

AN OPEN SYSTEM

RUSLAN ALIEV | ELIZABETH DEWOLF | SERENA GIRANI | PETER GRIFFITHS | PAULA SZEJNFELD SIRKIS

INTRODUCTION

Does the planning focus on Elephant & Castle's transport connectivity lead to social disconnect on a local scale? In analysing the historical and present Opportunity Area planning contexts, this project argues that the current transport-focused approach to redeveloping the strategic site surrounding Elephant & Castle and St George's Circus will undermine its potential to function as a local centre, just like over a century of unsuccessful regeneration schemes that preceded it. The transport capacity to accompany the development of housing and jobs for new residents and workers is well-defined and measured while strategies to integrate them with current residents are neglected. Given that a perceived disconnect between residents and non-residents already exists, Opportunity Area planning is likely to exacerbate this. There is the opportunity for this not to be the case, but this requires a rethinking of how to use Opportunity Areas to develop specific social infrastructure to bring non-residents, new residents and old residents together thereby supporting the new centre planners want to create.

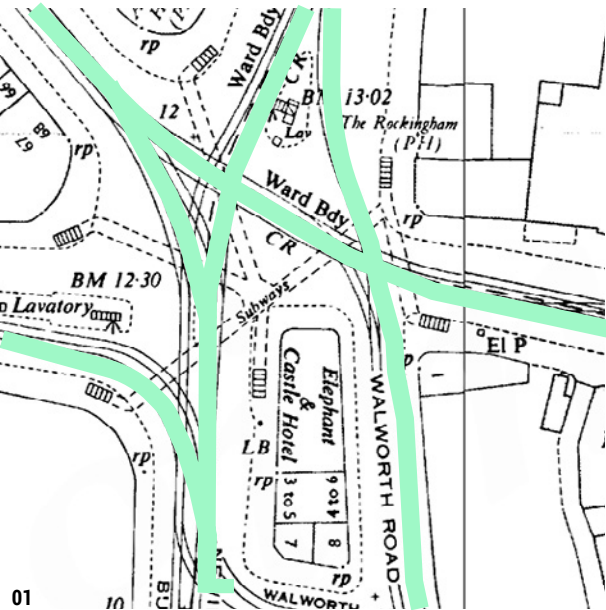
HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Elephant & Castle's primary value has long been understood in terms of proximity and accessibility to Central London, but prior redevelopment efforts have not successfully exploited this resource despite increasingly grand-scale private and public developments. Over the last few decades, the area has boasted one of Europe's greenest buildings (Eighteen, 2005), London's greenest building (SLHL, 1991), London's tallest apartment building (SLP, 1959), and Europe's biggest shopping centre (SLP, 1960).

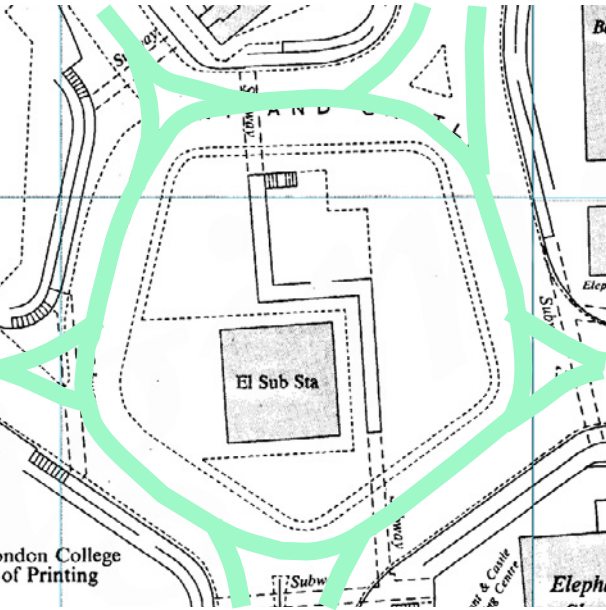
During its 1920s heyday, the messy intersection supported the Piccadilly of the South, collecting people rather than dispersing them (Humphrey, 2013). Unlike Piccadilly Circus, successive rationalist reworking of the roads culminated in the 1960s reshaping into the current pentagon junction, removing the friction created by the chaos of connecting routes. St George's Consortium (Southwark News, 2000), who made a recent bid for the redevelopment plan, suggested halving the number of lanes entering the junction in order to reduce the 'slingshot' effect and quieten the pace, recognising that 'point-to-point' connections allow for accelerated movement but limit opportunities for interaction (Hillier, 1996:260).

As with the surrounding area, the scale of interventions at the Elephant & Castle junction has been significant over the last century. Before WW2, the interchange was a huge local asset, encouraging people to stop, shop, and even drop at the ever-expanding hotel. Its value was not aligned with moving efficiently through it. Bomb damage later opened up big parcels of land leaving plots for intervention at a scale unusually large for London. This resulted in a change in purpose from a destination to a transport junction with a focus on connectivity to the City rather than the area surrounding it. Not fully understanding the economic and social consequences of this shift in scale and purpose may partly be responsible for repeated regeneration failures thus far.

1952



1967



PRESENT CONTEXT

Southwark Council has sold the public Heygate Estate to private developer Lend Lease for it to be transformed into 'a (private) model for high quality urban living' (Southwark News, 1998), part of a larger regeneration effort TfL hope will encourage utilisation of the transport hub's full potential. This potentially excludes the nearby shopping centre, which Deputy Mayor for Transport Isabel Dedring (2014) sees as a sub-optimal anchor for the junction's impending rebirth-by-peninsularisation as it primarily serves local low-income residents.

Within the London Plan, Opportunity Areas are brownfield sites considered resources for providing infrastructure, land, and investment to support more jobs and houses (2011:60; 2.58). The Blackfriars Mile is a grouping of sites the local council has identified as being able to support brownfield redevelopment and density intensification (Southwark, 2013a) and forms part of the the Elephant & Castle Opportunity Area, as defined in the London Plan (2011:60). It focuses interventions around linkage to bring new people in; it uses the public street to activate a point-to-point connection between the Thames and the new centre. In effect, the council sees the development challenge as spatially and economically connecting London with Elephant & Castle. The lack of social research in Opportunity Area planning - at City and local authority level - forms part of a central critique of this project and informs the need to find a methodology to build social connection into Opportunity Area planning.

Though not an Opportunity Area plan, the Urban Forest initiative does give some priority to encouraging relationships between 'the 'local' urban interior and the rapidly developing edges' along Bankside by attempting to soften borders for tourists, using landscaping to activate pathways through the neighbourhood (WWMA, 2007:3, 10). Although the Urban Forest has invested energy in investigating local social networks, it is a private initiative primarily aimed at tourists (ibid 14).

As these privately-led strategies are operating in a speculative post-recession environment, they must be delivered relatively quickly and although they are happening within a policy framework, they don't directly connect to each other spatially or temporally. Both projects allude to the provision of social infrastructure in their planning but have no clear strategy for implementation. This lack of strategy for social intervention will only reinforce the existing problems of Elephant & Castle, the centre that pins these interventions into south London.

Just to the north is St George's Circus, branded as 'the southern gateway to central London' (Southwark, 2013b:14), echoing that the area's legitimacy is in providing overflow for business that cannot fit in into the main centre across the Thames. While attracting investment could bring significant opportunity for new social relationships between residents, new residents and non-residents, the council's policy on social infrastructure does not guide where new

Fig. 01 | Evolution of junctions at Elephant & Castle
Source: digimap.edina.ac.uk
Fig. 02 | Public transport accessibility level
Source: TfL

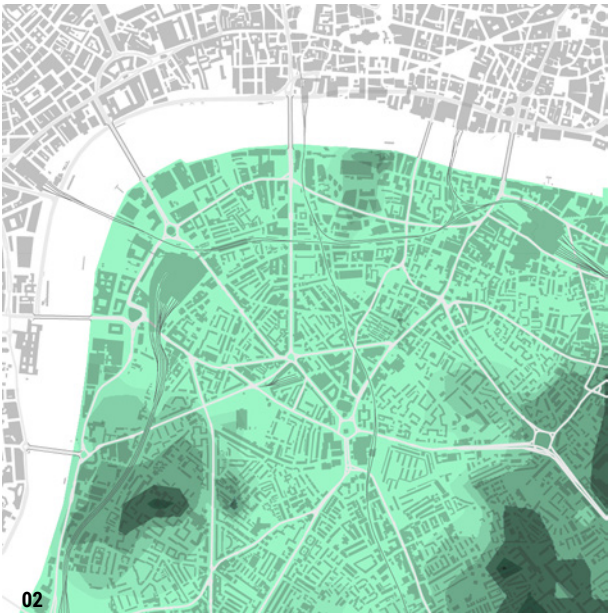
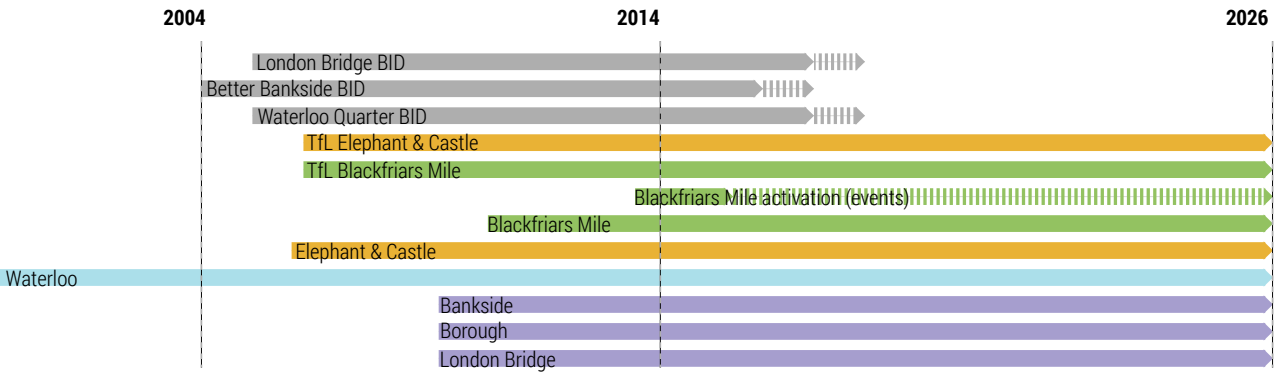




Fig. 03 | Spatial fragmentation
 Source: Southwark Council & Lambeth Council planning documents

interventions should happen to ‘strengthen the relationships between people living and working in the area’ or how it will encourage ‘accessibility for all’ (Southwark, 2013a:18; 3.14). Currently, the council’s planning report for implementing Opportunity Areas defines the only strategic use for CILs and Section 106 charging schedules as ‘transport mitigation’ (Southwark Council, 2012b:4). CIL legislation allows areas to be compensated for the ‘cost of infrastructure required to support the development’ (2010:12; 14.1a), which may include social infrastructure. The City of London sees economic opportunity in making Elephant & Castle a ‘town centre’, but a more progressive planning framework can redevelop the centre in a more sustainable way by ensuring social infrastructure is in place to support it.



FRICION AND RESONANCE

RESONANCE

To understand Elephant & Castle's potential to perform as a centre, we analysed Angel and Old Street, two other major transport nodes and popular neighbourhood centres along the London Inner Ring Road and the Northern Line. We consistently found that the greatest amount of social and economic activity did not occur in the main node but on the streets just removed. As residents mitigate the chaos of junctions by seeking alternative paths to access the areas around them, the centre reaches beyond the junction. The pedestrian patterns along these alternative paths attract small-scale retail, enriching and further extending the centre. As in space resonance theory, where electron particles influence those around them in waves of continuous communication (Wolff, 1995), spatially concentrated interactions resonate outward from urban nodes and manifest in perceivable physical layers in the urban fabric. This resonance is best perceived along the streets, as they serve to 'spread the centre out' (Hall, 2012:180).

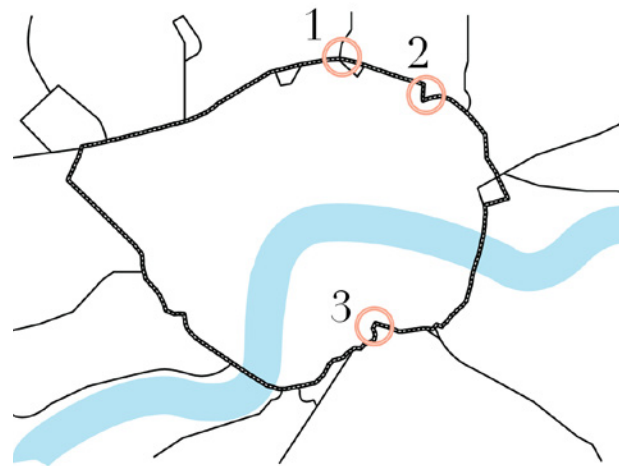
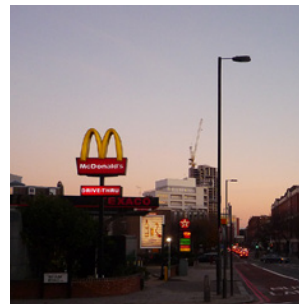


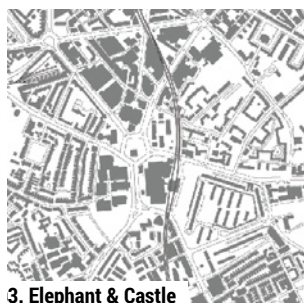
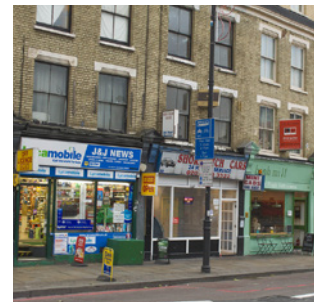
Fig. 04 | Centres within London Inner Ring Road
Source: Edina , BLOM 2013



1. Angel



2. Old Street



3. Elephant & Castle



FRICTION

Centres are dense concentrations of spatial and social difference, and they form the types of spaces that philosopher Unger refers to as 'zones of heightened mutual vulnerability, within which people gain a chance to resolve ... conflict' while catering to 'microlevel ... defiance and incongruity' (Unger, 1987:562, 564). This microlevel defiance that different communities engage with as they manage their co-existence and come to make sense of the 'other' is friction. As a force used either to start or stop activity, friction can have productive or destructive consequences; what could result in cooperation in some multicultural districts may lead to tensions and crime in areas where social disconnection is particularly pronounced. Productive frictions generated by the negotiation of social, cultural, and political differences are actually preferable to consensus (Wittgenstein, 1958:46); as Jane Jacobs (1961) argues, difference stimulates 'spontaneous self-diversification' through which groups assert their influence on their neighbourhoods, effectively producing urban space and driving forward social, cultural, and economic innovation (Lefebvre, 1974; Huvendick & Lenskjold, 2004). Thus, friction can be a resource if channelled to bridge rather than deepen disconnect, enabling the centre to resonate outward in waves that overlap and shape its surroundings.

READING AN OPEN SYSTEM

Resonance speaks to the centre being part of a larger city context, a kind of system where the centre both has an influence on the periphery and the periphery on the centre. Solving 'problems' by simply pushing frictions further out from the centre will only increase socio-spatial inequalities, which will likely have a far greater negative impact on the centre. City environments are complex, and everything has an impact on its immediate surroundings, making it problematic to draw boundaries to create closed system environments (Batty, 2011). Operating within an open system encourages planners to transfer their development focus from the central point toward a network of strategically advantageous beats or 'pulses' (Hall, 2012:180) where frictions overlap. In reaching beyond the centre to a wider audience on a smaller, more dispersed scale, a distributed development strategy can be realised that is inclusive of both commuters and residents (Sassen, 2006:29).

The open system includes all of the Opportunity Areas within Southwark and neighbouring Lambeth, with some overflow into their immediate surroundings. The scale of the system is larger than the Local Authority to include relationships beyond borough boundaries and it focuses on the area north of Elephant & Castle as its proximity to Central London makes it a contested site of regeneration.

Any system has the potential to over-simplify or abstract. Forrester's (1969) attempt to use cybernetics to define all cities as one system had disastrous consequences; his models advocated for wide-scale clearing of social housing in favour of luxury homes. If this system were let loose in Southwark, Elephant Park, the new Heygate, won't be the only scheme that razes social housing. The open system recognises that people's spatial relationship to the city is an imagined lived experience (Crane, 1960), so every mapped street has been walked; interviews and surveys provided greater insight into how residents and non-residents relate to the area; and commuter flows by bus were studied entering and exiting Elephant & Castle with empirical data sets to confirm our perceptual analysis.

The open system is one of the ways planners can use Opportunity Areas to support the regeneration efforts going on across London by ensuring development does not 'privilege the centre' (Sennet, 2008:10), but strengthens 'the complex interactions necessary to join up the different human groups the city contains' (ibid). The council needs to drive these connections as developers are unlikely to plan beyond their scheme boundaries. Lend Lease, for example, were criticised for using major transport links to develop Westfield Stratford City as a 'citadel of ... high-end retail, which aim[s] to attract the well-heeled of the region rather than the local communities around them' (Minton, 2008:XIV-XV). The Blackfriars Mile project, as a kind of transport infrastructure linking London to what is hoped to eventually be a completely new centre at Elephant & Castle, risks achieving the same result. However, Opportunity Areas along Blackfriars and around the Elephant can be used to 'locate new community resources at the edges between communities ... to open the gates between different ... communities' (Sennet, 2008:11). The following analysis explains how planners can locate and open these gates.

CONTEXT SPECIFIC ANALYSIS

LOCATING GATES THROUGH RHYTHM ANALYSIS

As people move through space, a variety of signals allow the moods and atmospheres of a place to be judged and interpreted. In this movement malfunctions of rhythm or arrhythmia are registered as disruptions in the fabric of the city, potentially prompting people to alter their path (Lefebvre, 1974). Arrhythmia, or ‘breaks’, can be physical, such as an abrupt change in building scale, or perceptual, like the unease brought on by a sudden lack of people in the street. For a centre to be successful at drawing people in, breaks in approach must be kept to a minimum; rather, its influence must resonate in a way that prepares people for arrival at the central point. To understand the rhythm of approach to Elephant & Castle, we analysed the movement to it from Central London using what is considered by the council to be its greatest asset: public transport.

Specifically, the analysis covered five routes crossing the Thames via Westminster, Waterloo, Blackfriars, Southwark, and London Bridges. First we analysed statistical patterns of movement towards Elephant & Castle using TfL passenger data to determine points along the routes which were particularly attractive to pedestrians and which ones they avoided. Densities at bus stops along four of the routes clearly show Elephant & Castle to be the busiest, with quieter rings fanning outwards, showing breaks of significantly quieter activity, particularly around St George’s Circus.

We then engaged in qualitative perception mapping, recording our experience along the path to Elephant & Castle while observing building use, landmarks, changes in urban grain, signage, movement of fellow passengers, and whether we felt a sense of preparedness to enter a new centre after leaving Central London.

Changing patterns in building scale, road capacity, land use, and street-level activity were observed on each 15-minute route, and breaks occurred at similar intervals along all five, supporting the understanding of centres as nodes that resonate outward in broad rings. For example, the influence of the central city is apparent in the large scale of hotel and office buildings from the Thames down to the railway overpass that crosses all five routes. After this point, the size of buildings dramatically reduces to a more human scale, and they become increasingly geared toward residential and small business use. The final segments of the route pass through an indeterminate area of generic institutional and commercial structures that do not provide any spatial cues to prepare passengers for arrival at the centre. Suddenly, the buses turn a corner and dump passengers at the Elephant & Castle junction in a frenzy of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Such an approach to the centre is disorientating and suggests that the influence of this particular centre does not resonate to integrate co-existence in a gradual, cohesive way. In this case, the rings meet to form constraining boundaries that isolate the different urban realities within them, contributing to increasing fragmentation along the bus routes.

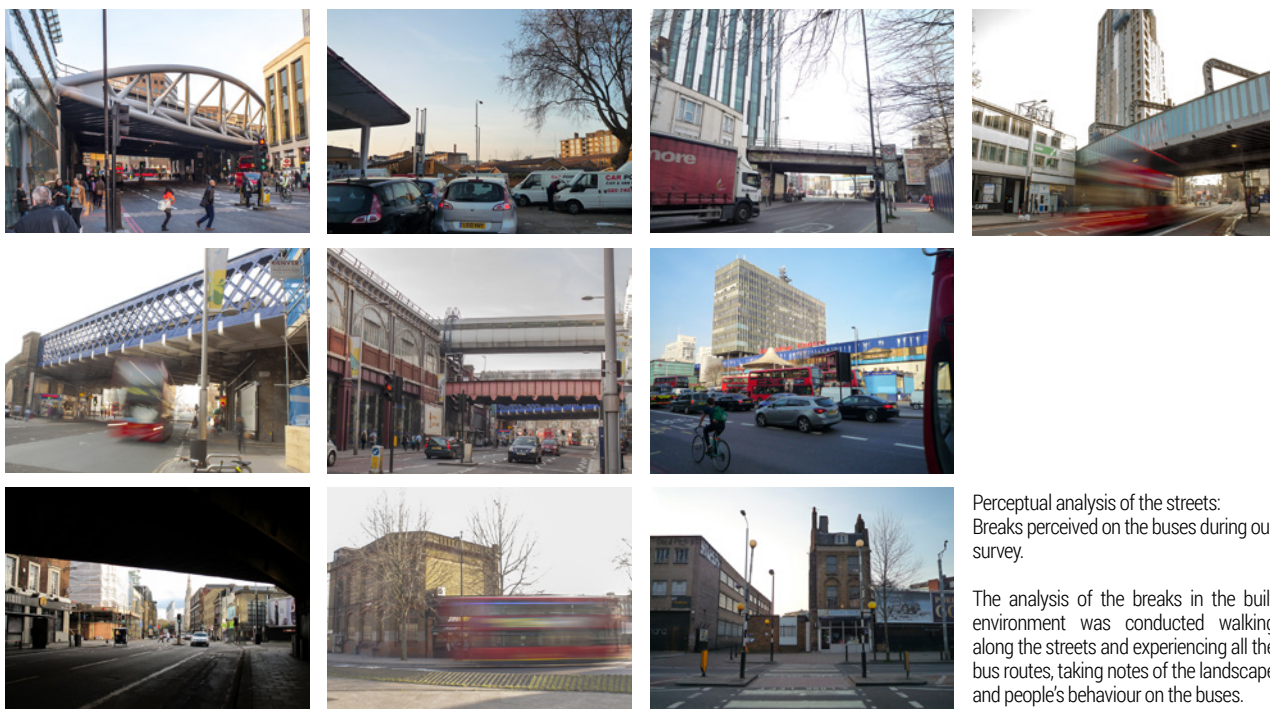
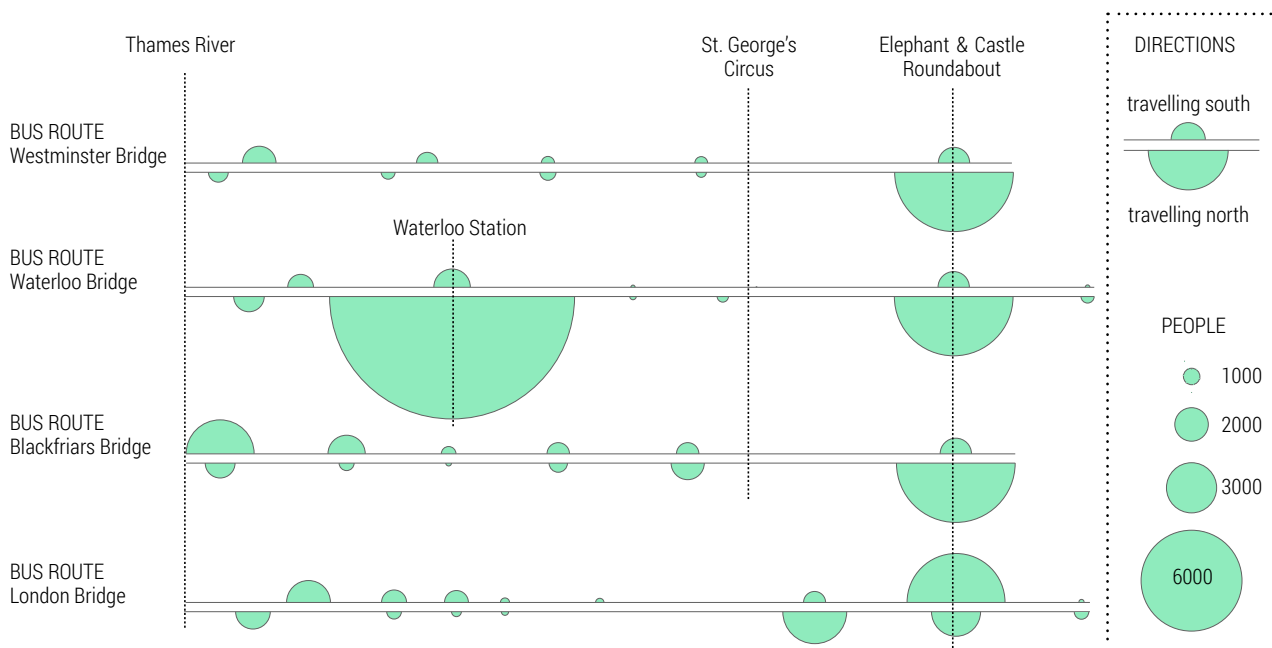


Fig. 05 | Jobs, employment and new businesses
Source: Southwark Council, 2012

Fig. 06 | Bus stop utilisation: daily occupancy average on bus stops on a week day

The graphic shows the sum of the daily average number of boarders of every bus route using these bus stops.

Source: TfL Bus Service Survey Analysis, 2009-2013



Perceptual analysis of the streets:
Breaks perceived on the buses during our survey.

The analysis of the breaks in the built environment was conducted walking along the streets and experiencing all the bus routes, taking notes of the landscape and people's behaviour on the buses.

INTERVIEWS

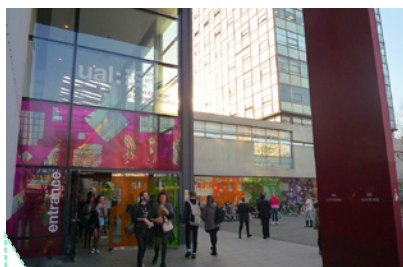
To understand how structural unemployment affects the social resonance of the area, we conducted 25 in-depth interviews with local residents, students, and people working but not living in the area. The interviews took place at the Elephant & Castle shopping centre, the London College of Communication, the Elephant & Castle metro station, the Rockingham housing estate, and at a number of local businesses and on streets equally distributed between the roundabout and Central London. Four pervasive themes emerged from these conversations: (1) transport accessibility is the neighbourhood's greatest asset; (2) its greatest flaw is that there is no place for youth and the unemployed to 'hang out'; (3) change through regeneration is welcome, but it must be inclusive and serve the needs of the existing population; and (4) there is a social disconnect between residents and non-residents, or those who are moving in due to the regeneration. We were particularly interested in this disconnect because it pointed to a destructive friction that could be undermining the resonance of Elephant & Castle.



The reason behind [the regeneration] is to get rid of the poor people and bring in new rich people. Eventually you'll have the locals moving out...

unemployed resident,
in shopping mall, late-20s

1



The people you see at the roundabout are the people who just come in, not the people who live in the area. When you're from outside it becomes a concern to you because you don't really see what is going on there.

security desk employee at LCC,
male, middle-aged

2



They should build more places that kids could go... A lot of young children have criminal records before reaching 18, and it's a very bad start for them in life.

father in rising sun pub near
rockingham estate

3



I used to volunteer at the library but I have a child now and so I can't work. I wish I could look for a job.

mother in community garden
near heygate estate

4



The neighbourhood feels rundown, it needs businesses, more money and little bit of regeneration. Those things will help.

job centre employee, non-resident,
male, mid-30s

5

Residential Property Value

Unemployment

Density

Land Use

Urban Grain + Heights

Opportunity Areas

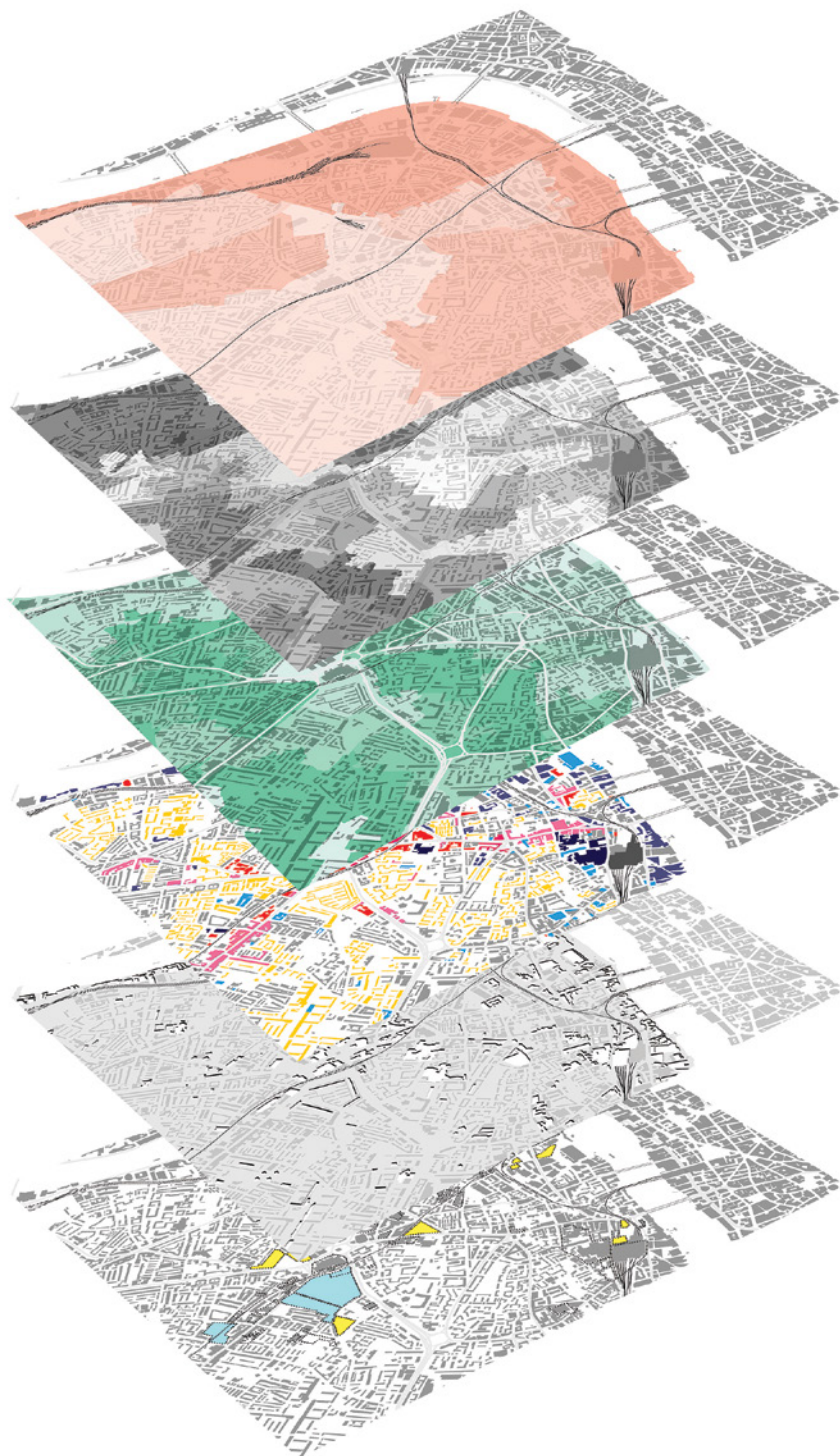


Fig. 07 | Multiples layers
Mapping the complexity of the open system.

METHODOLOGY

We developed a methodology for identifying resonance and frictions around Elephant & Castle to highlight that the council does have the tools at its disposal to measure social concerns directly related to Opportunity Area planning. Particular overlaps will be used to identify sites for strengthening the centre by providing shared access to spaces for residents, commuters and non-residents. Without this shared space, the opportunity for developing relationships to each other and to the spaces supported by the centre is limited.

The following layers provide a quantitative understanding of the context into which Opportunity Areas are being inserted: Residential Property Values; Unemployment (Variable Friction) and Density; Land Use; and Urban Grain and Heights. The Council uses Opportunity Areas to propose where development can take place, focusing on transport accessibility. Opportunity Areas are likely to be developed first and, those that include publicly owned plots present ideal sites for intervention. The 15-year Opportunity Area plan includes 56 hectares in total, of which 40% is public land. Of this public land, 15% has already been developed.

The layers show a complex built environment. Bigger buildings hug the Thames, showing the influence the City has across the river. Moving south, the landscape is interrupted by train tracks and a mix of lower density typologies made up of continuous street facades, former industrial buildings, terraced houses, and gated estates. Approaching and immediately around the Elephant & Castle is a collection of completely different typologies, highrise modernist shopping centre and buildings and new 'global city' buildings characterised by a fragmented urban grain. Proceeding south the density considerably decreases and also the typology becomes more uniform. The change in grain is reflected in the varied land use, which also highlights how the Elephant & Castle pulls mixed activity down from the north along the main roads and limits non-residential use south of the junction.

The multiple layers show how Elephant & Castle and Central London have an effect of resonance. We can read a double system. The first one, consisting of public institutions (mainly cultural), private institutions (largely educational) and offices, attracts people at a metropolitan level; it is developed along the bank of the river and at Elephant & Castle. The second one, the local system, is mostly made up of smaller shops spread along the high streets. Land use identifies this disconnect between residents and non-residents.

Residential property value clearly shows the influence of the City, with land values in the highest band along the Thames, but also by viaducts and the factory typology east of Blackfriars Mile. The depressed values along Blackfriars and Elephant & Castle show the economic rationale behind the Opportunity Areas; from a Central London perspective, this land is at a significant discount, dropping by at least 20% between the north section of St George's Circus and Elephant & Castle.

The index of deprivation is used to add a social layer to the physical and economic frictions. Since local access to jobs presented as one of the big social disconnects in the area, and to a greater degree than in London as a whole, isolating unemployment helps spatially locate frictions. As stated above, structural unemployment acts as a friction in that the skills mismatch makes it unlikely these residents will be able to access many of the new jobs the borough is producing. Moving away from central London, density triples from the top of Blackfriars Road and mainly concentrates around Elephant & Castle. Density is used to inform where the highest pockets of unemployed people are, giving a clearer idea of where significant social frictions exist.

Overlaying these layers of analysis produces a map visualising a complex open system that resonates from the two centres: Elephant & Castle and central London. The data have been simplified to make frictions legible so gates can be identified. Opportunity Areas already built out have been hidden. BIDs have been added to show potential partners and the major roads, where visibility is greatest, have been plotted. These streets give a sense of how people transit through the space and how the different areas are physically connected.

The areas where layers overlap, especially along high-visibility bus routes, are of interest because they spatially highlight where frictions are likely to make it difficult for residents and non-residents to interact meaningfully. By using the Opportunity Areas to strategically position social infrastructure in these spaces, these gates can be opened, thereby unlocking 'our capacity to live together' (Sennet, 2012:200).

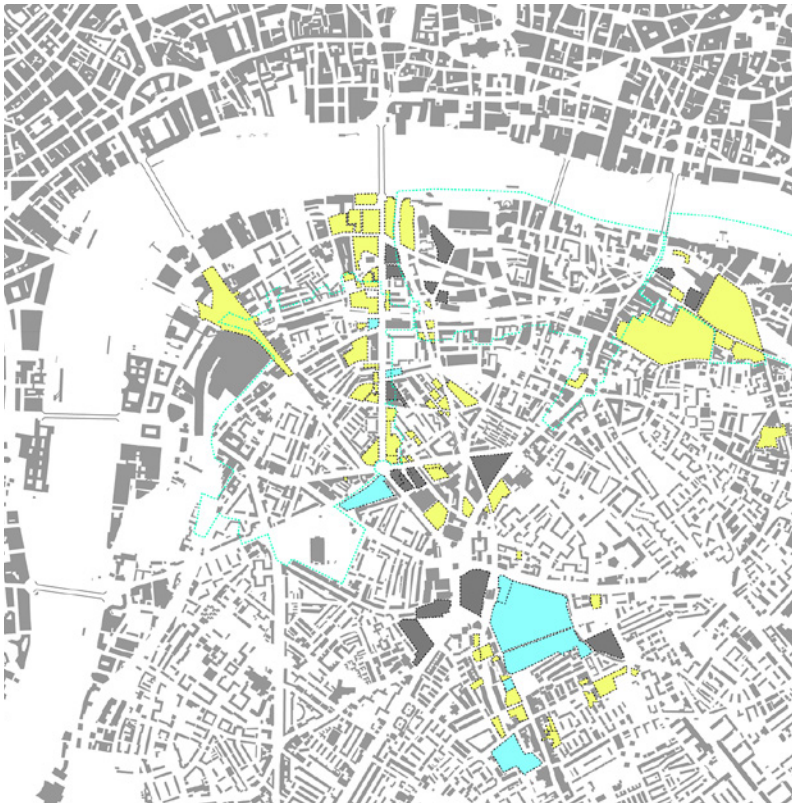


Fig. 08 | Opportunity Areas

Source: Southwark Council, Lambeth Council, 2014

- publicly owned
- approved or being redeveloped
- rest
- BID boundary

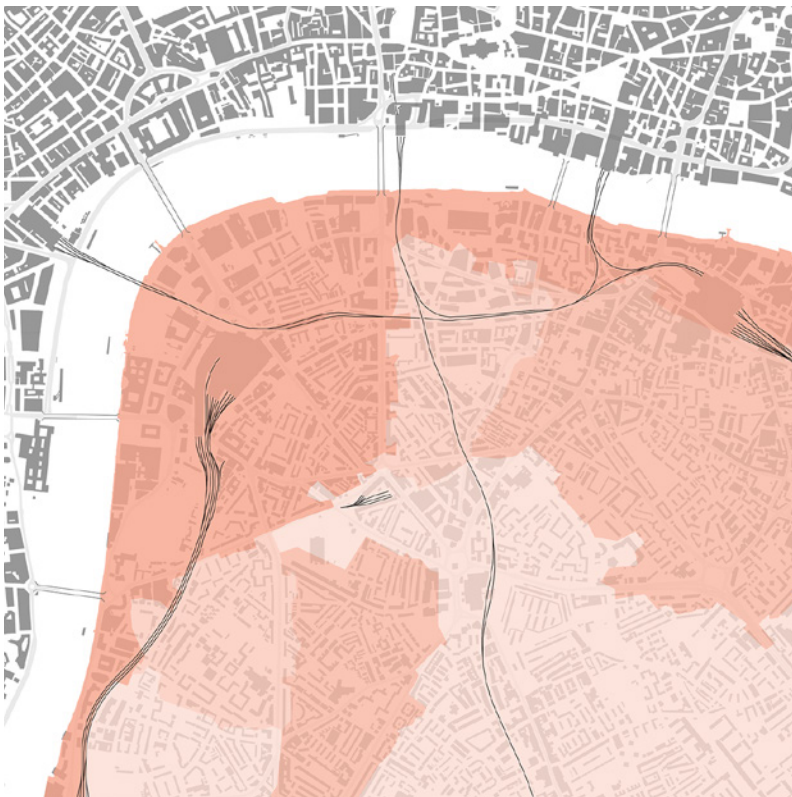


Fig. 09 | Residential property value (£)

Source: zoopla.co.uk, 2014

- £ 270,000 - £ 320,000
- £ 320,001 - £ 400,000
- £ 400,001 - £ 490,000
- £ 490,001 - £ 560,000
- £ 560,001 - £ 850,000

Fig. 10 | Unemployment

Source: Indices of deprivation, 2010

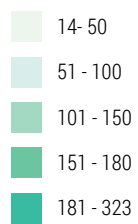
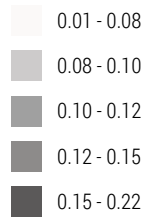


Fig. 11 | Density (people per hectare)

Source: GLA, 2013

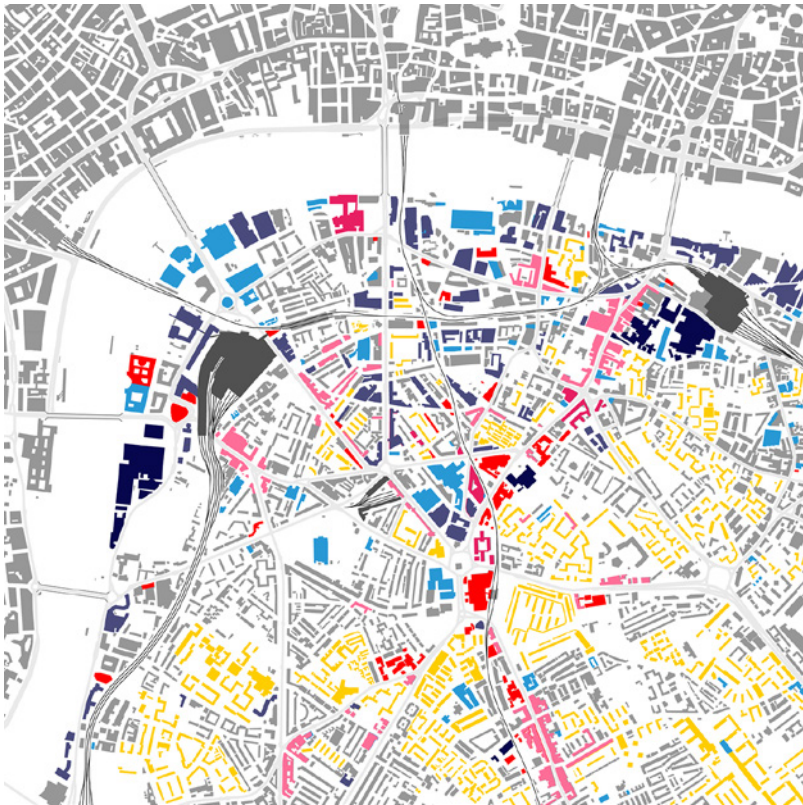


Fig. 12 | Land use

- commercial
- mixed use - commercial
- offices
- mixed use - offices
- cultural institutions
- non-cultural institutions
- infrastructure
- public housing



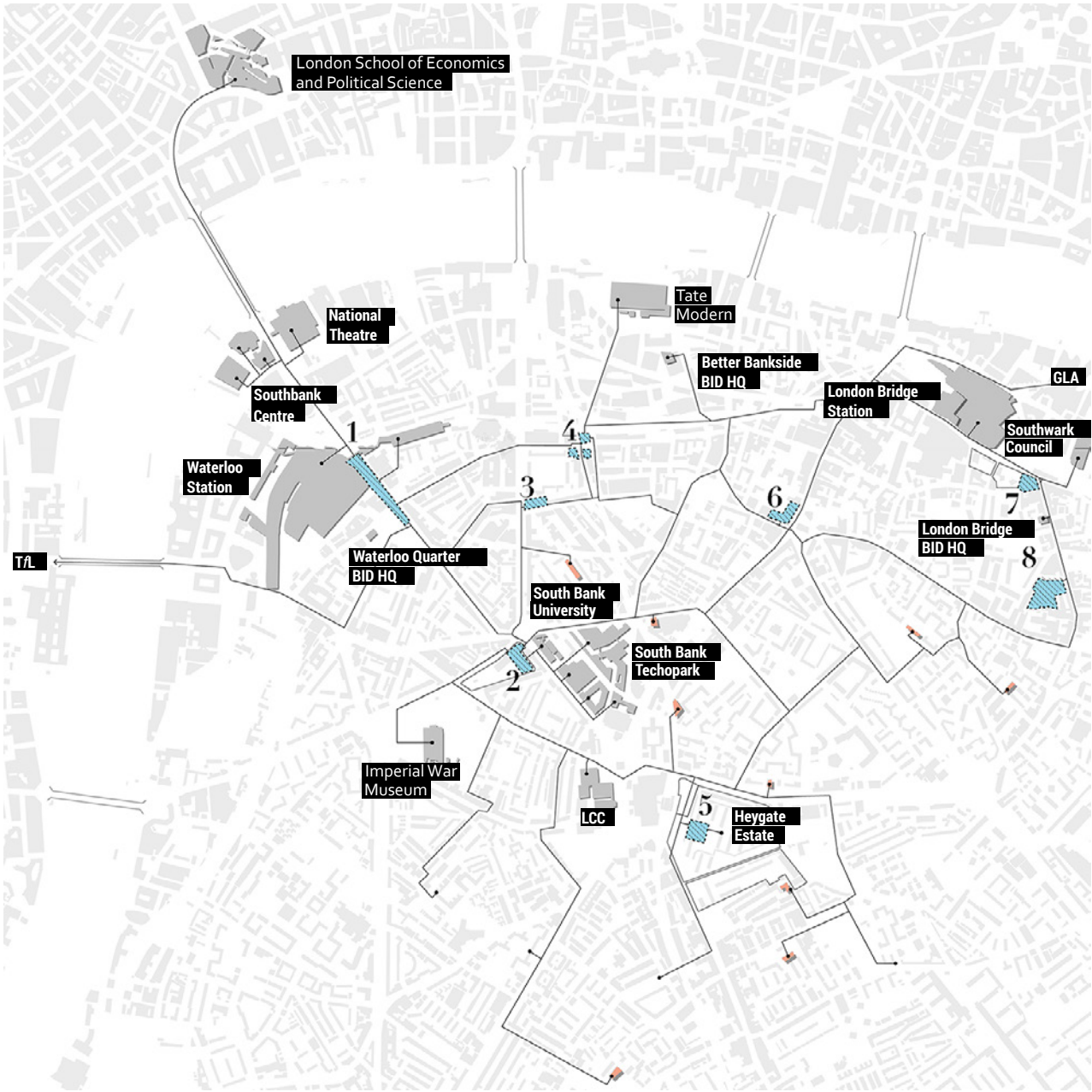
- building over 20 metres
- urban grain

Fig. 13 | Urban grain and heights
Source: Cities Revealed, 2012



- local use spaces
- spaces attracting non-residents
- spaces of metropolitan importance
- high unemployment + high density zones
- opportunity areas
- opportunity areas, public
- BID boundaries

Fig. 14 | Synthesis map





 intervention plots
 community centres

Fig. 15 | The open system

OPEN SYSTEM

SYSTEM OF INTERVENTION

By identifying the areas where social and spatial friction is concentrated, a strategy can be generated to encourage relationships across the gates to broadly increase interactions between residents and non-residents. The council's plan to connect Elephant & Castle to the City using Blackfriars Mile and other linkage projects are point-to-point spatial strategies that may actually reinforce gates. The complexity of cities requires a system of relationships; the centre will need to have relationships with the areas around it and not just with regenerated areas.

'Cities that develop organically over time possess a rich web of overlapping connections' while building cities like 'trees' is not ideal as branches can never grow back into each other, which undermines a city's structural complexity and sustainability (Alexander, 1965:70). Blackfriars Mile emphasises Elephant & Castle's 'branch' character, while the open system adds a layer of relational complexity to and around the centre, strengthening the centre.

The open system suggests relationships, both physical and social, that in a sense 'build' the semi-lattice Alexander (1965) positions as superior to the 'tree'. Oxford Street, London's premier high street, highlights how powerful these lattices can be: space syntax analysis shows it to be the most physically integrated street in London (Major, Penn & Hillier, 1997). However, physical connection alone is not sufficient to integrate non-residents and residents. The argument proposed is that the best opportunities for intervention is where social and spatial frictions collide. Opportunity Areas defined at the borough level provide great opportunity to develop these social relationships.

What follows are some suggested sites and the relationships that could be developed, but the same logic could be used to identify other sites.

(2) On Waterloo Road, St George's depot is highly visible; retaining public space here allows for interventions targeted

at using these frictions as a resource to bring residents and non-residents together. Visibility on the bus network enables non-resident access, while public land allows residents to not be crowded out of what is likely to become a contested space for development.

(3) It is possible to give Blackfriars Mile an east-west focus too, and the mix of interventions may provide value for residents and non-residents to interact. Strong visibility along the Mile, with strategic partnerships in quieter locations (4) east of the street, can be used to draw non-residents further in, encouraging exploration beyond the gates.

(5) Services can be established at the redeveloped Heygate that bring existing residents into contact with incoming residents, while strategic street activations can encourage a relationship south and east. The redeveloped Heygate will introduce new friction into an area of mostly social housing; land values will increase as the new Elephant Park is marketed to affluent clientele. This highlights the need for an understanding of how big projects will influence the surrounding social landscape.

(1, 6, 7, 8) The system of intervention does not require everything to be done simultaneously. Future projects that increase relationships can extend further from Elephant & Castle.

Rather than linking point-to-point, which serves to spatially fragment rather than strengthen the centre, these interventions work together. The current massive redevelopment of brownfield sites provides the possibility to consider the opportunity of these areas beyond the built environment, economic development and transport accessibility. The availability of so much land, much of it public, in close proximity to the centre of London is also a resource for the social structure of the city. Social fragmentation in this case can be addressed spatially by retaining public land.

RETHINKING SOCIAL OPPORTUNITY

Policy for the development of urban centres must aim to integrate economically-focused initiatives with cultural and social services for the benefit of local residents (Porta, 2011:44). Similarly, where new centres are created out of Opportunity Areas, councils need to consider the long-term social impact of projects to ensure the short-term, isolated approach taken by the private sector is balanced by providing necessary social infrastructure (FALP, 2014:59). This presents a challenge in an austerity environment where public land is increasingly sold to developers.

Providing effective social infrastructure is all the more challenging within a planning ideology that tends to identify Opportunity Areas on the basis of underutilised transport infrastructure. At both City and borough level, the conceptualisation of “opportunity” as a means to create more jobs and houses is far too narrow and limits the priority of providing social infrastructure. While an interest in developing London’s social infrastructure and fostering social interaction amongst groups is expressed in planning documents at both City and Council level (FALP, 2014; SPD, 2012), there is no clear strategy for implementing social infrastructure interventions, measuring their impact, or using them to generate relationships between residents and non-residents.

We advocate for a conceptual shift by proposing two policy recommendations to the new London Plan, which is currently under consideration:

(1) The performance of social infrastructure can be measured according to the English Indices of Deprivation, which combine a number of statistical indicators to analyse which areas experience high levels of social, economic, and housing-related deprivation. These data can help to determine local frictions and where they could be turned into resources to plan what types of interventions would be most effective in the development of new social infrastructure.

(2) To ensure the long-term impact of social infrastructure, the council must act now to systematically retain or buy public land on desired intervention sites before it is developed by privately-led regeneration efforts; where public land is sold, revenues should go to purchase replacement land. Section 106 and the CIL are charges that councils can levy to compensate local communities when development takes place, and the revenue can be used most strategically by going towards the retention or purchase of public land distributed across the open system. Using this approach, the public is more able to contest increasingly privatised spaces into the future.

Opportunity Areas should be more than financial centres (Sassen, 2009:225). But advocating for more social infrastructure is not a matter of either-or; in fact, it can have massive positive externalities on economic progress. In addressing inequalities and bridging disconnect, social infrastructure has the potential to drive development by enhancing human capital (Familoni, 2006). It offers a chance to build both social and economic relationships to ensure more distributed growth and prevent social inequalities and decay (Sassen, 2009:234-5). Therefore, broadening the understanding of ‘opportunity’ to include the provision of both social and economic infrastructure is in the best interest of the city as well as residents.

OPENING THE GATES

To balance the effects of private development in Elephant & Castle, Southwark Council's first priority should be to retain or acquire the public land. Determining its use must be flexible and include the participation of all parties involved in order to 'leave an essential part of the process to those who are most intimately connected with it: the ultimate consumers or citizens' (Mumford, 1950:86-7).

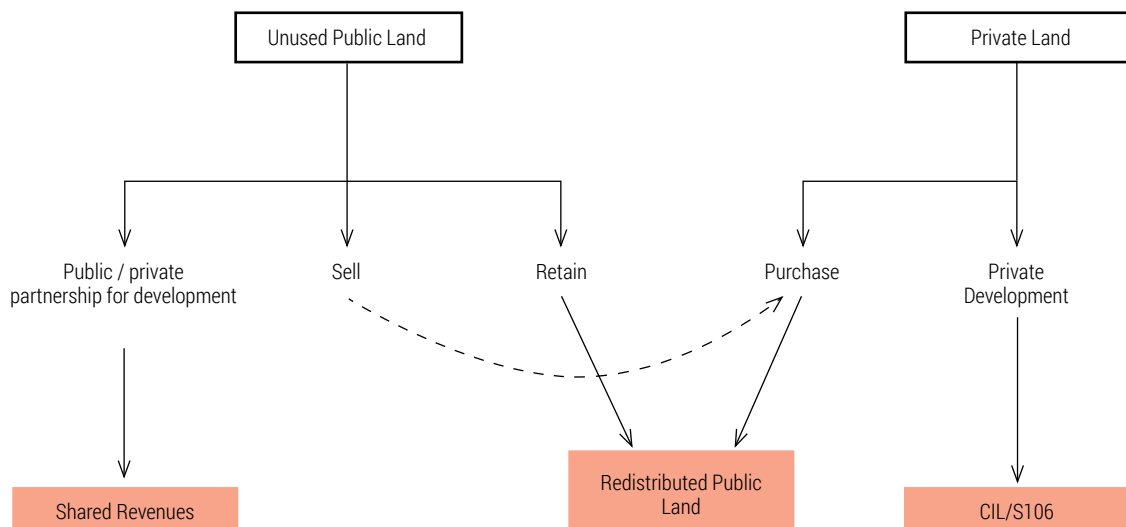
Along the high-friction gates identified within the open system resonating from the centre, we located specific sites for interventions that could serve to open these gates. The process of site identification is two-fold: on a human scale, the intervention must encourage physical and social interaction between disconnected groups. On an urban scale, the sites must be widely distributed in order to use frictions productively to support the resonance of the centre. Thus, friction will be channeled to encourage connection rather than disconnection.

The next step is to determine the function that each intervention will have. Frictions can only be used productively if the activities at each site relate directly back to the social contexts of the open system. In the case of Elephant & Castle, the professional skills gap is one of the greatest disconnects in the area, resulting in high employment for local residents. If

neglected, this difference might generate frictions in the form of social tensions, displacement, and potentially deepening socio-economic inequalities. To instead use the friction as a resource to bridge disconnection and create a more socially and physically cohesive open system, the functions of the Elephant & Castle interventions must deal with the skills gap and with social disconnect in some manner.

Beyond these social, spatial, and political strategies, our system is not prescriptive; a variety of sites, including non-Opportunity Area sites, and functions could produce the desired results. However, to envision the success of this systematic approach to development, we carried the process through for exemplar projects at four sites within the Elephant & Castle system.

Fig. 16 | Ownership model: retain, purchase and distribute public land



SITE SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

IMPLEMENTATION

Local data and in-depth stakeholder interviews should be analysed to imagine how the function of each intervention could address unemployment or its negative effects. According to a council-generated survey, local residents identify the biggest problem in Southwark as 'lack of things for young people to do' (Southwark Council, 2011:9). A number of interviews also confirmed that residents are concerned with the lack of activities for youth and the unemployed. From another perspective, a local mother expressed that she wanted to work but had to look after her child. Statistical findings in Southwark confirm more economically inactive women desire to work than men, suggesting greater barriers for women to find jobs (Southwark Council, 2012a:7). Finally, other interviews revealed that residents, particularly the unemployed, fear regeneration will drive up prices in local shops. All of these concerns informed the suggestions for potential interventions. As proof-of-concepts, examples are inspired by existing projects from cities around the world.

All job-related initiatives would be connected to Employ SE1, a job placement network established by the Southwark and Waterloo BID. The Council has already advocated for expanding this network to include more organisations, so linking it to these interventions would further the goal of resolving unemployment (Southwark Council, 2012a). The London Plan policy 4.12 (FALF, 2014:151-2) also supports efforts to 'remove barriers to employment' through local skills development and providing business with start-up space and affordable childcare facilities.

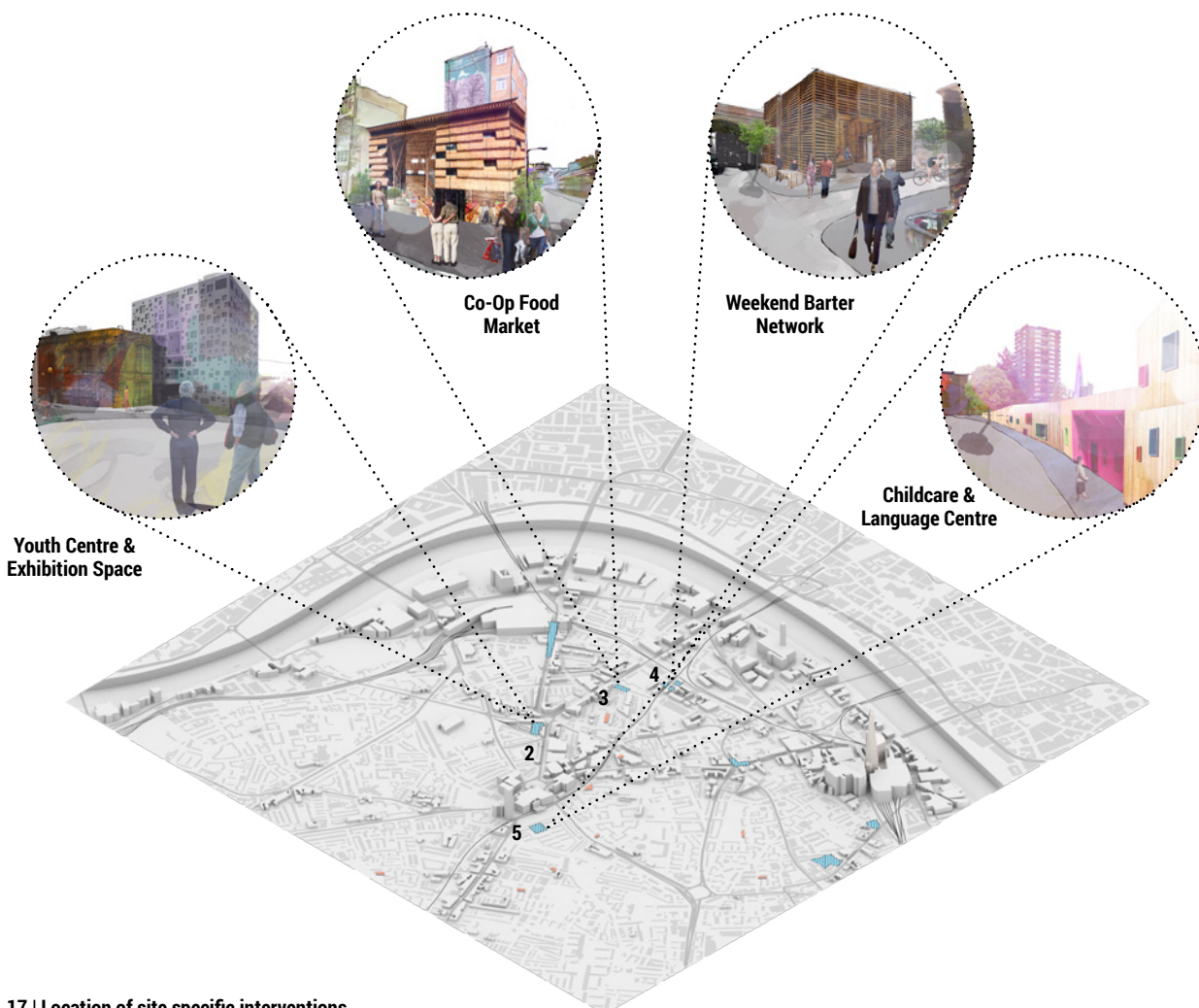
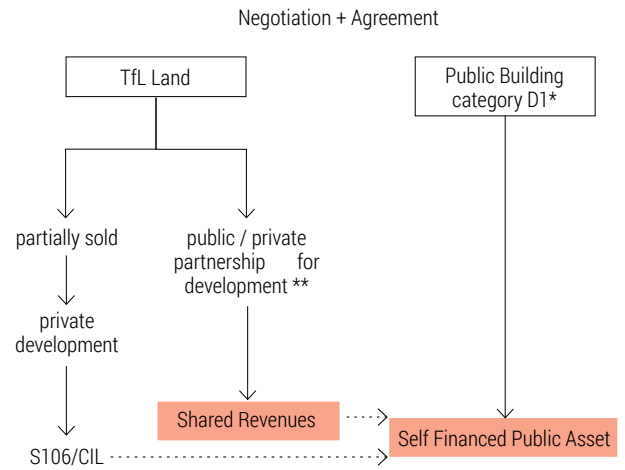


Fig. 17 | Location of site specific interventions

1. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTRE AND EXHIBITION SPACE

The Bakerloo Depot Opportunity Area next to St George's Circus is valuably positioned between the private development on Blackfriars Road and Elephant & Castle roundabout. When TfL sells the land to developers, the council could negotiate a partnership to use some of the land along with the portion they already own (Westminster Bridge Road 5a) to support a youth centre and exhibition space. At the centre young people could practise visual and performing arts, and those not in school or employed could learn job skills. Just as in the United Teen Equality Center in Lowell, Massachusetts, the youth would work with the staff to organise desired programmes, taking ownership of the centre while learning how to enter the labour market. Next to the centre on the same plot would be a public space for exhibitions and performances of their projects. Modelled after Paris's Le Centquatre public performance establishment, this public space would connect young residents with visitors from elsewhere. This two-part intervention gives youth a place to go while bridging the structural unemployment gap by providing skills and placement opportunities.



*Category D1:

In The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, Part D, Class D1 includes 'non-residential institutions; any use not including a residential use'.

**SEMAVIP

In Paris is an example of how the public sector can participate in the development process and retain part of the revenues through increased land values .

Fig. 18 | Youth Development Centre and Exhibition Space ownership and partnership



Location Key



Site Specific Context

At a highly visible area, with many bus routes; near mixed use buildings & schools



Status of Land Ownership

Owned by TfL; Council owned D1 (Westminster Bridge Road 5a)



Bridging Disconnect

Space that can attract visitors from across London due to accessibility; important location in the borough



Reach of Resonance

London-wide reach

Fig. 19 | Plot specifications to determine future project



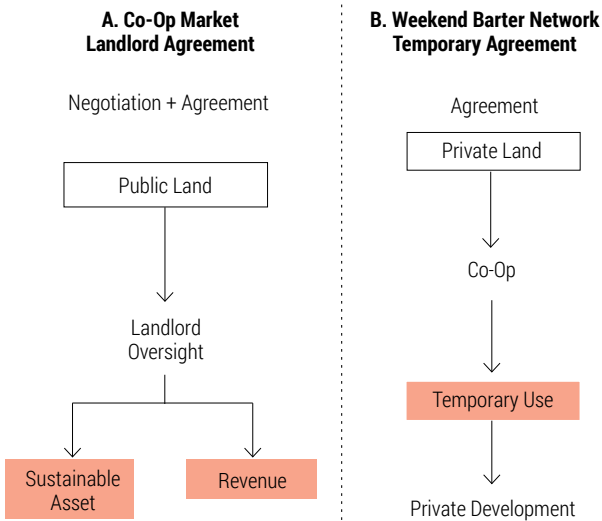


Fig. 20 | Co-op Market and Weekend Barter Market agreement

Fig. 21 | Co-op Market and Weekend Barter Market agreement



2A. BLACKFRIARS FOOD COOPERATIVE

The highly visible, publicly-owned opportunity areas near Blackfriars Road are ideal for a linked intervention to counteract the area's privatisation and to provide a space where residents and non-residents could meet. On one site, a cooperative market could supply locally-sourced products at discounted rates to members who work a few hours per month, allowing access to affordable food and to an affiliation of co-workers from different areas. The council would retain the land, but the co-op could be run by a non-profit with subsidised rents. An existing example of this model is the Park Slope Food Co-op in Brooklyn, New York, where membership is diverse and based on a wide catchment area. The co-op also provides an alternative to the proliferation of chain-food stores, something bemoaned by the Blackfriars Landowners Forum (2014).

2B. WEEKEND BARTER MARKET

A nearby plot is privately-owned. The Council could temporarily use it to host a weekend barter market while the developer waits for the land value to increase, and people from across London could come together to exchange labour hours for services. The market could be managed by the same organisation as the food cooperative, and may even sell fresh produce. Examples of similar initiatives are London's Local Exchange Trading Scheme (which recently closed its Southwark branch) and Zumbara Time Bank in Istanbul.



Location Key



Site Specific Context
a. Highly visible plot
b. Slightly hidden plot



Status of Land Ownership
a. Public land
b. Private land



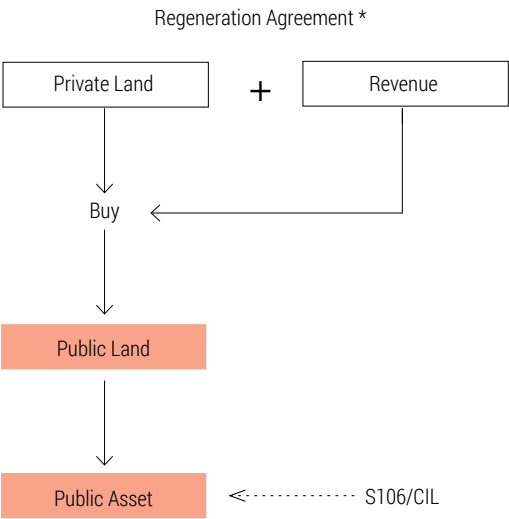
Bridging Disconnect
a. Commercial meeting space
b. Local network



Reach of Resonance
a. London-wide reach
b. Southwark-wide reach

3. CHILDCARE AND LANGUAGE CENTRE

The proximity of the Heygate Estate to the roundabout and the friction the new upscale housing will create with Walworth Road make it a strategic location for intervention. The council could use the revenue gained from the sales agreement to buy back a portion of the scheme, and this portion could serve as an affordable childcare centre and a language institute for adults taught by local instructors. Economically inactive mothers could receive free childcare while seeking work, but the centre would also be available to local residents. As nearly 20% (CIS, 2013:5) of Southwark’s population has a main language other than English, ESL and other language courses could help them secure jobs. Native speakers of other languages could teach courses or provide immersion sessions to native English speakers as well.



***Regeneration Agreement** in respect of Elephant & Castle (09/2010) section ‘6.2 The Council shall be entitled to Profit Overage equal to 50 percent of the Net Profit.’

Fig. 22 | Child Care + Language Centre purchase and partnership



Location Key

Site Specific Context
Within the premises of a former estate building; surrounded by estates.

Status of Land Ownership
Formerly public land; Council have profit share agreement.

Bridging Disconnect
Meeting place for new residents and current residents.

Reach of Resonance
Southwark-wide reach.

Fig. 23 | Plot specifications to determine future project



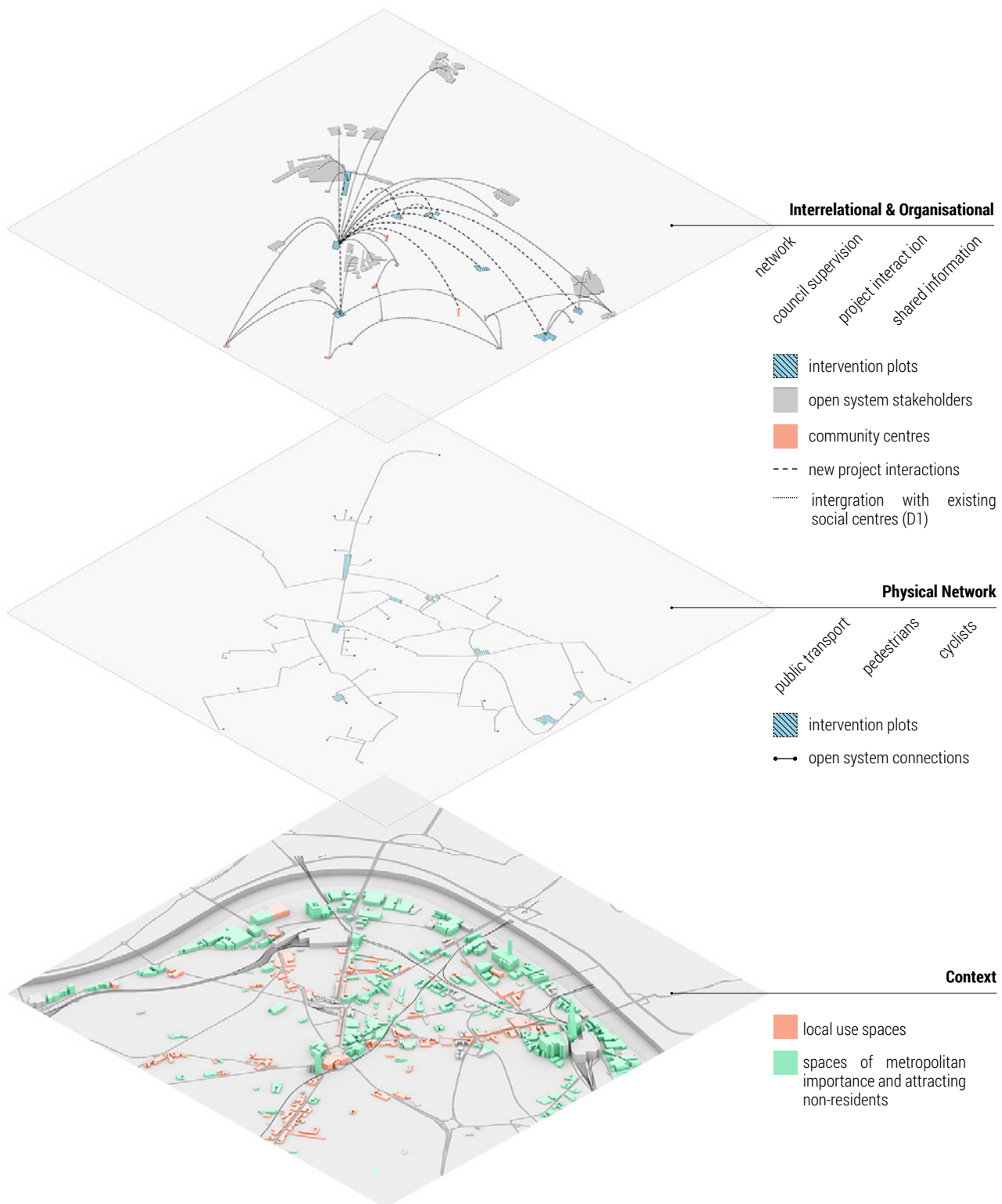


Fig. 24 | Open system layers

IMPLICATIONS

Our suggestions for strategically bridging disconnect within an open system come at a time when social infrastructure is being developed and reworked in innovative ways throughout London. In little over a decade, Tower Hamlets Council has reestablished the importance of city libraries for local residents by implementing a network of Idea Store Libraries that add adult education classes, career support and training, and leisure areas to traditional library services. The new King's Cross redevelopment includes King's Place, a commercial and cultural hub that used Section 106 monies to build a public concert hall and secure space for three orchestras. The Coin Street Community Builders trust has worked to regenerate London's South Bank while incorporating mixed-use social resources and public spaces such as the Oxo Tower Wharf and Bernie Spain Gardens. These schemes work to bring people together, but our open system framework calls for addressing disconnect in a more spatially strategic way and through retention of public assets in order to balance private influence.

To facilitate the relationships between the diverse range of stakeholders implicated in Elephant & Castle's redevelopment, we advocate for a shift in the perception of how to build a successful urban centre. The Council has already identified disconnect and unemployment as problems that require policy attention. The Blackfriars Mile and Urban Forest initiatives address this disconnect by economically and spatially linking Elephant & Castle to the north. The regeneration will draw in new people of higher socio-economic status, which could produce destructive frictions that will widen inequalities

in the area and further disconnect residents who already experience difficulty accessing many of the benefits of a strong local economy. If we spatially identify where these frictions are generated, we can use them productively to start interaction rather than prevent it. Approaching Elephant & Castle as an open system of strategically placed public assets allows for a more nuanced policy intervention framework with many benefits: it provides opportunities for connections between non-residents, new residents and old residents; it strengthens the resonance of the centre and increases access by widely distributing sites for intervention; and it builds relationships between these sites as well as other area stakeholders who might not otherwise connect. Finally, the open system framework highlights the capacity the council already has to develop Opportunity Areas as resources for social benefit as well as economic impact. Using this open system to strategically retain public land for the provision of social infrastructure is critical to realising the potential of Elephant & Castle in a way that does not repeat the history of failed regeneration efforts.

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