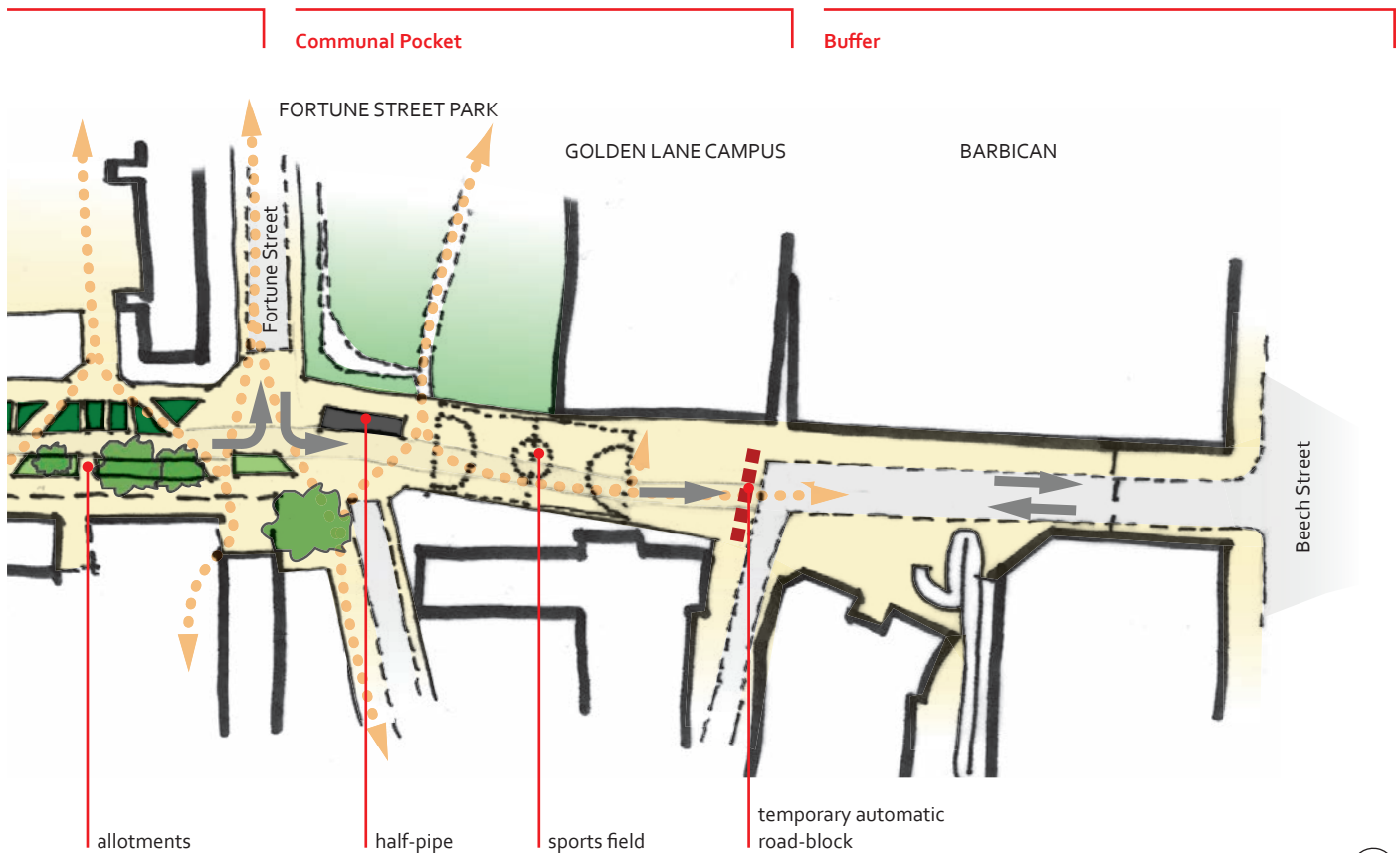
- Use of adjacent buildings: Offices and institutional
- Blank walls on street level, set back
- Very low intensity, minimal social activity

Objectives:

- Function as a transitional area from the communal pocket to the institutional functions along Beech Street

Interventions:

- Potential to temporarily block traffic from entering into the 'residential pocket' (e.g. evenings, weekends)
- Orange curtain at the entrance to the Barbican to mark the transition and arouse curiosity



CONCLUSION

If the public city is defined by the variety of spaces and the range of gradated intensities that it can accommodate, there will always be a balancing act to be maintained in the face of change over time. This understanding of space presupposes a level of richness and particularity which is often invisible to all but those most familiar with an area. In the case of our study area, this has proven to be the residents, but in somewhere like the City of London, it could well be those who have worked there for an extended period of time. The point is simply that planners and designers should recognise that they cannot on their own attempt to understand the complexity of space once its social aspect is taken into consideration.

As we have seen in our research area, this level of consideration is not currently the status quo for the planning bodies responsible and this failure within the planning system is likely to be repeated in areas across the United Kingdom and internationally. Given the variety of planning systems in place across the world and the fundamentally political nature of any intervention designed to address this issue directly, we have rather sought to show how space itself can be used to facilitate the development of an enhanced role for local actors.

The form of such an intervention will inevitably change from one area to another - and so it should do. However, we believe our emphasis on designing places to enhance specific qualities at three different levels - temporal, procedural and physical - of intervention, constitutes a widely applicable approach for designers to follow. As they seek to provide local actors with physical spaces that can accommodate their 'bricolage', they can indirectly unlock the potential of a latent space to become the type of space which embedded users can become attached to and identified with.

The public city thrives on diversity and variation, but such complexity can only be engendered by a multitude of actors operating incrementally on a local scale. This complexity is beyond the remit of planning authorities and therefore is often ignored. The preservation of the public city relies upon local actors being committed to individual spaces in such a way as to make them visible within a top-down analysis. Without such visibility, the diverse spaces which make the public city what it is will slowly fall victim to the homogenising principles of property development and urban regeneration. If interventions in physical space can provoke groups to identify with the diverse spaces of their neighbourhoods, this process need not be inevitable.



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Fig. 28 (facing page): Concept for a Proposed Intervention on Golden Lane

Looking north towards Old Street: newly paved, converted into a one-way street and with shared garden allotments on the street. A communal space which local people can take ownership of

Fig. 29 (below): Concept Looking South Towards the Barbican

Temporary seasonal or time-of-day proposal including a sports field, seating and a curtain that marks the transition into the Barbican

