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# A Project on Social Research in Lighting Design

A report by the **Configuring Light/Staging the Social** research programme  
at the London School of Economics and Political Science  
2015

**LSE**

Knowledge  
Exchange  
HEIF 5

# CONFIGURING LIGHT

## staging the social

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Architectural sketches and pink sticky notes. The sketches include floor plans and site plans with various annotations like "play area", "BBQ", "garage", and "garage gets really smelly". The sticky notes contain phrases like "EVERYTHING!", "PLACES", and "Features @ dark ends".

Architectural sketches and pink sticky notes. The sketches include floor plans and site plans with various annotations. The sticky notes contain handwritten text such as "Garage gets really smelly", "If you have trouble with the car, it will be a pain", and "Features @ dark ends".

## Introduction

In October 2014, Urban Lightscapes/Social Nightscapes brought together 25 international lighting design professionals, architects, planners and social scientists for a week-long workshop on Peabody's Whitecross Estate (London). The aim was to explore how social research could be better used to help designers understand the social spaces and users they are designing for, and how to better integrate social research into design processes.

Led by the LSE-based Configuring Light/Staging the Social programme in collaboration with the Social Light Movement, participants were trained in 'Social Research in Design' – an approach developed for the project, and supported by an open access handbook and training exercises. This approach used hands-on engagement with specific sites on the estate to help participants develop an awareness of their social understanding of spaces and users, to gain practical experience of carrying out focused social research, and to explore the ways in which their design thinking could interact creatively with social research findings.

Participants, working in groups focused on specific sites, explored social research in the context of a realistic design process: each group produced a lighting design, responding to their research, and presented it to a symposium comprising Peabody staff, residents, other designers and academics.

This highly innovative application of academic research within design practice has engaged with and delivered benefits for the lighting design and planning profession, the 1,200 residents of the Whitecross Estate and for Peabody. The project was funded by LSE HEIF5 and received technical sponsorship from iGuzzini.

[www.socialnightscapes.org](http://www.socialnightscapes.org)

## Collaborators



The Social Light Movement runs practice-based workshops taking lighting professionals through a structured programme of working with a specific urban community to analyse problems, design solutions and present them to local councils. Its previous workshops have led to permanent installations of new lighting concepts and ongoing community participation in wider design and urban planning debates.



Peabody, one of London's oldest and largest housing associations, was a project collaborator. Its IMPROVE team, set up in 2010 as part of a ten-year programme to transform the open spaces in around 40 Peabody estates, provided the project team with a case study site (the Whitecross Estate) and organisational support.



iGuzzini, an Italian lighting manufacturer, provided technical sponsorship for the project by contributing to financing the involvement of the Social Light Movement and sponsoring all lighting fixtures needed for the lighting mock-ups.



## The Configuring Light Programme

Configuring Light/Staging the Social is an interdisciplinary research programme based at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Founded in late 2012 by sociologists Dr Joanne Entwistle (King's College London), Dr Don Slater and Mona Sloane (both LSE), it explores the role lighting plays in our everyday life. Configuring Light's work is supported by the LSE and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Past and current collaborators include Ove Arup, Derby City Council, Speirs+Major, the Wellcome Collection and the London Science Museum.

Light is a fundamental aspect of our lives, the backdrop for all social interaction. Everything we do happens in some degree of light and darkness. Light determines not only if there is social interaction, but also what kinds of social practices are possible after dusk, how safe we feel and how well we can navigate through nocturnal environments. At the beginning of the twenty-first century and fuelled by new technologies, light has taken centre stage in many urban discussions, especially around economic and environmental costs in the context of sustainable urban development, safety and well-being, and also aesthetics and city branding. Despite this centrality, there is very little knowledge and research on what lighting means to people and how they incorporate it into their daily lives in different contexts. And even less on how lighting designers can build social knowledges to inform their interventions into everyday life and built environments.

Configuring Light/Staging the Social examines the fundamental role of lighting in the social world. All projects under the programme's umbrella look at the ways in which lighting is configured into social life: as infrastructure, as technology, as ambiance or as a particular kind of material that we make and shape through our everyday practices and professional expertise. By 'social' we refer to the various social groups that users of a space belong to and through which they relate to the spaces that designers design: for example, families, genders, ethnicities, communities (local, urban, national) but also subcultures and other groups. Since individual identity is shaped through these memberships, so is our understanding and use of light. Looking at light as important 'stuff' within social life allows us to explore how professional practitioners – from lighting designers to architects, planners and regulators – 'work' this material into the urban fabric.

Configuring Light/Staging the Social aims to foster innovative and interdisciplinary practitioner-academic collaborations. Configuring Light runs projects and activities that range from research to education and knowledge exchange and impact. For example, since early 2014, it has been hosting an ESRC-funded seminar series that brings together academics and practitioners concerned with lighting issues. A particular research focus is a concern with public realm lighting, previous research projects looked at public lighting in Derby (UK) and Cartagena (Colombia).





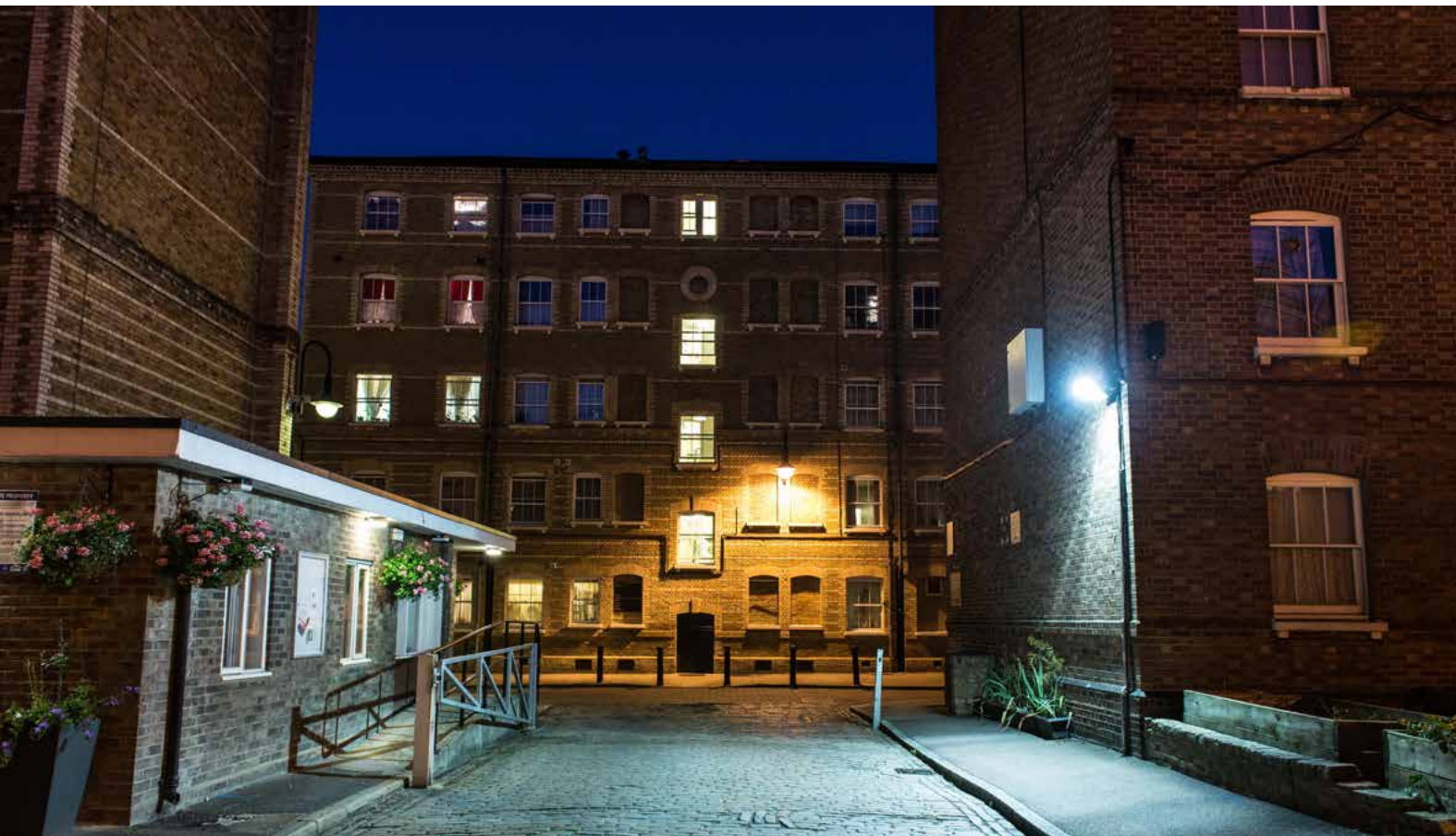




## The Idea of Social Research in Design

Looking at the public lighting of a place can tell us a lot about how it is socially constructed and perceived. The 'social significance' of light is often immediately apparent. For example, places like social housing estates tend to have intrusive and brutal lighting that marks them as problematic or even dangerous areas, irrespective whether this is the case. Other urban nightscapes, primarily in wealthier neighbourhoods, benefit from more subtle

lighting and more darkness. In 'problematic' places, lighting is implemented in a reactive manner ostensibly to prevent issues such as anti-social behaviour, while in others places, like a touristic centre, lighting is carefully and strategically used to create aesthetically pleasing nightscapes. These stereotypes of lighting only scratch the surface of 'configuring light' for the public realm: both housing estates and up-market neighbourhoods are



complex social worlds including diverse users (residents and passers through), carrying out diverse activities and movements, and with different understandings of appropriate or aspirational uses of that space.

Can we create lightscapes that take as their starting point the people who will move through them and how they 'make' a space through their daily practices? How can we develop not only lighting technologies, but also techniques for understanding these social spaces that lighting design so fundamentally intervenes in? In other words: what can social research contribute to configuring the urban night?

## Social Knowledges in Lighting Design

Lighting design is a major social intervention, impacting people and their ways of life. It depends on social knowledge – designers act on information and assumptions about the people and spaces they design for. Designers have to develop detailed understandings about the spaces they intervene in – not only in terms of the built environment, but also what these spaces mean to the people who use them. These social understandings, however, are usually not made explicit and systematic, even though they are largely driving design processes and decisions. Designers of-



ten need tools that will allow them to systematically capture the needs, understandings and practices of the social groups or communities they design for.

In lighting design, social research is usually external to the design process itself. It often enters into design as pre-packaged information, through briefings, statistics, reports etc. Or social research is used to test a design concept against standardized pieces of information in order to measure it. Alternatively, designers and planners carry out consultations, aiming to get the views of stakeholders on relevant issues and desired solutions. Social research, by contrast, aims to produce rich and detailed social knowledge of how a space works, and to systematically articulate the concerns of stakeholders who may not be accurately represented in consultation processes.

The social research in design approach is premised instead on the idea that doing social research should be an integral part of designing urban space. It means that designers remain critical of 'pre-packaged' social research and keep posing questions, suggesting possible or previously unseen directions – and that they engage with the people they design for by going out and doing their own piece of social research.

In this context, 'the social' does not designate an area that is deprived or problematic, or more of a community. Any space is 'social', because it is made up of many different understandings, actors, materials and interactions, whether it is a housing estate or a shop-

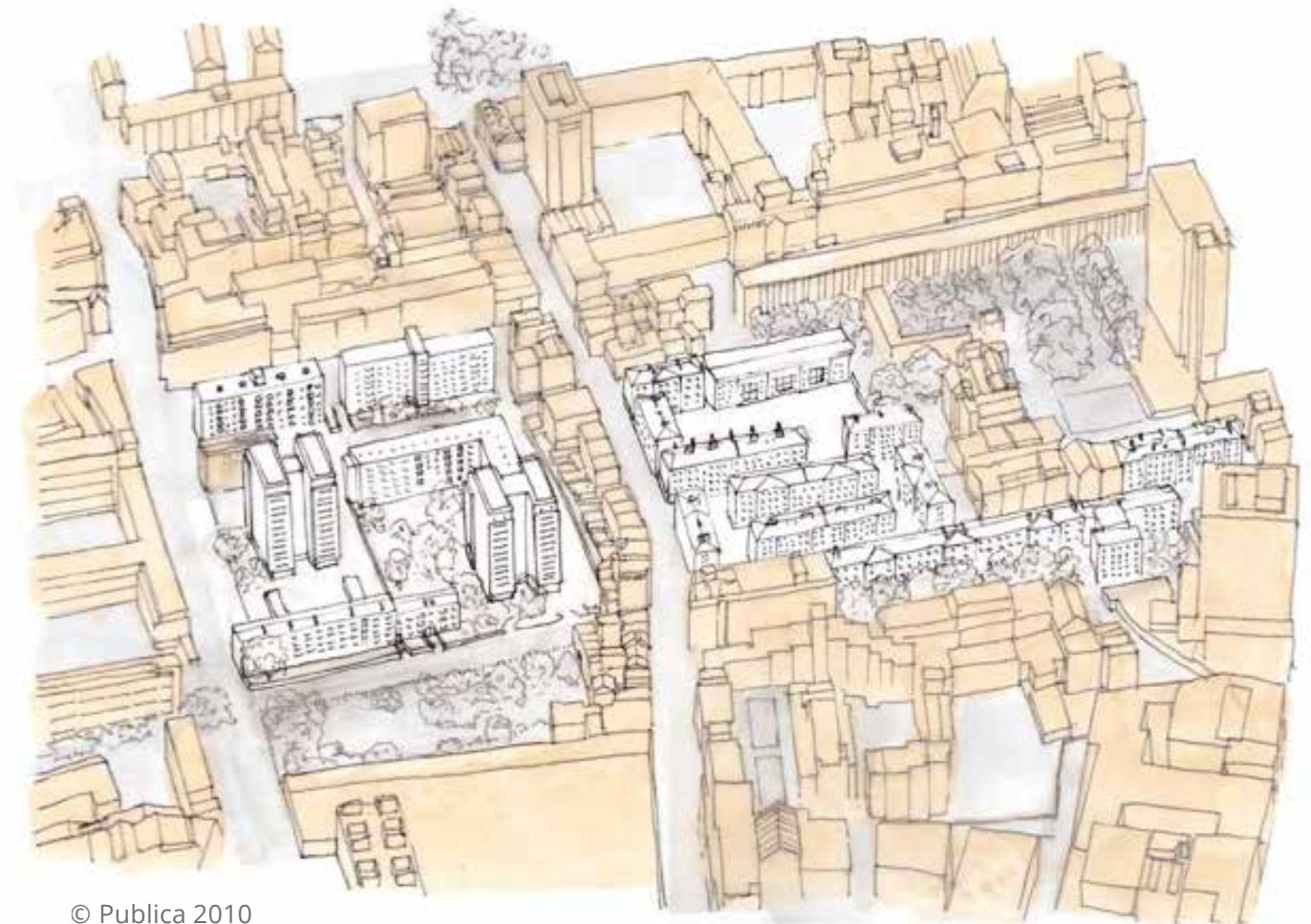
ping mall. Social research in design takes the particularity of any social space into account and promotes being transparent about the objectives of a piece of design, to allow new information to disrupt professional biases, to be able to give good reasons for specific design decisions and to develop site-sensitive designs. This is specifically crucial for lighting design as lighting is so fundamental to our experience of space and at the same time it is so difficult for us to comprehend how a space can actually be changed through lighting design and new lighting technologies that become available.

Against this backdrop, the Urban Lightscares/Social Nightscapes workshop was conceptualised to be as hands-on as possible. The workshop concept was developed in collaboration with the Social Light Movement, who contributed experience from similar community-engagement workshops around lighting and specifically supported the workshop groups in the design development. Both lighting designers (Social Light Movement) and social researchers (Configuring Light) were leading the workshop through four training units: Identifying Social Knowledges and Assumptions, Doing Social Research, Articulating Light and Integrating Social Research into the Design Process.

## The Whitecross Estate

Peabody – one of the oldest and largest housing providers in London – provided the Urban Lightscares/Social Nightscapes workshop with an exceptionally rich site for our case study: the Whitecross Estate in Islington, London. Whitecross is a fairly old estate built for the urban poor in the 1880s. Today, the estate also encompasses a range of post-war

redevelopments that were built on the other side of Whitecross street, cutting the whole estate into two areas. The Whitecross Estate is home to about 1,200 people with some families having lived on the estate for generations. Being located between the Barbican and bustling Old Street, the estate stands in the midst of heavy gentrification. White-



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cross street, which 'cuts' the estate into an 'old' and a 'new' part, is home to a daily food market which serves the workers in the City (more than locals) for lunchtime. The estate has very active residents and a community centre which is heavily used for various community activities. The lighting on the Whitecross estate is very functional and bright, following engineering paradigms. There is

currently no lighting strategy in place for the estate and new lights tend to be installed in reaction to residents complaining about 'lack of safety'. Most of the public lighting, especially newer lamps, is installed very high up to flood light the public spaces on the estate. This stark lighting not only consumes enormous amounts of energy and causes light pollution in people's flats, but also leads to

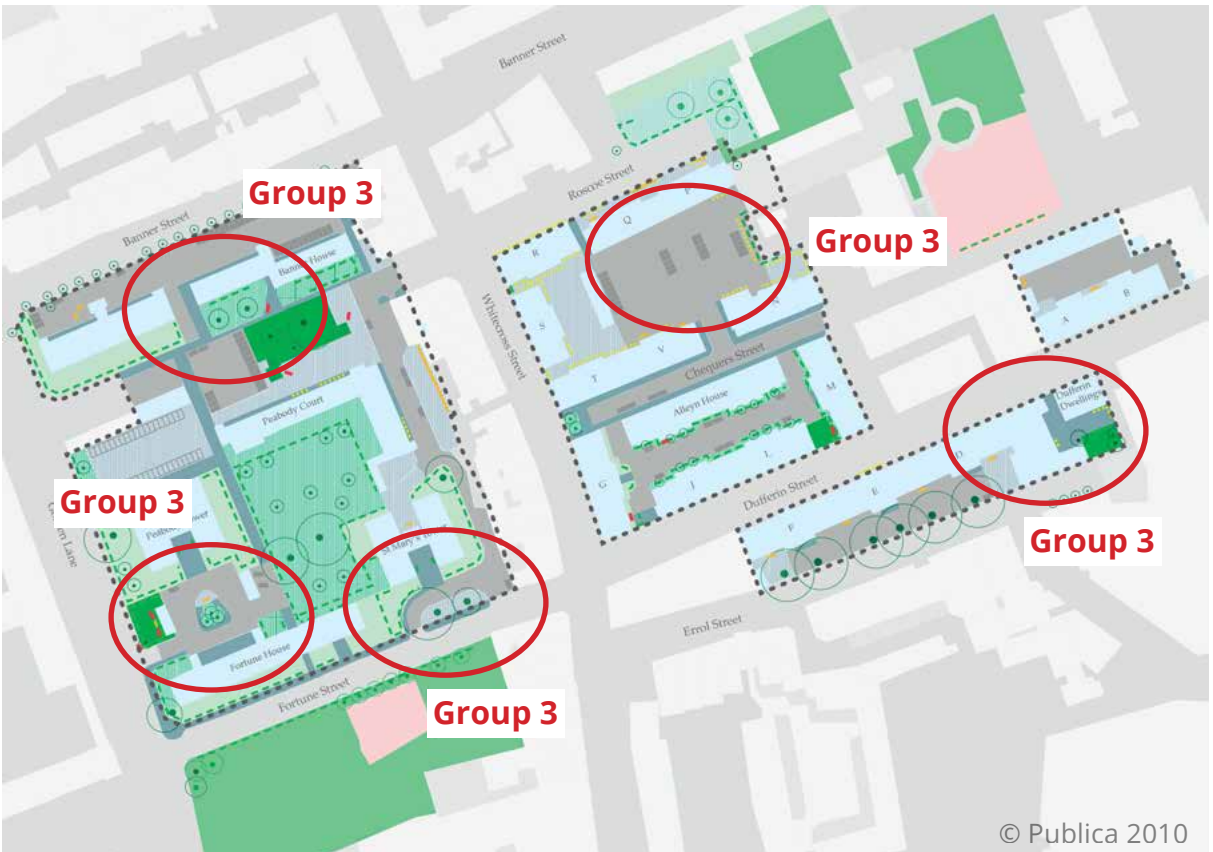


very high contrast ratios – stepping out of the floodlight feels like stepping into complete darkness, even when the space 'outside' the floodlight is not actually that dark. Moreover, it does not respond to actual social activities: for example, Banner House is brightly lit up, but because of the position of the lamps, residents are nonetheless not able to see their locks when opening their front door.

For the Urban Lightsapes/Social Nightsapes workshop, 25 lighting designers, architects and urban planners came together on the Whitecross Estate. For their social research

and lighting design projects, they were divided into five groups and allocated a micro-site on the estate. In a lightwalk together with the Whitecross community previous to the workshop, these locations had been identified as most 'problematic' or 'interesting'.

The brief for the design teams was to conduct social research on and around their micro-site and, based on this social research, develop new lighting design interventions for that site which would be pitched to Peabody at the end of the week.





## The Workshop: Social Research in Lighting Design

At the core of the workshop concept were four activities that aimed to focus attention on the whole process of making sense of a social space in the context of lighting design:

**What do (we think) we know?** – taking stock of the social assumptions, knowledges, images that designers have, as well as identifying gaps and uncertainties that could impact on design.

**Doing Social Research** – carrying out one small piece of social research to think through the process of designing, conducting and analysing research.

**Articulating Light** – using lighting design mock-ups to explore how we can get people to be aware of and talk about lighting and lit space.

**Integrating social research in design** – identifying where and how social research can play a more integrated role in design

### What do (we think) we know about Whitecross

Good designers, as they enter into a new project, are already thinking in terms of the people and practices they design for. They will use whatever latent knowledge or common sense they may have, as well as pub-

lished sources and material contained in their brief. If they feel less sure of this knowledge, or need to extend it, they may try to seek out information to aid them. However, since most designers are also incredibly busy and have not had training in social research methods, much of what counts as design research is based on a wide array of ‘social data’ that is gathered from different sources, but in rather unsystematic ways. Importantly, most design projects start with social knowledges and assumptions that are inherited in briefing documents or are embedded far back in the client’s decision-making.

Therefore social design research is about identifying and challenging the assumptions that we start off with. The first step in social research in design is to ask, ‘What do (we think) we know?’ – to identify and assess the social knowledges we start with in a design process: what they are, where they come from, where the gaps are, what we feel shaky about and what more we need to know. This is also what we mean by reflexivity: thinking about what we know rather than simply taking ‘facts’ or ‘assumptions’ as given. Taking stock in this way is not an academic exercise but a very practical way of opening up a learning process. In the following activity, we have simply tried to give this process a systematic form.



The designers were sent out to walk around and observe their designated space. They could use whatever materials they had to look at and record the space and many chose to draw maps of their site to work out its main features and identify the issues they thought might be significant. From their observations and records, they reported back to the main group their initial assessment of the space. In the case of Group Five, the main problem they saw in the large and unpleasant car park space in what they understood to be the front of the building. They felt that this must be a

problem for residents, whose approach to their building and home was unattractive and also very brightly lit. In carrying out this exercise, group five carried out short interviews with people moving in and out of their site. It took only a few interviews to discover that residents did not in fact think that the front of their building was the side facing the car park. In fact everyone treated the 'back' of their block as the de facto front. This clearly prompted an entirely different assessment of the site than the one produced by simply reading the plan and walking about the site.



## Doing Social Research

Designing and carrying out social research is a creative and (hopefully) surprising process – much like design itself. It is a dynamic engagement with a unique social world that you are trying to understand better in order to make an effective design intervention. Every design brief and every social space is different and therefore will require a different combination of tools, strategies and approaches. The second workshop exercise therefore focused on designing social research that will help develop design work.

The overall aim of social research in lighting design is best described as wanting to make sense of a social space and the people and practices that go on within it; and usually to make sense of specific issues that are strategic for the design process. 'Making sense' as an aim stresses interpretation and understanding. Raw data – whether statistics, interview quotes or observations – are not enough: we need to be able to interpret the data and give a rich picture of what is going on and how lighting can intervene. How we go about this can take very different forms.

The five groups used and innovated a wide range of research techniques. In addition to differing styles of interview, participants used visual prompts, word prompts, and asked people to mark routes taken through the estate at different times of day on hand drawn maps. Actively pursuing research questions also led participants to widen the scope of their enquiry, for example by going after historical material or requesting interviews with

Peabody staff in order to better understand the policy context that shaped their space.

Participants were also encouraged to treat social research, and its relationship to design practice, as an iterative process: short pieces of research naturally led to further research questions, or a need to address the same questions through different methods in order to build up a richer picture of their site.

## Articulating Light

It is hard to get people to talk about lighting directly. Firstly, light tends to be in the background, taken for granted. Light is 'infrastructural' in the sense that it is the enabler of activities and thus tends to be – ironically – invisible. Unless the lighting fails or is problematic, people often have very little to say about it. Secondly, people generally draw on an impoverished language of light, tied to very specific issues – for example, people think public realm lighting should be very bright for reasons of safety and domestic lighting should be cosy. Finally, articulating lighting and its effects involves articulating feelings, moods, atmospheres, sensual and embodied experiences – which most people often find rather difficult. The task for social research in lighting design is to help people reflect on more aspects of lighting – but without being directive and simply generating the responses we expected in advance. As professionals, lighting designers can be intensely attuned to light features that are entirely invisible to users. Social research in design needs to identify what people do not see as much as what they do see. The situation is compounded by







another feature that lighting professionals take for granted: we experience lighting effects through their complex interactions with other materials (for example architecture or landscape) so that much of our understanding of light is very site-specific.

With this problem in the minds of the designers, the different groups came up with different strategies for eliciting responses. One group used descriptive words on cards

that residents could select to describe a quiet courtyard area. Another group asked residents to think about their different pathways through the estate by day and night and chart these on a map. This map highlighted the gendered differences that are apparent at night, with men not modifying their paths at night but women walking along particular routes they feel most safe in terms of people and light in the space.



Mid-week, all the groups also had the opportunity to do mock-ups of possible lighting equipment that they could use to help formulate their designs and engage in a dialogue with residents about their lighting design ideas, helping the designers learn about thinking through the best ways to engage in a conversation about light with users. While their professional knowledge is vast and their vocabulary extensive, designers have to find innovative ways to capture the attention of users when designing any social research on light. The 'Articulating Light' activity also involved the most spectacular resident engagement activity of the workshop week: the Guerrilla Lighting, which was led by the Social Light Movement. Here, around 50 people – residents, participants and Peabody management – were handed torches and glow sticks and walked around the estate, changing various its spaces through 'instant' lighting interventions. This activity aimed at creating a more playful resident engagement, but also intended to show how fundamentally light could change a space

### Integrating Social Research into Design

Social Research in Design can be more productive and creative when the research and the design work are tightly integrated. An important – probably decisive – aspect of integrating social research in design work is convincing the client that social research is a worthwhile expense, both in time and money, and that it will significantly enhance a project in demonstrable ways. Different kinds of cli-

ents respond differently and different kinds of projects need different kinds of arguments. Moreover, integrating social research should produce not only better design, or more evidence to support design decisions, but potentially a different relationship between clients and users of their space that goes beyond the specifics of lighting.

This final activity was conceptualised as a discussion bringing together all workshop groups. The core concern was to understand what prevented design professionals from integrating social research in their everyday design practice. Participants shared their experiences from different professions – lighting designers, planners and architects – which were mainly articulated as constraints in terms of time, money and social research skills. Solutions emerged including the value of precedents, as well as beginning the design process with small bits of social research that highlight community engagement.

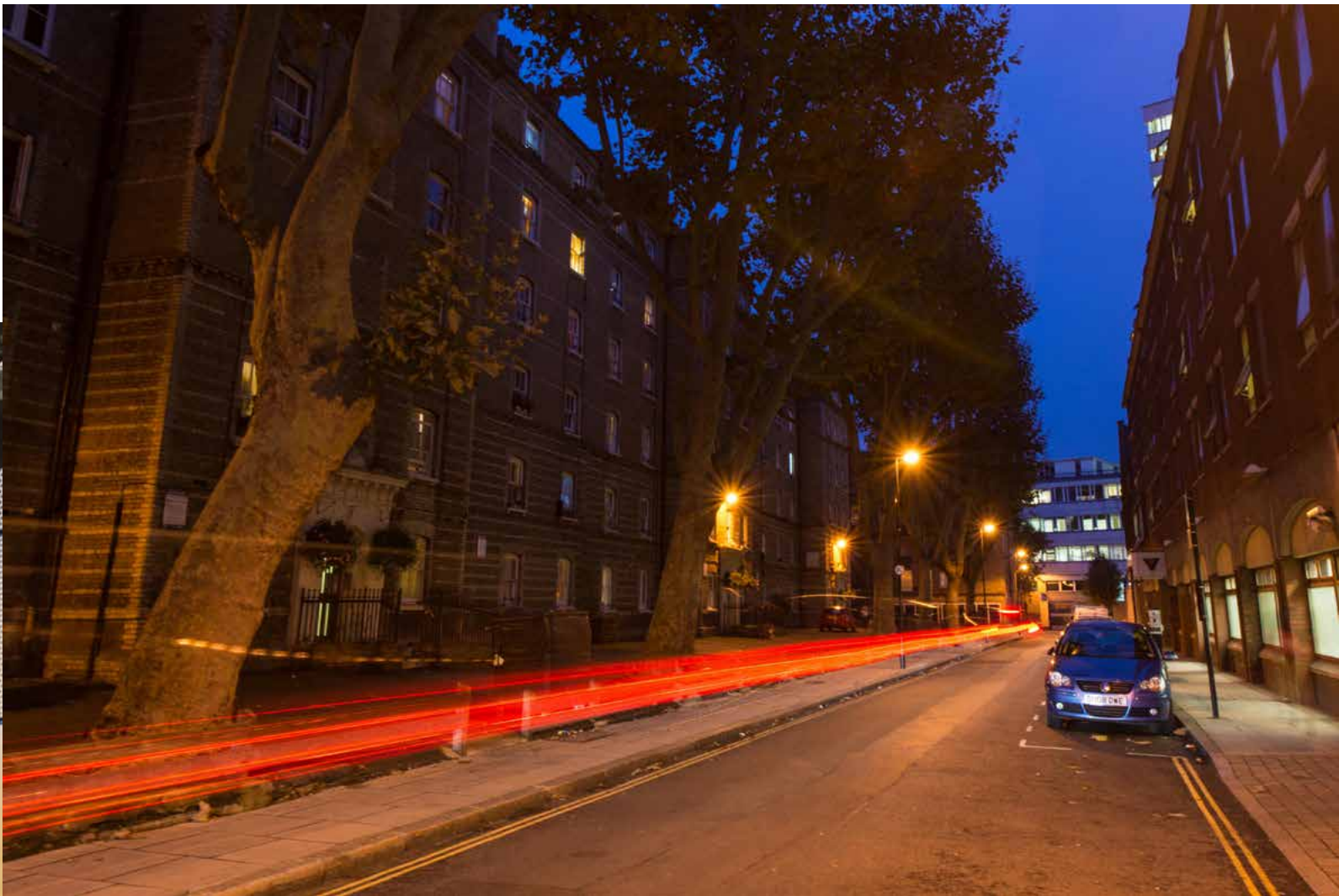
### LSE Symposium

On the last day of the workshop the five workshop groups presented their social research and lighting design ideas to an expert panel, as well an audience that included members of the Whitecross community, Peabody management and the wider public in a symposium at the LSE. The panel comprised renowned lighting designer Roger Narboni and Design Council advisor Brian Quinn and was chaired by LSE Cities' Professor Fran Tonkiss. Each group was given ten minutes to present their social research and final design



ideas. The aim was to describe their research activities for the space they were allocated and present their design strategies. What was surprising was not merely the range of different research techniques used – interviews, observations, mapping, visual prompting –

but also the range of different problems identified in each space and the design solutions suggested as a result.



## Group 1: Dufferin Court and Errol Street

Group One worked on one of the edges of the Whitecross Estate, on Dufferin Court and the blocks on Errol Street. They identified the core problem of their area as the boundary between the estate and the external public space, particularly the YMCA located opposite, and a problematic corner known for ‘anti-social behaviour’, such as drug dealing. Group One initially considered a design solu-

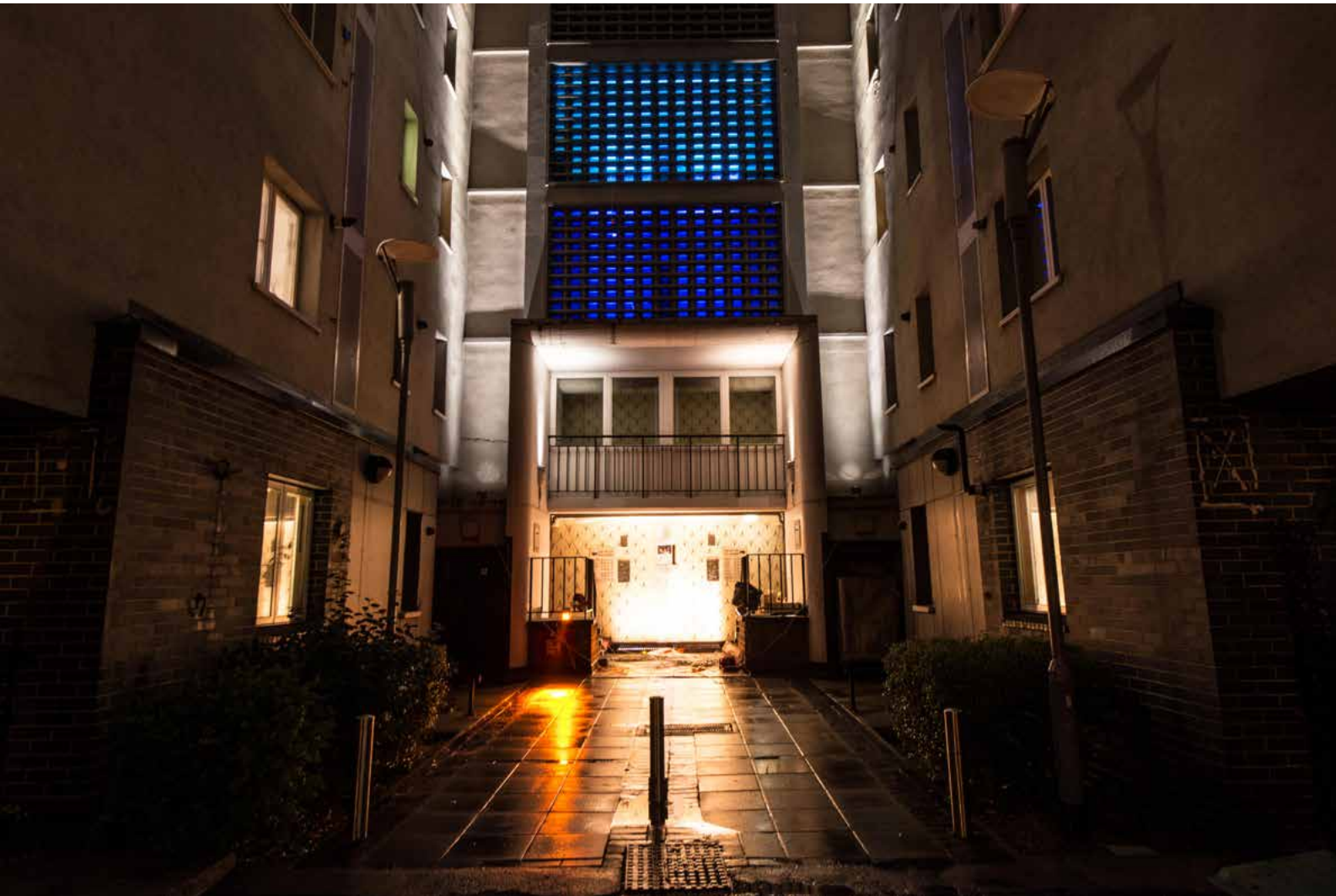
tion that would try to strengthen the Peabody boundary using trees and lighting. However, after reflections based on their research, they decided against trying to ‘resolve’ the problem with a design, but instead to make the boundary issue a feature of the space using a temporary light installation called ‘Drop of Light’. This could function as a light ‘bridge’ that might prompt further discussion and feed into a later design once more thoughtful discussion within the community had been prompted.



Group 2: St Mary's Tower and Garden Street

Group Two worked on the site of St Mary's tower, one of the two big towers on the estate, and its surrounding area. The social research the group conducted revealed that residents appreciated the location as well as the community spirit of the Whitecross Estate. Though most interviewees articulated concerns that were not directly related to lighting, the research indicated Garden Street as a major thoroughfare for a lot of residents.

The majority felt their pathway was affected by poor lighting, characterised by the stark contrasts created by flood lighting. Women were more affected than men and more likely to change their route after dusk to walk along an alternative path that was more evenly lit. The group addressed the issue of improving connections by suggesting a catenary lighting system as well as highlighting existing greenery and allotments to reflect what residents valued on the estate.



Group 3: Peabody Tower and Fortune House

Group Three also worked on the newer side of the Whitecross Estate and were allocated Peabody Tower, Fortune House and the surrounding area which included a currently fenced park. Their social research and site engagement showed that residents had a strong sense of identity with the space and appreciated it as a peaceful and quiet area with a strong sense of community. The green

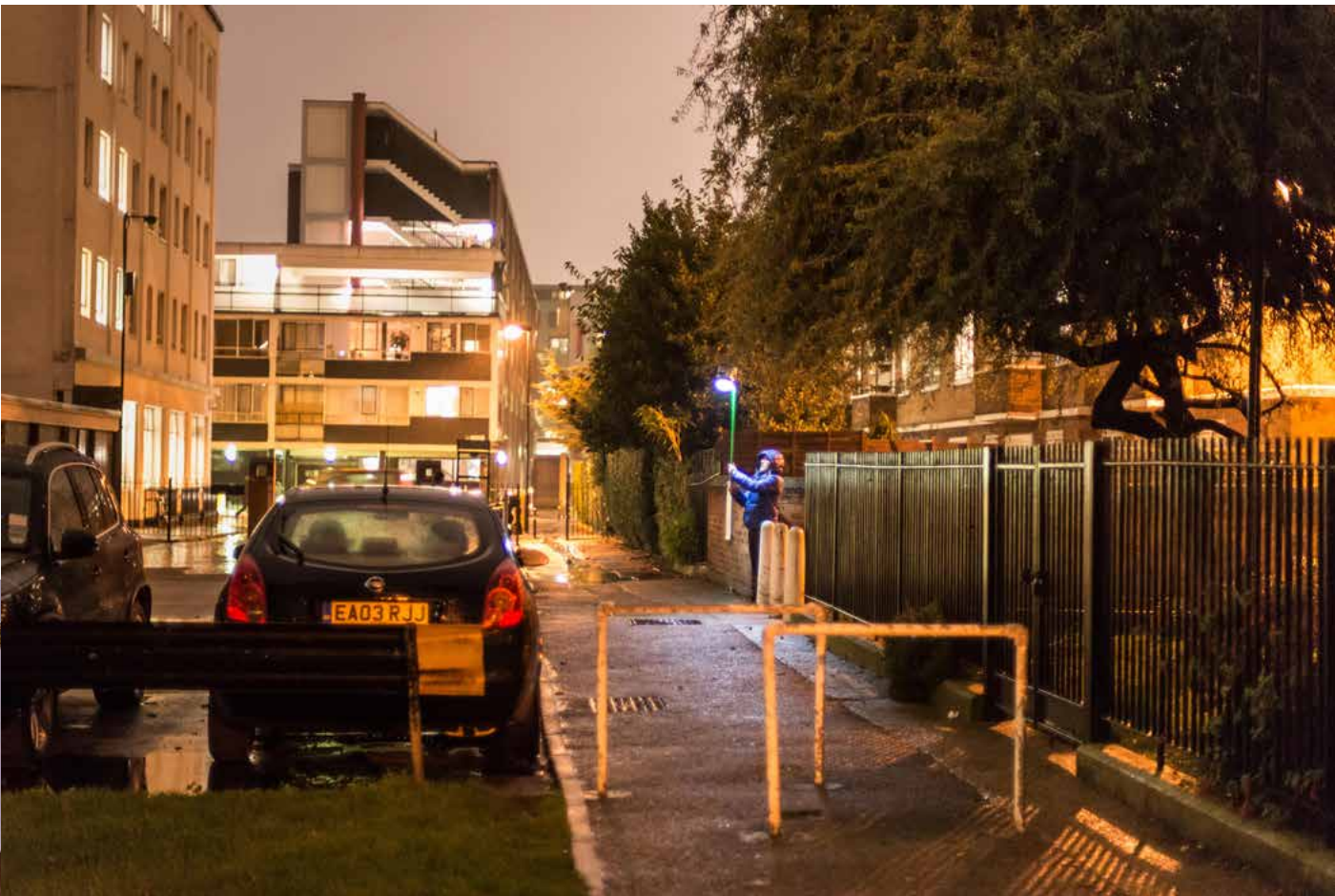
spaces on the site were particularly valued as a strong 'connecting' element to nature, but at the same time residents articulated a need for 'better security' after dusk. The group proposed emphasising the valued quietness and peacefulness of the environment and particularly the important relationship to nature by up-lighting the trees in the park as well as bringing the lighting for pathways down to a human scale in order to make the space feel less functional and 'more safe'.



## Group 4: Chequer Square

Group Four was given a central place within the Whitecross Estate: Chequer Square, just off Whitecross Street, which also was the location of the community centre and most of the gardening activity. The group uncovered the fact that the 'users' here would be made up not only of residents but also a significant proportion of by-passers who use the square as a short-cut, as well as visitors from the

market who come in to eat their lunch. The issue here was how to make the space welcoming and friendly, but at the same time make sure it is not too open and remains a space for residents. The group addressed this complexity by proposing to highlight the existing greenery provided by the garden club, highlighting elements at the entrances as well as the historic doorways of the blocks to 'mark' the experience of 'arriving home'.



## Group 5: Banner House and Roscoe Street

Group Five worked on Banner House and Roscoe Street. The group used social research to explore whether residents of Banner House really felt part of the estate despite being located on its edge, using the inward-facing entrance as 'front of house' as opposed to the 'official' entrance on Banner Street. Roscoe Street was perceived as a major thoroughfare for 'corporate London' and the green space here lacked opportunities for acting as a meeting space. The lighting was perceived

as similar to 'Blackpool illuminations' and the bulkhead lights above the doors made the house 'look like cells'. In response to that, Group Five proposed lighting that would mark the thoroughfare on Roscoe Street through 'human-scale' street lighting. Further, the existing green space was would be accentuated through up-lighting one of the big trees as a 'community tree' and the block itself would get balustrade lighting and door lamps in the shape of the door numbers which would be back-lit.



In all cases, it was evident that the creative process of conducting research for the five spaces fed into the creative process of designing for the space. All groups deeply engaged with their site, its users and the Whitecross residents and successfully brought together traditional social research tools with design thinking. What stood out was that across the board, the Whitecross Estate was being recognised by its residents as an established and highly valued community. What also became clear was that lighting is not a stand-alone issue but that it goes hand-in-hand with other aspects, such as landscaping (e.g. improving surfaces), thus lighting design initiatives are best tied together with larger improvement programmes.





## Key Takeaways

The Urban Lightscapes/Social Nightscapes workshop demonstrated that integrating social research and lighting design is not simply about providing more engaging public consultations. Rather, it is about using collaboration across different disciplines to avoid the polarised application of light technologies and creating transparency about the objectives of a piece of design. The workshop underlined the significance and potential of creative use of social research in design. In retrospect, there are three key takeaways for lighting design for public spaces:

### 1. Understanding 'the social' is a fundamental and distinctive way of knowing a design site

Designers, planners and architects tend to start from spatial analysis and materials in making sense of their design site – from maps, plans and observations of built form. Social understanding, however, is rather distinct from spatial analysis: it aims to find out how diverse users of a space understand and use it, to get at the complexity of the social life of a space. There is no substitute for engaging with people through conversations, observations, discussions and so on. Moreover, as our participants discovered, relying only on spatial analysis can be dramatically misleading.

### 2. Social research needs to be integral to lighting design

Instead of taking the abstract form of background statistics, surveys or public consultation, social research should be conducted alongside design activities. The best design proposals in the workshop arose from responding to the unpredictable and rich social information the teams gathered – the stories of residents and space users on how they use and understand the Whitecross Estate.

### 3. The dialogue between social research and design needs to be creative and responsive

In the workshop, participants trialled ways of connecting social research and design practice. This is itself a matter for creativity and innovation. It worked best when each side raised challenging questions and the response was unpredictable and creative. A social research finding is not a test or 'fact'; it is material that designers need to interpret, digest and respond to in terms of their design expertise, knowledge of materials and visual sense. Conversely, a design issue does not always translate directly in to a question for a researcher to ask people on the street; social researchers normally have to innovate new questions, methods and forms of analysis to get at the issues a designer needs to know about.

### 4. Lighting demonstrations are key for good lighting design

Demonstrations and mock-ups are crucial in developing ideas and generating real participation in public realm design. People lack a 'language of light' and find it very difficult to talk about and imagine possibilities of lighting. Integrating lighting demonstrations into the social research and lighting design process can generate more sophisticated data and lead to more site-specific designs.

### 5. Social research in design and consultations are different but complementary processes

Asking passing or invited stakeholders to raise issues or comment on designs is not social research. Social research actively explores issues in depth and seeks out diverse users of a space in order to articulate their concerns and their interrelationships. This kind of research not only feeds into design processes but can also help make consultations more meaningful, reliable and productive. Moreover, social research can help ensure that design processes are not wrongly skewed by un-researched comments made in consultations that get entrenched as facts or assumptions or constraints. Knowing what to ask, in what way and to whom requires a social knowledge base; and this can also help contextualise and interpret what comes up in consultations.



## Outlook

The Urban Lightscares/Social Nightscares project has kicked off a considerable range of new dialogues on how design, planning and engineering practitioners can collaborate with social researchers to create urban design interventions – in this case lighting designs – that take as a point of departure the social fabric of a place as opposed to its built manifestation or a particular design idea. It has been very well received by both practitioner and academic audiences in national and international events and conferences and has already inspired Jerusalem's Bezalel University to conduct a similar workshop project and the City After Dark conference in 2015.

This project was a pioneering first step in opening up dialogues and ways of working between social researchers and designers, planners and architects. It raised many more questions and opportunities than it settled, many of which we hope to pursue through further workshops with different formats and addressing different types of participants. The most promising questions that emerged from the Whitecross experience and inform the ongoing work of Configuring Light include:

### Extending outwards:

What different issues, conversations and formats would be involved in expanding the role of social research with other parties involved in lighting design, e.g. manufacturers, engineers, urban planners, private developers, hospitals or school authorities?

### Lighting the public realm:

How can social research and lighting design together help increasing the public's understanding of the properties and potentials of light, so that communities can play a more active role in decisions around public realm lighting?

### Social research training in design education:

How can social research in design approaches be introduced into mainstream design and architecture training and what can social research in design approaches contribute not only to consultation processes but also participatory design and co-design approaches?

Working towards the overall aim of fostering interdisciplinary collaborations between practitioners and academics, Configuring Light/Staging the Social and the Social Light Movement are now working with Peabody towards implementing some of the designs that have been developed by the design teams on the

Whitecross Estate, and more importantly, how to integrate social research aspects in forthcoming lighting design projects on other Peabody estates. The Configuring Light team will also expand the 'Handbook for Social Research in Design' that was developed for the Urban Lightscares/Social Nightscares project into a book-long publication outlining social research methods for practical lighting design.

In order to build on the success of the workshop and expand the social research in design approach, the Configuring Light/Staging the Social team has also recently been joined by Dr Elettra Bordonaro of the Social Light Movement. The aim of integrating Dr Elettra Bordonaro into the Configuring Light programme is to develop the workshop concept and content into an international series of workshops that can be hosted on different sites. This workshop series will stay committed to the focus on places that normally fall under the radar of lighting design, such as social housing.



## Project Team



**Dr Joanne Entwistle**  
Configuring Light/Staging the Social

Dr Joanne Entwistle is a co-founder of Configuring Light/Staging the Social and Senior Lecturer in Sociology at King's College London. She has published extensively on the sociology of fashion, dress and the body and aesthetic markets and economies. Major publications include: *Fashioning Models: Image, Text, Industry*, co-edited with Elizabeth Wissinger (Berg, forthcoming); *The Aesthetic Economy: markets and value in clothing and modelling* (Berg, 2009); *Body Dressing*, co-edited with Elizabeth Wilson (Berg, 2001); *The Fashioned Body: fashion, dress and modern social theory* (Polity, 2000).

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Mona Sloane is a co-founder of Configuring Light/Staging the Social and a sociologist based at the London School of Economics. As LSE PhD scholarship holder, she works and publishes on the sociology of urban design, material culture and economic sociology. For Configuring Light, Mona develops new projects and runs the programme's wide range of activities. She holds an MSc in Sociology (LSE) and has a background in communication and cultural management. Together with Elettra Bordonaro, Mona took a leading role in conceptualising and managing the Urban Lightscapes/Social Nightscapes project.

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**Dr Elettra Bordonaro**  
Social Light Movement

Dr Elettra Bordonaro co-founded the Social Light Movement and is a trained architect holding a PhD in architecture. Elettra has worked on lighting master plans and public realm lighting for major lighting design studios such as Light Cibles (Paris), Speirs+Major (Edinburgh), Metis Lighting (Milan) and Light Bureau (London). She taught at the Universities of Rome, Milan and Turin and was a visiting professor at Rhode Island School of Art and Design in 2014. She runs her lighting design studio called Light Follows Behaviour. Together with Mona Sloane, Elettra took a leading role in conceptualising and managing the Urban Lightscapes/Social Nightscapes project.

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**Dr Don Slater**  
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Dr Don Slater is a co-founder of Configuring Light/Staging the Social and Associate Professor in Sociology at the London School of Economics. His current research focusses on light and lighting design but he also researches and writes extensively on the sociology of material culture and economic life, new media and digital culture and visual and material culture. Major publications include: *New Media, Development and Globalization: Making Connections in the Global South* (Polity 2013); *The Technological Economy* (2005, with Andrew Barry); *The Internet: An Ethnographic Approach* (2000, with Daniel Miller); *Consumer Culture and Modernity* (1997).

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# Participants

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- Lynne Connelly, UK
- Graham Festenstein, UK
- Raphaël Girouard, France
- Marina Hadjilouca, UK/Cyprus
- Claire Hamill, UK
- Christina Hébert, UK/Canada
- Nora Inmaz, Spain
- Renata Jardim, Brasil
- Zoi Katsarou, Italy/Greece
- Luciana Martinez, UK/USA
- Victoria McReynolds, USA
- Joana Mendo, Germany/Portugal
- Robin Miller, USA
- Virginie Nicolas, France
- Alexandros Papageorgiou, Cyprus
- Oscar Pena, UK/Colombia
- Solveig Pezin, Belgium
- Paula Rainha, Portugal
- Satu Streatfield, UK
- Paul Traynor, UK
- Anna von der Schulenburg, UK/Germany
- Antonia Weiss, Holland/Germany
- Cehao Yu, UK/China



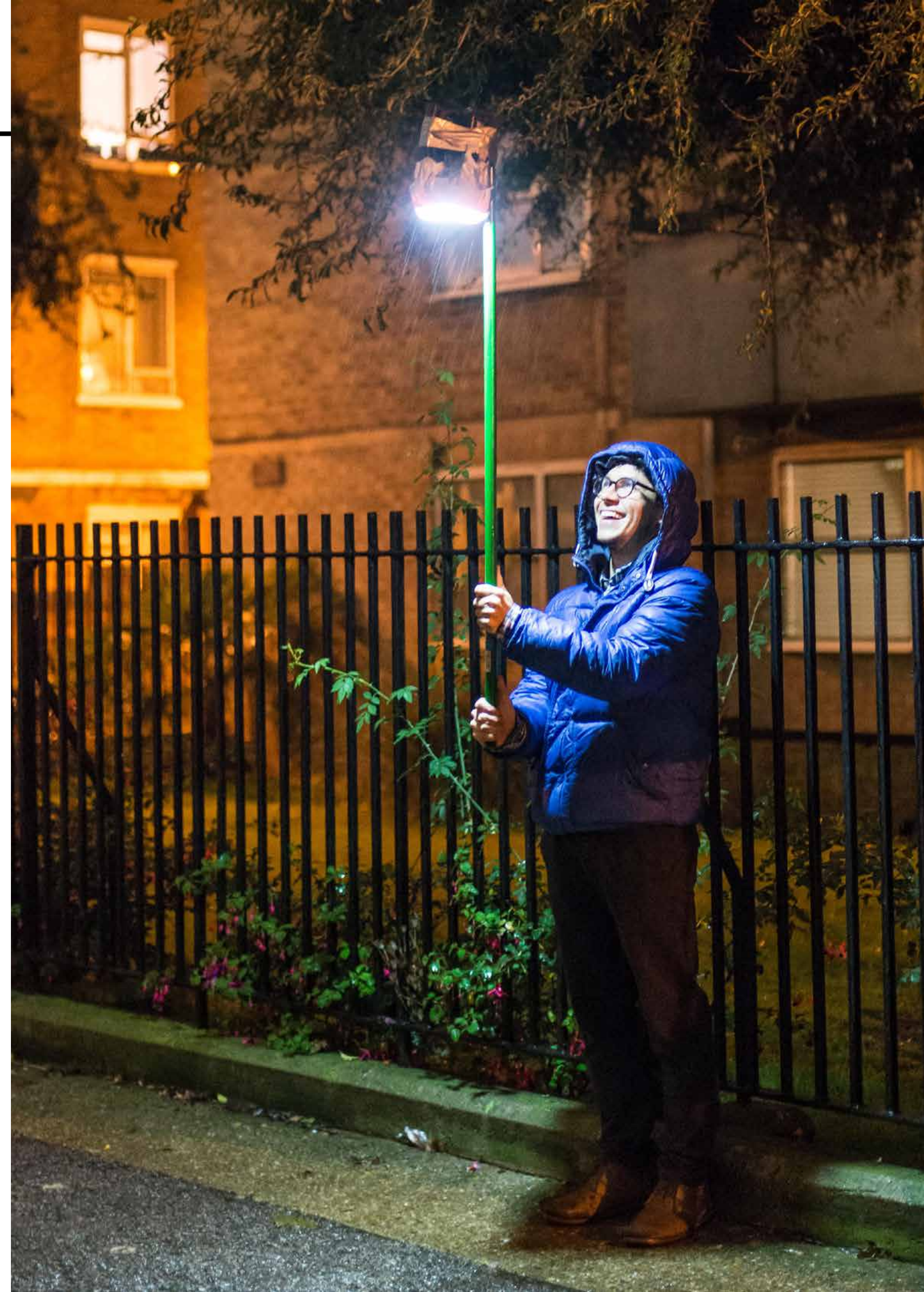


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# URBAN LIGHTSCAPES / SOCIAL NIGHTSCAPES

Urban Lightscapes/Social Nightscapes  
A Project on Social Research in Lighting Design

A report by the Configuring Light/Staging the Social research programme  
at the London School of Economics and Political Science  
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