

Studio Convenors

Suzl Hall / Lecturer, Cities Programme

Fran Tonkiss / Director, Cities Programme

Design and Layout by Joshua Simoneau and Guy Trangoš

Edited by Fran Tonkiss and Suzanne Hall

Printing and bound by the Manson Group Limited, London

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their valuable contributions to the Studio:

Olga Astaniotis / The Olive Grows

Robert Barker / Barbican Residents' Association

Katharina Borsi / University of Nottingham

Ian Boyd / CityYMCA Youth Projects

Ricky Burdett / LSE

Houriye Dervish / Street Trading Manager, Islington Council

Europa

Davina Fell / Former South Islington Business Manager

Fiona Furness / Space

Kathryn Firth / Olympic Park Legacy Company

Gunter Gassner / LSE

Helena Gaunt / Guildhall School of Music and Drama

Giddy Up Coffee

Simon Heath / Online Reprographics

Patrick Hegarty / Friends of the Fortune Street Park

Tom Holbrook / 5th Studio

Simon Holt / Friends of the Fortune Street Park

Adam Kaasa / LSE

Klaus Kruse / Living Structures

Guido Lang / Stormharbour Securities

Sophie Leighton-Kelly / Barbican

Dr Juan Pablo Pardo-Guerra / LSE Sociology

Emma Ridgway / Barbican

Philipp Rode / LSE

Fred Scott

Paul Selby / London Borough of Islington

Vivienne Thompson / London Borough of Islington

Andrew Todd / Studio Andrew Todd

Sadiq Toffa / LSE

Savvas Verdis / LSE

Maria Vitale / Peabody Trust

The Whitecross Street Market Vendors

Whitecross Street Market Traders' Association

Finn Williams / Common Office

© 2012 The Cities Programme, The London School of Economics and Political Science and authors all rights reserved. No part of the publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher

All image credits are by the authors, unless otherwise indicated.

Cover Image: Joshua Simoneau

The Cities Programme

The London School of Economics and Political Science

Houghton Street

London WC2A 2AE

United Kingdom

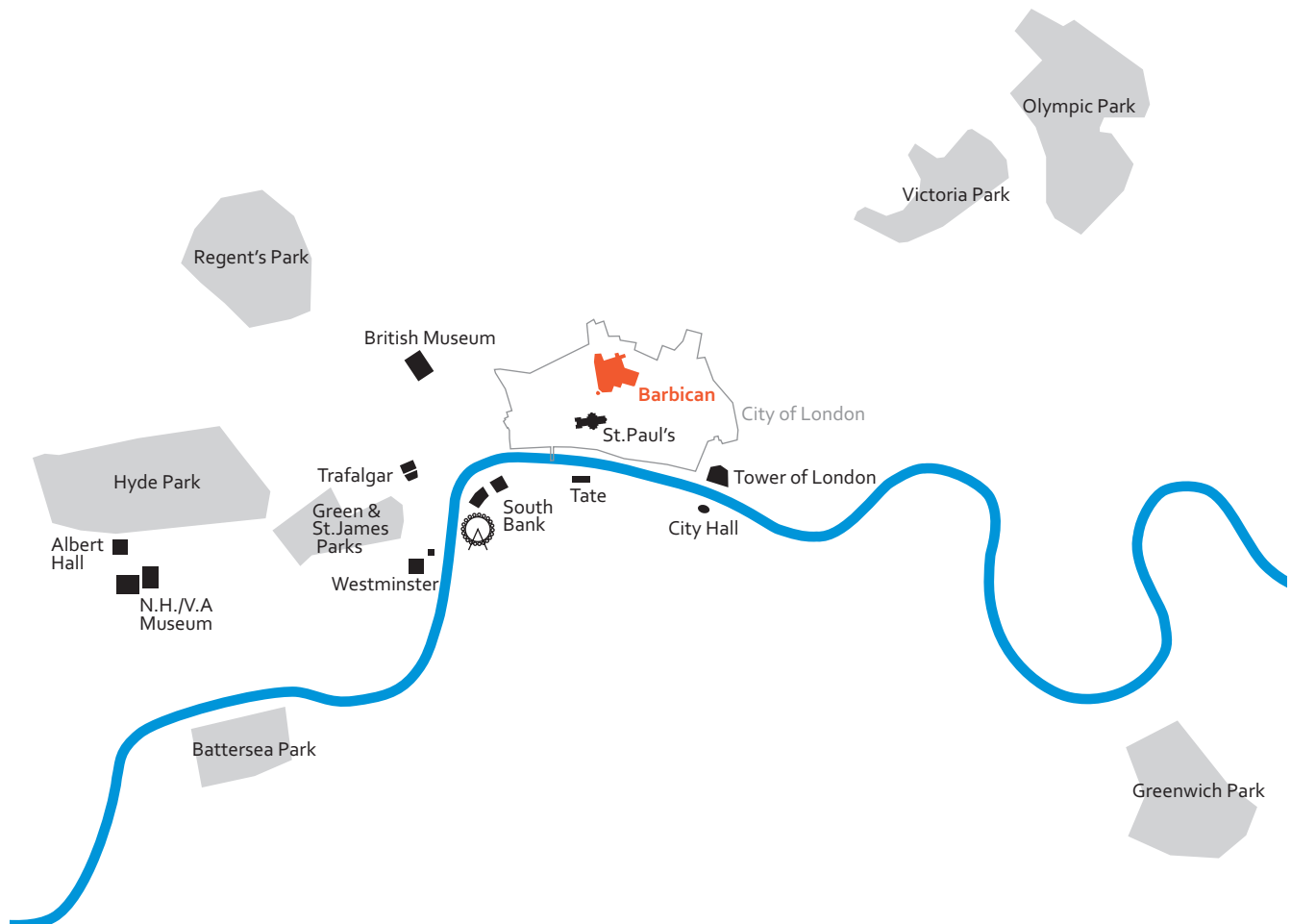
www.lse.ac.uk/collections/cities

THE CITIES PROGRAMME

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

The City Design Research Studio is the centrepiece of the Master's programme, linking theoretical debates and research with the detailed analysis of problems of city design and original proposals for urban intervention. It promotes an understanding of the city as a social as well as a built environment. In 2011-12, the Studio focused on the Barbican as a site for thinking about the problems and the potential of the 'public city'. We explored the 'public' character of the city not simply in terms of designated spaces, but in terms of different kinds of use, of users and of urban interaction. This involves critical thinking that challenges conventional distinctions between what is properly 'public' and what defensibly 'private' in the city, and design thinking that goes beyond standard interventions in the public realm. Students worked together in interdisciplinary groups to research their site contexts and to propose inventive urban strategies. Their analyses and propositions form the basis of this year's publication.

Fran Tonkiss
Director, Cities Programme



MSC CITY DESIGN AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

2011-12

Ilana Adleson

Sharifa Alshalfan

Caitlin Amos

Julia De Martini Day

Anna Dekker

Daniela Gorny

Christian Glavic

Simon Harper

Denizer Ibrahim

Jorge Martín Sainz de los Terreros

Magdalena Morel

Daniel Ernesto Moser

Francis Moss

Ximena Ocampo Aguilar

Rachele Pacifici

Nicolas Palominos

Max Pollock

Joshua Simoneau

Bethania Soriano

Sehr Tejpar

Guy Trangoš

Jill Wong

Mirjam Wurtz

Youngsoo You

Adriana Valdez Young

CONTENTS

1	PUBLIC CITY Introduction
5	EVERYDAY PUBLICS The Barbican Beyond the Box
27	EMERGENT PUBLICS The Brittle City
49	REORDERED PUBLICS City Living
73	LOCAL PUBLICS Pockets and Seams
93	PRODUCTIVE PUBLICS Re-producing
115	EXCHANGE PUBLICS Whitecross Street





Suzi Hall
Studio Co-convenor

PUBLIC CITY

INTRODUCTION

A studio exploration of the Barbican complex and its urban milieu

How is public space and public culture constituted in a diverse and rapidly changing city? Our studio exploration addressed this question from the base of a large-scale, internalised urban cultural centre: the Barbican. The complex is a multi-level, multi-entry labyrinth that is home to the Barbican Centre, Europe's largest multi-arts centre presenting a range of art, music, theatre, dance, film and education events. Adding to its urban presence is the Barbican Estate, a dense housing development built in the 1960s and '70s by Chamberlin Powell and Bon, on a 35-acre site that had been subject to World War Two bombings.

A primary challenge for the Barbican Centre is to re-conceptualise the model of a public arts and learning centre by responding to a changing city, its new audiences, and its transforming modes of accessing culture. The cultural and spatial desire to disassemble the fortress-like configuration between the Barbican and its city is coupled with an economic and political imperative. Since the economic crisis of 2008 and the austerity measures introduced by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government from 2010, new questions have emerged: How is public culture valued and measured?; Who benefits from investments in public culture; and How is public culture resourced? The Barbican presents an opportunity to conceptualise how participation and performance extends both within its walls and to its city beyond.

The 'city beyond' is an urban myriad that is both diversifying in terms of its ethnic variety and cultural practices, and polarising in terms of the increasing gaps between rich and poor. These shifts convey the complexity of London's stature as an overtly 'global city' with its prestigious 'world class' landscapes, juxtaposed with the everyday and ordinary city that often exists below the radar of the official, bureaucratic or institutional lens. Out of these contextual intricacies our studio explores how to recognise, interpret and shape new ways of being public. Our studio was oriented around the re-imagining of an introverted cultural centre in a changing city, exploring possibilities for how the Barbican, in making connections to the city, meets new audiences and users. In Phase 1 we explored the Barbican in its urban surrounds and used different lenses to interpret these spaces, including visual, socio-economic, planning and ethnographic data. These addressed:

- Sensing public space: exploring the rhythms of the city, its routines, its day and night activities and its day-to-day configurations across the week.
- A profile of people: accessing and interpreting socio-economic surveys across urban scales.

- Regulatory frameworks: synthesising the directions established in policy and planning documents.
- Microcosms of everyday life: exploring the fine-grained appropriations of the city.

In Phase 2 of the studio we focused on varied forms of intervention. This work was driven by the development of a conceptual framework that addressed the following questions:

- What is the scope of city design in this context?
- At what scale and in which site/s is it optimal to focus practical interventions?
- Which are the most appropriate tools of intervention?
- Who are the most appropriate actors to lead or participate in different urban interventions?

This studio publication represents the work of six groups, each taking a distinctive public concern and each developing that concern through a respective spatial focus. The urban range of projects extends from the Barbican itself, to its local landscapes, to its setting within the financial 'City', and to the city several kilometers out to its east.

1. Everyday Publics (Barbican Beyond the box)

As the name suggest, this group took the everyday life-worlds of the city as the key 'venue' for performance-based social experimentation. It specifically turns to the human and spatial assets to the east of the Barbican, and focuses on a staged journey through the urban landscape to involve diverse individuals in a process of actively engaging with their urban terrain.

2. Emergent Publics (The Brittle City)

This project explores ways of bringing together the varied institutions associated with the Barbican, many of which co-locate but do not actively exchange ideas and capacities. By developing an institutional forum, the intention is to capitalise on institutional strengths to actively re-curate the multitude of separate spaces within and around the Barbican.

3. Reordered Publics (City Living)

The 'Occupy' movement evident in London during the duration of Studio gave clear political and creative impetus to this group, who questioned the singular dominance of 'The City' as an exclusive and limited domain ordered around the logic of finance and banking. The group set to 'reorder' the urban logic of the City by engaging with the City's own language of competition and innovation, and analysed its poor capacity to compete with other financial centres on the basis of liveability. By introducing housing typologies into the City, the groups argue for greater liveability, while accommodating a far more varied urban populace.

4. Local Publics (Pockets and Seams)

This group also focused on 'liveability' but from the perspective of the small collections of public life and space evident on the Golden Lane and Peabody Estates to the north of the Barbican. The group invested time in observations and interviews with residents, exploring 'how to socialise Kevin Lynch' and integrate human sensibilities and aspirations alongside the identification of Lynch's spatial elements. This led to a very different sense of design intervention where recognising the 'pockets and seams' of local worlds shapes the broader urban design framework.

5. Productive Publics (Re-producing)

This group matched a political concern – the diminishing variety of urban manufacturing and industry in London, with a pragmatic one – the significant expanse of underutilised spaces within the large, modernist caverns of the Barbican. By mapping underutilisation, as well as mapping manufacturing and industry present or needed in the locale, the group focused on using the spaces of the Barbican to make forms of production visible.

6. Exchange Publics (Whitecross Street)

Whitecross Street is an urban strip of retail and market activities and connects the Barbican in the south to the cultural offer at St Luke's to the north. It is emblematic of an urban microcosm of face-to-face, regular forms of exchange. This group explored the social and cultural dimensions of 'non-monetary' exchange within selected urban microcosms adjacent to the Barbican, revealing the potential for expression and participation in these everyday precincts.

Below: Location of Project Sites

