

# Regeneration Realities

## Urban Pamphleteer # 2

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Urban Pamphleteer

Ben Campkin, David Roberts, Rebecca Ross

We are delighted to present the second issue of Urban Pamphleteer

In the tradition of radical pamphleteering, the intention of this series is to confront key themes in contemporary urban debate from diverse perspectives, in a direct and accessible – but not reductive – way. The broader aim is to empower citizens, and inform professionals, researchers, institutions and policy-makers, with a view to positively shaping change.

### # 2 London: Regeneration Realities

The term 'regeneration' has recently been subjected to much criticism as a pervasive metaphor applied to varied and often problematic processes of urban change. Concerns have focused on the way the concept is used as shorthand in sidestepping important questions related to, for example, gentrification and property development. Indeed, it is an area where policy and practice have been disconnected from a rigorous base in research and evidence. With many community groups affected by regeneration evidently feeling disenfranchised, there is a strong impetus to propose more rigorous approaches to researching and doing regeneration. The Greater London Authority has also recently opened a call for the public to comment on what regeneration is, and feedback on what its priorities should be.

With this in mind, in *Urban Pamphleteer* #2 you will find analyses of regeneration, practical case studies and ideas or position statements that address the following questions: Is it possible to reclaim and rethink regeneration as a concept and set of practices?

How can we develop ethical, evidence-based and rigorous methods of regeneration that better serve the communities in whose name it is carried out?

If economic growth, and the supposed 'trickle-down' effects of increased land values have come to dominate regeneration rhetoric and practice, how can they be rebalanced towards the needs and values of existing communities?

*Urban Pamphleteer* is supported by the UCL Grand Challenge of Sustainable Cities and the UCL Urban Laboratory.

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**Rebecca Ross** is Interaction Design Subject Leader in the Graphic Communication Design Programme and Postdoctoral Fellow in the Spatial Practices Programme at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design.



The historiography of 19<sup>th</sup> century housing and land reform tends to focus on the great philanthropists such as George Peabody, Samuel Lewis, Octavia Hill and Angela Burdett Coutts. There was, however, a series of initiatives by radical and working class organisations such as the followers of the Chartist James Bronterre O'Brien, who maintained an agitation for land nationalisation after his death through their participation in the First International and a range of other short-lived organisations including the Land and Labour

## DAN CHATTERTON: REMEMBERING A RADICAL PAMPHLETEER

League. Pamphleteering was part of the milieu of local politics. While there is no evidence that the Land and Labour League had significant influence on national policy, it can be argued that they forced John Stuart Mill and his Liberal colleagues to adopt a more radical position than would have otherwise been the case, influencing Mill to move much closer to a socialist position in the 1870s.

Politics has to be about people's real lives, not the untried theoretical concepts of poliwonks or the unintelligible language of many an academic urbanist. To win an argument you first have to be understood.

One of the more eccentric London pamphleteers was Dan Chatterton who published a self-produced paper, *Chatterton's Commune, the Atheistic Communistic Scorcher*. Thanks to the research of the libertarian socialist journalist and televi-

sion executive, Andrew Whitehead, we have considerable information on Chatterton's activity on the fringes of London radical politics in the late Victorian period.<sup>1</sup> Chatterton's pamphlets included: *Hell, Devil and Damnation: Blood, bullets and bayonets; Fruits of a Philosophical Research of Holy Scripture* and *Commune in England*, the latter being subtitled 'the Organ for smashing up Kings, Queens, Princes, and Priests, Policemen, Prigs, Paupers and Prostitutes, Land and Money Mongers, and Rogues and Rascals of all Degrees.'

In 1879 Chatterton published a pamphlet entitled *The Homes of the Poor and the Board of Works Swindle by one of Ye Hungry Guttled Dedicated to a Suffering People*. The pamphlet tells the story of a child who died in a slum off Gray's Inn Road, her family having been displaced by improvements carried out by the Metropolitan Board of Works. This is followed by a number of examples of profiteering by landlords and mismanagement by local vestries. Chatterton's solution is the nationalisation of 'land, houses, money, fisheries, railways and mercantile marine under a pure and just State; a government of the people, by the people, for the people, the only justified rent being a purely nominal charge.'

Chatterton called on the Metropolitan Board of Works to 'clear the land-map out and rearrange good wide streets and to build thereon good six roomed houses, with, say twelve feet square rooms. With every accommodation, back and front rooms same size, with gardens at the back, the wash-house, dust-bin, and water-closet to be at the bottom of the garden, the whole of the drainage to run under the wash-house, dust-bin and water-closet,







Andrew Whitehead. 'Chatterton, Dan, and his Atheistic Communist Scorcher', <http://libcom.org/library/-dan-chatterton-scorcher-london-communist-atheist>

till it comes to the end of the street, where a house should be left down, and a subway made to carry such drainage out into the man sewer, by this means avoiding all foul smells and poisoning of the blood—sickness, disease, and death.'

Chatterton argued that the homes would cost £300 to £400 and should be built of brick. The rent should be one shilling a week per room. There should be no sub-letting. They should stand for sixty years, and would pay for themselves in thirty. Rent for the second thirty years would go to the government and all other taxation should stop: 'We should then have good homes, good food, good clothes, health, life, liberty and happiness for all.'

Chatterton's pamphlet, like his other publications, probably had little impact—he is mainly remembered for his eccentricity. Nevertheless, popular propaganda is an important part of politics as it counters the arguments of the national press and media which are much more prevalent now than they were in Chatterton's day. In discussing policy opinions in political networks—the Labour party especially—radical options always

meet the response, 'We can't propose that—the press would attack us'. This is political cowardice. The radical pamphleteers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and, in fact, the socialists of the last century were not terrified of what the conservative press would say.

They developed their own propaganda, putting forward their message in terms with which people sympathised. Politics has to be about people's real lives, not the untried theoretical concepts of poliwonks or the unintelligible language of many an academic urbanist. To win an argument you first have to be understood. The 19<sup>th</sup> century radicals and socialists did not just have a vision of what they wanted, but a clear understanding of the means to achieve it. There are of course parallels between the experience of the 19<sup>th</sup> century

slum residents being displaced to make way for new homes for the better off, and the experience today of tenants displaced to make way for

upmarket regeneration schemes, though the context is very different. The comparison is an interesting one, but the lesson from history is about the need for independent and vigorous struggle and believing in the justice of the cause.

**Duncan Bowie** is Senior Lecturer in Spatial Planning, University of Westminster.





## CONSERVING LIVING BUILDINGS

Buildings are not just bricks and mortar or steel and concrete. Social housing in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was created with a social purpose in mind, for which it is still in demand. Today the very existence of social housing is under threat from government policy and listed buildings are especially vulnerable. If we determine that social purpose must also be conserved, we must look beyond physical conservation and commit to keeping these homes

in the social sector.

As an architectural writer I am interested in analysing built projects in use, and how they are managed, and financed over the long term.<sup>1</sup> As a local councillor I represent the residents of the Cheltenham Estate comprising Trellick Tower, listed Grade II\* in 1991, and Edenham Way, listed Grade II in 2012 after a long community campaign. Both are designed by Erno Goldfinger and are under siege by Kensington and Chelsea Council and their political and commercial aspirations.

*Buildings are subjects, not objects.  
They are not sculpture, nor are they relics.  
They are living buildings whose original use  
is continuous and still needed today.*

I am uncomfortable with the fetishisation of Trellick Tower, whether by architects or for the consumption of interior design magazines.<sup>2</sup> In my opinion it demeans the true value of the building and creates a

taste for it that will raise property prices and squeeze local people out of their own neighbourhoods. Such buildings are neither works of art nor 'containers of collectibles'.<sup>3</sup> Social tenants also appreciate the superior quality of their building; I will not encourage their homes being viewed as 'merchandise'.<sup>2</sup>

Elsewhere I have reviewed the issues surrounding the Cheltenham Estate through the prism of a theory I call Soft, Hard and Plastic.<sup>1</sup> Soft issues relate to the conservation and reinstatement of social purpose and meaning, and the human need to live in a sympathetic environment. Hard issues include physical design and material conservation matters, and how to conserve, improve, replace or reinstate. Plastic issues involve the ever-changing balance of efficient management, funding of effective ongoing repair and maintenance, and long-term financial stability—without which a building is vulnerable to loss to commercialism—and finally, of course, effective political engagement. This is a live project whose outcome will affect the wellbeing and future of about 1,000 people.

Typically the discourse on social housing revolves around distinct areas: planning policy; socio-economic issues; architectural typology; management, maintenance and funding; or lived experience and consumption patterns. This separation of issues has come about artificially due to the development of specialities and professions that concern themselves with each discipline in isolation. The tendency then is to simplify and distil problems relating to that discipline, lazily conflating arguments and creating epigrams which can be more easily defined, analysed and subsequently addressed or 'resolved'. This does not relate to how projects come about and





# makes her stand



**WE WON'T GO!** Labour Councillor Emma Dent Coad chains herself to the gates of the former Edenham care home as the bulldozers roll in

Picture by Grant Humphreys  
GH1\_8737

Councillor Emma Dent Coad chained herself to the gates of Edenham Residential Care Home by Ernö Goldfinger, later demolished by Kensington and Chelsea Council, July 2008.

1 Emma Dent Coad, *Trellick Tower* for Icomos Conference, Madrid, 2011 <http://www.emmadentcoad.co.uk>, or, paper in full at <https://skydrive.live.com/view.aspx?resid=DD44554F617ACAEA!328&cid=dd44554f617acaea&app=WordPdf>

2 Colomina, Beatriz, *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).

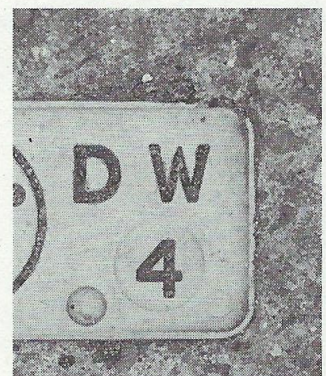
3 Benjamin, Walter, *The Servitude of Usefulness*, 1935.

**Emma Dent Coad** is a design and architecture critic and local councillor at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, where she is Deputy Leader and Finance Spokesperson for the Opposition Labour Party.

are consumed in everyday experience, and is not a methodology that will produce meaningful insights or intelligent solutions. It is certainly not an approach that will deal with the very real problems of long-term survival faced by social housing such as that in Trellick Tower. My three categories of Soft, Hard and Plastic are co-dependent and should be evenly balanced.

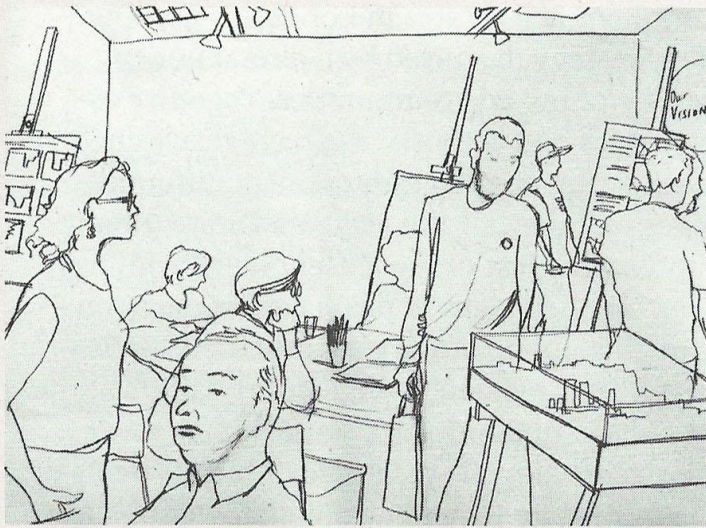
In the fight to preserve buildings such as Trellick Tower within the social sector we must be proactive, not reactive. As an historian as well as a local politician fighting to preserve principles, I realise that we must get our hands dirty to engage politically, comprehensively and at the right time. We must understand enough about the economics, financing and management of these buildings to question exaggerated financial projections and challenge dangerous assumptions and 'tough' conclusions.

Buildings are subjects, not objects. They are not sculpture, nor are they relics. They are living buildings whose original use is continuous and still needed today. They must not be reduced to a trope or cipher or an icon; they take their meaning from the human interaction that they inspire. That has to work as well. It is all too easy to set up a false dichotomy where ideology fights pragmatism. By understanding and working across specialities we can challenge this either/or situation. Then we can fight for both.





## Howard Read



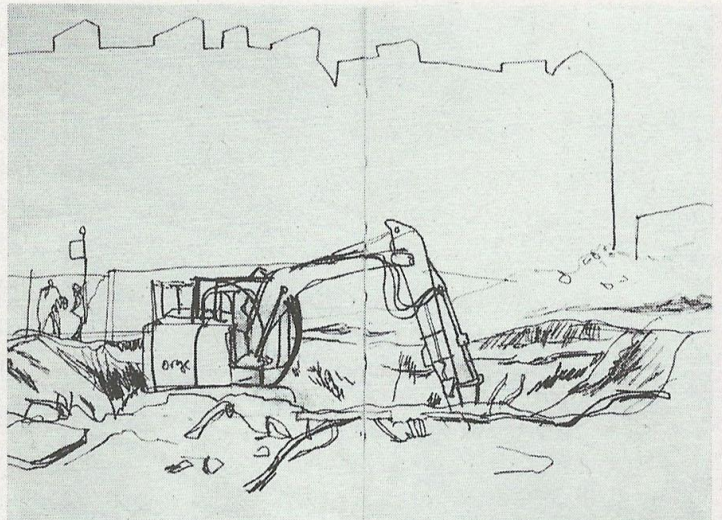
Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2013, 2:00 pm  
Interior, Soundings Hub, 182 – 184 Walworth Road SE17  
Pencil on paper – composite view from sketches.



Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2013, 2:20 pm  
Wansley Street SE17. To the left is the fenced off  
Heygate Estate. Pencil on paper – A6 sketchbook.



Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2013, 3:00 pm  
Garland Court, Wansley Street SE17. The first  
replacement homes, built as part of the E&C  
regeneration, consist of an equal balance of  
private and social housing, like most of the street.  
Pencil on paper – A6 sketchbook.



Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2013, 4:00 pm  
Phase One development site, re-named Trafalgar  
Place by the developers, used to be part of the  
Heygate Estate. Pencil on paper – A6 sketchbook.

**Howard Read** is Senior Lecturer in Illustration  
at University of Wolverhampton and a PhD  
Candidate at Manchester Metropolitan University.



### Heygate Estate sketches

The selected sketches are from a 'walk and talk' event organised as part of the regeneration of the Elephant and Castle – specifically phase 2, which concerns the demolition of the Heygate Social Housing Estate. The consultation exercise was organised by Soundings and comprised of local residents, developers and architects. I live locally and received a flyer about the event. I have been attending meetings at the Soundings Hub on the Walworth Road and drawing the developments on the Heygate Estate over the last year as part of my PhD research looking at the role of drawing in regeneration. I aimed to record and capture the views of local residents by drawing the event in an A6 sketchbook and making notes.



We are clear that the 'regeneration' of council estates in London is nothing more than a state-led gentrification strategy disguised by a liberal policy

## THE SOCIAL CLEANSING OF COUNCIL ESTATES IN LONDON

rhetoric of mixed communities. Together as academics and activists<sup>1</sup> we have researched four London council estates, all at different stages of 'renewal': the Heygate Estate (finally empty as the last of the leaseholders, who were asserting their right to proper compensation through a public inquiry around their CPOs, was forcibly evicted by high court bailiffs at the instruction of Southwark Council'),<sup>2</sup> the Aylesbury Estate (part of which has been 'redeveloped', the rest of which is being decanted or is still in limbo), the Pepys Estate (where a council tower block, Aragon Tower, was redeveloped by Berkeley Homes into the Z Apartments),<sup>3</sup> and the Carpenters Estate (whose residents vigorously and effectively opposed the London Borough of Newham and UCL's plans for a UCL-led development, and whom we have been helping to develop an alternative neighbourhood plan).<sup>4</sup>

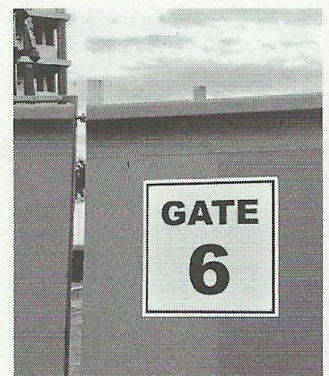
Mixed Communities Policy was launched by the previous New Labour government to tackle social exclusion in deprived areas such as council estates. New Labour believed that they could reduce social exclusion and promote social mobility for the poor by mixing them with the middle classes—the idea being that the social and economic capital of the middle classes would trickle down to the poor through social mixing. The goal of this revanchist form of social engineering was a new moral order of respectable and well-behaved (middle class) residents. Despite a change of

government and no new national discussion on mixed communities policy, local councils in London still cling to it as the selling point for their 'regeneration' schemes (as seen in the current Earls Court regeneration plan).

But there is significant evidence of the poor performance of mixed communities policy with respect to its claims to aid the social and economic mobility of the poor. Geographers have called it 'a faith-based *displacement* activity'. The evidence to date<sup>5</sup> indicates that mixed communities policy improves the life circumstances of neither those poorer residents who are able to remain in the neighbourhood, nor of those who are moved out. Indeed, there seems to be quite persuasive evidence<sup>6</sup> that specialised neighbourhoods have labour market advantages, even for the poor; indeed particularly for the less skilled who rely on personal contacts to a greater extent to find jobs.



Graffiti on the Heygate Estate—a graphic commentary on dispossession and housing speculation in the Elephant. Photo by Loretta Lees.





<sup>1</sup> This research is funded by a 2012 *Antipode Activist Scholar Award*, PI: Loretta Lees, Cols: London Tenants Federation, Richard Lee/Just Space and Mara Ferreri/SNAG, 'Challenging "the New Urban Renewal": gathering the tools necessary to halt the social cleansing of council estates and developing community-led alternatives for sustaining existing communities.'

<sup>2</sup> 35 Percent: Campaigning for a More Affordable Elephant. 'Heygate Leaseholders Forced to Leave Their Homes', <http://35percent.org/blog/2013/07/20/heygate-leaseholders-forced-to-sell-their-homes-cpo-approved>.

<sup>3</sup> See Davidson and Lees (2010).

<sup>4</sup> CARP and the UCL students' campaign did influence UCL's decision to back out, but there were also economic factors regarding the price of the land, etc, and more generally the failure to reach a commercial agreement (read the interview with the former UCL Provost Malcolm Grant in <http://cheesegratermagazine.org/investigations/2013/5/13/interview-with-the-provost.html>).

<sup>5</sup> See Bridge, Butler and Lees (2012); and specifically on London, Arbaci and Rae (2013).

<sup>6</sup> See Cheshire (2009).

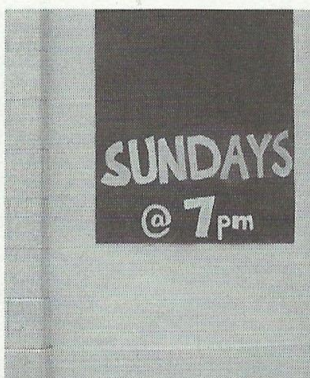
<sup>7</sup> See Hyra (2008).

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.londontenants.org/publications/other/theaffordablehousingconf.pdf>

The term 'the new urban renewal' has been used<sup>7</sup> to describe the American HOPE VI programme of poverty deconcentration, in which public housing projects in US inner cities have been demolished (much as London council estates are being demolished in the name of mixed communities policy) to make way for mixed income housing in ways very similar to post-war urban renewal programmes in the US. Despite a new emphasis in 21<sup>st</sup> century London on partnership working, community involvement, and sustainability, the results are the same: the destruction of local communities and the large-scale displacement of low-income communities (see the SNAG maps showing the displacement of council tenants and leaseholders from the Heygate Estate).

The process for all four 'regeneration' schemes we have looked at has been very similar: *First*, local authorities made out that the estates were failing in some way, socially or economically; they were sink estates, they were structurally unsound, etc. These were often misrepresentations and falsehoods. *Second*, the local authorities systematically closed down options and subsequently created a false choice for the estate's residents between living on estates that needed upgrading and repair (which they were very unlikely to get) or newly built neighbourhoods in which they were unlikely to be able to afford the rents let alone get a mortgage, and even if they did they would not be living with their existing community. *Third*, residents' support for these regeneration programmes was more often than not misrepresented or misused. *Fourth*, the delays and uneven information flows meant that residents often struggled to fight, many lived and still live in limbo, unsure about the future of their estate, many suffered and continue to suffer from depression and exhaustion. *Fifth*, the 'affordable housing' supposedly being made available to the ex-council tenants is a con - much of the housing deemed affordable by the government is out of the reach of households earning below the median level of income in London (around £30,000 p.a. in 2012)!<sup>8</sup> The fact is that a variety of unjust practices have been, and are being, enacted on these council estates.

In this project we have been gathering the data (evidence of resident and business displacement and unjust practices) and the tools (examples of alternatives) necessary to try to halt further demolitions and social cleansings, and to develop community-led alternatives for sustaining existing communities on council estates in London. We are in the process of producing an anti-gentrification toolkit that will provide tenants, leaseholders and housing activists across London with the information that they need to recognise council estate destruction as a form of gentrification, and also with suggestions for practical ways to fight it. If we truly want London to be a socially mixed city we must stop the social cleansing of its council estates now! It is already getting too late!





### Relevant Reading and Evidence

Sonia Arbaci and Ian Rae, 'Mixed Tenure Neighbourhoods in London: Policy myth or effective device to alleviate deprivation?', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37:2 (2013): 451–479.

Gary Bridge, Tim Butler, and Loretta Lees, eds, *Mixed Communities: Gentrification by Stealth?* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2012).

Paul Cheshire, 'Policies for Mixed Communities: a faith-based displacement activity?', *International Regional Science Review*, 32:3 (2009), 343–375.

Mark Davidson and Loretta Lees, 'New-Build Gentrification: its histories, trajectories, and critical geographies', *Population, Space and Place*, 16 (2010), 395–411.

Derek Hyra, *The New Urban Renewal: the Economic Transformation of Harlem and Bronzeville*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

Loretta Lees, 'The Death of Sustainable Communities in London?', in *Sustainable London? The Future of a Global City*, eds, Rob Imrie and Loretta Lees, (Bristol: Policy Press, forthcoming, 2014).

Loretta Lees, 'The Urban Injustices of New Labour's 'New Urban Renewal': the case of the Aylesbury Estate in London', *Antipode*, accessed May 3, 2013, doi: 10.1111/anti.12020.

<http://www.betterelephant.org>

<http://www.elephantamenity.wordpress.com>

<http://www.heygatewashome.com>

<http://www.justspace2010.wordpress.com>

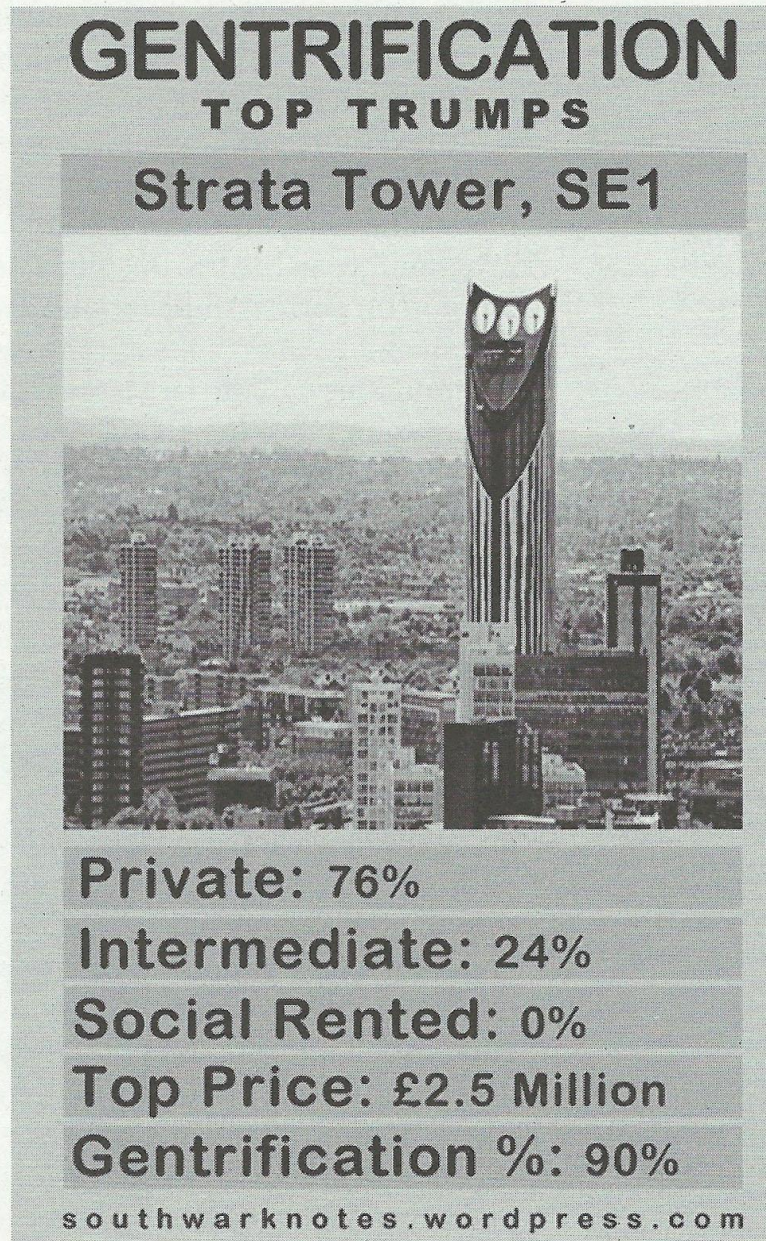
<http://londonjustspace.wikispaces.com>

<http://www.londontenants.org>

<http://www.peoplesrepublicofsouthwark.co.uk>

<http://www.southwarknotes.wordpress.com>

<http://www.35percent.org>



Top Trumps card of the Strata Tower: Heygate leaseholders were offered a shared equity option in intermediate (housing association) housing in the Strata (note: in this 'mixed income' tower the intermediate and private properties have separate lifts!). Courtesy of Southwark Notes Archive Group (SNAG).

**Next page** Map by SNAG.

Leaseholders who have been displaced from the Heygate Estate.

**Overleaf** Map by SNAG.

Council tenants who have been displaced from the Heygate Estate.













'The problem is one not merely of bricks and mortar but of flesh and blood, of the personality, customs, hopes, aspirations and human rights of each individual man, woman and child who needs a home.'

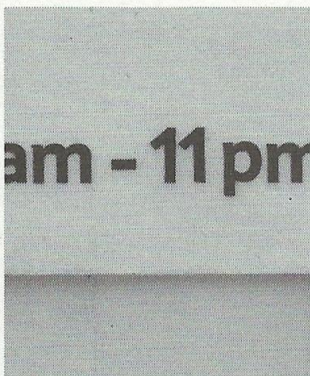
Isaac Hayward, leader of LCC, 1949.<sup>1</sup>

## THE CERTAINTY OF UNCERTAINTY



While the concept and practice of regeneration remains fiercely disputed, one certainty of its process is disruption. After decades of mismanagement and shelved refurbishment plans, residents of the Haggerston Estate in East London are awaiting demolition of their final block. Our six-year engagement on the estate has provided us with a chorus of residents' thoughts and experiences over this prolonged period of uncertainty, suspended between full occupation and imminent demolition. They articulate the everyday emotional challenges of the endless consultations, failed plans, political wrangling, stock transfer votes, decanting and rehousing that accompany the process of regeneration—experiences shared by communities across London but rarely acknowledged in policy documents and academic papers. We have collated the following quotes from interviews, oral histories and group workshops since 2007, and they have been left unattributed to protect anonymity.<sup>2</sup>

- » If our building would look beautiful like the ones that have been privatised or renovated, would we be seen as different people? Just because we live here we are seen as dirty, because the rubbish isn't carried away, but we are tidy, we bring the rubbish to the bin.
- » We're just herded around. We are to blame for existing. If you think about Parliament and the juggling about they do with housing, we haven't got a chance.
- » You had the social landlord canvassing, the council stock transfer team canvassing, sometimes with the people from the electoral reform society with the ballot box in their hand. And then you also had the Labour Party putting out a leaflet calling for stock transfer. The Conservatives of course supported it as well.
- » To be honest I didn't want to move. All of a sudden they are moving me from that place—it wasn't all that posh, but I was happy there. 30 years, and all of a sudden they are moving me. I cried like a baby.
- » I think people were scared to complain about their housing. Not everyone is brave enough to ask to fix their house. They don't know what will happen to them.
- » I think looking at what politicians today are saying about social housing, it's impossible to glean anything valuable.
- » I'm not going to take any kind of romantic position on my broken-down flat. It was run into the ground by the Council that owned it, and I'm just waiting for a decent place to live. And OK, I don't really believe this Photoshopped garbage, but even this has got to be better than where I live now.





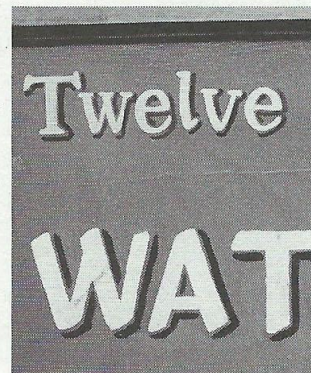
## The certainty of uncertainty

- » I have good memories of the estate. I've had good times, I've had great flatmates. If it wasn't for the actual physical deterioration of the building I really wouldn't want to move because I like the architecture, I like the people who live in the building, I like the landscaping, I like everything. I don't like the actual ruin of my flat. But in other respects of course I'm going to miss it. I just want something that is warm and dry, that's all.
- » This talk of the redevelopment has been going on for so long, it was just so frustrating to think about it and get involved in it, and then nothing happened. There was talk of things changing but things weren't changing, and you still have to live your everyday, you still have to find the energy to get up and go to work and study.
- » We're trying to build that strong community link really, to foster that when the new people come, so they can feel part of a strong community.
- » We don't expect that it's just going to fall into place, we have to be on the go. Some people might have a feeling of, oh there are people that are buying, some people are renting, some are part buyers. Who knows how that might play in people's thinking in terms of how they judge each other. So we'll work on that.
- » I think there is hope, but the hope depends on people. It depends on people feeling like what they do has an effect. And that with housing they are provided with a sense of ownership. People can do remarkable things with very small means.
- » It requires a long-term commitment. People are so caught up with the stuff of everyday life. I'm just waiting to be paid next week. I'm not even thinking beyond that.
- » Being part of the consultation meetings—however futile, however much of a shadow-puppet theatre they feel like—you still feel you are part.
- » You have to fight for it. We fought for it. Everyone who has been involved in the regeneration has had to push for it, to keep an eye on certain groups. I would be very cautious against being completely celebratory.
- » Being an involved citizen—objecting, fighting and talking to one another is the best way to deal with it. It's the passivity that will victimise us.
- » I don't have time to feel nostalgic or any form of emotion, I just need to finish packing, go to work, unpack, live. But I think at some point I am going to feel a bit wistful.

<sup>1</sup> London County Council, *Housing: A Survey of the Post-War Housing Work of the LCC 1945–1949* (London: LCC, 1949), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> To find out more about this ongoing project, please visit [www.fugitiveimages.org.uk](http://www.fugitiveimages.org.uk).

Artist filmmaker **Andrea Luka Zimmerman** and writer researcher **David Roberts** are Fugitive Images.





In October 2012, students from the MSc Social Development Practice (SDP) programme (UCL) undertook a three-month research project to explore the

## WELL-BEING AND REGENERATION: REFLECTIONS FROM THE CARPENTERS ESTATE

Competing claims on urban space have created tensions between residents seeking to maintain their established homes, livelihoods and neighbourhood facilities, and urban policy initiatives that seek to unlock East London's economic potential.

impacts of regeneration processes on those residents directly affected. The case centred on the Carpenters Estate, a 23-acre council housing estate in Newham, adjacent to the Olympic Park and the Stratford City development. At the time of the project, the estate was under consideration as the site of a second campus for University College London (UCL). The 700 units of terraced houses, low-storey apartment blocks, and three 22-storey tower blocks were earmarked for demolition by the London Borough of Newham, with some residents already relocated, and the completion of this process integral to the proposed redevelopment. The SDP team introduced the use of a 'well-being analysis' to explore the ways in which this initiative supported or constrained the capabilities and aspirations of Carpenters Estate residents.

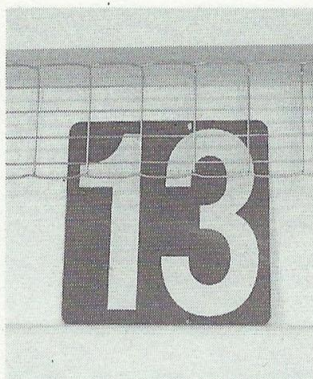
The proposed regeneration scheme in the Carpenters Estate mirrored similar trends occurring elsewhere in the area. East London has long been a laboratory for UK

urban policy, dating from the post-war slum clearance and reconstruction schemes right up to the 2012 London Olympic Games. The Games, alongside other recent regeneration programmes such as Stratford City, have contributed to the radical reshaping of East London's physical landscape.<sup>1</sup> With an additional £290m earmarked as a part of the Olympic Legacy, this investment has promised to boost tourism, generate employment, and create new homes and neighbourhoods—contributing to the changing image of East London.<sup>2</sup>

Yet questions have been raised regarding the extent to which the unfolding regeneration processes can provide and enhance employment opportunities, affordable housing and open public space to benefit low-income East Londoners.<sup>3</sup> While the rhetoric of regeneration emphasises community consultation, public-private partnerships and the creation of new mixed communities, the reality all too often means displacement, disenfranchisement and marginalization for pre-existing communities that do not benefit from increased investment, or cannot cope with rising property values.<sup>4</sup>

Such pressures have emerged in the Borough of Newham, where competing claims on urban space have created tensions between residents seeking to maintain their established homes, livelihoods and neighbourhood facilities, and urban policy initiatives that seek to unlock East London's economic potential.<sup>5</sup>

It is within this context, and in collaboration with residents, activists, and researchers, that the exercise on the Carpenters Estate examined the proposed regeneration plan, centring on three







key dimensions of the current residents' well-being: secure livelihoods, dignified housing, and meaningful participation. The methodology was based upon Amartya Sen's Capability Approach,<sup>6</sup> which explores the abilities and opportunities of individuals and groups to achieve the things they value. Apart from prioritizing values that local residents attach to the place they live, the study aimed to reveal their existing capabilities to achieve those values, and to reflect on how neighbourhood changes might support or constrain them.

The tension between policy rhetoric and residents' lived experiences was evident throughout each of the three dimensions examined by the SDP students. In relation to dignified housing, residents highlighted the importance of bonds with their homes and communities that extended beyond their physical house structures. The regeneration process failed to recognize the value tenants, leaseholders and freeholders placed on their homes and on their relationships within their neighbourhood. Similarly, the students who focused on security of livelihood uncovered that this was based upon a far more nuanced set of calculations than evident in the 'cost-benefit analysis' undertaken by UCL. For residents, livelihood security was not solely defined by income, but encompassed a diverse set of influences including job security, cost of living in the area, and the ability to access local support networks. Finally, the students who focused on meaningful participation revealed the sense of disenfranchisement from the planning process felt by residents. While regeneration processes theoretically hold the potential to grant residents greater decision-making authority over their lived space, inadequate information from Newham Council and UCL in addition to various official exclusionary





tactics vis-à-vis community groups resulted in prolonged uncertainty, and helped create the feeling of a 'democratic deficit'.

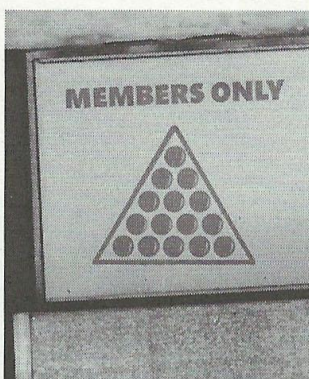
For communities facing similar challenges, a well-being analysis forms a valuable counterpoint to more traditional 'cost-benefit' calculations that do not account for the more intangible priorities and aspirations residents attach to their neighbourhoods.

While the regeneration of the Carpenters Estate falls within the wider discourse of creating an 'Olympic Legacy'—focused on creating long-term and sustainable benefits from the Games for East London citizens—the incorporation of a well-being analysis helps to qualify this process. This allowed for an examination of the intended and actual beneficiaries of regeneration,

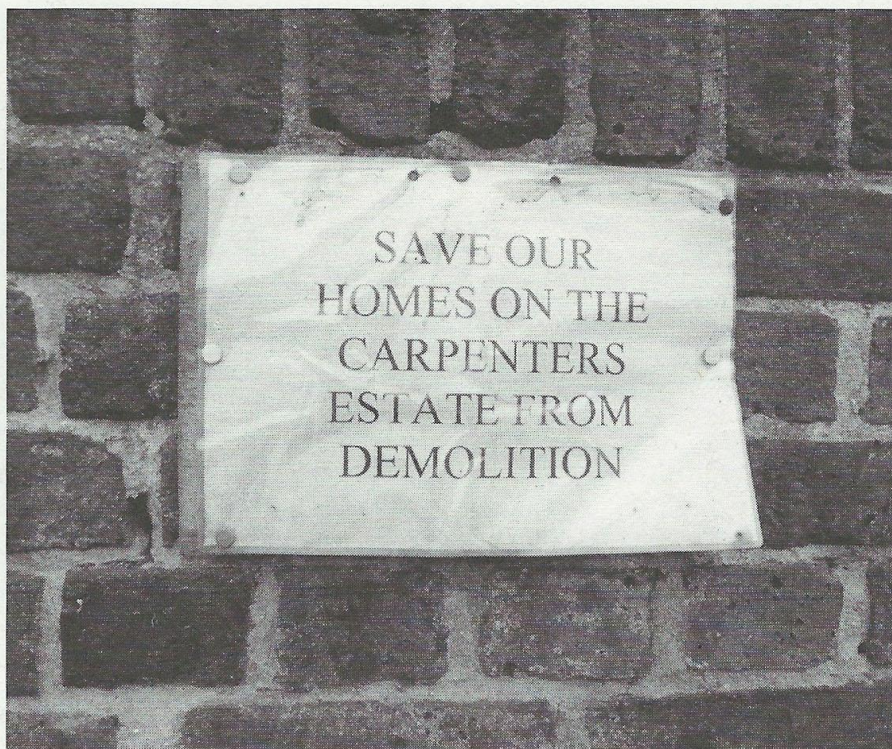
highlighting where there may be discrepancies between wider city visions and those residents directly impacted. For communities facing similar challenges, a well-being analysis forms a valuable counterpoint to more traditional 'cost-benefit' calculations that do not account for the less tangible priorities and aspirations residents attach to their neighbourhoods. Adopting this approach could potentially animate those values and voices

that are often unheard or suppressed in large-scale planning schemes. It can thus help to renegotiate the aims of regeneration, and support the advocacy of more equitable processes of urban development.

*Subsequent to the research reported here, negotiations between the London Borough of Newham and UCL for the redevelopment of the Carpenters Estate broke down in May 2013. If any future regeneration plans for the Carpenters Estate are to avoid the policy failures highlighted in the SDP report, they must embrace genuinely meaningful participation and acknowledge the value the existing neighbourhood has for its residents' well-being.*







1 Anna Minton, *Ground Control: Fear and Happiness in the Twenty-First-Century City* (London: Penguin, 2012).

2 Andy Thornley, 'The 2012 London Olympics: What legacy?', *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, vol. 4, no.2 (2012), 206–210.

3 Penny Bernstock, 'London 2012 and the Regeneration Game', in *Olympic Cities: 2012 and the Remaking of London*, eds. Gavin Poynter and Iain MacRury (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); Mike Raco and Emma Tunney, 'Visibilities and Invisibilities in Urban Development: small business communities and the London Olympics 2012', *Urban Studies*, vol. 47, no. 10 (2010), 2069–2091; Rob Imrie, Loretta Lees, and Mike Raco, eds., *Regenerating London: Governance, Sustainability and Community in a Global City* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).

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5 Nick Dines, 'The Disputed Place of Ethnic Diversity: an ethnography of the redevelopment of a street market in East London', in *Regenerating London: Governance, Sustainability and Community in a Global City*, eds. Rob Imrie, Loretta Lees, and Mike Raco (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009); Paul Watt, "'It's not for us': regeneration, the 2012 Olympics and the gentrification of East London', *City*, vol. 17, no.1 (2013), 99–118.

6 Amartya Sen, 'Development as Capability Expansion', *Journal of Development Planning*, vol. 19, (1989), 41–58.

7 Alexandre Apsan Frediani, Stephanie Butcher, and Paul Watt, eds., 'Regeneration and well-being in East London: stories from *Carpenters Estate*', MSc Social Development Practice Student Report, 2013, <http://issuu.com/dpu-ucl/docs/carpenters-estate-london>.

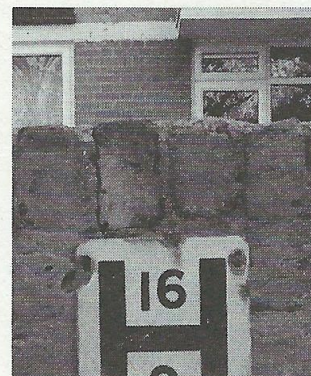
8 Open University, 'Social Housing and Working Class Heritage', 2009, <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/social-housing-and-working-class-heritage>; Site/Fringe, 'On the Edge: Voices from the Olympic Fringe—Newham and Hackney', 2012, <http://sitefringe.wordpress.com>; Peter Dunn, Daniel Glaessl, Cecilia Magnusson, and Yasho Vardhan, 'Carpenter's Estate: Common Ground.' London: The

Cities Programme, London School of Economics, 2010; Paul Watt, "'It's not for us': regeneration, the 2012 Olympics and the gentrification of East London', *City*, vol. 17, no. 1 (2013), 99–118.

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*HOW TO GET  
THE MOST  
FROM  
COLLABORATION  
BETWEEN  
COMMUNITY  
& ACTIVIST  
GROUPS &  
UNIVERSITY  
STAFF &  
STUDENTS*





## The need for change

Urban policy is increasingly driven by market forces, by the power of real estate and financial interests to influence governments and local authorities. This trend extends market forces into fields previously sheltered from them – social housing, recreational provision, elder care etc – and increases inequalities of income and wealth, undermines rights of local communities and underplays the importance of environmental protection and sustainability.

These same forces which have so influenced urban policy increasingly also influence the content of research and of education. However, universities and their students can and should be essential sources of critical and challenging analysis and creative thinking and thus help widen public debate and develop alternatives.

Community and action groups are normally under-resourced in their engagements with local authority planning departments and developers and, while much expertise is to be found amongst activists and community members, there is often scope and need for input and support from researchers. This is especially the case with large scale and metropolitan-wide planning issues, where local knowledge is not always what is valued, but where a community

perspective is still essential. The experience of the Just Space Network with the London Plan Examination in Public process exemplifies this, where the need to develop wider-ranging and often technical responses to planning issues and to present more synthetic evidence offers an opening for supportive research interventions.

## How to get the most from collaboration

Citizen groups and campaign groups are almost always under-resourced. They normally depend on the unpaid labour of committed enthusiasts. Only in exceptional cases are they large enough and well enough resourced to have paid staff, and even then the staff tend to be over-stretched. Researchers should approach them bearing this very much in mind.

### Researchers–staff or students:

- 1 Prepare fully before making approaches to community groups: read their websites and publications to avoid wasting their time when you meet.
- 2 Consult carefully at the early stages in the formulation of research or dissertation topics to minimise the risk that you are duplicating work that has already been done and to avoid projects that may inadvertently be damaging or unproductive for the groups you are working with.
- 3 When academics apply for research funding, there should be efforts to integrate community/action groups as research partners rather than merely viewing them as subjects of study. Non-academic research partners are something research councils and the EU are increasingly encouraging (e.g. ESRC-DFID schemes) and this is a direction that needs to be explored and developed.
- 4 Many universities have funds set aside for 'community engagement', not just for external outreach but also for challenging new directions in policy and action oriented research. Public engagement should be integral to our research, and the Universities Funding Council for England monitors this as part of assessing your research.
- 5 Community groups are usually extremely well informed on the issues they are engaging with, but not often familiar with the latest academic jargon. It is important to strike a good balance in the language and tone you adopt. In addition, it could be that research aims formulated in theoretical terms might need to be adjusted to the practical aims and concerns of collaborating groups.

It is very good to be open to this – it will mean that your results are likely to challenge and extend knowledge, rather than just reproduce well-known academic debates. And it is certainly more likely that they will be more immediately useful to the groups you are working with. From the community perspective, it is also possible that new ideas and fresh perspectives will be most welcome. Working collaboratively, then, can be a space for innovative thinking and creative tension as well as practical support and impact.

- 6 Be sure to consult with groups before passing on information to other organisations you might be engaging with in the research project, i.e. do be mindful of the politics of the situation and respect what you hear in confidence.
- 7 Also, be prepared to contribute time and effort to the group which might not directly feed into your own research process, but which reciprocates the contribution the group is making to your personal research.
- 8 Always make sure that the groups you cooperate with get copies of your findings. They should receive them promptly and without having to pester you. They should at least have an electronic copy of what you produce and ideally paper copies as well because not everyone can cope with printing costs.

If you are a *university teacher* seeking community group assistance or collaboration as part of student field trips or study projects, do budget for some money to support their input. You are diverting their resources and should compensate them in cash or in kind or both. And of course if there is a research or design product from the student work you should agree in advance with the students and the community group that the results will be made available to the group.

And do remember to ensure that results of all your research are always available on open access, not behind publishers' paywalls. Otherwise you are just addressing other academics in well-heeled institutions.

*Community groups* can make invaluable contributions to the education and training of the next generation by cooperating in these various ways. Some points to bear in mind when doing so are:

- 1 Try and formulate what your group might be able to get from the relationship, for example useful survey or research results, technical support with software or mapping, knowledge of parallel campaigns or policy initiatives elsewhere in the world, help in preparing plans, strategies and evidence, indirect access to research literature.
- 2 If you are asked to cooperate in student study projects or dissertations, do find out, and bear in mind, the timescale to which the students are working: they may have to complete their work in just a few months. Alternatively, researchers working on a long-term project over a few years might need to be alerted to forthcoming events or any urgent activities that you might need their assistance with, as other commitments might mean they are not always present.
- 3 Don't be shy about asking for something back – in money or in practical help – in exchange for your time and effort.
- 4 Do make sure that there is agreement in advance that you will receive at least electronic copies of the dissertation or reports or designs which the students or academics produce and will be free to make reasonable use of them in your own work.



*THIS DRAFT PROTOCOL GROWS OUT OF EXPERIENCE OF INTERACTIONS BETWEEN RESEARCHERS AND LOCAL ACTION GROUPS IN LONDON, AND OUT OF THE STRONGLY-FELT NEED THAT THESE COLLABORATIONS SHOULD BE MORE EXTENSIVE AND MORE PRODUCTIVE FOR BOTH PARTIES THAN THEY OFTEN ARE.<sup>1</sup>*

*WHILE SUCH COLLABORATIONS CAN BE VERY POSITIVE, THERE ARE PITFALLS TO BE AVOIDED.*

<sup>1</sup> The protocol comes out of a project funded by UCL Public Engagement Unit supporting university cooperation with the Just Space network of community/activist groups on London Planning, 2009–11.





1 Anna Minton, *Ground Control: Fear and Happiness in the Twentieth-Century City* (London: Pluto Press, 2012).

2 Andy Thornley, 'The 2012 London Olympics: What legacy?', *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, vol. 4, no.2 (2012) 206–210.

3 Penny Bernstock, 'London 2012 and the Regeneration Game', in *Olympic Cities: 2012 and the Remaking of London*, eds. Gavriel Salvendy and Iain MacRury (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); Mike Raco and Emma Tunney, 'Visibilities and Invisibilities in Urban Development: small business communities and the London Olympics 2012', *Urban Studies*, vol. 47, no.10 (2010), 2069–2091; Rob Imrie, Loretta Perotti and Mike Raco, eds., *Regeneration in London: Governance, Sustainability and Community in a Global City* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).

4 Jacqueline Kennelly and Paul Watt, 'Restricting the Public in Space: the London 2012 Olympic Games, hyper-securitization and marginalized youth', *Sociological Research Online*, vol. 18, no.2 (2013); Andrew Wallace, *Remaking Community? New Labour and the Governance of Poor Neighbourhoods* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

wordpress.com, Peter Dunn, Daniel Glaessl, Cecilia Magnusson, and Yasho Vardhan, 'Carpenter's Estate: Common Ground.' London: The

**Just Space** is a London-wide network of voluntary and community groups working together to influence planning policy at the regional, borough and neighbourhood levels.



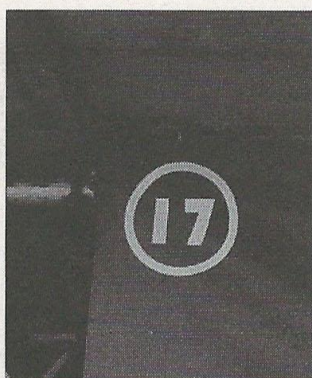




Carpenters Estate, Stratford,  
London, 21 July 2012.  
Photo by Isaac Marrero-Guillamón.

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The main and most recurring failure of regeneration schemes or softer urban rebranding exercises is their failure to capture and distribute the value they

## PLACE BRANDING AGENCY

generate for the beneficiaries they purport to serve, namely the local inhabitants struggling to cope with rising costs of living as a direct consequence of regeneration/rebranding exercises.<sup>1</sup>

Place marketing techniques have been with us for several decades, proposing ways to 'revitalise', change or reconfigure entire areas of cities for a variety of purposes in the name of 'regeneration'. In contemporary product design, the manufacturing of desires that preempts the product desirability is of central concern for designers. Similarly, in contemporary urban design, the city conceptualized as a product fuels the intense production of scattered signals that boost the city in its image. Place names and their rebranding are key factors in these urban operations and become the signifiers of their worth in material terms.

If indeed places have immaterial capital—as city boosters tell us—, the revenues from such capital must be shared between its producers, the place 'shareholders'.

This proposal aims to address the outfall of revenues from immaterial cultural capital—the main currency of contemporary urban economies centered on marketing urbanism.<sup>2</sup> If indeed places have immaterial capital, as city boosters tell us, the revenues from such capital must be shared between its pro-

<sup>1</sup> Hilary Osborne, 'London House Prices Outpace the Rest of the Country Like Never Before,' The Guardian House Prices Blog, June 28, 2013, [http://www.theguardian.com/money/2013/jun/28/london-house-prices-outpace-uk?CMP=tw\\_t\\_gu](http://www.theguardian.com/money/2013/jun/28/london-house-prices-outpace-uk?CMP=tw_t_gu)

<sup>2</sup> See the now classic tale as told by David Harvey in his 'The Art of Rent', reprinted in David Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, (London: Verso, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> The Section 106 built in the planning system addresses only the material capital extracted from newly built developments, forgetting the existing immaterial capital on which their marketing is based. As such, it arrives too late in the process, when an area's value has been manipulated to boost sales.

<sup>4</sup> This is a concept proposed by Matteo Pasquinelli in his article 'Immaterial Civil War: Prototypes of conflict within cognitive capitalism', [eipcp.com](http://eipcp.com), <http://eipcp.net/policies/cci/pasquinelli/en>

ducers, the place 'shareholders'.<sup>3</sup>

'Appellation of origin' protection schemes in intellectual property laws denominate and safeguard the area of production in order to maintain links between people, places and their economy. How could we envisage such denomination to exist for cities, areas, quarters, and streets whose intellectual property belongs to those who generate its cultural capital?

Through the actions of a Place Branding Agency, all self-interested acts of boosting and appropriation of an area's cultural capital would have to implicitly address the social needs of all those called into being as the cultural capital active builders of any area. It means instituting a de facto 'right to the city' legal status.

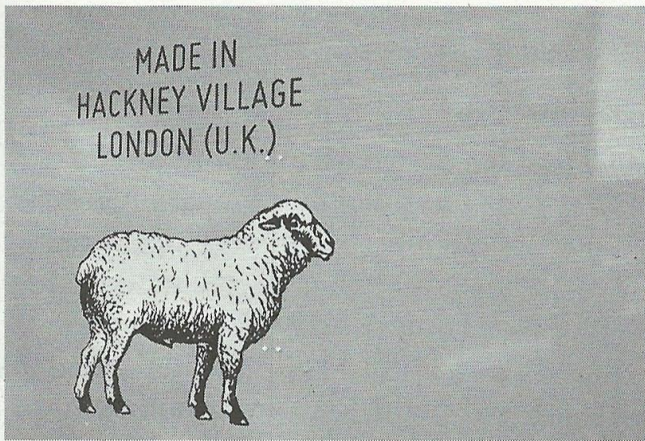
**Some Examples:** In Hackney Central, a new housing development by Aitch Group at the premises of a former Burberry factory highlights the area's industrial heritage through the use of a sheep as their logo and the name 'The Textile Building: made in Hackney Village, London UK' as their brand.

This is a clear example of collective

immaterial value sequestration or extraction for private gain. How can the local 'villagers' control the appropriation of their name to capture and







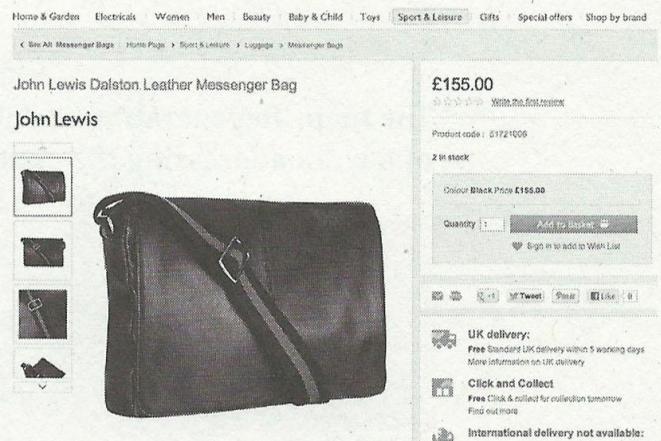
**Top left** A hoarding of 'The Textile Building' a development by Aitch Group in Chatham Place, Hackney. Photo by Alberto Duman © 2012.

**Top right** The 'Dalston Messenger Bag' for sale in John Lewis is another case of immaterial value extraction.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Accessed from John Lewis website on 12 August 2013, <http://www.johnlewis.com/john-lewis-dalston-leather-messenger-bag/p231788756>

<sup>6</sup> See for instance the recent troubles caused by Hackney Council shifting an old peppercorn rent from £10 per week to £37,000 per year to the Centerprise Bookshop/Café in Dalston High Street: <http://www.centerprisetrust.org.uk>

**Alberto Duman** is an artist, university lecturer and general practitioner of the city.



redistribute the immaterial capital called into being by those using it for private gain? How can we enact this social equality agenda of redistribution within the territories where 'immaterial civil wars' are clearly taking place, propelled by vested interests often camouflaged through hyperlocal blogs, Twitter feeds and Facebook groups?<sup>4</sup>

**The Place Branding Agency:** Such denomination would operate a degree of inclusion in which those residents within the boundaries of any defined area are automatically allocated shares derived from the future immaterial equities involving the use of the name of that area as an added value to any product.

Every product or service that invokes the name of an area, but whose production site or company address does not fall within the defined boundaries of such area, must incur in a value-extraction exercise that reflows capital back to the area itself through the collection powers of the local Place Branding Agency. This could operate independently of local authorities, vary in scale across the urban environment and gain its

powers through an extension of global intellectual property legislation.

This would mean, for example, that a fictional Hackney Village Branding Agency would file claims for equities from Aitch Group for their use of the name 'Hackney Village' in the marketing language of their development, independent of the sales resulting from it.

Equally, a fictional Dalston Branding Agency would file claims for equities from John Lewis for their use of the name 'Dalston' in their 'Dalston Leather Messenger Bag' sold in their stores nationwide.

The Agency's funds could then be used to mitigate the rising private rents of the area, support start-up grants, or finance community initiatives aimed at helping the existing occupants of the area to remain in their place.<sup>6</sup> The more the area is commodified as an asset through marketing, the more cases of collection by the Place Branding Agency would be enacted, and the more redistributive powers would be accrued.

The ultimate purpose of this fictional proposal is to flush the invisible flows of immaterial urban capital back into a more conscious and visible territory, as part of a critical agenda for regeneration studies.





# MAPPING REGENERATION GRIEVANCES IN LONDON 1998-2012

The map, 'Regeneration and its discontents', has been drawn in the context of a work addressing the contentious politics of regeneration in London and its (in)visibility in the public sphere. It is an attempt to understand the geographical extent to which regeneration has been challenged by groups facing some of its adverse effects.

Like regeneration, protests and campaigns for the defense of the built environment have an ambiguous meaning. Framed as localist forms of engagement, they are often dismissed through use of the disparaging term 'Not in My Backyard' (NIMBY). Their political agency is regularly denied by those who want to limit

the scope of social movements to struggles explicitly targeted at global forces operating in relation to contemporary capitalism.

At the other end of the interpretative spectrum, some contend that such protests are in fact a typical form of resistance to the expansion of the late wave of global capitalism. In a post-Fordist era where collective bargaining and unionised collective action are weakening, localist struggles represent an important possibility for disenfranchised citizens to oppose some of the adverse consequences of operations led by global financial property interests involved in 'regenerating' areas.

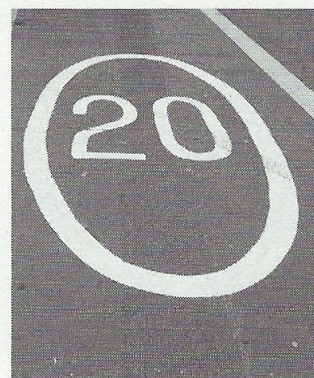
As Cloward and Piven have pointed out, it is people's concrete experience 'that moulds their discontent into specific grievances against specific target'.<sup>1</sup> As a result, citizens are more likely to frame their discontent with regeneration in terms of rising rents, unaffordable basic goods, displacement, biased consultations, loss of amenities and services, and the dismantling of local communities, rather than in terms of opposition to state-led gentrification. By aggregating these concrete experiences across time and space, much can be learned about emerging patterns of citizens' actions against regeneration. The map can help us better understand the modalities of collective action in reaction to planning policies, and some of its salient geographical and social determinants.

In the absence of a singular public record of contentious events taking place in regenerated areas, I started to collect newspaper coverage of instances of resistance to the implementation of regeneration policies. The digitalisation of the local newspaper *The Evening Standard* helped me to cover a relatively long period (13 years) which corresponded to the advent of the 'urban renaissance' agenda.

I divided the collection of protests into two categories; the first group (red on the map) consists of articles in which people are either explicitly protesting against the local implementation of the regeneration agenda or 'scaling up' their protest

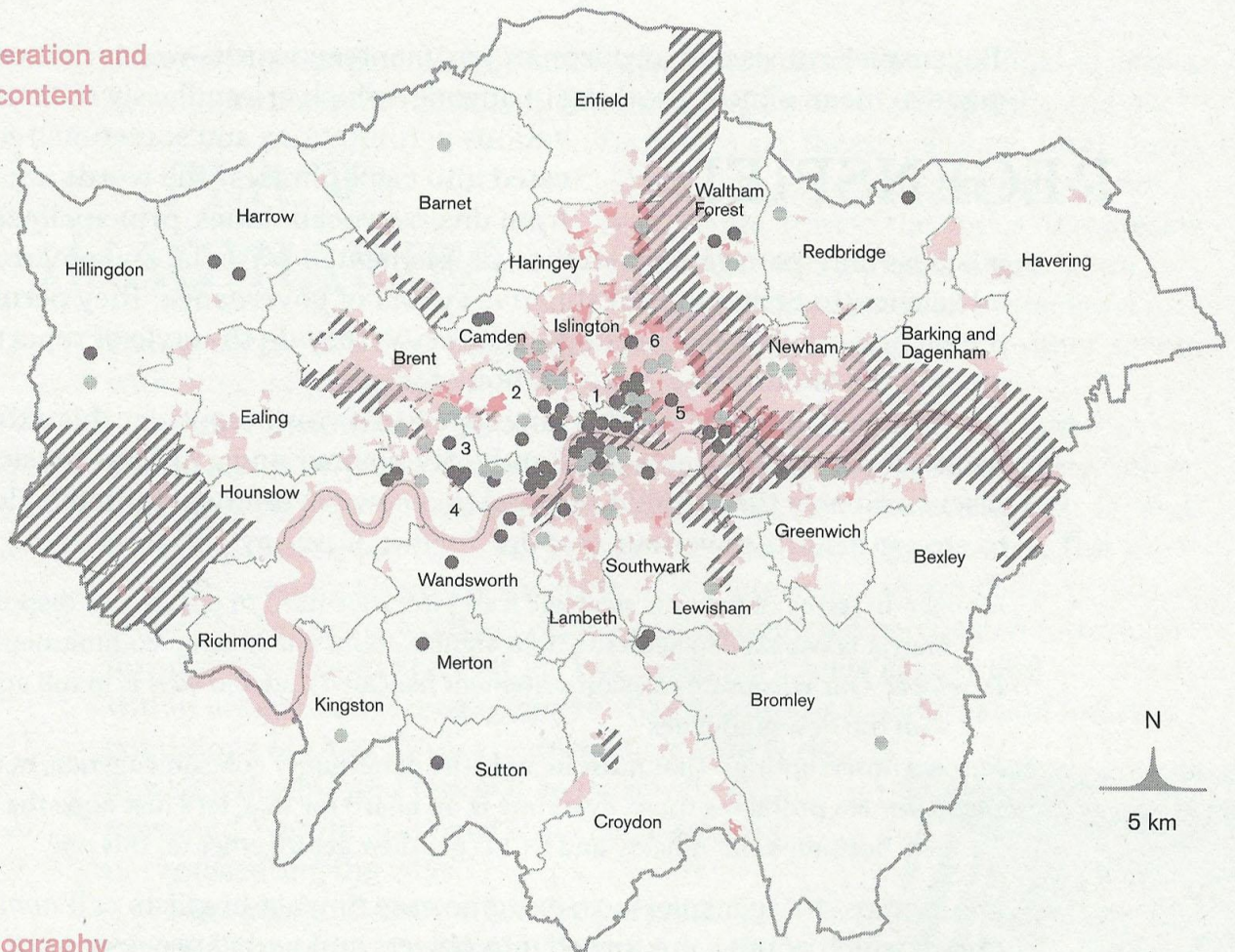
<sup>1</sup> Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (New-York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1977), 20.

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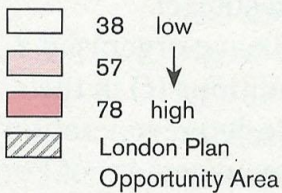
Regeneration and its discontent



The geography of regeneration

- 1 City of London
- 2 City of Westminster
- 3 Kensington and Chelsea
- 4 Hammersmith and Fulham
- 5 Tower Hamlets
- 6 Hackney

Deprivation Index



Urban Conflicts

- Land use
- Regeneration

to demand social, cultural or environmental justice. The second group (dark grey) represents the coverage of conflicting property interests and land use conflicts.

As articles in *The Evening Standard* are written by business correspondents, the map shows a bias towards conflicts involving main market players. Residents of council homes, for example, who are highly likely to suffer from the adverse effects of property-led regeneration, are rarely given a voice. The map is therefore also interesting because of its absences, blanks and the under-coverage of some of the discontent of regeneration. For instance, it does not show many of the campaigns supported by the Just Space network in inner and East London.

This is why alternative channels are needed. The work done by the *Southwark Notes Blog* (<http://southwarknotes.wordpress.com>), for example, provides an extensive and accessible archive of the re-development of the Elephant and Castle area and demonstrates in the process the complex stories and multiple spheres of engagement channelled in the campaign.





## REGENSPIEL

'Regenspiel' consists in a lexicon of portmanteau words—words that can be made to mean almost anything to anyone—which are endlessly reiterated in various permutations and sometimes collocated into catchphrases. The words are drawn from diverse vocabularies, principally those of business and management studies supplemented by social and environmental science, to constitute a distinctive syntax of governance. They permeate the diction of business meetings as much as they do the style of report writing and the audio-visual presentation of ideas.

As an example of how this language game works consider this extract from a meeting between a local authority planner and a private developer discussing how they should respond to a new government initiative designed to strengthen the governance of the Thames Gateway:

*Planner* In terms of the new strategic framework we need to ensure our responsibility matrix is tweaked to send the right signals about partnership commitment...

*Developer* Our corporate mission statement has been updated so it is in full accord with the new guidelines—

*Planner* (interrupting) That must include the community cohesion agenda, of course.

*Developer* No problems there, everyone is on board for that, let's just hope the thing gets bottomed out quickly and DCLG get their act together on this one.

The syntax of Regenspiel is an extreme case of what linguists call *nominalisation* in which actions are turned into objects and verbal processes are turned into abstract nouns. At its simplest this involves the deletion of concrete human agency and attribution and their replacement by abstract entities invested with a performative function as the chief protagonists of the storyline. So instead of a transactive model of causality involving a) an actor b) a process of modal action described by a verb, located in a specific time and place, and c) predicated on a consequential effect, we have an account dominated by purely impersonal and often literally non verb-alisable processes of agency and accountability. This is a language of action without a subject.

So instead of saying: Some people (a) have organised a campaign to do something (b) about conditions (c) in their area (d), we talk about 'consensual people-led regeneration'. Instead of telling a story about how the management of Ford Europe decided to sack 4,000 workers at its car assembly plant at Dagenham and offered to retrain them to set up their own small businesses, we talk about how Ford pioneered a new 'workforce remodelling plan'.

The preponderance of agentless passive verb forms is a notable feature of this discourse: nobody ever seemingly does anything to anyone, stuff just happens.

Extract from Phil Cohen  
'Regenspiel' in Phil Cohen, Michael J. Rustin (eds.) *London's Turning: the making of Thames Gateway* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008). See also: <http://philcohenworks.com/theolygarchs-guide-to-legacyspeak/>

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Ben Campkin

How can we imagine decline and regeneration differently? In looking across eclectic media—journalism, photojournalism, cinema, site-specific and performance art, theatre, architectural design, advertising, television—similar questions reverberate around the ethics of representing poverty and material degradation, and the tensions between projections of

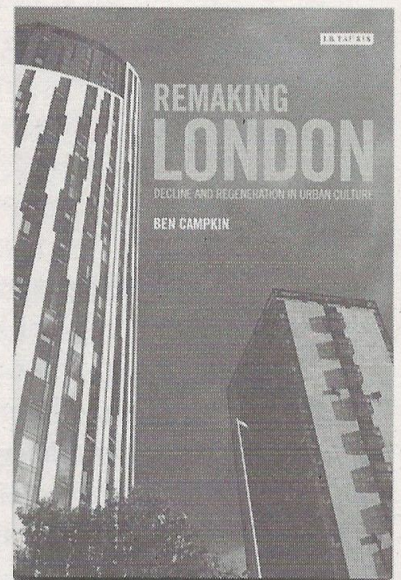
## PLACE IMAGINARIES

change as produced by built environment professionals and by other agents within the cultural politics of regeneration.

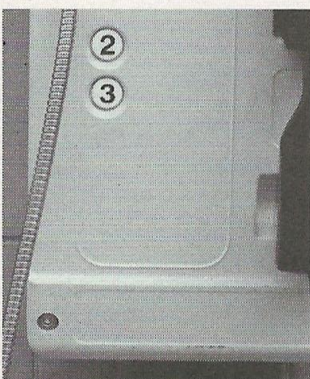
Rather than think of these conflicted discourses in terms of different understandings of 'place image'—which has a visual emphasis, suggests rather fixed and singular associations, and externalises understandings of place—it is perhaps more helpful to understand them as place imaginaries. This notion can usefully articulate the ways that contested sites are constructed, recognised or distorted from multiple and conflicted perspectives, through forms of representation that are not passive but have agency and are affective within urban change, engaging the specific empirical features and material conditions of cities. If we are to challenge the ways in which decline and renewal are currently being imagined, we will also need to propose new ways of representing the city.

If broader and more rigorous approaches to the understanding of regeneration as culturally produced have been lacking in contemporary scholarship, so too have critical historical perspectives. Contested understandings of history are central to the conflicts that surround urban restructuring. In these contexts, the past is drawn into fraught relationships with the present, and with the anticipated futures of specific sites. Here, distant and recent history may be constructed and narrated in nuanced ways, often being distorted, buried or neutralised as anodyne heritage. With this in mind, there is a need to frame the dominant discourses that have propelled the recent transformation of London within a longer-term historical framework, drawing attention to the short-termism and neglect of lessons from the past in policy and practice. Intractable challenges in the present

are structured through earlier forms of urbanization, requiring us to connect the restructuring of late-modern London with the development of the modern city. Many of today's regeneration sites have been subject to repeated renewal campaigns, and the tropes through which places are stigmatised often recur in different forms from one period to another.



Extract adapted from Ben Campkin, *Remaking London: Decline and Regeneration in Urban Culture* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013).





This is a call for a type of research which—in the urban policy field—hardly ever happens, but without which there is no hope of distinguishing good from bad policies.<sup>1</sup> First, an anecdote.

## A CALL FOR LONGITUDINAL REGENERATION RESEARCH

In the late 1990s I was invited to negotiate with the Government Office for London (GOL) a contract to evaluate a ‘regeneration’ project at King’s Cross. The core of our research at the Bartlett<sup>2</sup> was to be a sample survey of residents and businesses in the locality, and then a repetition of the same survey with the same sample some years later, when the regeneration initia-

tive had ended. The spacing was not long enough to capture many impacts, we thought, but it was the longest interval GOL could then embody in a contract. For respondents who remained through the period we would have been able to assess their experience of the ‘regeneration’; if they had been replaced at their addresses we would have been able to compare the newcomers with

‘Regeneration’ is rapidly reaching the end of its life. Along with other slippery terms like ‘sustainable’ and ‘diverse’ it has become a fig leaf used to legitimise almost any urban property development.

the original people or firms and we also hoped to track as many as possible of those who had moved out. We did the first round.<sup>2,3</sup> However GOL was no longer overseeing the work since, in 2000, the GLA and the London Development Agency (LDA) had been created and the oversight passed to the LDA.

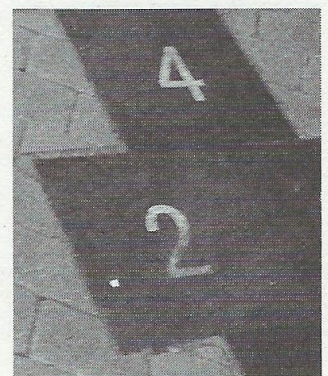
In this new context, the King’s Cross Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) Board terminated our contract before the re-survey could begin, arguing that results that would emerge only after their organisation had ended its fixed-term life were of no value to them. GOL—which had been admirably supportive of the before-and-after approach—no longer had a say and could not defend us. The new LDA declined to intervene. So that was that. The contract ended and the staff were declared redundant. The opportunity to track gainers and losers was lost.

\*\*\*\*

‘Regeneration’ is rapidly reaching the end of its life. Along with other slippery terms like ‘sustainable’ and ‘diverse’ it has become a fig leaf used to legitimise almost any urban property development.

Those who view regeneration as action to reduce deprivation treat it as axiomatic that it’s a good thing and thus something to be attempted in areas of poverty. Successive London Plans, for example, tacitly rely on this view when they identify all the London zones exhibiting high levels of deprivation as ‘regeneration areas’ without seeing any need to justify the identity.

Others think of regeneration in purely physical terms: as almost any process which replaces old buildings with new, low value buildings with high value ones or ones which permit further densification of the use of land. With the slashing of public spending and public initiatives we have seen the





term become little more than a synonym for privately-oriented urban property development—albeit state-sponsored in various ways.

Underlying the collective incapacity of threatened citizens and critical scholars to halt or redirect the regeneration machine is a major research failure.

As London increasingly displaces its low- and middle-income populations through its development process, reinforced by cuts in benefits and increased insecurity for tenants, the tensions surrounding regeneration become ever

stronger, but they are by no means new: they have been a feature of the process for decades.<sup>4</sup>

These tensions surfaced formally in the public hearings on the 2009 draft London Plan,<sup>5</sup> now adopted as the London Plan 2011.<sup>6</sup> The hearings received evidence from numerous affected individuals, from tenants' and residents' groups, academics and others, with some co-ordination in the Just Space network.<sup>7</sup> The thrust of this evidence was that there are few benefits flowing to residents (in whose name 'regeneration' is done): communities are dispersed, support networks broken, many residents are never re-housed, rents and other costs rise and those affected have little or no say in what gets done. This evidence carried a lot of weight with the expert panel, which concluded that there should be stronger mechanisms to minimise adverse effects on prior residents and help ensure that they participate in the benefits (see 'London Plan Examination in Public, Panel Report', extract, on page 26).

Although the Mayor resisted this argument and scarcely modified his plan, the GLA has not laid the tensions to rest. There are two signs that some thinking is under way. In 2011 the GLA Economics team published a research paper, which concluded: 'Without data to do [longitudinal studies] it may not be possible to determine conclusively whether culture-led regeneration, or indeed any regeneration, works.'<sup>8</sup>

Now in 2013 the London Assembly has created a new 'Regeneration Committee,'<sup>9</sup> which might be a forum in which the realities can confront the myths. At its first meeting it called evidence from geographer Professor Loretta Lees, and it is a good sign that advice from academics expert in housing in regeneration is being sought.

Underlying the collective incapacity of threatened citizens and critical scholars to halt or redirect the regeneration machine is a major research failure: there is virtually no long-term research which tracks those affected by regeneration and thus challenges the standard discourse. We (researchers) do not adequately identify gainers and losers—though we do know a lot about the mechanisms that transmit gains and losses—and above all we do not even try to follow affected people over the years to find how they respond to the urban renewal processes to which they are subject.

The only recent evidence I can find that tracks the prior residents of a regeneration scheme is not academic research but an activist group's plotting of what happened to residents displaced by the emptying of the Heygate Estate, based on data extracted from Southwark Council by a FOI request (see pages 9 and 10).<sup>10</sup>





A call for longitudinal regeneration research

- §2.97 ...the principal points put to us by community representatives were that they:
- want involvement in the future plans for their areas;
  - oppose wholesale and permanent displacement;
  - want to contribute to, as well as derive benefit from, regeneration through new housing provision, local job opportunities and skills training, better environments and from improved community infrastructure of sufficient capacity and appropriate utility for all;
- and
- should be subjected to processes that are not unreasonably drawn out in implementation.

2.98 We do not see those as unreasonable aspirations.

\* \* \*

2.101 If the risk of disadvantage being increased and intensified in other areas is to be avoided, however, the aim in regeneration should be to secure the same quantity of affordable housing within the areas concerned at the end of the process as there was at the beginning, even if the "mix" (expressed as a percentage of affordable homes to market homes) changes. Although this affordable housing may not be wholly available to the original community (many of whom may by then have put roots down elsewhere and may be regarded, in a statutory sense, as suitably re-housed) it should at least be available for those displaced from regeneration projects nearby. The appropriate "split" (expressed as the proportions of affordable housing that are to be social rented or intermediate) can then be tailored, by the housing providers in consultation with the Boroughs concerned, to meet the needs of the incoming community. We accordingly recommend that Policy 2.14 be modified by addition of a requirement that the aim should be no net loss of affordable housing within individual regeneration areas. Recommendation 2.9: Add at the end of Policy 2.14B "These plans should seek to achieve no net loss of affordable housing in individual regeneration areas."

The need for this kind of work is stronger than ever and I hope that people who have not yet retired can devise such projects and seek funding for serious longitudinal panel research on responses to urban change in London. Such work would have to be thoroughly independent of interested parties, both governmental and private, and funding would be a major challenge since few sponsors would be keen on work whose results would flow only over years or decades to come. In the anecdote with which I began it was

some un-elected civil servants  
who got our research started and  
a fixed-life development agency  
including local politicians which  
stopped it.

It's a challenge to universities  
and research councils. Will anyone  
do it?

**Michael Edwards** is Senior Lecturer in the Economics of Planning, UCL Bartlett School of Planning. He has worked on planning and real estate markets for many years and he is active in London planning.

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**Nick Ennis and Gordon Douglass,  
*Culture and Regeneration – What evidence is there of a link  
and how can it be measured?***

**GLA Economics Working Paper 48, 2011, extracts:**

p.8 'Since evaluations are generally carried out shortly after completion, there are none showing the long-term impact that really matters most for regeneration. This is very important because the indirect and chained impacts of schemes are not being recorded'.

p.10 'Understanding the impact of any regeneration scheme requires an enormous amount of data. The evaluations that have so far been conducted provide a snapshot with which we have judged programmes that are intended to have a very long-term impact. As noted before regeneration takes time, often a generation or more. Therefore it would seem more appropriate to judge the success of a regeneration scheme on evidence gathered over a long period of time'.

p.12 'To really understand the long-term impact of regeneration schemes, especially culture-led schemes that focus so much on people, it is necessary to find a dataset that follows people over time. The British Household Panel Survey is one such dataset. It follows a small sample of individuals over time, recording far more than basic demographics, including employment status, household finances, education, health and even opinions. But its sample size is far too small to investigate the impact of regeneration schemes. Without organising a special—and expensive—longitudinal survey, it is simply not possible to follow people and track changes in their quality of life'.

p.12 '... Without data to do this it may not be possible to determine conclusively whether culture-led regeneration, or indeed any regeneration, works'.

1 This note on regeneration research was prepared for the inaugural meeting of the London Action and Research on Regeneration Group (LARRG), UCL Urban Laboratory.

2 Michael Edwards and Emmanuel Mutale, 'Change and Perception of Change at King's Cross: Surveys of Households and Enterprises in

London' (London: Bartlett School of Planning, UCL 2002), eprint on households <http://eprints.ucl.ac.uk/5071> and eprint on enterprises <http://eprints.ucl.ac.uk/5070>

3 Michael Edwards and Emmanuel Mutale, 'Monitoring and Evaluation of the Work of the King's Cross Partnership: Final Report.' (London: Bartlett School of Planning, UCL, 2002), eprint at <http://eprints.ucl.ac.uk/5073>

4 See Just Space 2013 conference, <http://londonjustspace.wikispaces.com>

5 Planning Inspectorate, 'Draft Replacement London Plan Examination in Public, Panel Report' (2011). See extracts, page 26.

6 The Mayor of London, 'The London Plan', Greater London Authority (2011). <http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/planning/london-plan>

7 JustSpace, <http://londonjustspace.wikispaces.com>

8 Nick Ennis and Gordon Douglass, *Culture and Regeneration – What evidence is there of a link and how can it be measured?* GLA Economics Working Paper 48, 2011, p.2.

9 GLA, 'Regeneration Committee'. <http://www.london.gov.uk/moderngov/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=303>

10 <http://www.35percent.org/blog/2013/06/08/the-heygate-diaspora>





*astate* is a commentary and an approach. It is being developed as a way of working theoretically and through practical projects to critique the process

## ASTATE

of regeneration in London. It questions how language is used by councils and developers in the programme of regeneration and the affect that this language has on the shared narratives and memories of urban change. It questions how the public and its role are presented.

During this process we have attended a range of public events that explicitly aim to aid understanding and participation in regeneration. These have occurred in the forms of public consultation, public meetings, public inquiries, public forums, public open days and public conversations.

Through our attendance, we have embodied the language used by developers and community engagement officers, adopting it as a guide to seek out places that have been improved and revitalised. We have taken an exploratory journey through these spaces, allowing the language we remembered to explain the places and materials that we found as we walked.

A space created as public without containing any public creation...

The narratives below are made from words recalled from our journey. They are presented alongside images of what we found and a few selected quotations gleaned from developers' documents and signage around the city.

These words and spaces constitute our future urban environments.

As we journey through designed landscapes, amenity spaces, opportunity areas, core documents, defensible spaces, symbolic barriers and raised podiums, we avoid dwellings sited in small clusters, and we realise that the public access through this estate is restricted. Unobserved entryways or escape routes are excluded, to encourage natural surveillance.

A landscape designed to avoid potential hiding places, with open frontages and low walls and high boundary fences—a balance between security, surveillance and privacy. We avoid the unsecured rear gardens facing footpaths, open land and lighting.

We pass strong lockable gates to the build-

ing line, and avoid design features that allow climbing and access points.

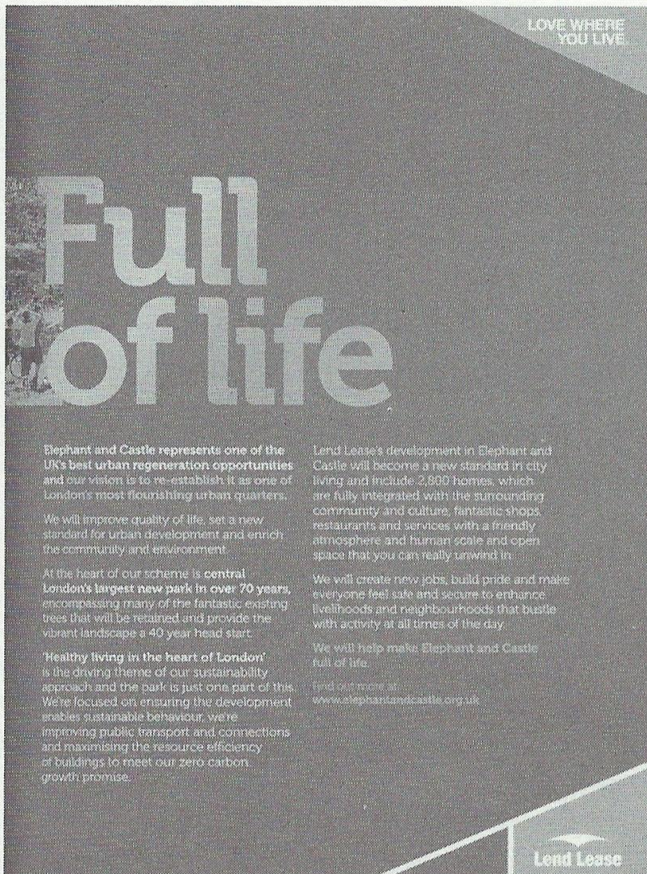
This area is exciting, diverse and vibrant. It is flourishing.

We are in the time of Boxt erity for an artist quarter, a creative community space, an office space, market space, public gallery space, green space, commercial space, café space, and in addition to all of this, a viewing tower.

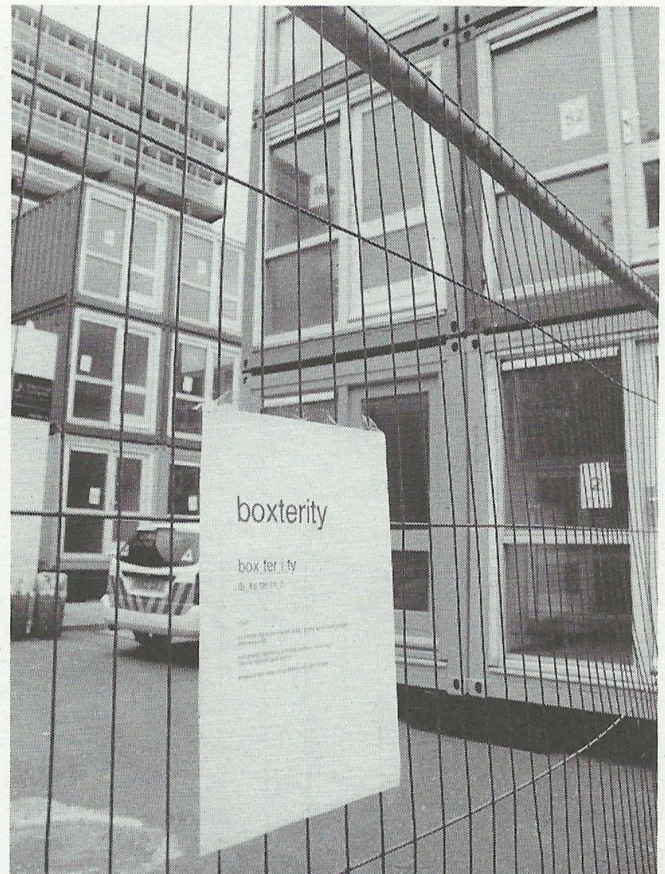
Upholstery from consultation room.







Love where you live, *Southwark magazine*.



Boxterity, a term used by astate.

We see the bigger picture, creating healthier environments, exceptional design, strong communities, a sense of belonging and an improved way of life. We believe in doing things better. We imagine, we create. We love where we live.

### Archaeology Officer

The applicants have undertaken a desk-based archaeological assessment to inform their environmental statement. This document is based upon a search of the surrounding archaeology within a 300m radius from the centre of the site, and includes an 'approximate' plot of a radius of 250m around the boundary of the site. As such the sample area examined has not crossed the New Kent Road and identified the extensive

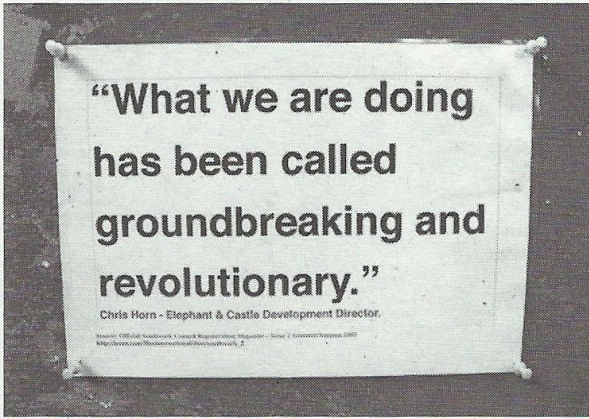
Core documents, part of the master planning of Elephant and Castle.



Our life chances are being improved with meaningful opportunities to participate. The development framework is using a holistic and integrated approach to community and sustainability creating balance in the area, revitalisation and essence, whilst minimizing the impact on the environment. Architecture of the highest quality, a design that maximizes the benefits of amenity, greening, micro-climate, bio diversity and ecology.

We encounter a feature that increases attractiveness, comfort and value: 'Apartments feature the latest and integrated Smart Home Technology, allowing residents remote access to adjust the automated blinds and switch on the under floor heating system

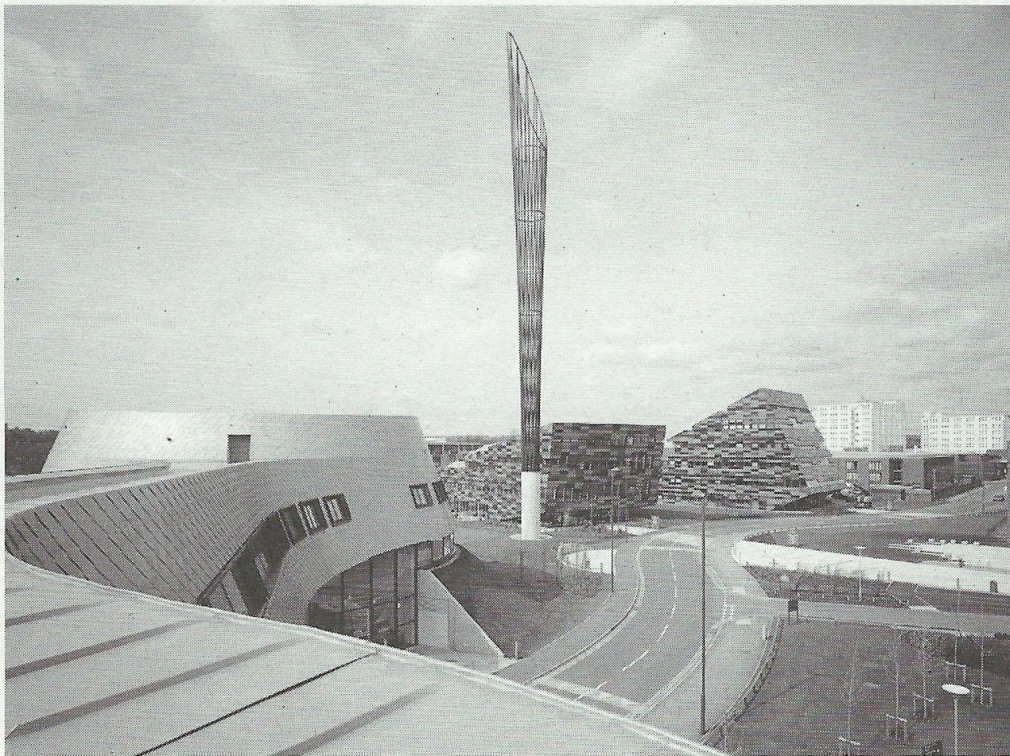




A quote from Chris Horn, Elephant and Castle development director.



Public art lighting, Peckham.



Make architectural and design studio's proposed Amenities Building for Nottingham University.

or air conditioning as they disembark from a long haul flight, as well as control the state-of-the-art security system. The technology hub also communicates wirelessly with the lift, automatically recognizing residents and delivering them to their floor' (Designed for life, Berkeley Homes).

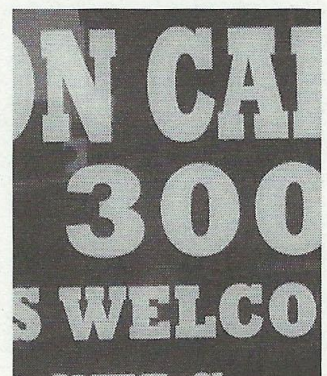
We stumble upon the state-of-the-art.

We are invited to encounter a dynamic space of evocative possibility with real turf underfoot creating a complex emotional landscape.

We continue through the woodland trail complete with pre-concreted logs, reminded that 'the real' is a luxury.

We pass buildings with the names Success, Unity, Peace and Hope, Ability Plaza and Avant Garde Towers.

We have arrived home.







East Village London.

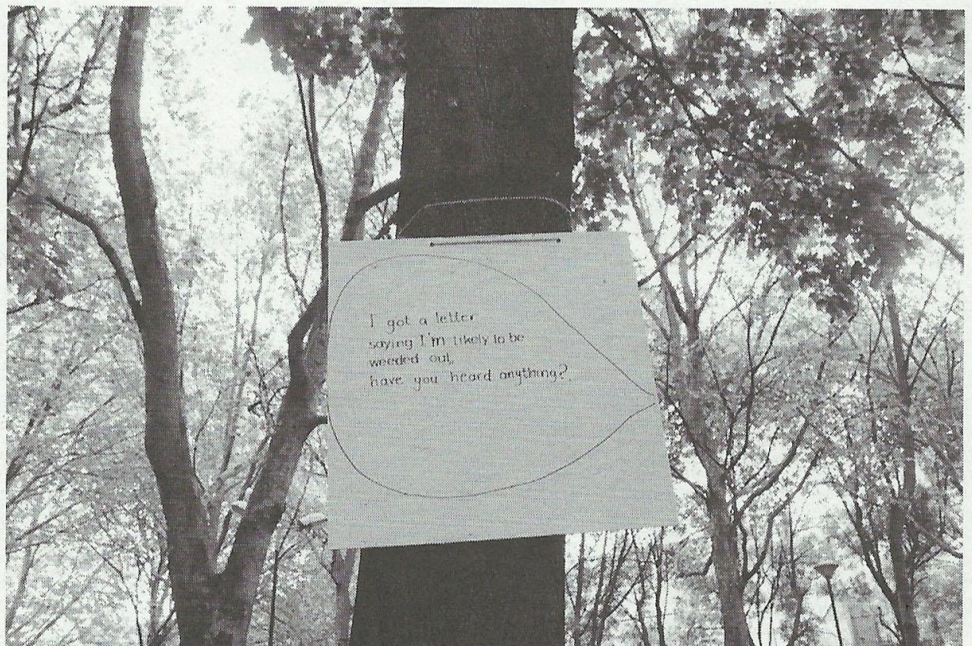


Playground Hackney Wick.

We are surrounded by these words of progress yet we have walked through a space somehow continuously lost within newly formed, publicly accessible areas. A public space that has become a format so inaccessible it is no longer recognizable as public. A space that has become stale and monotonous. A place to experience only with the eyes. A place of lines, line after line of silver birch trees and intermittently lit areas. A place where home resembles a digital reality, and the combination of materials chosen for sustainability and safety prematurely decay as CCTV cameras look on. A hyper-specialised space wherein any excursion outside of these ordered parameters becomes something abnormal. A space created as public without containing any public creation.

We have arrived at a state where language is disconnected from its meaning, and lacks substance. Are we at the point then where the only way forward is to develop a new language?

**isik.knutsdotter** is a collaboration between the artists Louise Sayarer and Eva Vikstrom.



400 Speeches public action, Elephant and Castle.



# HOW SHOULD LONDON'S REGENERATION MOVE FORWARD?

The London Assembly have formed a new Committee – the Regeneration Committee – whose work will monitor and review the Mayor's regeneration functions and spending decisions as well as wider regeneration matters of importance to Londoners.

We are asking you for your opinion on what is most vital for the new Committee to examine in the year ahead. How can regeneration be moved forward, post-Olympics, to allow London to thrive?

FEEL FREE TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BELOW OR SUBMIT A RESPONSE OF YOUR OWN BELOW.

Select File

Name:\*

Organisation:

Email Address:\*

1. What does regeneration mean to London? How does regeneration fit with London's growth plans?

2. What do you feel should be the Mayor's key regeneration priorities? How successfully have the resources and powers available to him driven forward regeneration in London?

3. What are the greatest opportunities and largest barrier to successful regeneration in London? How could these be harnessed or overcome to allow London to thrive?

4. Which of the following regeneration projects in London are of interest to you?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park | <input type="checkbox"/> Nine Elms         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greenwich Peninsula          | <input type="checkbox"/> Royal Docklands   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canning Town & Custom House  | <input type="checkbox"/> Barking Riverside |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Royal Arsenal, Woolwich      | <input type="checkbox"/> Kidbrooke Village |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wembley City                 |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other                        | <input type="text"/>                       |

Thank you for your views. Please press the submit button below to send.

## LONDON ASSEMBLY

[www.london.gov.uk/assembly](http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly)

Submit



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Photo of hoarding in King's Cross redevelopment area, by Rebecca Ross and Guglielmo Rossi.

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