



# URBAN ECOLOGY OF THE HIGH STREET

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# INTRODUCTION

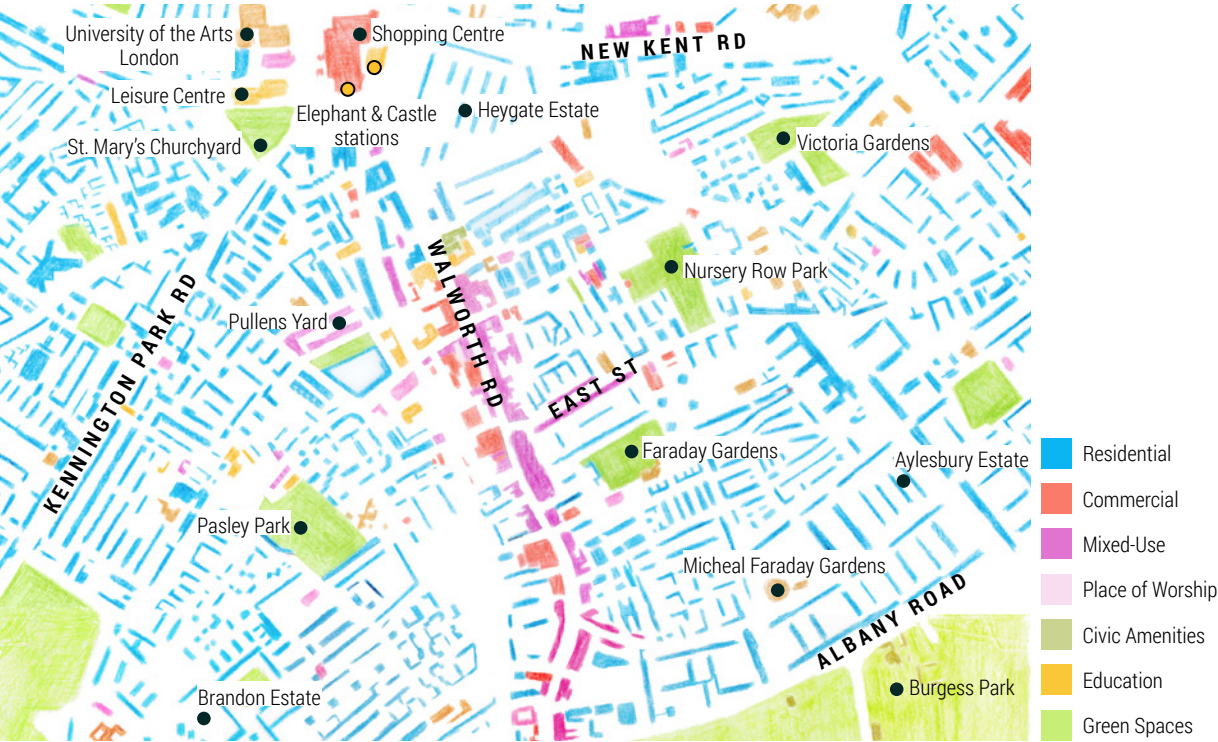
To the local neighbourhood commercial areas such as high streets can be read as fulfilling the role of a contemporary agora: a local public centre for cultural, social and economic expressions to be made and realised through a number of physical and symbolic means. Walworth Road is an example of such a street. The relationship between the commercial and social realms is fused together forming a co-dependant and mutually influential bond. In the face of economic challenges, the street's ability to adapt and morph into a more resilient version of itself is what has allowed it to become an important resource for local residents. However, despite the street's previous ability to survive several reiterations of economic change, the regeneration of Elephant & Castle acts as an irregular force, disrupting the dynamics between patterns of difference in the local social landscape. The questions of how this street will be affected and how it will adapt in reaction to this new force form the premise of this project.

Walworth Road is one of Elephant & Castle's prominent commercial areas, comprising of East Street Market, Arnside Street, Westmoreland Road and John Ruskin Street (Fig.01). Supported by a constant flow of vehicular traffic, one of the street's definitive characteristics is its large clustering of small independent shops catering to the needs of the

locality's diverse population. Reviewing the area's latest census data shows a representation of several age groups, nationalities, socio-economic levels and educational qualifications, creating a rich social tapestry. The multitude of interactions performed by these different groups on the high street weave a complex network of exchanges or urban micro-ecosystems. We use the conceptualisation of the urban ecosystem as a way in which to better imagine how the new incoming population, as a result of the regeneration plan, will affect the balance of these systems.

For some, the regeneration plan is essentially a form of 'social cleansing' replacing the area's large low-income population with wealthier social classes (Philby, 2013). In this context, the high street becomes a battleground upon which social, cultural and economic boundaries may be drawn in light of competition between different groups. However, with assistance we believe it is possible for the high street to continue to adapt and morph to serve as a resource for both existing and incoming populations. Through a process of compatibility, this project aims to demonstrate how social and commercial diversity can be maintained on the high street. Encouraging a multitude of ways in which different social groups can engage with the high street is how we envision the resourceful city.

**Fig. 01 | Land use map**  
Walworth Road stands out in its hinterland as a distinct cultural, social & economic high street.



# PORTRAIT OF WALWORTH ROAD

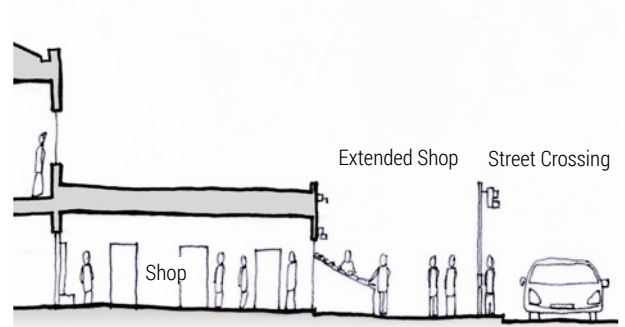
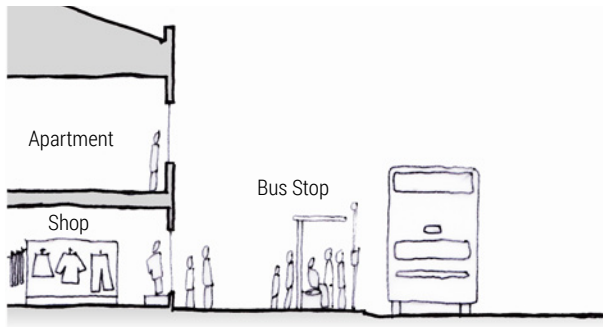
## SHOPS

The Walworth Road commercial area is a successful high street due to its wide offering of goods and services that include fresh produce, hair salons, restaurants and a variety of retail stores (Fig.03). Upon multiple site visits we witnessed a variety of ways in which different people used the high street as a space for social interactions (Fig.02), whether it be the familiarity displayed between shopkeepers and their loyal customers, people simply watching other people from different vantage points or friends and children of shopkeepers keeping each other company. We attributed the common occurrence of these interactions to the high density of small shops in the area. With 5m frontages measuring an average area of 70 sq m, the size of these tenancies are easily adaptable to suit the sale of a variety of goods and accommodate an intimate scale which encourages a more personalised customer service.

Through the physical flexibility of shops, business-marketing strategies are able to manifest in a wider range of forms, offering highly customised services that quickly adapt to the needs of locals. Examples of this are found in many of the beauty salons where a proprietor hairdresser would share a space with a proprietor nail artist. Other similar examples were found where grocers also provided money transfer services and mobile phone sales and servicing. We found that the scale of shops on the street was intrinsic in allowing for shopkeepers to adopt more creative sales techniques, creating retail hybrids as a means for a single shop to broaden their offering. Not only does this allow shopkeepers to better adapt to the changing needs of their customers, but also contributes to the dynamism and vitality of this high street.

**Fig. 02 | Typical social interactions seen on Walworth Road**

The small grain allows for the flexible use of space. In this image we see the shops extending onto the footpath, actively engaging pedestrians. We see interactions through people waiting at the bus stop, looking through shop windows & residents looking downward onto the street.







## INTER-DEPENDENCY

Our observational analysis taken over multiple site visits revealed an inter-dependent relationship between small independent shops and large retail chains (Fig.04). A concentration of these stores at the intersection of Walworth Road and East Street, combined with their proximity to bus stops, creates a dense pattern of social interactions (Fig.05).

This agglomeration of destination retail combined with its location creates what Bill Hillier refers to as the multiplier effect whereby certain locations have more potential than others and thus such locations can take advantage of this by forming higher densities.

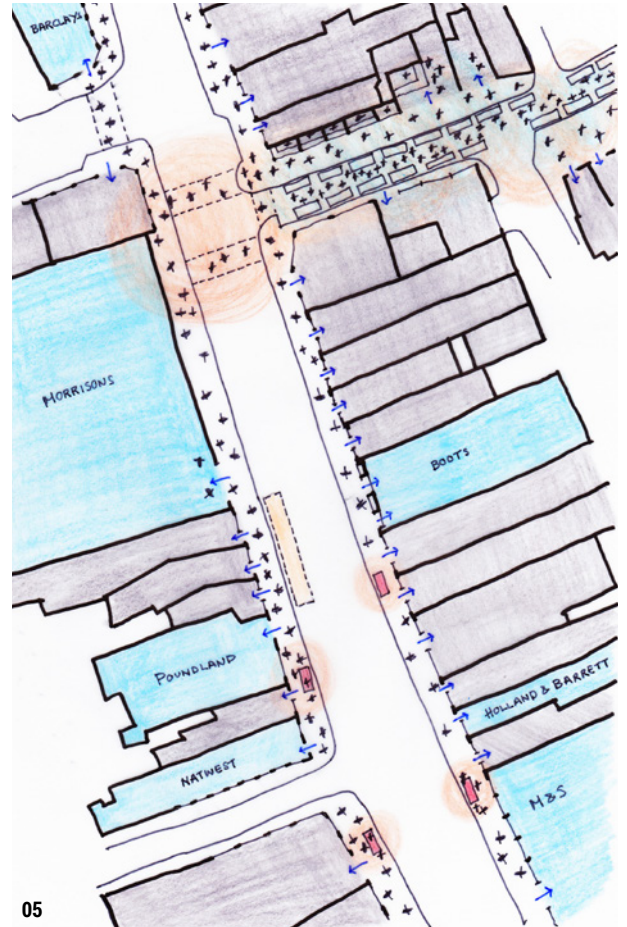
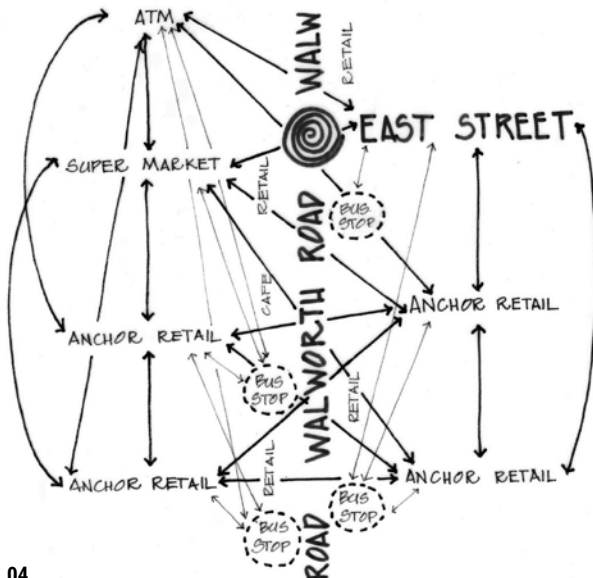
Now if cities are, as they were always said to be, 'mechanisms for generating contact', then this means that some locations have more potentials than others because they have more by-product and this will depend on the structure of the grid and how they relate to it. Such locations will therefore tend to take advantage of this, and higher densities will in turn have a multiplier effect. (Hillier, 1996:126)

**Fig. 04 | Interactions and inter-dependencies**

This intense node of social exchanges makes the junction an important part of Walworth Road.

**Fig. 05 | Walworth Road and East Street junction**

A plan of the junction, plotting out the location of people on the street, highlighting the active spots around the market & the bus stops.



## EAST STREET MARKET

As one of London's oldest street markets (est. 1880), East Street Market is one of Walworth Road's most prominent features and is fondly visited by locals, as well as visitors from across London. Selling a variety of affordable goods ranging from fresh produce to clothing (Fig.06), on market days East Street is the commercial area's most densely populated area, attracting a mix of shoppers from a range of different social backgrounds.

Market stalls themselves offer a highly flexible and affordable means for entrepreneurs to establish their small businesses, sometimes acting as an essential stepping-stone prior to expanding their business into a small shop tenancy. For some, these market stalls provide a transient means before expanding their business, for others, they serve as a permanent platform upon which to sell a sample of their goods. However, although the market provides many benefits, its potential is not maximised as nearly 30% of the stalls are currently vacant.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The local population surrounding Walworth Road consists of people from a wide range of social backgrounds. According to the 2011 Elephant & Castle Supplementary Planning Document, baseline information highlights that the area's population consisted of a higher portion of 10-29 year olds compared to the London average; 13% of the population were aged between 0-9 years old, 34% were aged between 10-29 years, 42% were aged between 30-59 years and 11% were over 60 years of age. It was also predicted that there would be a large population increase for those aged between 20-29 years of age. The two most populous ethnic groups were 'White British' and 'Black or Black British (African)'. The majority of residents are of Christian faith, with the next largest group citing no religion. The second largest faith after Christianity was Islam at an average of 10% of the population.

An important point to highlight in regards to the area's demographics is the strong presence of a diverse migrant population. In 2011, Hall surveyed 93 of Walworth Road's 128 independent retailers finding that there were 20 countries of origin between them (2011:7). This reflects the breadth of ethnic backgrounds present in Elephant & Castle's hinterland. In the past, Walworth Road has been able to endure through several periods of economic change due to its spatial flexibility, variety in shop typologies, high density of interactions and role as a major traffic thoroughfare. The following section highlights the main issues we believe will affect the social balance of the high street.

**Fig. 06 | East Street Market stalls**

These images show a variety of stalls that are currently present in the market.



Trinkets Stall



Discounted Clothing Stall



Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Stall

# THE ISSUES

## POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FORCES

A number of political and economic forces have influenced the terms and conditions of the regeneration plan (Fig.08). This historically working class area sits amongst London's most deprived wards, which was one of the main factors that led to the site being marked for regeneration. Based on the government's Indicators of Multiple Deprivation, comprising of income, employment, health/disability, education, housing and crime indexes, many areas in the development site - particularly to the east of Walworth Road - rank in the highest 15% of most deprived areas in the country in 2010 (Dept. for Communities and Local Government, 2011).

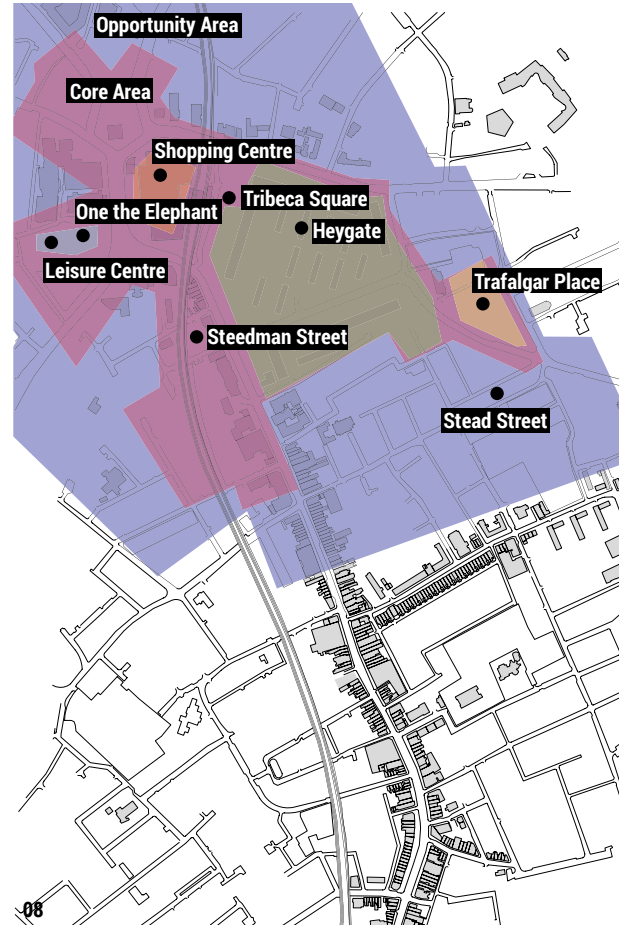
Continuing budget cuts and the mounting cost of maintaining public housing estates is another factor that led Southwark Council to sell the Heygate Estate, permanently displacing its former residents (Southwark Council's Budget 2013/14, n.d.). In order to fund this project-based regeneration, Southwark enlisted Lend Lease as their private development partner. These actions were met with criticisms from local residents who feel as though the council is inducing social cleansing in the area and questioning whose interests the regeneration scheme is aimed to serve (Philby, 2013)(Fig.07).

**Fig. 07 | Local sentiments**

Graffiti drawn on the walls of Heygate Estate expressing the sentiments of the residents towards the regeneration.

**Fig. 08 | Elephant & Castle Regeneration Area**

The multiple areas highlighted have been identified under the regeneration plan which is led by the development firm Lend Lease & Southwark Council.

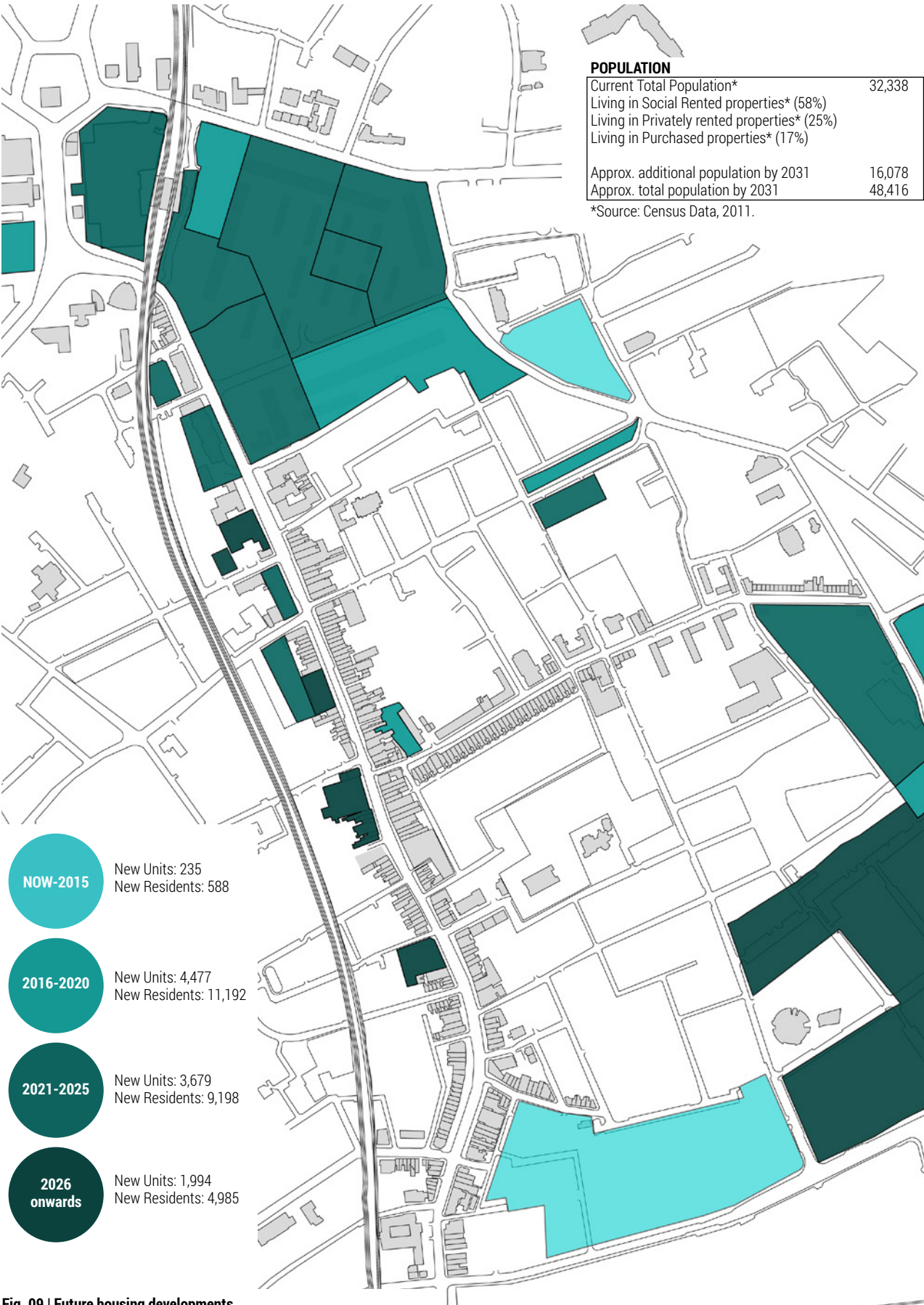




**POPULATION**

Current Total Population*	32,338
Living in Social Rented properties* (58%)	
Living in Privately rented properties* (25%)	
Living in Purchased properties* (17%)	
Approx. additional population by 2031	16,078
Approx. total population by 2031	48,416

\*Source: Census Data, 2011.



**Fig. 09 | Future housing developments**

The new developments will add 10,385 new housing units over the next 17 years, i.e. a net increase of 6,431 units.

## DISPLACEMENT

Due to the area's relative affordability, proximity to universities and central London, the local housing market is experiencing an increase in demand spurred by students and young professionals. 6,431 additional housing units are currently proposed to be built over the next 17 years and according to GLA projections, the population of the Walworth area will almost double its size by 2031 (London Borough of Southwark, 2001; London Borough of Southwark, n.d.; London Borough of Southwark, 2010)(Fig.09). Southwark Council requires developers to allocate a percentage of the newly developed units as affordable housing, rented at 60% of the market rate (London Borough of Southwark, 2011:4). However, these rental prices would still be deemed unaffordable for the majority of Heygate's former low-income residents (Wiles, 2014). For example a 3 bedroom apartment on Amelia Street currently costs £575 per week to rent according to Rightmove, an online real estate company. At the reduced rate of 60%, the rental price would equate to a staggering £345 per week, far too expensive for a low income family earning £12,000 per year to afford. If Southwark council were to continue selling off council owned housing estates to private developers, this would result in a drastic shift in demographics through the forcible displacement of a large population of existing low income tenants.

Not only will the regeneration plan affect the existing social make-up of the area, but it will also transform the physical appearance and experience of the high street. The marketing imagery for the new Heygate development depicts upmarket housing serviced by ground floor retail supporting the interests of a middle class clientele (Fig.10). Though it will be situated along the north of Walworth Road, these images bear no resemblance to the variegated appearance of the street's existing street character. Instead the new streetscape depicts manicured pedestrian paths and wide highly transparent shop fronts suggesting tenancies appropriate for large retail chains. Though in analysing the effects of regeneration we are less concerned with how it would affect the street's physical appearance and more interested in understanding how it will affect local social dynamics on the high street.



## POCKETISATION

With this emergence of privately owned high-end housing developments, complete with public green spaces that are owned and operated by the developers situated in midst of predominantly low-income housing, we believe there is a potential for this public space to be viewed as exclusionary by the existing locals (Fig.10). These feelings of exclusion will likely manifest themselves in pocketisation; the creation of distinct zones that are dominated by one social group in which other groups do not feel welcome. In situations 'when disengagement is coupled with contestations over space does it turn into tension ... issues surrounding competition over resources such as housing can fuel group animosities and tensions' (Wessendorf, 2013:419).

However, in our site analysis we also found evidence of existing pocketisation occurring in areas towards the southern end of Walworth Road and the far eastern side of East Street. In these pockets we observed distinctly lower numbers of shoppers and higher numbers of empty tenancies. Upon visiting these areas to collect information, we were consistently met with suspicion from shopkeepers.

Pocketisation as process develops out of conditions of marked contrasts or differences between disparate social groups that are viewed negatively by at least one group. Such pockets must be addressed in order to widen people's accessibility to a larger variety of resources, whether it be the Heygate development's outdoor landscapes or shops along the bottom of Walworth Road.

**Fig. 10 | Future developments - design proposals**

The image on the left depicts future development Trafalgar Place and the image on the right depicts an artist's impression of street activity along Walworth Road designed as part of the future Heygate development.

Source: Lend Lease, 2012







01 Heygate Estate - 3,039 apartments to be completed between 2014 - 2023.



02 237 Walworth Road - 54 apartments to be completed between 2011-2016.



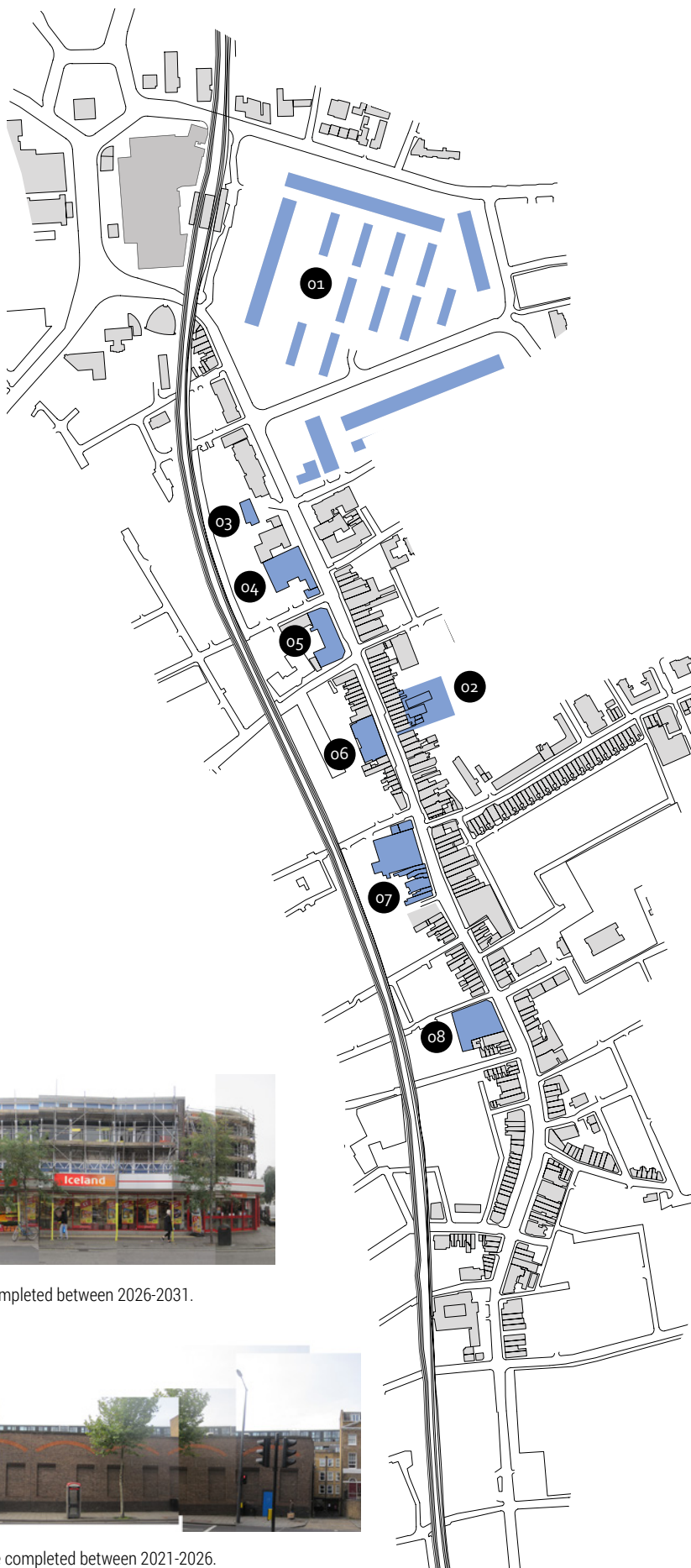
03 Kwik Fit - 21 apartments to be completed between 2016-2021.



04 328-346 Walworth Road - 25 apartments to be completed between 2026-2031.



05 Police Forensics Laboratory - 53 apartments to be completed between 2021-2026.



## DISAPPEARANCE OF FINE GRAIN

The growing number of middle class newcomers will lead to an increased demand from retail chains for large tenancies along Walworth Road consequently threatening the existence of fine grain retail. A number of properties along Walworth Road are already marked for demolition and will be rebuilt as apartment complexes (Fig.11). It is likely that their ground floor tenancies will be designed to meet the needs of a large more robust retailers, instead of multiple small independent shops.

Although in past decades the Walworth Road commercial area has displayed an ability to adapt to a series of economic changes, the regeneration plan presents itself as a different kind for challenge, one that will quicken the effects of market forces leading to dramatic effects on the high street. This accelerated process will in turn affect the livelihoods of existing locals and unsustainably reconfigure the balance between different social groups.

In exploring the nuances of issues facing this high street, we are concerned with how the regeneration plan will amplify the already existing signs of gentrification in the area and consequently how this will affect the street's existing social and cultural patterns.

**Fig. 11 | Future developments on Walworth Road**

This diagram maps out the approved developments which are planned for construction over the the next 17 years.



06 Chatelaine House - 99 apartments, to be completed between 2021-2026.



07 262-290 Walworth Road - 100 apartments, to be completed between 2026-2031.



08 224-236 Walworth Road - 27 apartments, to be completed between 2026-2031.



# THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

## URBAN ECOLOGY

Ecology can help us understand the complexities of cities. (Steiner, 2004:194)

The ecology metaphor is a useful tool that can help us understand the complexity of the high street. Urban ecology can be used as a theoretical model to describe the spatial relationship between different social structures in cities, first adopted by sociologists at the University of Chicago.

We understand the inherent interdependencies between the high street's different actors and entities in this way, identifying the entire area as a cohesive ecosystem. Ecosystems can be defined as an 'object that is made up of subsystems or components, which interact in such a way, that they have, collectively, a recognisable wholeness' (Golley, 1998:10). On Walworth Road, these actors and entities included storefronts, vendors, stall holders, pedestrians, bus stops, ATM machines, public spaces, visitors to the area and local shoppers, all of which are fundamental aspects of the high street that are interconnected and contribute to the street's vitality.

Some aspects of the theory are rooted in the principles of Darwinism and his belief in 'survival of the fittest', which in this sense describes competition between social groups (Tibbetts and Hemmens, 2009:383). Similar logic seems to have been accepted by many city planners, understood simply as a consequence of market forces and undermining the importance of sustaining a social balance between different groups within a neighbourhood. It is common that in gentrified neighbourhoods authorities fail to consider

the significance of acknowledging the interests of low-income residents. As a group, these people and their cultural identities connected to place are often vulnerable to the unfettered forces of urban renewal. In the case of Walworth Road, it is important for Southwark Council to acknowledge the interests of its less wealthy residents who are under threat due to economic competition spurred by the incoming population.

However when engaging with urban theory, adhering too rigidly to the Chicago School's exact definition of urban zones or placing too much importance on the metaphor in general is flawed and can lead to over abstraction or generalisation, which is not appropriate in an urban context that is diverse and multilayered.

We use the concept of urban ecology in three specific ways. First as a framework for understanding the interdependence of people, shops and other key actors along Walworth Road and in Elephant & Castle, thinking of our study area as a cohesive ecosystem. Second, in relation to the effects of gentrification outside the redevelopment site, the ecology concept can help inform our understanding of competition between different social groups. Finally, we can learn from the natural world that diverse ecosystems are generally healthy and durable, while less diverse ecosystems with few species or monocultures are susceptible to harmful effects of change. In this sense we are concerned with allowing for our Walworth ecosystem to exist in a balance that allows for the economic and cultural vitality of the high street to persist in the face of urban renewal.



## OUR VISION OF THE HIGH STREET

By achieving a balance in the representation of needs for different social groups, we believe that the high street can continue to thrive as a public space. Through encouraging economic, cultural and social diversity, the street can develop an 'ethos of mixing...referring to an expectation that in public and associational spaces, people 'should mix' and interact with their fellow residents of other backgrounds' (Wessendorf, 2013:407-408). Although Wessendorf specifically refers to social and cultural diversity, this project recognises the added importance of encouraging diversity in the physical sense of the street. As earlier mentioned, the design of shop spaces can both encourage opportunities, but also constrain access for shopkeepers. This affects how both shopkeepers and customers engage with the space and each other. Using this argument emphasising co-dependency, we highlight the importance of spatial diversity as being particularly influential in shaping social diversity.

Based on these principles, we believe that the high street should provide a variety of spaces to allow for different degrees of contact and interaction between social groups, consisting of many areas like East Street where mixing is a commonplace occurrence (Fig.12). In arguing against homogeneity and pocketisation, we recognise the importance of allowing differences to be expressed through everyday practices, while ensuring they do not become exclusionary by preventing other groups from participation in particular spaces. Living in separate worlds is acceptable to a degree however, in order to create a vibrant high street it is necessary for fellow residents to 'participate in one way or another in associational spaces or in the public realm' (Wessendorf, 2013:418-419). By encouraging diversity, we believe that people will benefit by learning from each other, allowing for the nuances of difference to spark individuals' curiosity and imagination.

## PROCESS OF COMPATIBILITY

In order to encourage and maintain diversity, we believe a process of compatibility can provide a framework to promote social engagement with the high street.

The way in which we envisage compatibility is developed beyond the simple notion of different entities co-existing without conflict. Instead we see compatibility as a process where varied social groups exist together in a mutually beneficial relationship made possible through the ease and comfort of communication. Rather than viewing compatibility as a static end goal, we think of compatibility as a process of constant dynamic adaptation. Through the methods of familiarity, introduction, participation and mixing we believe the street can continue to adapt to changes both in the short and long term, thus allowing for compatibility to exist.

Emphasising the role of adaption in reframing compatibility is key to understanding how this construct can be used as a social device. As Steiner highlights, 'adaptation permits us to be resilient in the face of change' (2004:192). By assisting the urban ecosystem to adapt, we allow it to become more durable in response to irregular forces of change such as those brought by the regeneration plan.

**Fig. 12 | East Street Market**

A thriving market where we see interaction of various social groups including both the local residents and visitors.



INTERVENTION

In order for the high street to continue to prosper, we believe it is important to monitor and provide a guiding framework that will enact a process of compatibility, thus allowing for the street to adapt to challenges posed by regeneration.

In the following section we present our proposed guiding framework as three strategies aimed at providing a holistic approach to initiate a process of compatibility (Fig.13). The first strategy is a set of policy recommendations that provide a foundation for adaptation to occur. The second is an informative strategy. Through a process of increased awareness, its aim is to allow visitors, existing and new incoming residents alike to familiarise themselves with existing and new areas surrounding Walworth Road and Elephant & Castle. Lastly, our third strategy consists of three programmes, each aimed at initiating processes of introduction, mixing and participation.

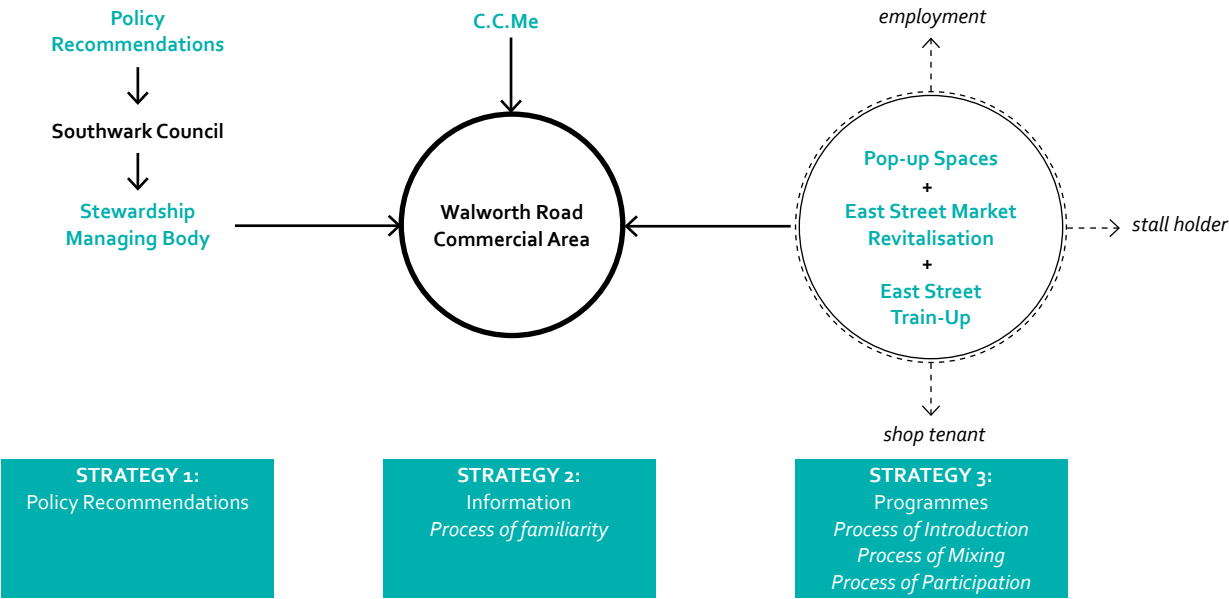
Although all three strategies are designed to complement one another, each of them could be undertaken exclusively allowing for some flexibility in the timing of their implementation. However, in order for more effective change to occur, we recommend that they all be executed within the next five years. In the following sections we will highlight which strategies and programmes should be given first priority.

STRATEGY 1: POLICY RECOMMENDATION  
THE PREMISE FOR CHANGE

In order to set the foundation for adaptation to occur, we have proposed three policy recommendations. As they set the premise for change, it is important that these are implemented first.

The first policy recommendation states that local council owned housing estates should be retained in order to preserve affordable housing in the area. This is to ensure that socio-economic diversity is maintained within the urban ecosystem. At present roughly 50% of Walworth Road's population resides in council owned estates. By 2031, after the completion of the proposed housing developments, the proportion of this population will be approximately 39% of the total population should the council retain these estates. In consideration of the council's continuing expense in maintaining its estates, we propose that any future sales should follow the Aylesbury Estate model. In partnership with a private developer, the unit density of Aylesbury was doubled, allowing half of the new units to remain in the hands of the council and the other half to be sold privately with profits shared between Southwark and the developer. As a result no tenants will be forcibly evicted. In order for the ecosystem to remain balanced, it is important that the low-income population be given the choice to remain to live in the area.

Fig. 13 | Intervention framework  
Proposed processes of compatibility for Walworth Road commercial area.



Our second recommendation is the council should provide low barriers of entry for new entrepreneurs in order to retain as many small independent businesses as possible in light of increased market competition from better resourced large retail chains. It is vital for a diversity of shops to exist on the high street to support a variety of business types and interactions between customers and shopkeepers. As large retail chains generally have higher accessibility to a range of tenancy sizes, we feel it is important for the council to support the interests of small businesses. We recognise four main components in the creation of low barriers. These are:

- Retaining 50% of shop tenancies as small flexible spaces (70sqm).
- Retaining market stalls.
- Continuation of council subsidised business rates for small businesses.
- Evenly distributing large anchor retail chain stores across the whole of Walworth Road in order to draw foot traffic to support small businesses.

Lastly, we propose the creation of a stewardship management group responsible for monitoring, assessing and making decisions affecting Walworth Road's urban ecosystem. This group will be led by eight directors consisting of business owners and council representatives, each representing the concerns of restaurants and bars, food retail, stall holders,

small business retail, large chain retail, market holders, urban street design and service industries (from lawyers to pawn brokers). Members will be elected by the compulsory vote of business owners in the area. The goals that the stewardship management group must uphold are:

- Ensuring that the needs and interests of different social groups are represented on the high street provided they don't encroach on the needs of others; and,
- Monitoring and managing the effectivity of each of the four processes.

In order keep up with their wide breadth of responsibilities, the managing group will also consist of a body of full-time employees.

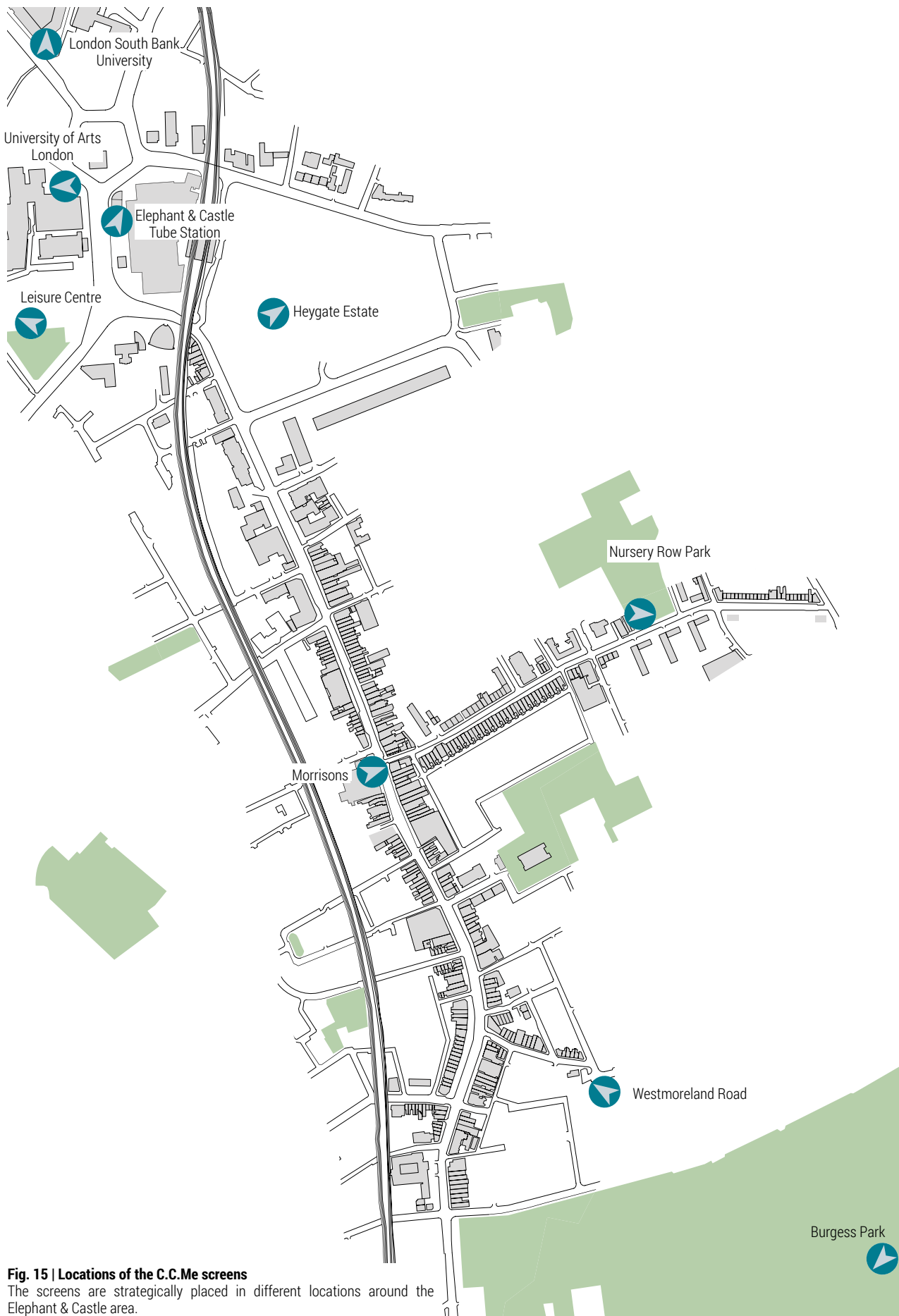
## STRATEGY 2: INFORMATION A PROCESS OF FAMILIARITY - C.C.ME

Our second strategy aims to increase the familiarity of existing and incoming social groups to the old and new parts of Walworth Road's rapidly developing streetscape. Through 'a sense of comfort and everyday contact, familiarity can be used as an adaptive social form to combine different traditions, people and places,' allowing for positive social mixing to occur (Hall, 2012:100).

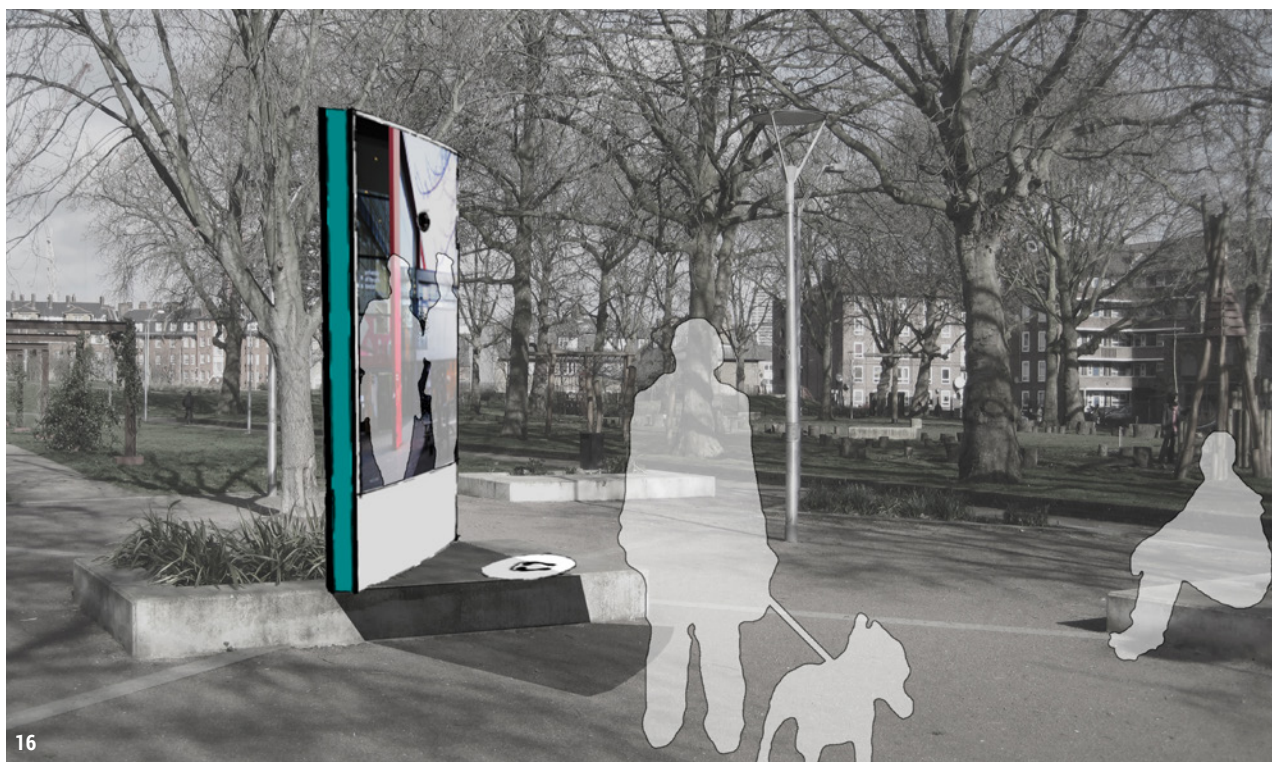
**Fig. 14 | C.C. Me at the University of Arts London**  
Live interactions between the UAL students on campus and a child in Burgess Park.







**Fig. 15 | Locations of the C.C.Me screens**  
 The screens are strategically placed in different locations around the Elephant & Castle area.



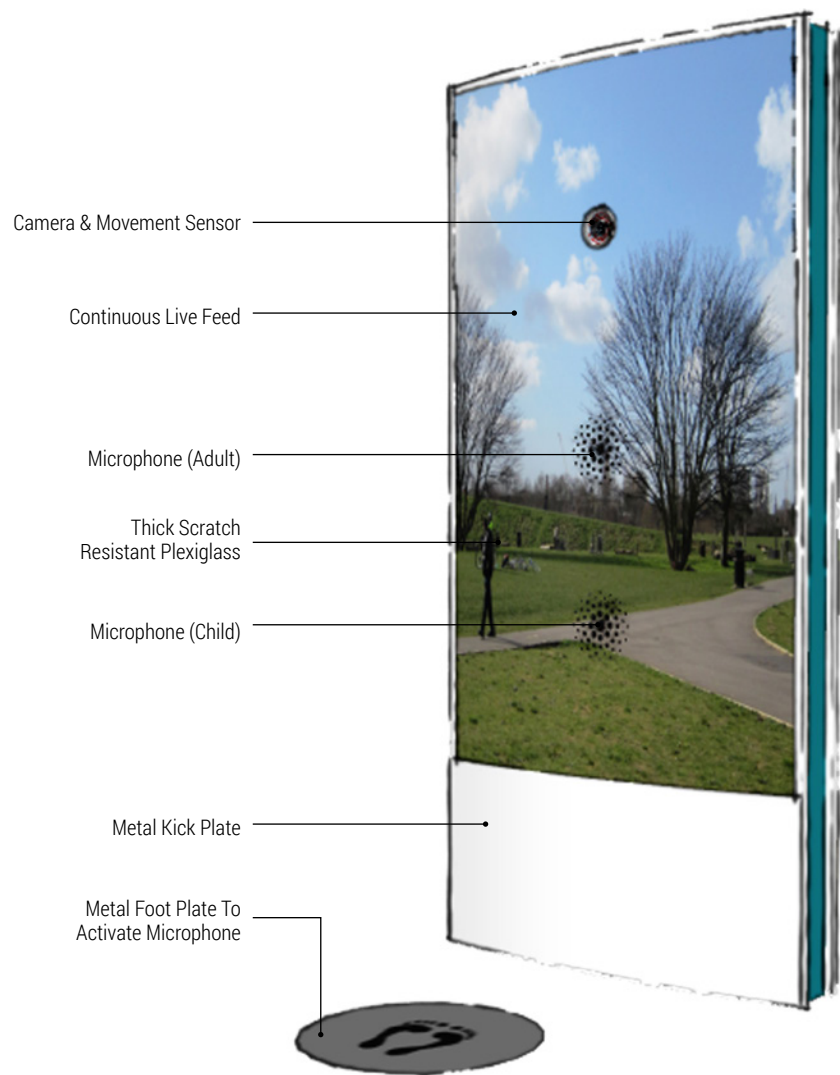
**Fig. 16 | C.C.Me at Nursery Row Park**  
Live video feed from the Leisure Centre attracting local residents.  
**Fig. 17 | C.C.Me at Burgess Park**  
This two sided screen has cameras on both faces, capturing the key areas of Burgess Park like the lake, tennis courts & barbecue area.

**Fig.18 | Live camera feed mode**

Stepping onto the metal foot plate activates the microphone, allowing the user to interact virtually with the user at the other location. Clap once for user information and clap twice for directory and news feed. For more detailed information, the user would be required to speak into the microphone.

**FUNCTIONS**

- Connect with locals via live feed camera and microphone.
- Discover new parts of the locality via live video.
- Information on local events.
- Local street directory.
- News feeds of events, including specials and discounts at local businesses.



In order to facilitate this sense of social and environmental awareness we propose the installation of C.C.Me screens as a means of increasing indirect contact between different social groups. Strategically located across a diverse range of environments within the locality, the main function of this innovative piece of technology will be to provide a live video and voice feed between different screens (Fig.15). The C.C.Me windows allow for passive interactions to occur between zones that we identify as being particularly susceptible to pocketisation by simply viewing different areas of the Walworth ecosystem. They also create the opportunity, if residents choose, to engage actively by speaking directly through the screen to residents in other nearby areas. C.C.Me will provide many more opportunities for brief daily encounters to occur between different social groups.

These windows will allow people to view unexplored areas, in order to familiarise themselves with new environments prior to physically visiting a place. An example on how this could be effective will be seen at the new Heygate, whereby new residents will be able to familiarise themselves with Burgess Park or Westmoreland Road by stumbling across screens placed at prominent points at the Heygate development and Elephant & Castle tube station (Fig.14,16,17). Once a person has become familiar with all parts of the Elephant & Castle area, C.C.Me will continue to be useful in providing information about shop specials, local community events, council announcements and also as a map directory of local businesses and amenities.

In order to respond to concerns about accessibility for those who are less familiar with interactive technology, a small information plaque will be present explaining how to use the C.C.Me screens (Fig.18). In addition, an attendant will be made available each day for its first month in order to assist new users. The same guide will also explain how users' privacy will continue to be protected.

Recognising London's reputation of 'endemic surveillance' we believe it is important for the screens' video and voice footage not to be recorded and stored. Also to prevent the unauthorised projection of people's conversation, a touch pad feature will ensure that the microphone is activated only when people choose.

As with other common means of funding new technology, there is potential for a venture capital firm to provide the initial funding for the development and installation costs of this pioneering piece of technology, after which local advertising fees will continue to provide on going maintenance costs.

We believe that C.C.Me has potential to not only help mediate social differences within the ecosystem, but also promote different forms of interaction throughout the high street.





Toy shop



Start-up shop



Start-up restaurant

**Fig. 19 | Diagram showing the vacant shops on Walworth Road**  
The circled area highlights the potential zone for pop-up clusters to be implemented. These pop-ups will cater to varied social groups.

### STRATEGY 3: PROGRAMMES

#### A PROCESS OF INTRODUCTION - POP-UP SPACES

As previously mentioned, the aim of the programmatic interventions is to stimulate compatibility, through the processes of introduction, participation and mixing in order to allow for increased accessibility to the high street by different social groups.

The first of these programmes will be to initiate a process of introduction of new social groups to targeted areas along Walworth Road by temporarily 'filling gaps' where the needs for specific social groups may not be met. We propose temporal shop spaces otherwise referred to as pop-up spaces as a dynamic way of encouraging a wider use of the street whilst also activating the high number of vacant tenancies in the area (Fig.19).

Capitalising on their event aspect, especially in the formation of clusters, pop-ups also have the potential to attract different targeted social groups to different areas along Walworth Road. For example, in the immediate future, we propose that pop-up stores should be aimed at attracting the local student population who currently recognisably under-utilise Walworth Road. Co-ordinated by the stewardship programme, a clustering of pop-up retail, student gallery spaces and study cafes or restaurants targeted towards students will attract this group to participate on the high street. Creating a multiplier effect to help support one another on the southern end of Walworth Road, these pop-ups will help to draw additional foot traffic from the local universities south. In an area previously identified as an exclusionary zone, we believe that introducing a new social group to the area will help mitigate social tensions through more regular daily contact.

Another function of the pop-up stores will be to provide a low-risk stepping stone for recent graduates, adding a new retail format to an existing array of shop types. These spaces will be hired by entrepreneurs at a flat rate to cover overhead costs. As an incentive, we propose that the council should exempt landlords from the full payment of business rates for the period of the pop-up's occupancy.

In recent years pop-up stores and events have become associated with their trend seeking, commercially driven clientele. As a result negative connotations have emerged such as its relation to hipster culture or gentrification. However, by focusing the role of Walworth Road's pop-ups towards fulfilling the needs of different social groups and encouraging social mixing, we believe that pop-ups will have a positive effect in helping to maintain a balance in the ecosystem. Responding to the area's diverse social mix, possible examples of pop-up stores strategically chosen by the stewardship body might include pop-up art galleries, homewares, restaurants, legal services, cafes, book shops, art and classes. In addition to targeting specific groups, we believe that providing an additional mix of event pop-ups will help stimulate curiosity and encourage exploration of the unfamiliar, eventually breaking the social barriers between existing and incoming residents.



Public Green Spaces



Study/Work Cafe



Student Gallery

**A PROCESS OF ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION  
EAST STREET TRAIN-UP**

The second of our interventions is aimed at initiating a process of encouraging the participation of the area's more at risk social groups who we believe are in danger of becoming extinct within the urban ecology of the high street. Open to all Southwark residents and business owners, the programme specifically aims to target the area's high population of unemployed and low-income groups who would not otherwise be able to afford training. Through this programme we also support small business owners, by providing training in how to better adapt their businesses to the needs of the changing market. With the purpose of empowering these vulnerable groups, we aim to increase their competitive edge against other better-resourced social groups or businesses, prolonging their participation on the high street.

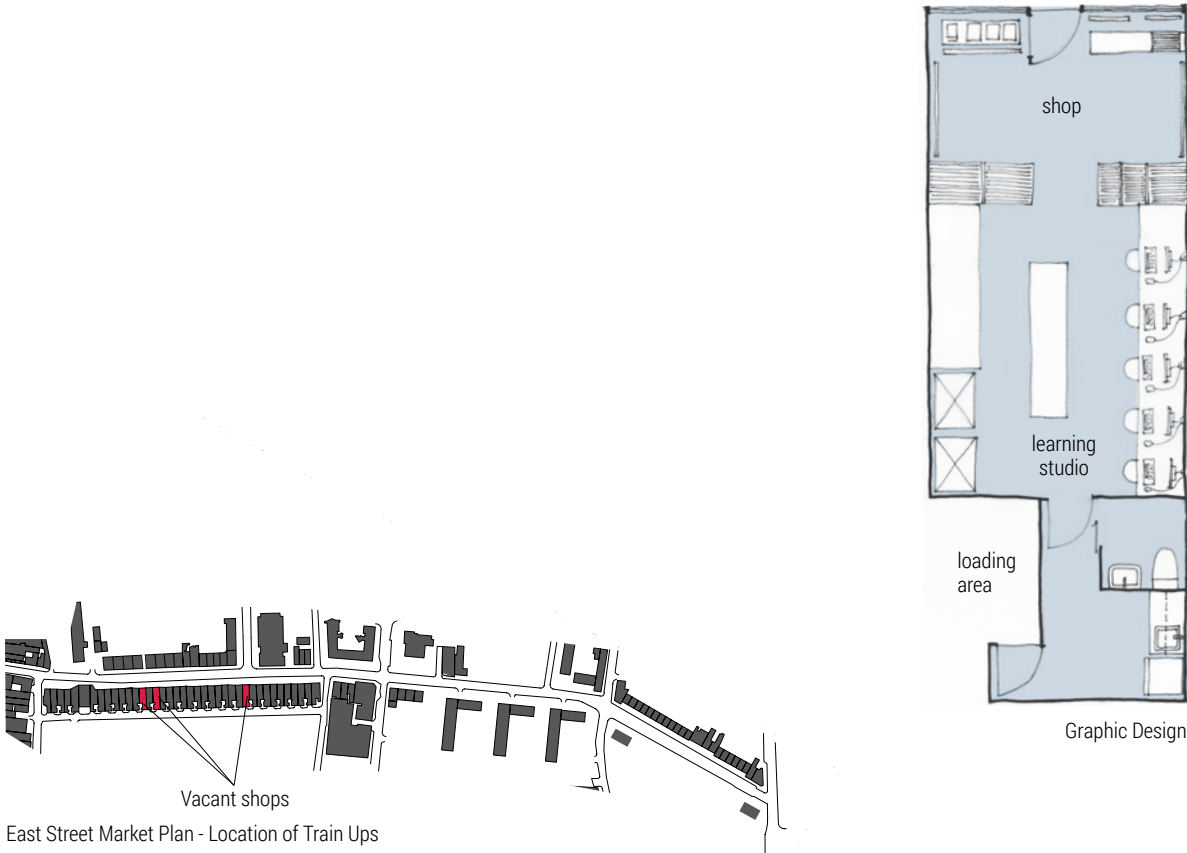
In order to take advantage of a large amount of council owned commercial properties, we propose that the training programme begin in the three currently vacant tenancies along East Street (Fig.20). With each different training programme located in its own shop tenancy, as additional

spaces become available, the training programme will be able to continue to expand. In keeping with the existing fine grain of East Street and its vibrancy, it is important for each training programme to have it's own active retail frontage to also assist in providing a small income for the programme. Examples we have provided include a graphic design training studio and a clothing production studio (Fig.20).

As part of the process of empowerment, there will be low-risk opportunities for graduates to test the marketability of their products in East Street Market's stalls and also in the pop-up market where available spaces will give first preference to recent graduates.

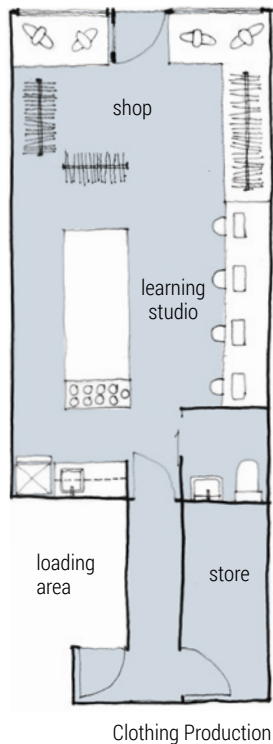
In addition to empowering vulnerable social groups, the training programme provides business and institutional network opportunities, further strengthening the local ecosystem's ability to adapt to changes (Fig.21). For instance, the programme can be run in partnership with local universities in order to formalise qualifications and ensure a

**Fig. 20 | Train-Up programme proposed layouts**  
Train up programmes are proposed to be implemented in council owned vacant shops, which can adapt to layouts that suit the activity/use.



higher standard of teaching. There are opportunities also for the programme to work in conjunction with local employers, by providing training in skills that are high in demand. Graduates also largely benefit from this by gaining direct access to local labour pools. Managed by the stewardship body, we propose that Southwark Council subsidise the cost of training for low income residents.

**Fig. 21 | Train-Up programme training activities**  
Clothing production and training for small business owners.





## A PROCESS OF MIXING EAST STREET MARKET

East Street Market exists as a space where dense activity and interactions between different social groups take place as a daily occurrence. Yet, in order to ensure it persists in this role, we believe the market's breadth of activity can be enhanced to meet its full potential as a successful public space.

In addition to its current form as a local market for affordable goods, we propose a complementary specialty market occurring every Sunday. Each week this specialty market will rotate between different themes in order to spark the interests of different social groups within the area. Some examples could be a food market, craft market, a charity stall day or a clothing swap (Fig.22, 23). This specialty market could function not only as a platform to showcase new ideas, but also as a new format for cultural expression. By targeting

various social groups with the specialty market, we believe that through familiarity these different groups will more likely continue to engage with the regular market, thus enhancing its status as a place for rich interactions. While C.C.Me leads to increased familiarity through indirect communication, East Street Market encourages people to actively engage in face-to-face interactions.

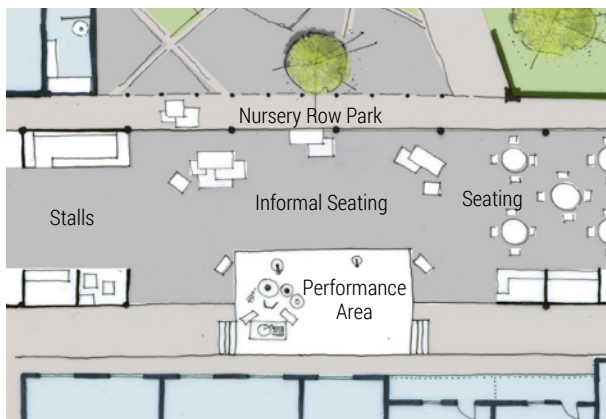
Also, in order to fill the market's vacant stalls we propose that four of these spaces be made available for entrepreneurial graduates of the training programme to showcase their products. Similar to the pop-up programme, one entrepreneur will hold each stall for a short period of one to three months, after which the stall will then be passed on to a new successful applicant. In the spirit of creating low barriers,

**Fig. 22 | Proposed alternative market layouts**

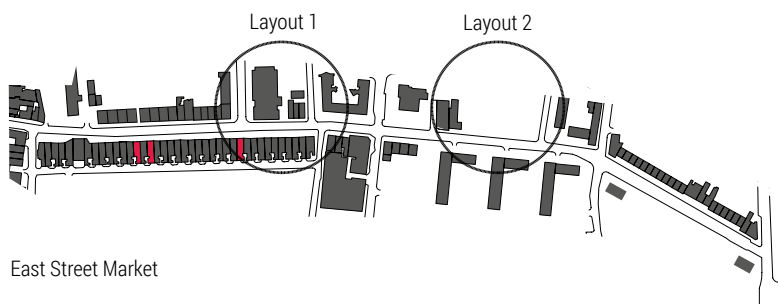
The market can adapt to various activities through innovative layouts at different locations.



Layout 1: Part of the road converted into seating area for food stalls that are clustered together.



Layout 2: The width of the road in front of the park used as a performance area with informal seating for viewers.



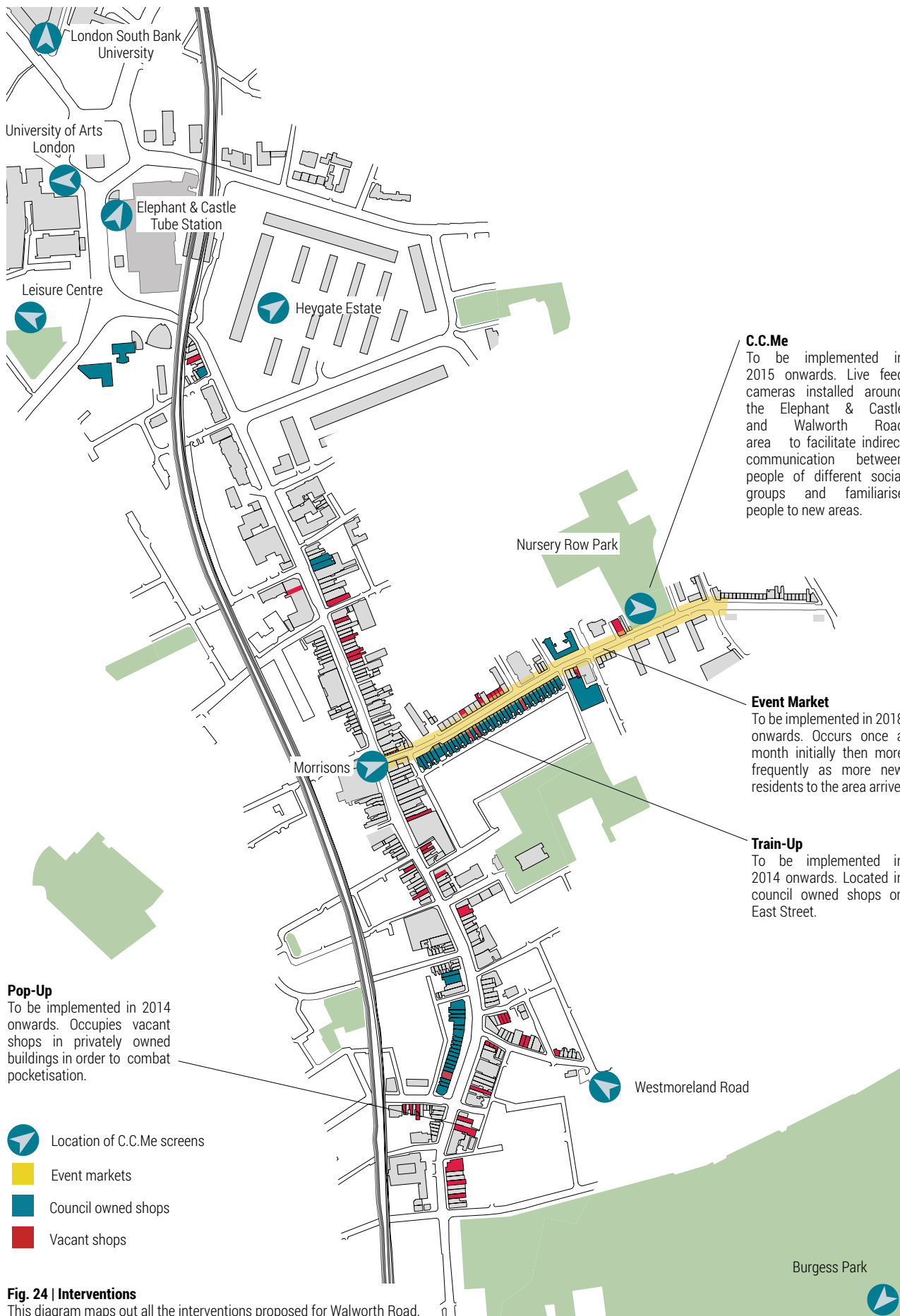
East Street Market

these stalls should be let for free. In addition, the stewardship body should push for remaining vacant stalls to be occupied by vendors selling takeaway street food. There are very few stalls of this type currently in existence yet street food stalls could attract both local employees and nearby shoppers to the market, further enhancing its diverse mixing of people.

We believe that the stewardship body could begin to occupy the vacant stalls in the immediate future. However, as the market currently functions as a successful public space utilised by a wide range of different social groups, the speciality markets would be more effective in bringing together new social groups once the first stage of the Heygate development becomes fully occupied.

**Fig. 23 | Examples of different outdoor markets**  
Food and night markets.





## CONCLUSION

Using these three strategic approaches to initiate a process of compatibility, we believe that Walworth Road's ecosystem will become more resilient through its increased ability to adapt to challenges presented by the regeneration plan (Fig.24).

Local high streets are important public spaces representative of the needs of its local residents through the fusing of commercial and social realms. The Walworth Road commercial area bears many characteristics which exemplify this, such as its small flexible shop spaces, the interdependence of large chain stores and small independent retail, and anchors such as East Street Market, which attract a diverse range of social groups forming an intensity of interactions. It is these relationships that have allowed Walworth Road's urban ecosystem to adapt to past market changes.

However, due to the proposed regeneration plan, the local demographics of the area will be significantly altered, resulting in new emerging tensions between existing and incoming social groups. We predict that some of these tensions will manifest in pocketisation and further social displacement.

In order for the ecosystem to continue to adapt in a sustainable way it is important for the council to assist these two disparate social patterns to co-exist compatibly. As spatial, social and economic forces are interdependent on one another, it is important that this social tension be addressed holistically. For this reason, our proposed intervention consists of three strategies, each addressing issues through the processes of information, introduction, participation and mixing. The aim is to reframe how the high street is conceptualised from the point of view of the council: not simply as a place of commerce but as a place of temporal cultural expression, social engagement and complex interactions supported by physical and technological strategies.

By engaging with the process of compatibility we will allow for the Walworth ecosystem to adapt to the changing environment in order for diversity to flourish on the high street.



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