

ESALA 2018

Master of Architecture

**THE REVANCHIST CITY AND THE  
URBANISATION OF SUBURBIA**

Tahl Kaminer

Alex MacLaren

LONDON







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**The Revanchist City and the Urbanisation of Suburbia.**

Transforming Tuscan Towns: Re-Imagining Communities for a Rural Ageing Population.

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# THE REVANCHIST CITY

## AND THE URBANISATION OF SUBURBIA

Central government in Westminster, local government and an amalgam of interests and forces have colluded over the past twenty years in transforming the inner city boroughs of London through redevelopment, gentrification and social cleansing. In this process, unprecedented numbers of unemployed, working poor and lower middle-class residents have been banished from central locations into the periphery and beyond. *The Independent* put the number of poor families that had to leave London in the years 2011-14 alone at 50,000.<sup>i</sup>

Since gentrification was first identified in London's Islington in 1964, the processes involved have intensified and mutated. In Northern Europe, gentrification became in the 1990s a particular and intended feature of local government urban regeneration plans; and while in Britain, as in the United States, gentrification is mostly market-led, government has contributed to and exacerbated this process, welcoming it as a solution to the 'problem' of inner cities, areas suffering from deprivation, unemployment, crime and low real-estate values. The reclaiming of inner cities from 'obsolete' unskilled labourers, migrants and poor has been understood to relate to the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society. Such an understanding envisions a moment of

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<sup>i</sup> Anonymous, 'Over 50,000 families shipped out of London boroughs in the past three years due to welfare cuts and soaring rents', *The Independent*, 29 April 2015, available at: <<<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/over-50000-families-shipped-out-of-london-in-the-past-three-years-due-to-welfare-cuts-and-soaring-10213854.html>>> (accessed 2 April 2018).

equilibrium, in which gentrification comes to an end once real-estate values reach a certain limit. Yet the entry of global finance into local real estate markets in the late 1990s has upended existing theories of gentrification. London in particular, since the 2007-8 crisis, has become a refuge for investments – capital redirected from precarious investments in insecure conditions in cities such as Athens to the safety of London.<sup>ii</sup> As the comfortable middle class is now faced with similar pressures to those experienced by the poor and lower middle class, so have housing and gentrification become increasingly major political issues.

The exodus of middle class residents from overpriced inner-city boroughs is now remaking London's suburban outer boroughs. The newcomers, in search of affordable housing and bringing with them specific expectations and demands for urban forms of living; the borough councils, interested in attracting economically-active residents and development; and real estate, focused on opportunities of profit making, have together been remaking London's suburbia. Higher densities are being created, urban morphologies and architectural typologies absent in suburbia have emerged, and urban forms of culture introduced.

In this context, the role of the architect appears pre-determined: in the inner city, to design high-end luxury housing for international investment, and in the outer boroughs to design housing that responds to the specific demands, values and expectations of middle class buyers. The Revanchist City studio critiques the role of the discipline in such urban processes by studying other ways of doing architecture. It posits that architecture can contribute positively to a neighbourhood and a community by questioning the boundaries placed on architectural

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ii Tom Slater, 'Gentrification of the City', *The New Blackwell Companion to the City* (Blackwell, 2011), pp. 571-85; Neil Smith, 'The Evolution of Gentrification', in Berg, J.J., Kaminer, T., Schoonderbeek, M., Zonneveld, J. (eds), *Houses in Transformation: Interventions in European Gentrification* (Rotterdam: NAi Publishers, 2008), pp. 15-25; Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London; NYC: Routledge, 1996).

agency by developers and city councils; by identifying the spatial forms corresponding to relevant alternative social forms; by altering the relation of the singular building to the urban whole – the latter understood as the *cit  *, the political community.

## LONDON

Greater London consists of urban inner-city and suburban outer-city boroughs. Much of London's suburban development was driven by the relocation of the middle class away from areas with high concentration of industries, working class and pollution. The Dickens' era infamous rookeries, such as the Old Nicol in Shoreditch or the St. Giles rookery north of Oxford Street, were all inner city slums, located in proximity to industries and work places. In contrast, the suburbs offered leafy, tranquil environments without the proximity to poverty, crime and dirt.

In the immediate postwar years, major industries relocated further afield, drawn to urban peripheries due to cheaper and available land supplies. Skilled, unionised labourers could take advantage of the opportunities created by the welfare state, raising their incomes, sending their children to universities and, often enough, moving to suburbia. Unskilled labourers, in contrast, increasingly became unemployed – initially because of automation, later because of the deindustrialisation of Britain and much of the West. The London Docks closed and new, automated facilities were opened in Tilbury; local industries dependant on the docks vanished.

The London County Council (LCC, later replaced by the Greater London Council) actively relocated residents of inner city areas such as the East End to the New Towns, reducing overcrowding in the process but leading to a hollowing out of inner cities. Deprivation, long-term unemployment and multiple social ills were concentrated in boroughs such as Hackney or Tower Hamlets. Out of the ashes of the industrial

city, a new city emerged over time. The London Docks became the Docklands, home to finance capital instead of industry. The return to the city movement brought capital and middle class back into inner city neighbourhoods, causing gentrification and further dislocation of local population. By the late 1990s, free-market renters in London's inner city were placed under increasing pressures. Those renters on lower incomes were the first to be expelled. And once the inner city was discovered as a prime location for international investment, property prices became detached from actual incomes. This meant increasing pressures on middle class free-market renters and removals of council flat tenure residents by borough councils eager to capitalise on high property values. In the last decade in particular, borough councils have been 'dumping' welfare recipients in other boroughs, and council housing estates have been systematically demolished and replaced by expensive housing. Home owners have been bought out through compulsory purchases at values which require their relocation to more distant areas. All tenures now appear precarious when faced with London's real-estate forces.

These developments necessitate a refocusing of attention from inner city boroughs to the outer boroughs to which the poor and the middle class are relocating. Newham has arguably experienced more changes than any other outer borough through the development of the Olympic village in Stratford, but the expensive, bland residential towers that have popped up along River Lea Valley are now appearing further afield, in areas such as Barking and Woolwich. Deprivation in inner city boroughs such as Hackney and Tower Hamlets has declined as their poorer residents have been pushed out, while significant deprivation has appeared for the first time in some outer boroughs such as Bromley as those expelled settle in their new neighbourhoods.



## THAMESMEAD

London, then, has become a revanchist city, catering to the interests of the few and expelling many of its previous residents. It is in this context of pressures and forces that the Revanchist City studio studied Thamesmead, an area that spans the outer boroughs of Greenwich and Bexley.

Thamesmead was planned in the 1960s as the eastern edge of Greater London, located in the historic Royal Arsenal on wetlands prone to flooding. The grand plan by the GLC was abandoned before completion, undermined by the reversal of promises for public transport connections and doubts regarding the scheme. The completed fragments of the plan have remained at the heart of Thamesmead, increasingly surrounded by new suburban developments. Familiar issues found here include unemployment, lack of access to work, and social deprivation. The area's notoriety was established through its use as a backdrop for the dystopian *A Clockwork Orange*: a brutalist landscape of social angst.

Thamesmead has not been exposed to the type of pressures Newham, Barking and Greenwich are currently encountering. There has been some change in its population, but no gentrification, and limited evidence of relocation into the area of those expelled from inner city. But the signs of forthcoming change are everywhere. Crossrail will bring fast public transport and connectivity to Thamesmead with the planned station in Abbey Wood, ushering in higher real-estate values and the forces from which the area has so far been sheltered. The area is now at the heart of London's largest and most ambitious urban renewal project, led by the housing association Peabody. This urban renewal project can be described as an attempt to leverage the forthcoming interest in Thamesmead as a playground for real estate in order to rectify some of the past errors. A more pessimistic assessment would characterise the urban renewal as the unwitting grooming of Thamesmead towards its forthcoming exploitation.





The first phase of the regeneration is the Southmere plan by Proctor and Matthews. It indicates the intention to import into Thamesmead town centre forms familiar from other parts of London: more dense, more pedestrian, more urban – but also more banal, familiar, and alien to the area. As Peabody has recruited Space Syntax as consultants, the logic that will lead the redevelopment becomes clear: a removal of many of the particularities of Thamesmead, replacing them with familiar and ‘tested’ forms of urbanisation, and hence, making Thamesmead more like any other London area.

## THE STUDIO

The question posited to the studio was how to respond to the current conditions of Thamesmead and to the urban renewal scheme? How, on the level of urban strategies, urban design and architecture, can Thamesmead protect its qualities while addressing its shortcomings? What aspects of the current conditions and future plan should be accommodated, what should be resisted? Can a counter proposal be devised?

On the level of architecture, the studio’s argument was that key areas of effective societal intervention are programmatic and spatial. Other areas, such as housing policy or protection of housing tenures, are beyond the direct remit of architects. By cautiously expanding architectural concerns beyond their current limitations, by rejecting the subjugation of architecture to fixed brief and site, the territory susceptible to architectural agency can grow exponentially and engage more directly with issues that are, fundamentally, social.

During the first semester, the studio conducted a comprehensive analysis. The regulatory framework controlling development, such as the London Plan and the Local Development Plans, were consulted. The morphology and typologies of the area were mapped. Geography, flooding risks, transport, housing tenures and prices, recent urban development in adjacent areas, deprivation, employment, stakeholders, everyday life, culture, amenities, religious communities, ethnic groups, green spaces, location of amenities and services – all were studied and mapped.



The studio met representatives of key stakeholders (Peabody, Royal Borough of Greenwich) and diverse professionals working in the area or directly involved in the urban renewal project (architects, planners, community outreach officers, director of a community centre, artist in residence etc.). The studio spent a day working in a local foodbank, created after the 2007/8 crisis. The area, as a whole, was not experienced by the studio as a dystopian city or 'sink estate', but as a tranquil suburban area with distinct qualities. The major issues the analysis and fieldwork highlighted were the limited transport connectivity, the absence of amenities or retail in walking distance, empty streets, the fracturing of the area by a motorway and an elevated sewage pipe ('the Ridgeway'), a limited sense of community, and the limited job provision. The absence of amenities and retail were the result of avoidance of activation of ground floor due to flooding concerns and the low densities of the area.

The response to the findings was articulated in seven plans produced by the studio: *The London Integration* plan accepted, in effect, the prospects of mass-densification proposed by the London Plan and driven by real-estate forces. It proposed to direct this urbanisation to the current Ridgeway in order to protect the rest of Thamesmead. *The Communities Commons'* plan suggested to enhance and empower communities and local initiatives already in existence, imagining a vibrant, dynamic and democratic Thamesmead shaped bottom-up and in defiance of the forces of real estate and development. The *Green* plan identified an opportunity to rethink Thamesmead through its vast green areas – using and enhancing the existing green as a means of creating specific neighbourhood identities and opportunities. *The Ridgeway* plan proposed to transform this urban element from one which dissects Thamesmead into a spine, a unifying element. The *Interfaces* plan addressed the fracturing of Thamesmead into enclaves by suggesting a series of strategies to overcome the fragmentation. The *Town Centres* plan rethought the three retail areas of Thamesmead by reorganising them and creating a clear hierarchy and correlation between them. The *Waterways* plan suggested to use Thamesmead's canals and lakes as a means of reorganising the area and rethinking it. In effect, despite the diversity of these seven propositions, they all attempted to salvage and secure aspects of contemporary Thamesmead in the face of



forthcoming changes. They accepted aspects of the forthcoming changes, and particularly the densification of the area, but wished to resist the attempts to turn Thamesmead into a very different area – not only more bland, banal and familiar, but also one that is more easily assimilated into the revanchist processes of contemporary London.

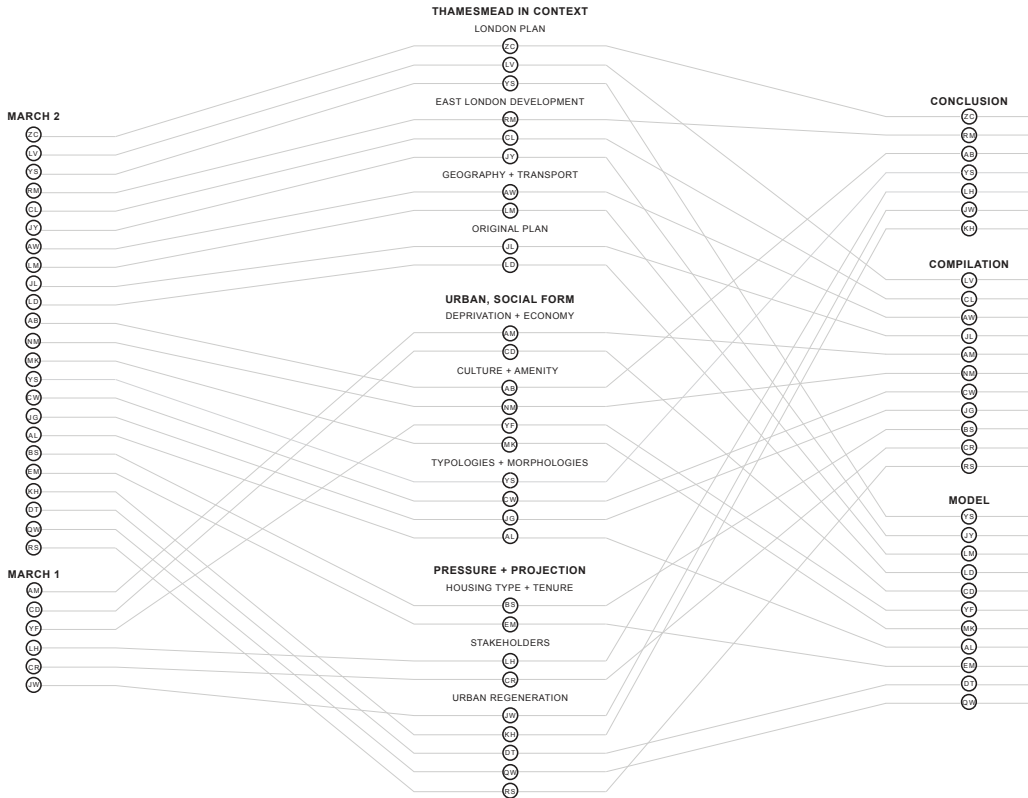
The last phase of the studio, conducted in this year's second semester, focused on the development of specific architectural projects. Following one of the plans outlined above, each project subjugated to the logic and principles devised in the plan, articulated on an architectural scale. Programme, site and form were consequently the key vehicles for articulating projects' position towards contemporary Thamesmead and its redevelopment.

The series of projects presented here are all, to some degree, pragmatic responses. They acknowledge the limitations of architectural agency and avoid indulging in imaginary fantasies. Some depend on specific future scenarios, others are completely embedded in current conditions. Most display some level of appreciation of contemporary Thamesmead; some are perhaps too enamoured with it. Considering the pragmatism on display, a series of arguments emerge vis-à-vis Peabody's urban renewal plan: the need for more bottom-up, democratic and participatory control of the process; the need to preserve and enhance the qualities that are distinctive of Thamesmead; the potentials of ushering in significant improvements with relatively low-cost and respectful interventions of different scales. Essentially, what is argued here is that another *cit  * is possible.

*Tahl Kaminer*

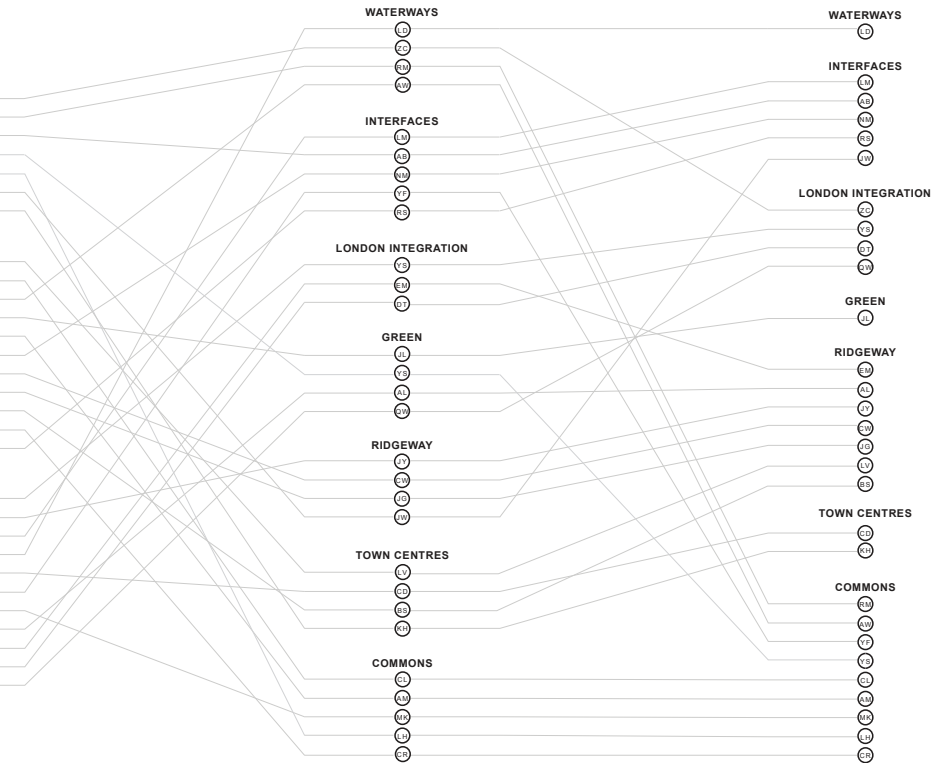
## ANALYSIS

## PRESENTATION



## MASTERPLAN

## PROPOSITION



# LONDON INTEGRATION MASTERPLAN

EUAN MILLER, YIXUAN SONG, DAMIEN THÉRON

MILLER, SONG, THÉRON - LONDON INTEGRATION

On the background of vast international investment and rapid development in East London, the integration into London masterplan embraces the inevitable globalization and gentrification process. It utilizes this opportunity to transfer Thamesmead from a service area to a local center for East London, by boosting long term development and helping to resolve existing problems at both local and urban scale. Focusing on long-term, the integration into London masterplan proposes a future Thamesmead which is the new centre of East London. Functioning as a transport hub, providing a large amount of housing and job opportunities. This potential is shown in Thamesmead's ideal location in the center of East London, combined with the large expanses of cheap unused land.

To allow further development and densification in Thamesmead, building on the recent crossrail investment in Abbey Wood, a significant increase in infrastructure is proposed. This will improve Thamesmead's connectivity with central London as well as the surrounding areas. The site for our development naturally defines itself from our main focus revolving around the existing physical division, both within Thamesmead itself and with London as a whole. With no clearly defined center existing in the area – aside from a small gathering of chain stores – Thamesmead is in dire need of a more logical and accessible central point.







▲ AXONOMETRIC OF PROPOSED NEW CENTRE FOR EAST LONDON





# 1.1

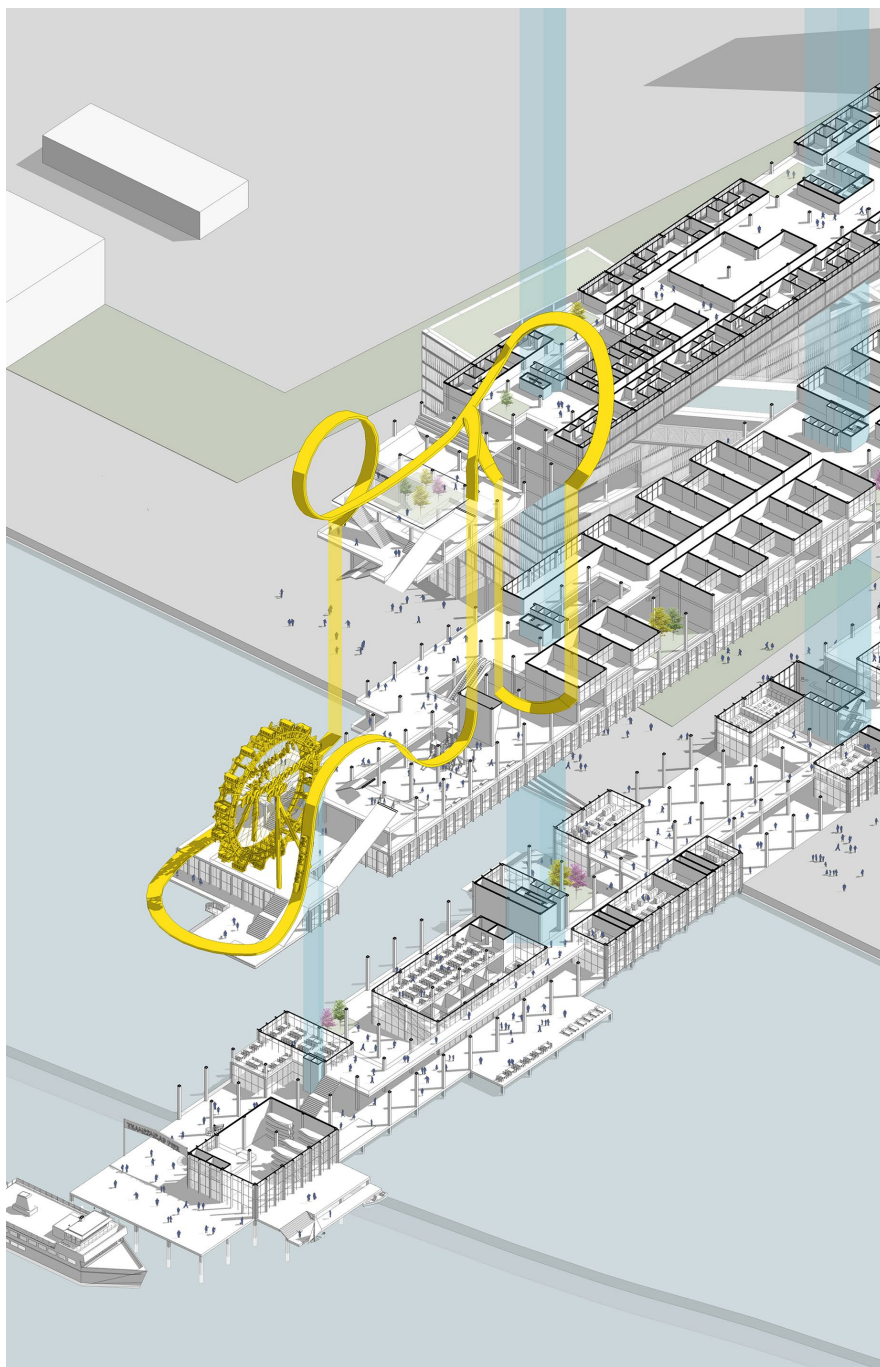
## MEGA FORM

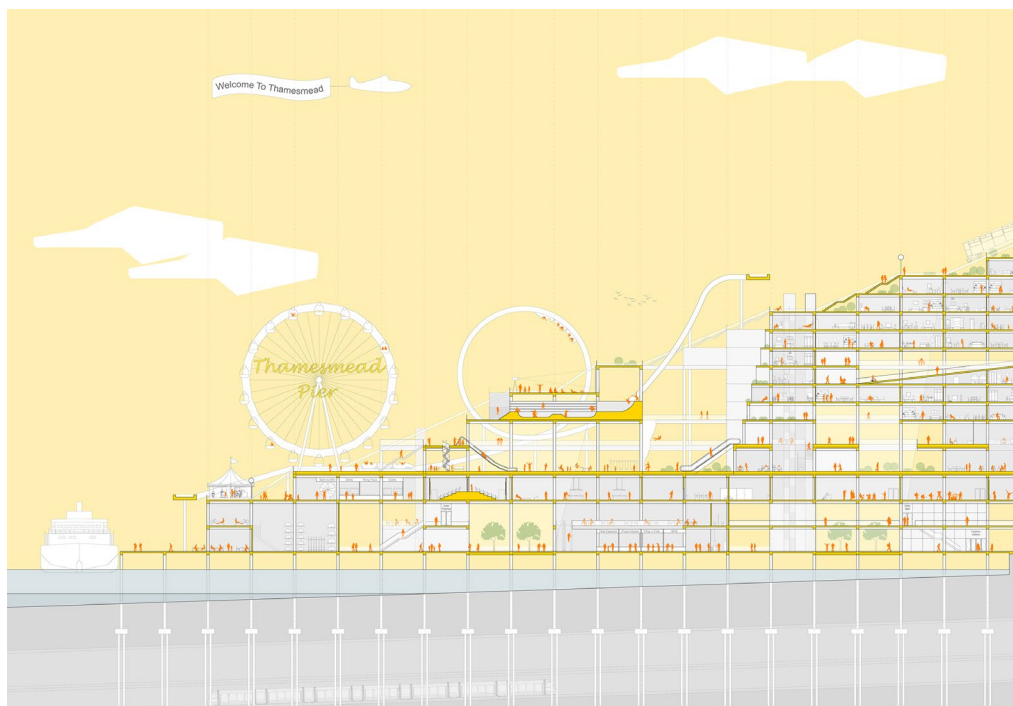
### KALEIDOSCOPIC CITY

QUEENIE CHO WOON LAU

*Kaleidoscopic City* acts as one of the key hubs in the regeneration belt and serves as a gateway to Thamesmead. It aims at creating a new urban form or solution incorporating living, society and culture through densification. This mixed-use megaform in high density mainly comprises housing with multifarious leisure amenities plugged in. The megaform becomes a pier along the river edge with the largest leisure element embedded, offering new ways of experiencing a city. It also transforms the urban surroundings into a more playful environment. The kaleidoscopic city space endows a commodious playground potentially transforming people's sense of themselves as human actors in an urban network of spatially bound and socio-economically grounded actions.

Because of the mega-scale, 'the city' allows various activities to interact with each other, but meanwhile also keeps them apart. Thus, the scale in fact demarcates the extent of coexistence of programmes. The city frequently emerges as a serious place and has a distinction between play and non-play actions inside the city (e.g. work vs. leisure vs. living). This project attempts to provide an urban mix that includes playful activities that are not only confined to specific places designated but also coexist with other non-play programmes within this hyperdense mass. *Kaleidoscopic City* functions as an organic framework to empower residential, infrastructural, and service components to be interconnected and expanded upon like a self-contained 'city'.



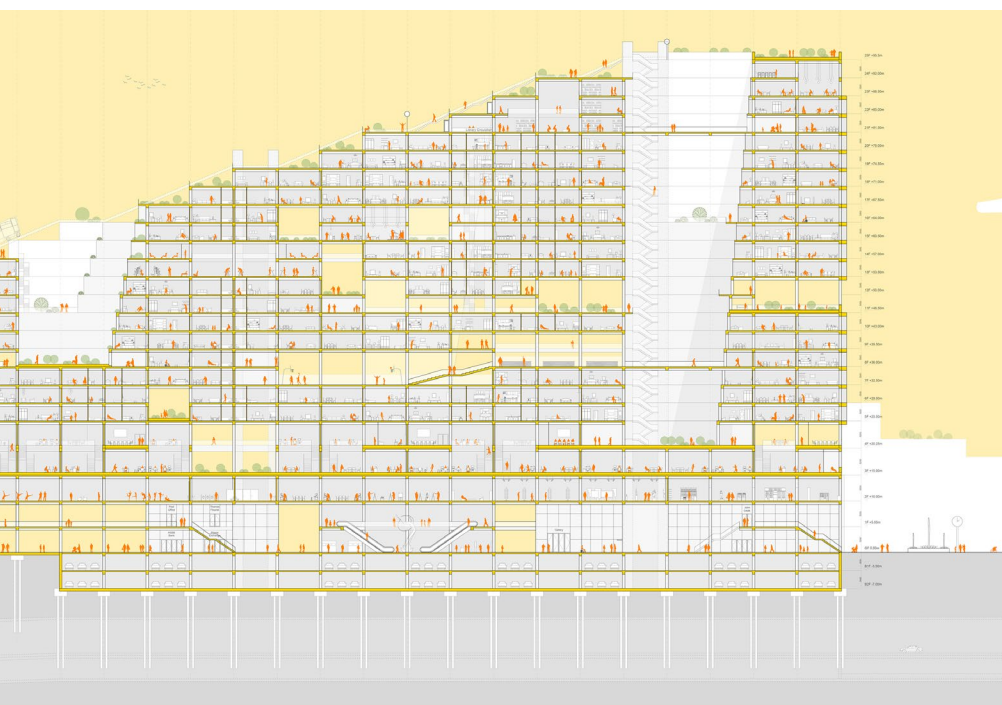




▲ LINEAR PARK

◀ THAMESMEAD PIER

▼ INCORPORATION LIVING, SOCIETY AND CULTURE BY DENSIFICATION



## 1.2

### PLUS

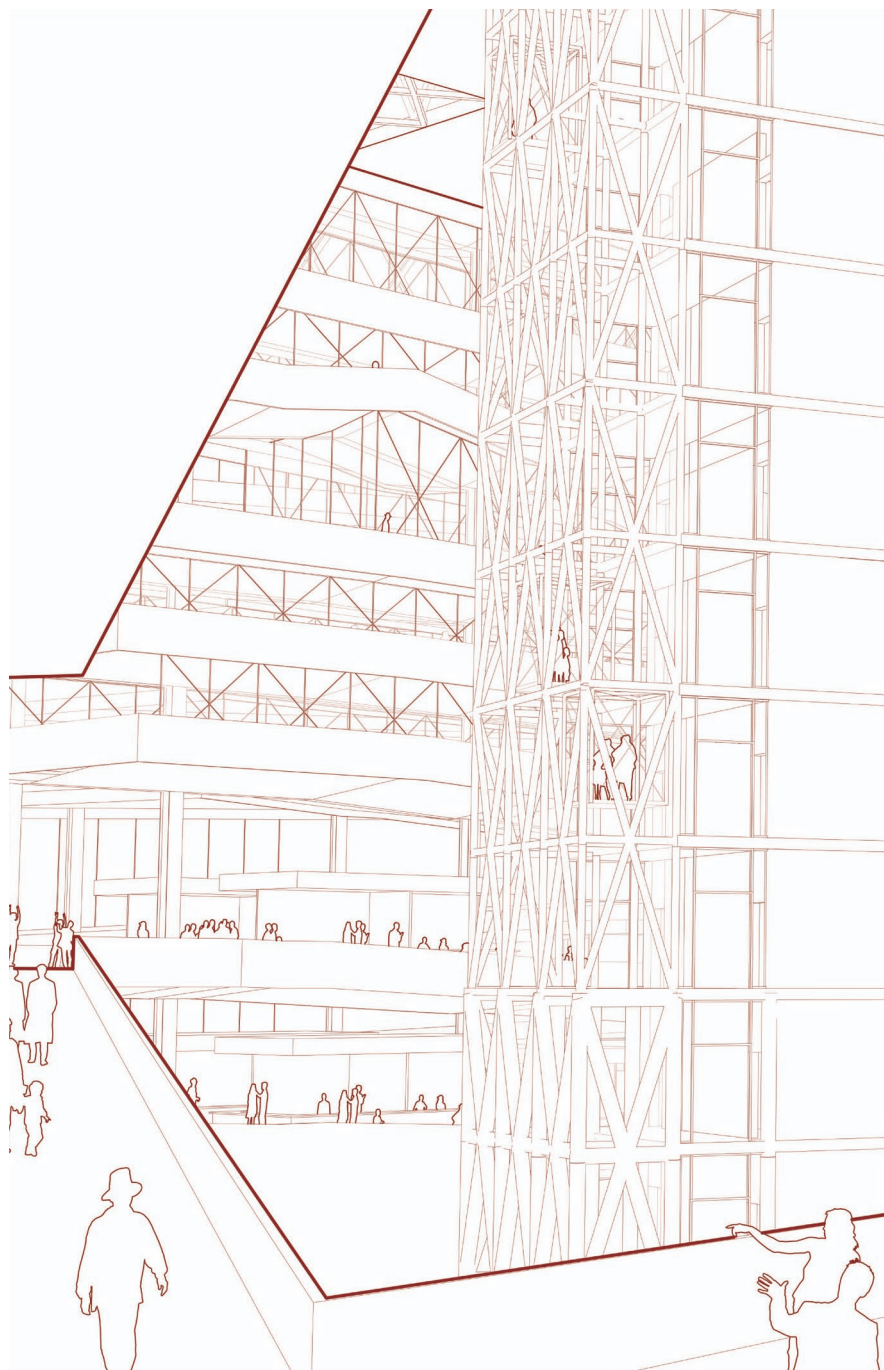
#### A BUILDING OF BUILDINGS, A CITY WITHIN A CITY

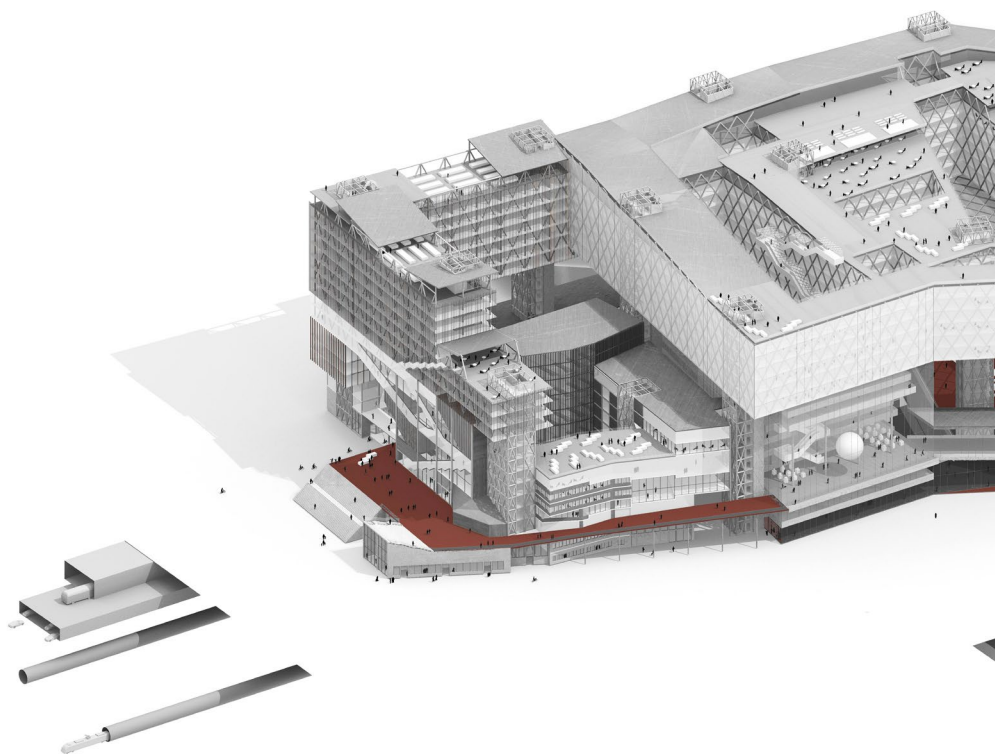
ZHIWEN CHEN, YIXUAN SONG, DAMIEN THÉRON

As vast international investment flows into London, globalization and gentrification have become inevitable within the whole city. The London Integration masterplan aims to control and utilize this rapid development to function at both local and urban scale. Freeing the streetscape from all mechanized utilities attempts to revitalise the human scale and alter the overdependence on cars.

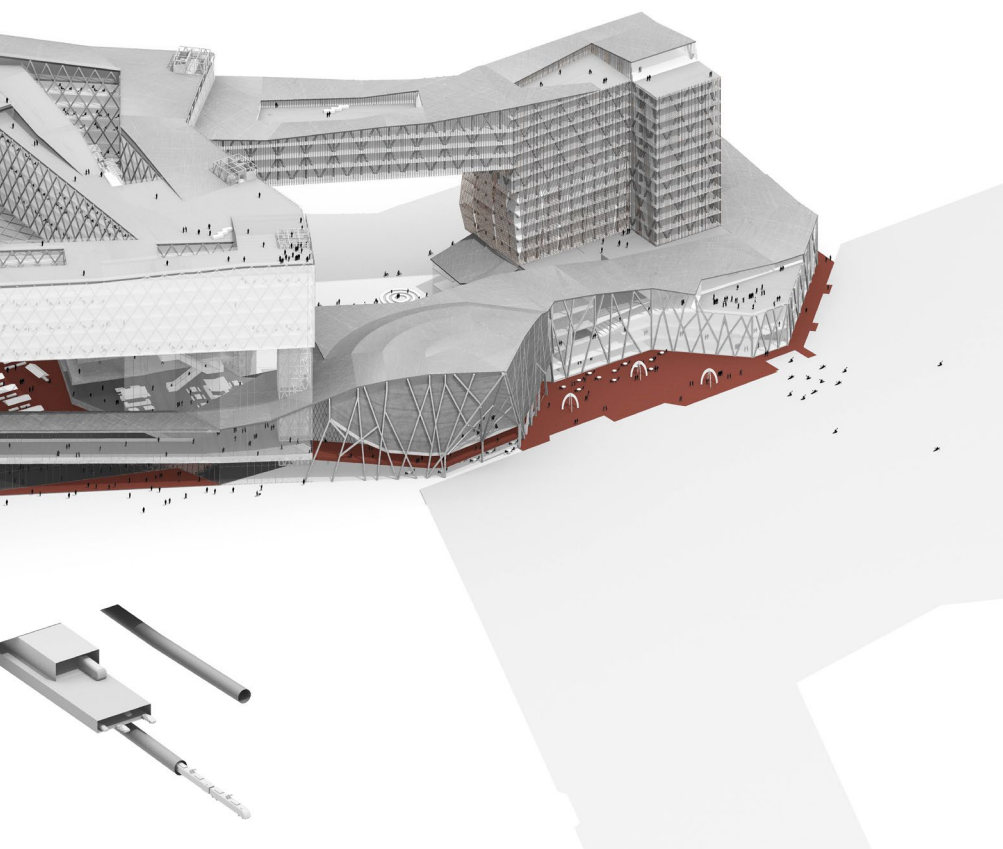
The central node is the starting point for the masterplan, named *PLUS (Public, Lifestyle, Unified and Societal)*. It explores long-term possibilities for Thamesmead as a new model for post-modern cities. The *PLUS* strives to provide East London with a self-sufficiency in terms of economics, leisure, and residential – ultimately shifting from serving London, to working with the rest of the capital. It is a building of buildings, a city within a city, which aspires for equilibrium between status quo and the inevitable development brought by gentrification in the area. By embracing the development and setting up a number of rules, the system guides the design towards a more inclusive and diverse resolution. The wide range of programs provided, together with the various housing tenures, seeks to promote a model of tolerance which embraces social differences.

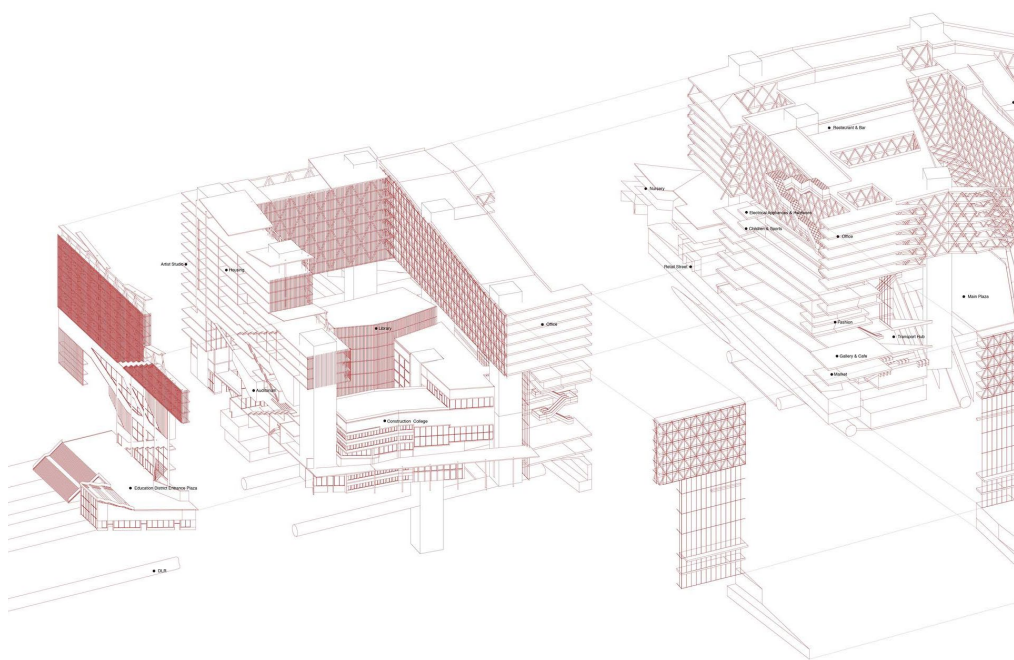


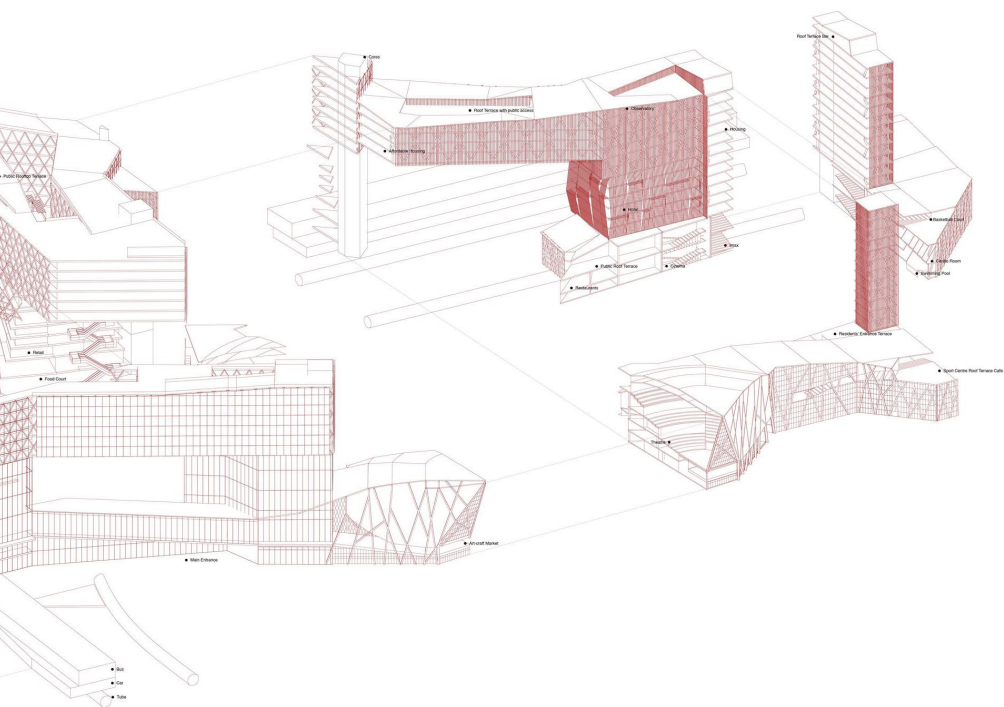












## ▲ ILLUSTRATING VARIETY AND CONNECTIVITY OF SPACES

## GREEN MASTERPLAN

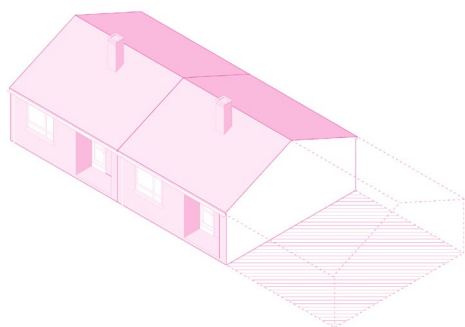
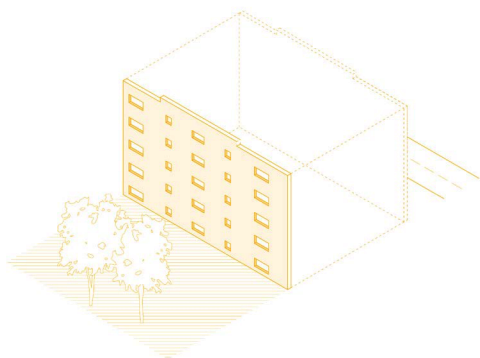
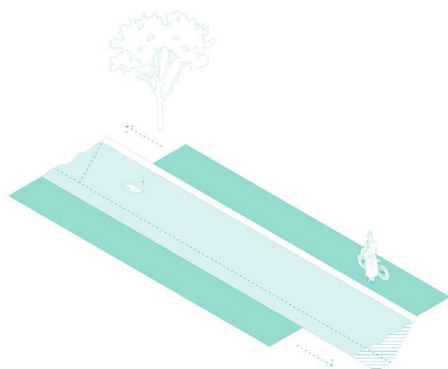
JULIJA LEBEDINEC, QUEENIE CHO WOON LAU,  
ALICE LODGE, YANNICK SCOTT

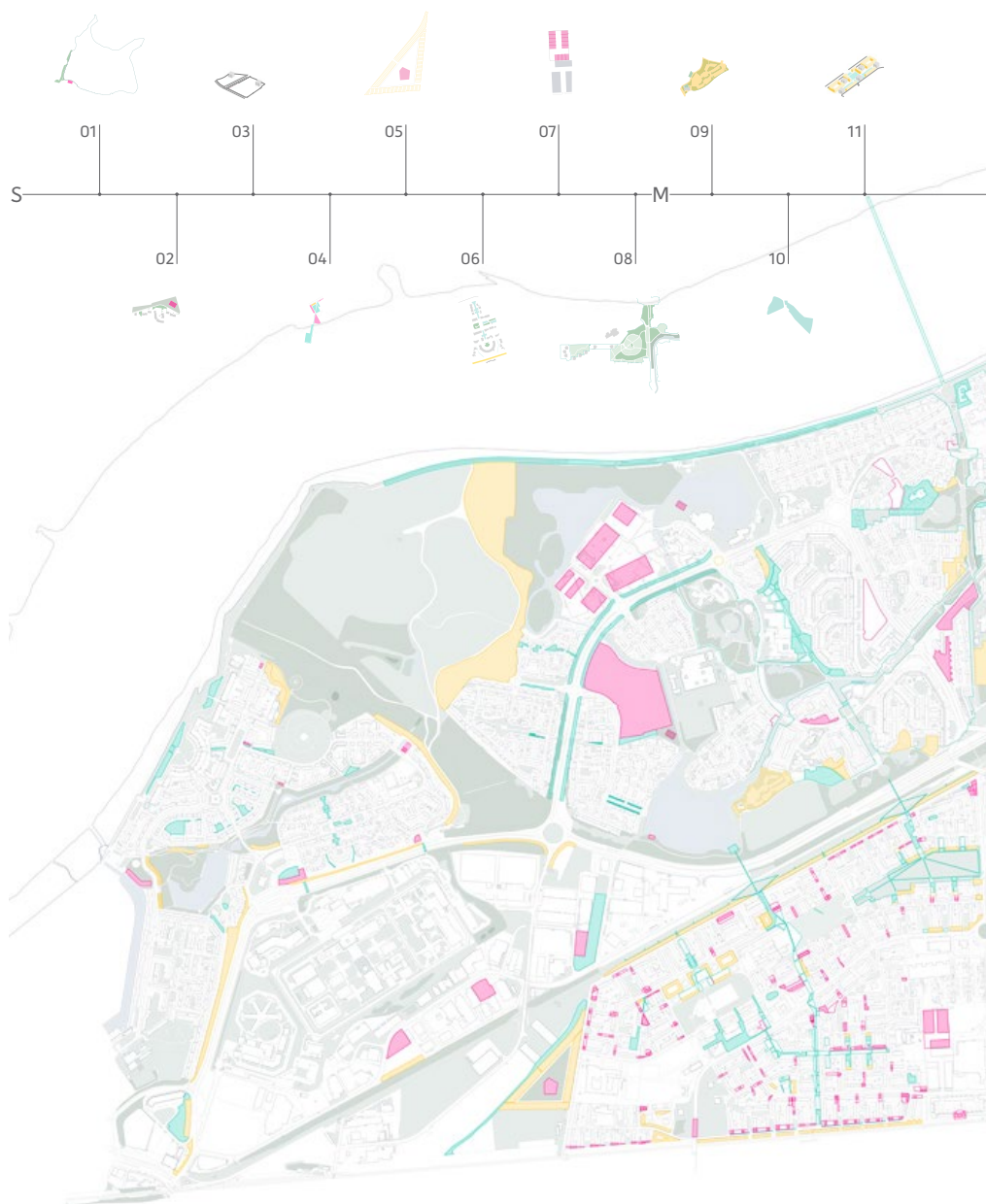
Thamesmead comprises approximately 70% of green space; 350 acres of wild open green, three nature reserves, 7km of canals, six major lakes and 5km of Thames riverfront. Despite this abundance, one often finds that access is prohibited or else the lack of amenities and infrastructure available inhibit it's effective use. In response, we propose to rethink Thamesmead by using and enhancing the existing green as a means to create specific neighbourhood identities and opportunities. This took form as a threefold strategic approach.

Infrastructure; concentrating on the development of the Green Belt and open spaces to form a continuous network of green, providing a link between Thamesmead's local centres, transport connections and recreation spaces.

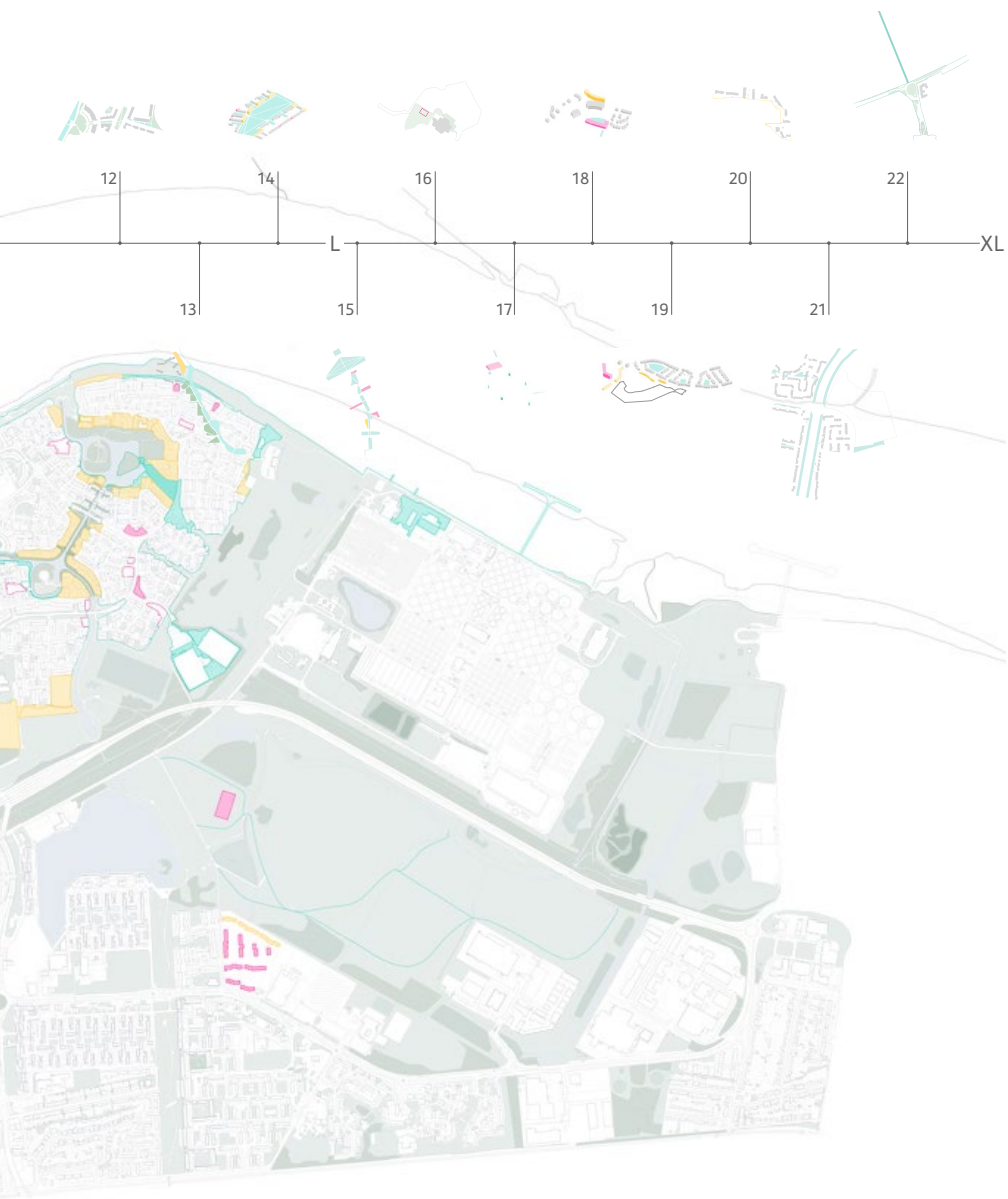
Edge; acting as a tool for enhancing and defining green areas which have been identified as having a higher use and value - or the a potential for it - as well as defining the boundary of the Green Belt.

Infill; re-appropriating underused or vacant public spaces such as pocket parks, open green lawns surrounding tower blocks and end of terrace no man's land. These vacant spaces and places offer an opportunity for sensitive development, including 'meanwhile' uses or temporary sites that offer low cost and low risk incentives for small enterprises, businesses or community groups.





▲ GREEN MASTERPLAN AND PROJECT MATRIX



LEBEDINEC, LAU, LODGE, SCOTT - GREEN

## 2.1

### LINKING SPACES

#### THE ROLE OF A PUBLIC SPACE WITHIN THE URBAN REALM

JULIJA LEBEDINEC

Thamesmead is a remote, suburban area of South-East London which evolved from an unrealised development project of late 20th century which aim was to create a 'New Town' outside of London. It was developed in under 15 years and designed in a brutalist style which soon, after the failure of an original masterplan, became stigmatic to the place. Thamesmead's concrete architecture and segments of heavy urban environment were often featured in visual media which created an image of a rough and violent place.

Today, the concrete towers of Thamesmead create a background for visual arts; Brutalist architecture turned into a canvas for street artists and is used as a concrete playground by skaters and bikers. Original buildings create an identity and stand as icons in a suburban environment. However, with the future arrival of Crossrail and DLR, the area is under the process of regeneration which includes the demolition of brutalist buildings and displacement of its current residents.

The project argues that the 'regeneration' process should not be a veil for gentrification and could be achieved by providing spaces which: allow the local community to grow in the process prior to housing the newcomers; improve and bring value to existing spatial and architectural arrangements and highlight unique features of the place with the potential to draw the attention and interest from the outside.









▲ INHABITING THE BRIDGE

◀ NIGHT-TIME ON THE NORTHBANK









EVANCHIS

## RIDGEWAY MASTERPLAN

JANE GILL, JAMIE WILSON, CATRIONA WRIGHT,  
JEREMY YEN

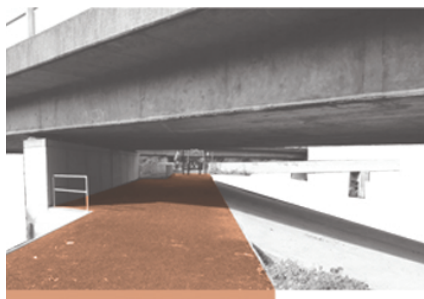
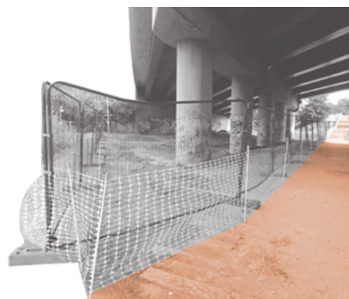
GILL, WILSON, WRIGHT, YEN - RIDGEWAY MASTERPLAN

In the 19th century Joseph Bazalgette sought not only to solve London's sewage problems but anticipated the needs of future generations. His solution improved the lives of the Victorian residents but, crucially, also integrated capacity for public transportation and future population increase.

Bazalgette's Victorian sewage network ends in what we now know as Thamesmead and is covered by a six-metre high embankment. This 3.5-mile path is commonly known as the Ridgeway. The raised land exaggerates the dislocated residential neighbourhoods and heightens physical and social fragmentation. The Ridgeway has the potential to become a connecting element in Thamesmead rather than a dividing barrier. The Ridgeway transverses various urban conditions; running alongside Garden City suburbia, under brutalist flyovers and ending at the Grade II listed Crossness Pumping Station. The linear route is loosely divided into zones: City Edge, Metropolitan, Urban and Suburban. These zones contain a mix of programmatic functions combining 'work', 'ecology', 'live' and 'culture'. An advisory framework suggests the programmatic intent for each zone and design parameters.

The masterplan forms a linear network of proposals each of which have a programmatic focus tied to the Ridgeway. The proposal network branches out and extends into the existing communities.





▲ DEVELOPING A STRATEGY

▲ ENCOUNTERS ALONG THE RIDGEWAY





## 3.1

# EXCAVATION + CONNECTION

## AN EXTENSION OF THE RIDGEWAY

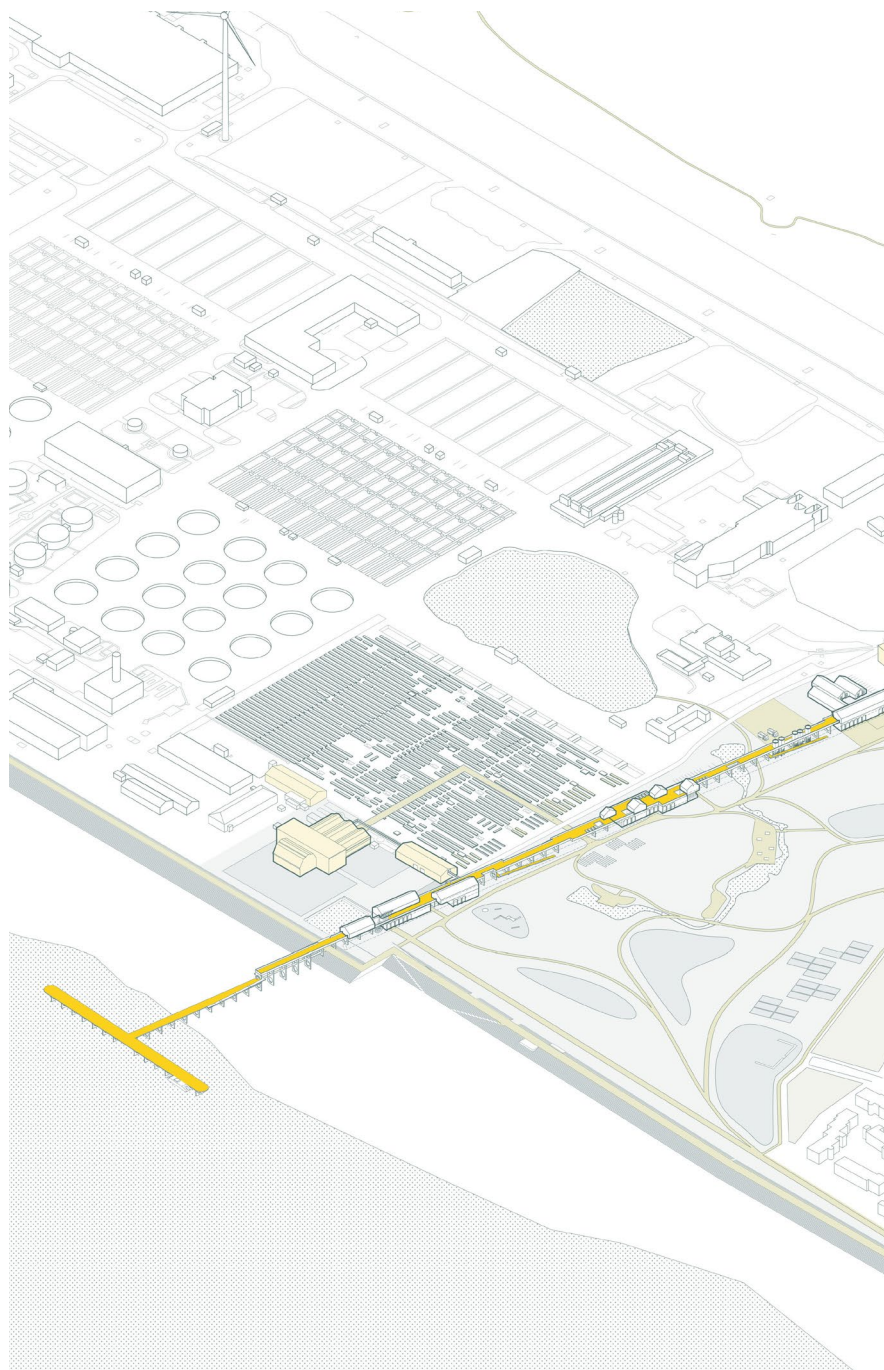
JANE GILL, ALICE LODGE

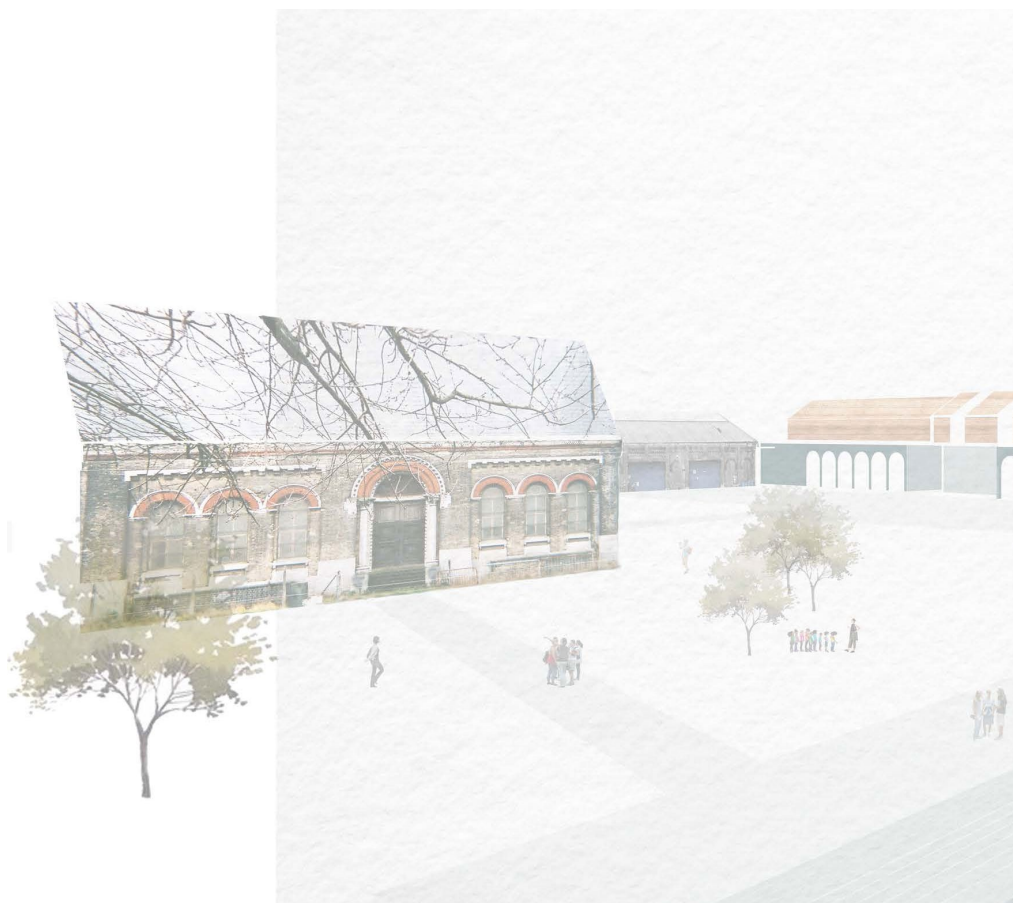
GILL, LODGE - EXCAVATION + CONNECTION

Our thesis argues that by putting locality and identity at the forefront of the design process, architecture can consciously provide activity to a previously isolated and fragmented site. The site is a redundant golf course in Crossness, a detached enclave of Thamesmead. It lies between a brutal, industrial sewage treatment works and the familiar, but underwhelming edge of suburbia. The site is also at the end of the *Ridgeway*. It is a six-metre-high embankment containing the final section of Joseph Bazalgette's Victorian sewage network, separating North and South Thamesmead. These conflicting interfaces result in physical and social fragmentation. Our proposal negotiates these paradoxical edge conditions, and exposes the site's hidden history and existing community groups. It seeks to connect Thamesmead both spatially and socially.

The project consists of three programmatic strategies: a commercialised museum linked to the Grade-I Listed Pumping Station, a wildlife centre focused on the ecological surroundings and nature reserves and a university research facility focused on the sustainable uses of sludge and ash, as a by-product of the sewage treatment process.

Our design follows Bazalgette's holistic approach to Victorian London's Sewage network. The proposal focuses on the present, but prepares for the future: a 200-year flood, an increase in population and Thamesmead's new unique relationship to London.





▲ ANTICIPATING THE 200-YEAR FLOOD AND IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY





SPACES TO ENJOY THE LOCAL ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY ▲

VIEWS FROM THE VALVE HOUSE WORKSHOP ►

REDEFINING THE BOUNDARY: BRINGING TOGETHER INDUSTRY & NATURE ▼









## 3.2

### MARSHLAND

#### REWILDING FOR THE FUTURE THROUGH A REINSTATEMENT OF THE PAST

CATRIONA WRIGHT

CATRIONA WRIGHT - MARSHLAND

How can natural assets be better protected from rapid densification? Thamesmead is fortunate to have an abundance of blue-green infrastructure yet these spaces are increasingly threatened by large housing and commercial projects. This thesis questions how the unique ecological assets of Thamesmead can be protected for the future.

It is proposed that this is facilitated through the reinstatement of the former Erith Marshes. The rewilding of the underused Southmere Park provides educational, ecological and social benefit for Thamesmead whilst creating a unique Site of Scientific Interest for London. The project proposes facilities for wetland and ornithological research as well as a public educational programme that draws from the land; simultaneously utilising and conserving it.

The marshland allows habitats to develop naturally whilst the land becomes a natural flood defence mechanism for the wider urban environment. An argument is formed suggesting that the rewilding of underused land should be recognised by policy makers as a viable means of land management.

The project poses that wild nature does not begin where architecture ends but it is, in fact, integral to its dynamic. Biodiversity and ecology therefore become intertwined with the economic and social condition of Thamesmead which, ultimately, ensures the protection of the site.









▲ MASTERPLAN FOR REWILDING AND REINSTATING THE MARSHLAND

◀ SYNANTHROPIC FACADES, BETWEEN WILD AND DOMESTIC

▼ 1:50 MODEL OF THE EDUCATION HOUSE

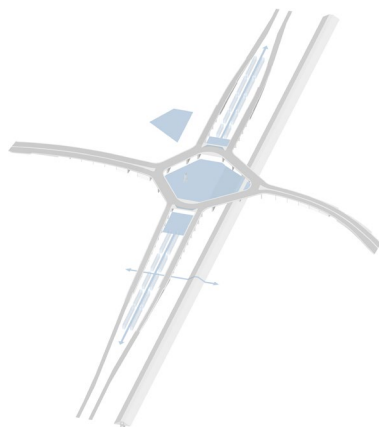


## UNDERPASS PARK

JEREMY YEN

The thesis argues for the colonisation of a kilometre-long stretch of Eastern Way motorway, guiding vehicular traffic onto Harrow Manorway flyover while forming a ground-level pedestrian realm the size of nearby Southmere Lake. At the intersection of Thamesmead's four great dividers of Eastern Way, Harrow Manorway, Ridgeway, and the Greenwich-Bexley borough boundary, the once-uninhabitable centre of Thamesmead is now well-connected and unifying.

Thamesmead-owning housing association and developer, Peabody, proposes a community of 600 new homes despite site peculiarity and difficulty. Peabody uses the Park's programme and gravitational force to pull Thamesmead's disparate parts into meaningful interaction for the first time: quality public space for communities of Abbey Wood, Moorings, Crossway and Southmere to meet entire Thamesmead. Space is activated through commercial and independent trade at ground level, inhabiting the existing flyover superstructure, with workspace solutions for the tech and creative scene at mezzanine. The project is further financed and energised by a Recreation & Snowsports Centre with a rooftop dry-ski slope, an unprecedented attraction for Greater London. Affordable and adaptable 3D-printed starter homes are developed by Peabody to occupy the ski-slope frame and test viability as a mobile solution to the housing crisis and to urgent densification of complex sites.

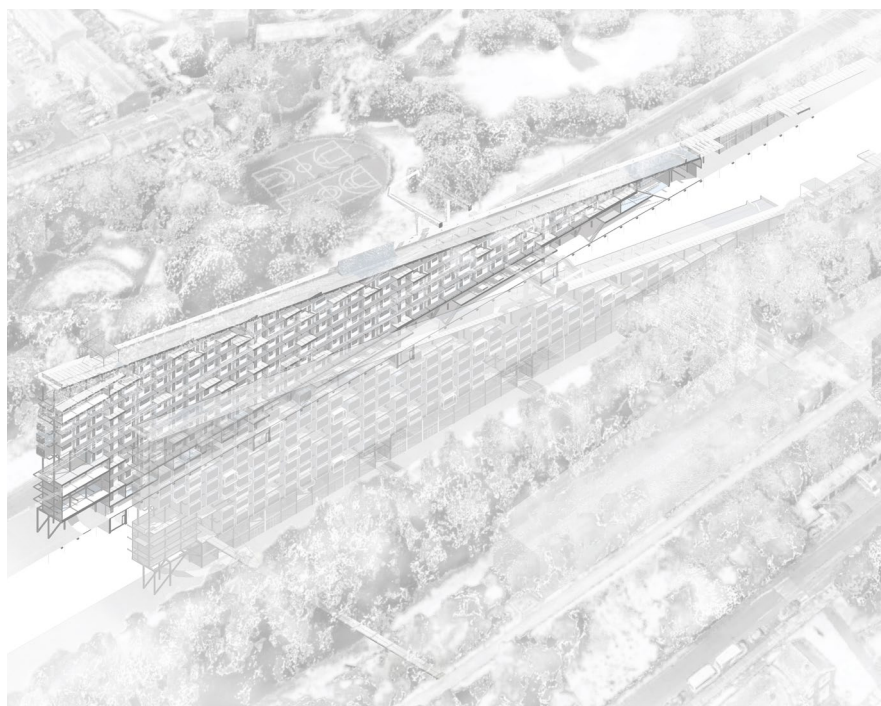


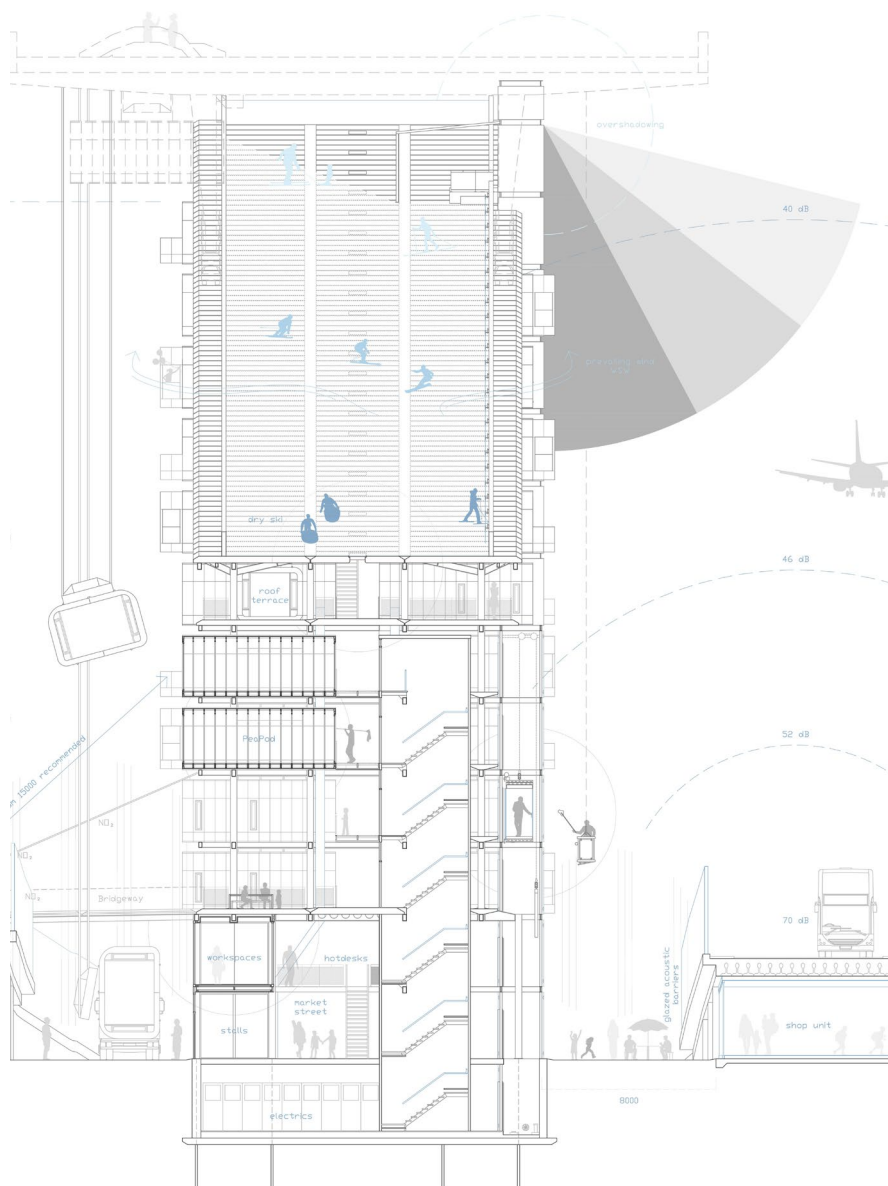


▲ UNDERPASS PARK FROM THE SLOPE

► EVERYDAY FUNCTIONS

▼ SECTION THROUGH THE SLOPE





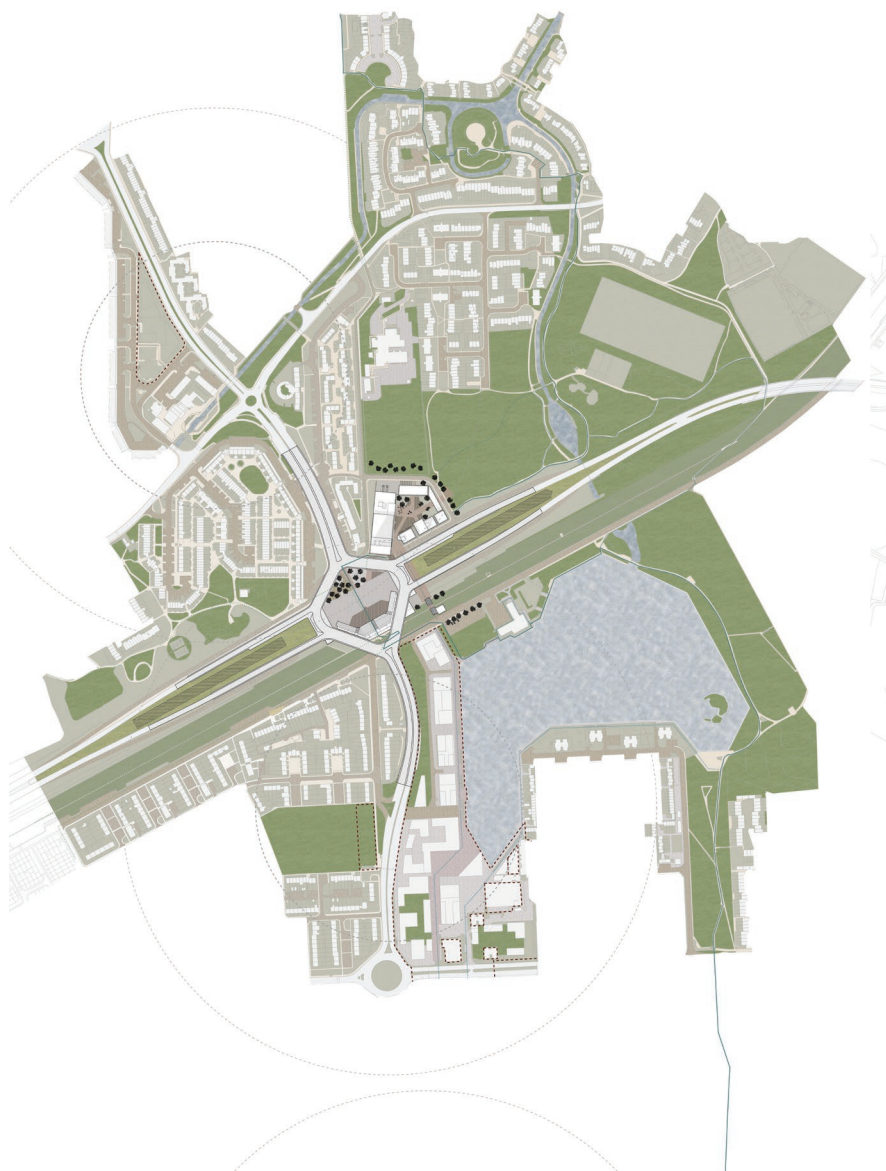


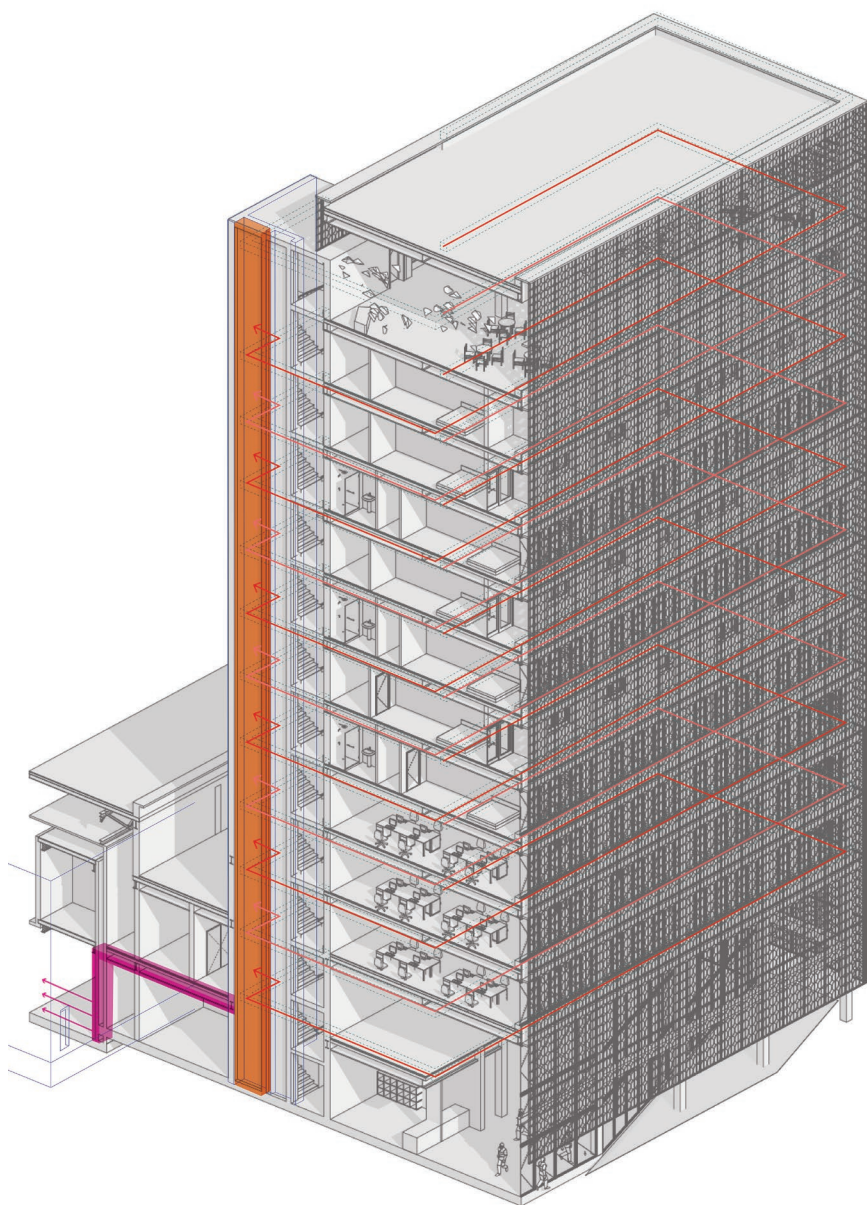
## CULTURAL CROSSING

LINDA VELIKA

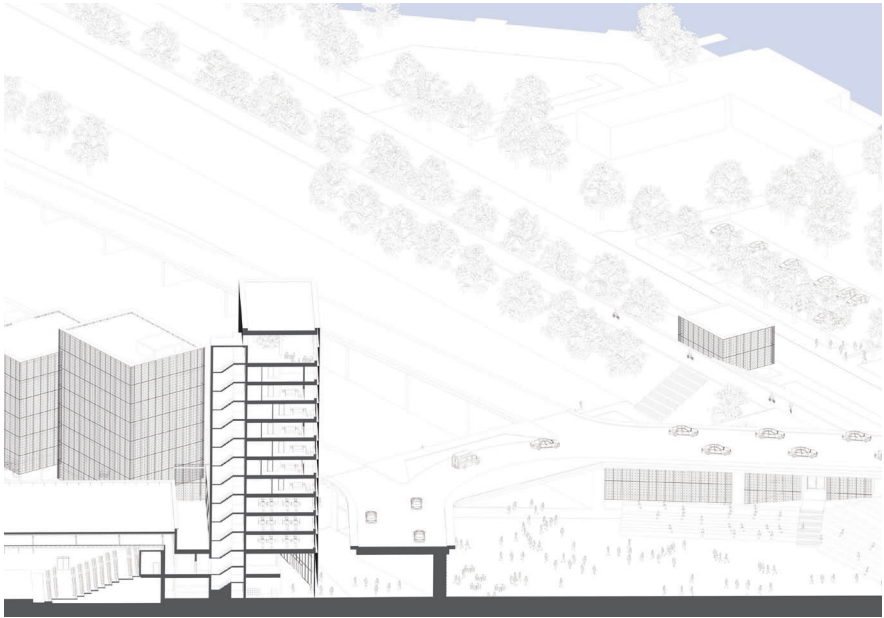
Greater London is drastically increasing in population and is expected to reach over 10 million by 2030. the current city model concentrates around several international and national centres between Westminster, City of London and Canary Wharf. In order to combat unaffordability, the Mayor of London has been working on policies to tackle increase in population. The strategy has been shifted from a centric city model to densify London through network of independent town centres providing amenities and professional opportunities locally. Part of Thamesmead estate has been prepared for a radical regeneration plan, including a new high-street from Abbey Wood station towards the Ridgeway – six meters tall infrastructure spanning across the ward splitting Thamesmead into half.

The thesis expands on existing plans and extends this new high street on the other side of the Ridgeway in between ‘legs’ of a Harrow Manorway flyover, by decommissioning part of Easter Way road. The proposal itself concentrates on the drama of this site. It evolves on the existing presence of cultural groups surrounding the flyover – the artists from the Lakeside Centre and young people from the Link and Dance school. The heart of the project is the new public centre compromising activities for existing residents as well as be attractive place for visitors. In the centre there is a performance art hall with adjacent educational and professional opportunities.



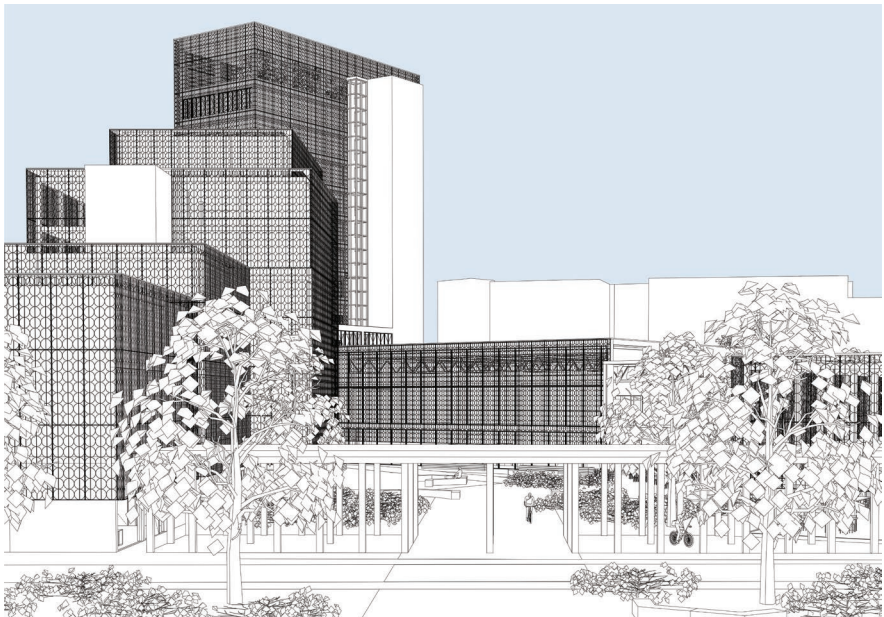


▲ INTEGRATED PHOTOVOLTAIC FACADE



▲ NEW PUBLIC COMPLEX

▼ SAFE ACCESS AND CONNECTION TO THE PARK - GREEN CHAIN WALK



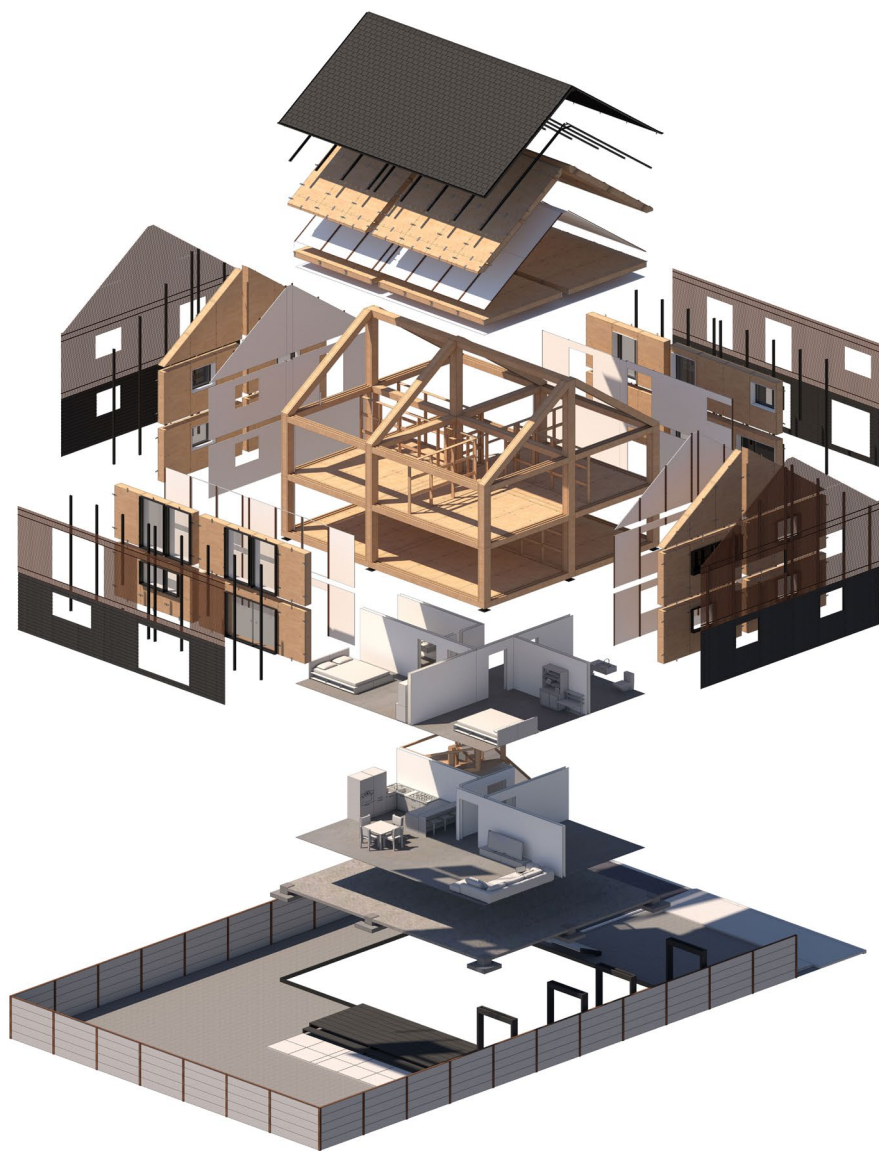
## THE RIDGEWAY FRAMEWORK

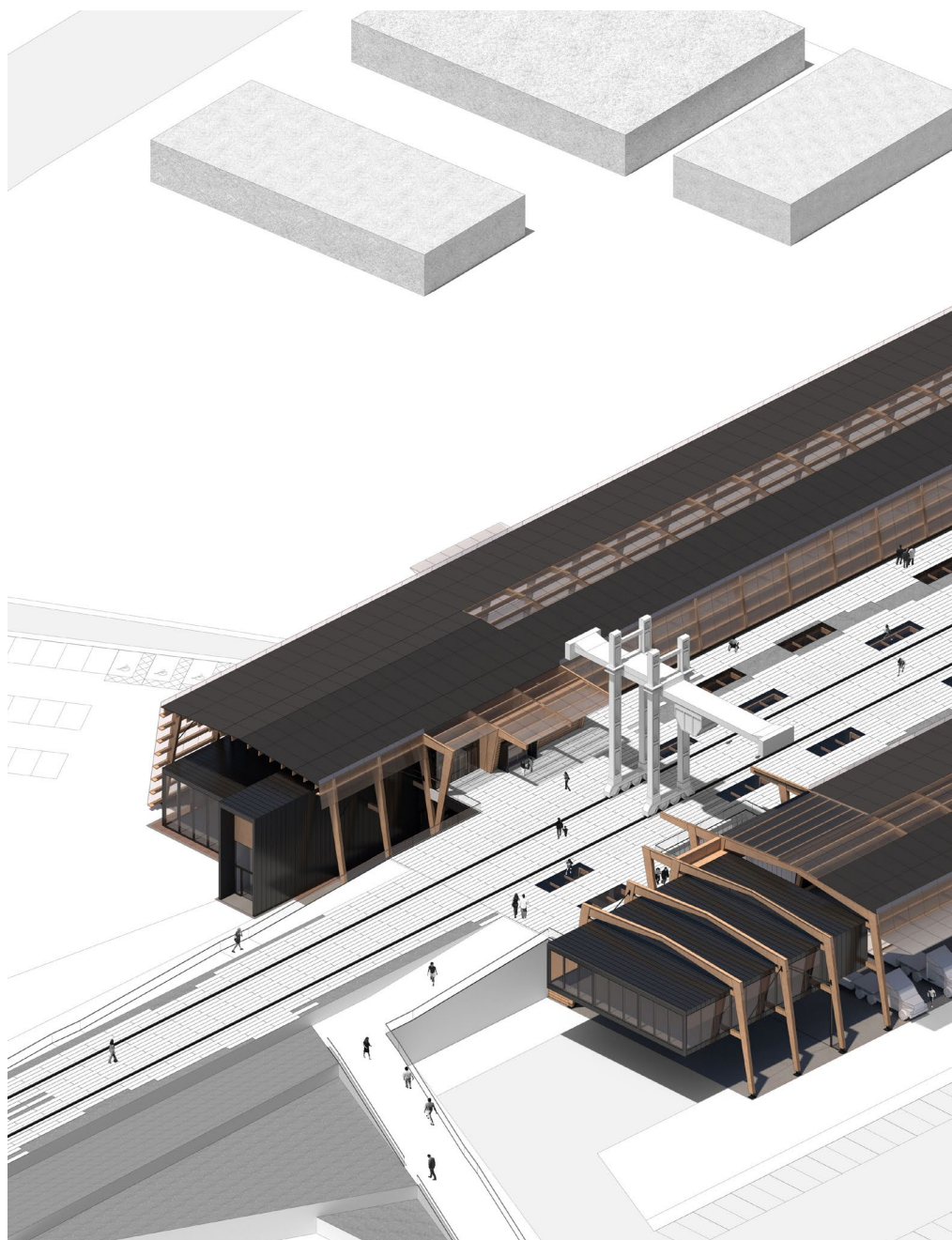
EUAN MILLER, BENJAMIN SMITH

The UK is currently experiencing a severe property supply deficit. In spite of an investment-based property system, the number of new homes built is significantly lower than that which is required by the free market. After a decades-long period of property and land inflation, homes are becoming increasingly difficult to afford, and are shrinking in size and in quality. The result is a monopoly-led housing stock, that has no incentive to increase in quality or investigate new ways of building and is incapable of meeting the demand for new homes put out by the country.

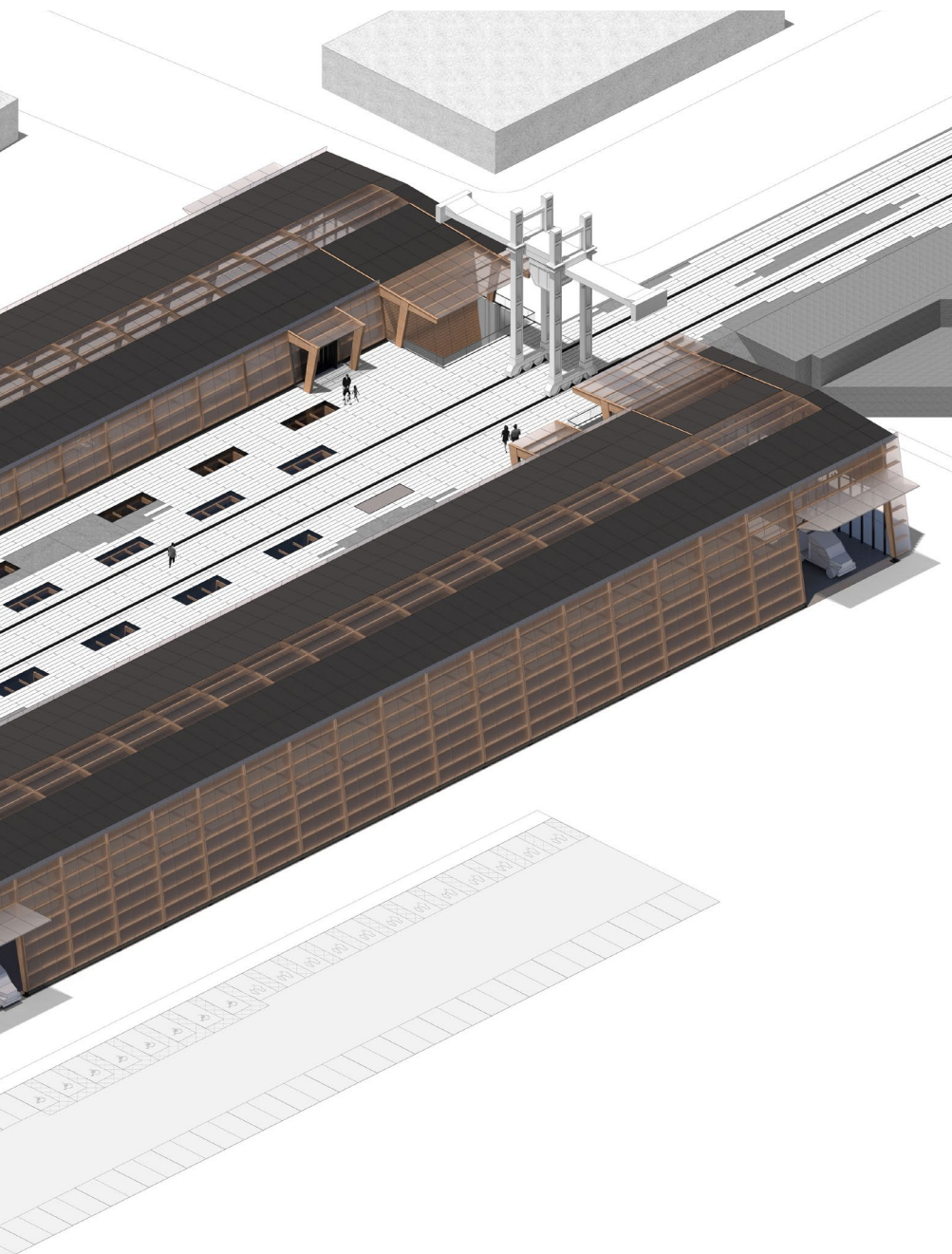
This proposal sets out to create a system to design and construct a variety of housing typologies by leveraging cutting edge technology and design principles in a simple way, with the aim of building homes that can strongly compete in terms of price and quality against the current property market. The project reimagines the site's historic location of the original factory that produced prefabricated components for the housing within the 1970s Thamesmead Masterplan. Absorbing the inevitable densification requirement resulting from new transport connections to central London, by utilising the full length of the underutilised land along the Ridgeway. Demonstrating the scalability, flexibility and quality of mass produced housing possible within the framework.







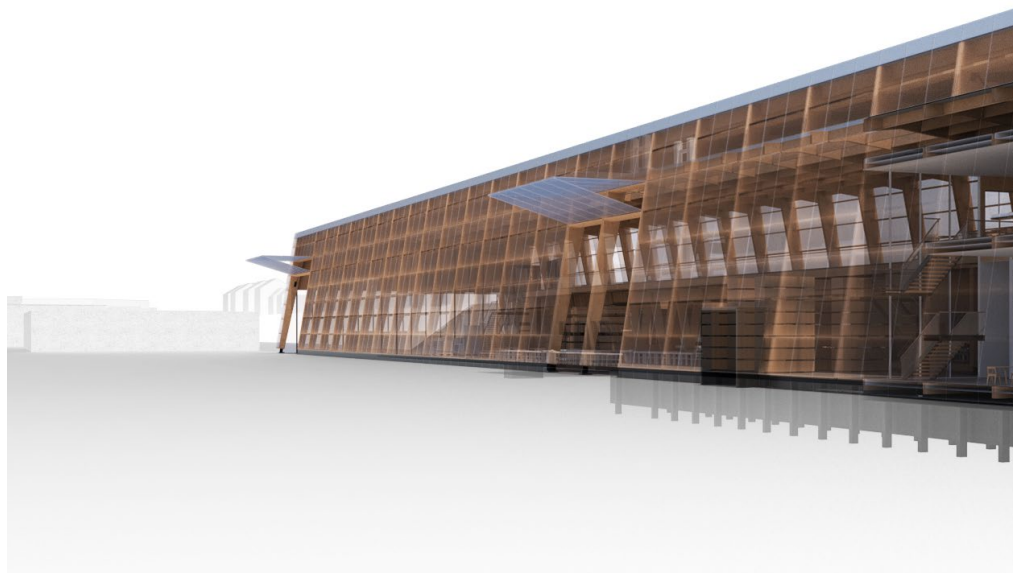
▲ THE INDUSTRIAL STAGE

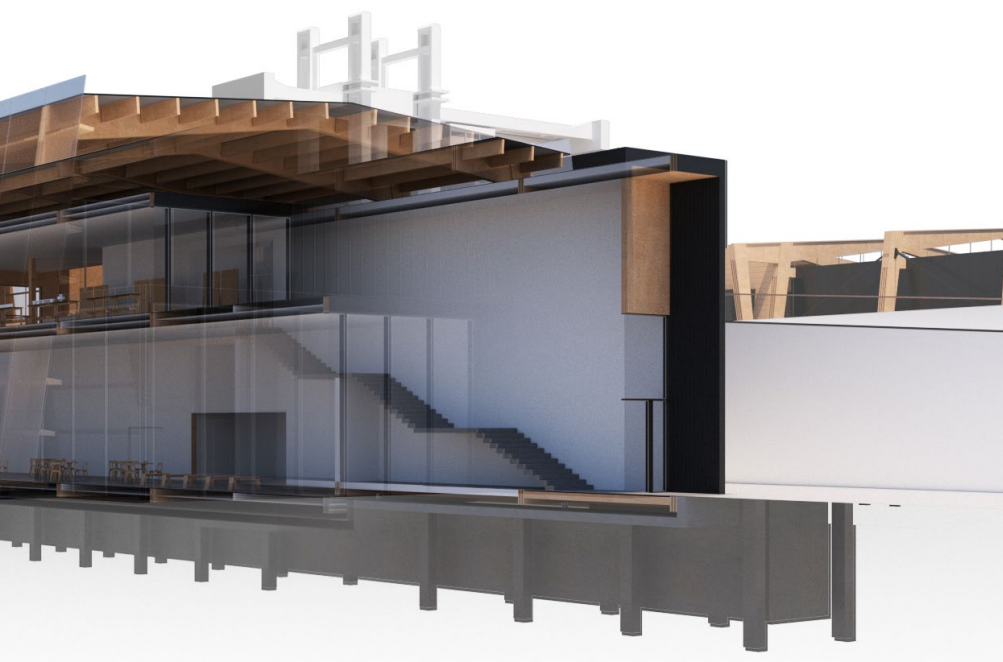




► A NEW BLUEPRINT FOR HOUSE CONSTRUCTION

▼ PROGRAMMATIC SECTION





MILLER, SMITH - THE RIDGEWAY FRAMEWORK

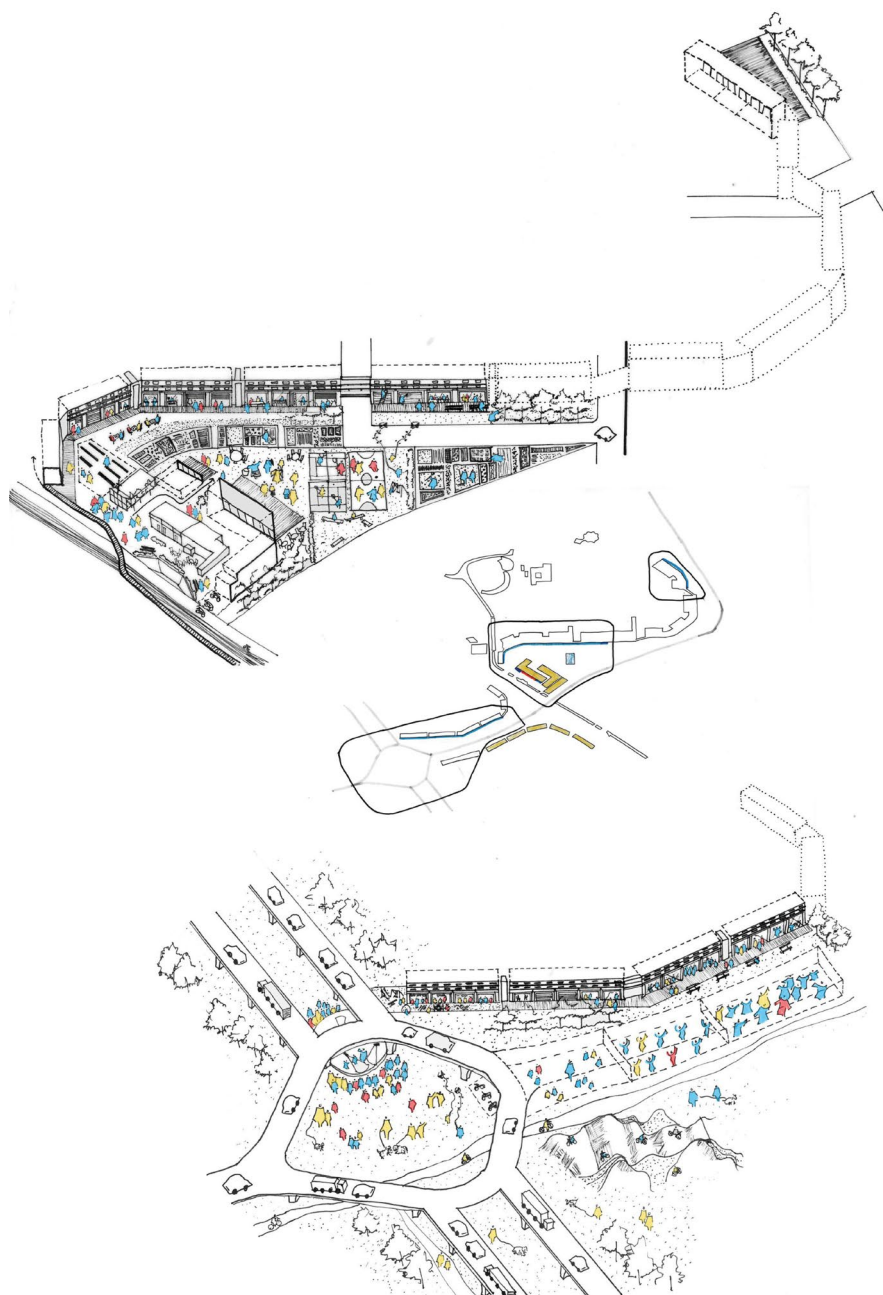
## TOWN CENTRES MASTERPLAN

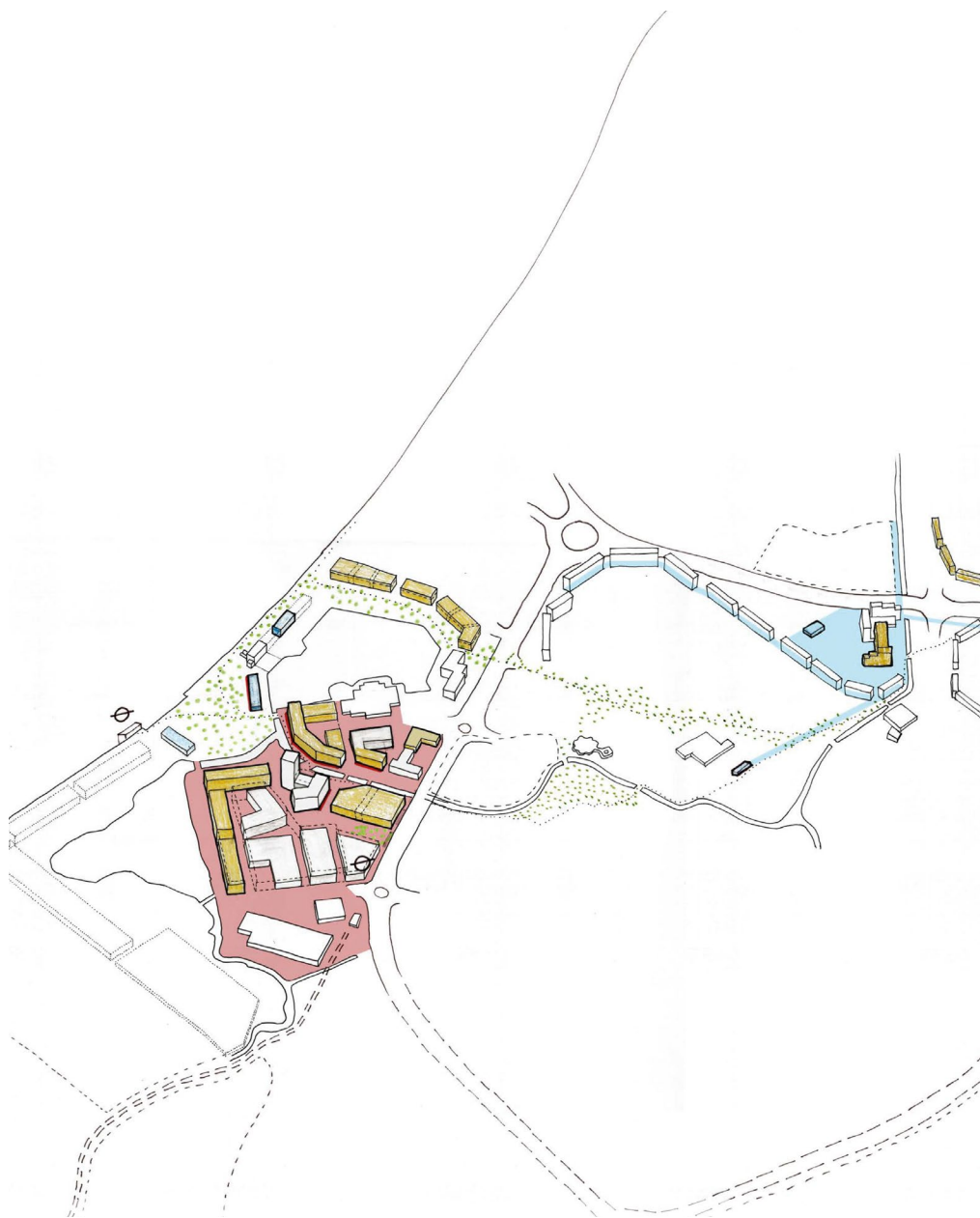
CAMILLE DAVISON, KATIE HAY, BENJAMIN SMITH,  
LINDA VELIKA

The *Town Centres Masterplan* aims to strengthen and/or redevelop the existing three ‘town centres’ recognised in Thamesmead, rather than impose a one-centre-fits-all approach. Given the suburban character, diversity of current and anticipated communities, large geographical area and North-South divide caused by the motorway, this strategy enhances individual identities and provides the relevant amenities.

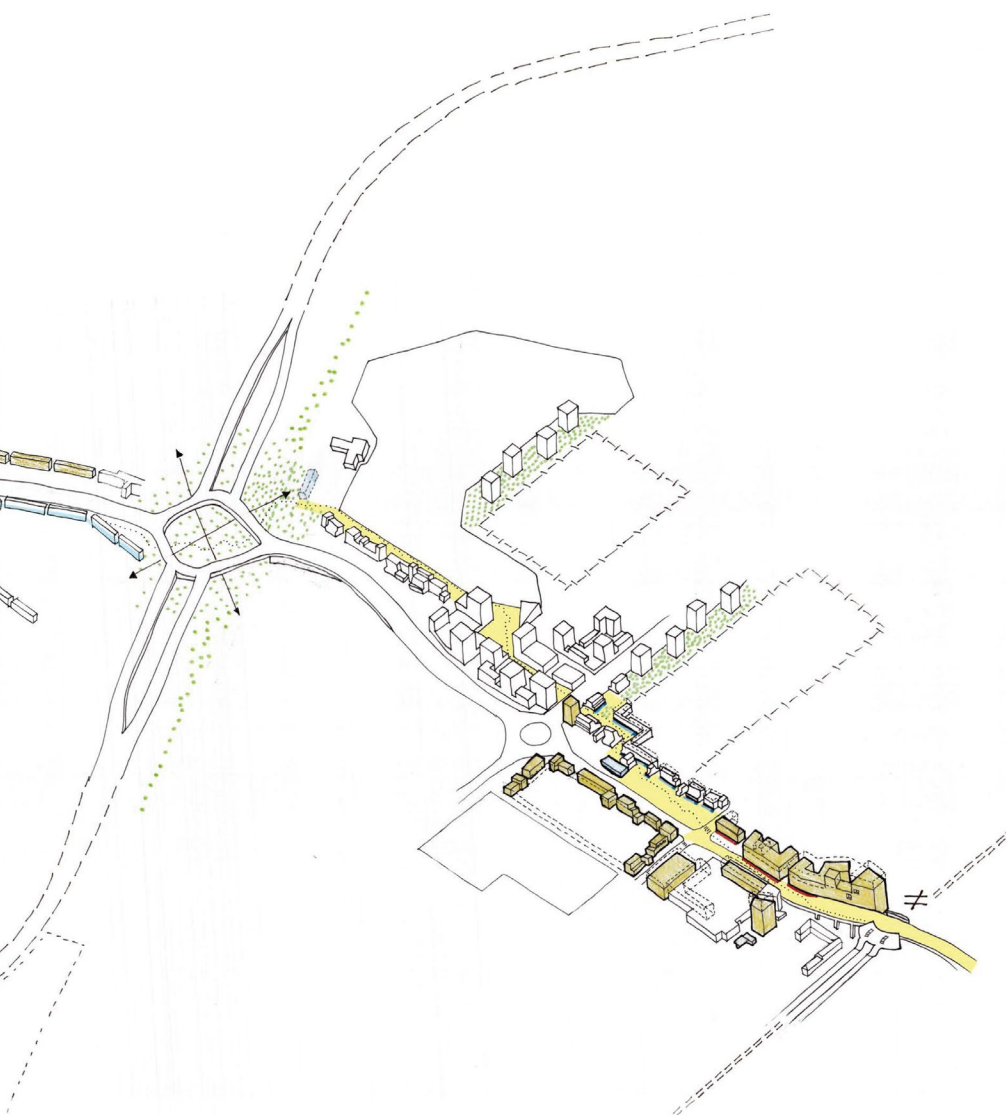
Our masterplan uses town centres to absorb and channel the inevitable pressure for development, resulting from the new Crossrail and DLR connections. Densification radiates from the proposed town centres where these critical transport links are located, strategically filling gap sites and allowing expansion upwards through Thamesmead, while minimising the demolition of existing housing stock.

Creating clear distinctions between the town centres, regarding character and function, was key to ensuring the town centres are inter-reliant rather than competitive. Centralising public programmes and spaces into the town centres creates opportunities for community gathering, meeting and socialising. While each town centre has a focus, a certain level of freedom and flexibility has been allowed by the mixed-use nature common to all. This, combined with increased connectivity, creates a permeability between the town centres which enables the diverse communities of Thamesmead to co-exist and change.





▲ PROPOSED CONNECTIONS, DEVELOPMENTS AND DENSITIES OF TOWN CENTRES





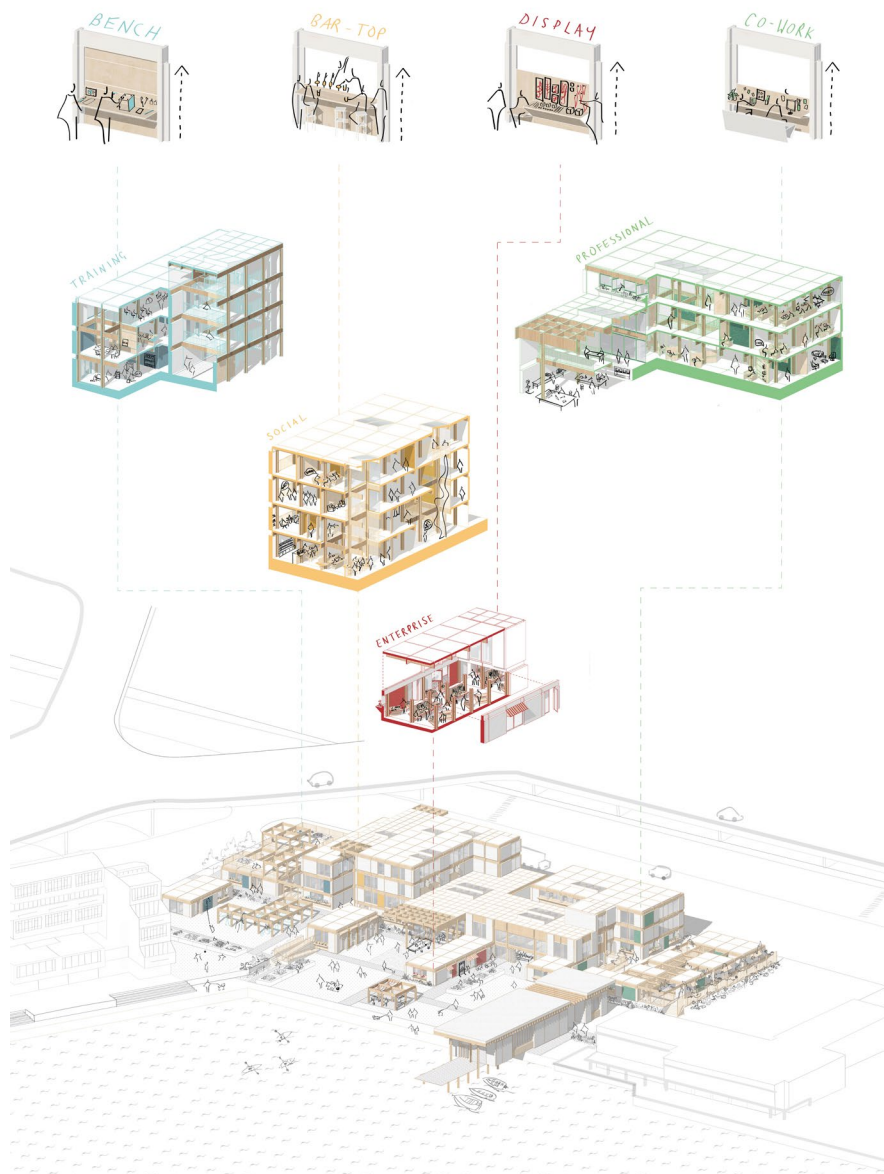
## RE-CREATION ORGANISATION

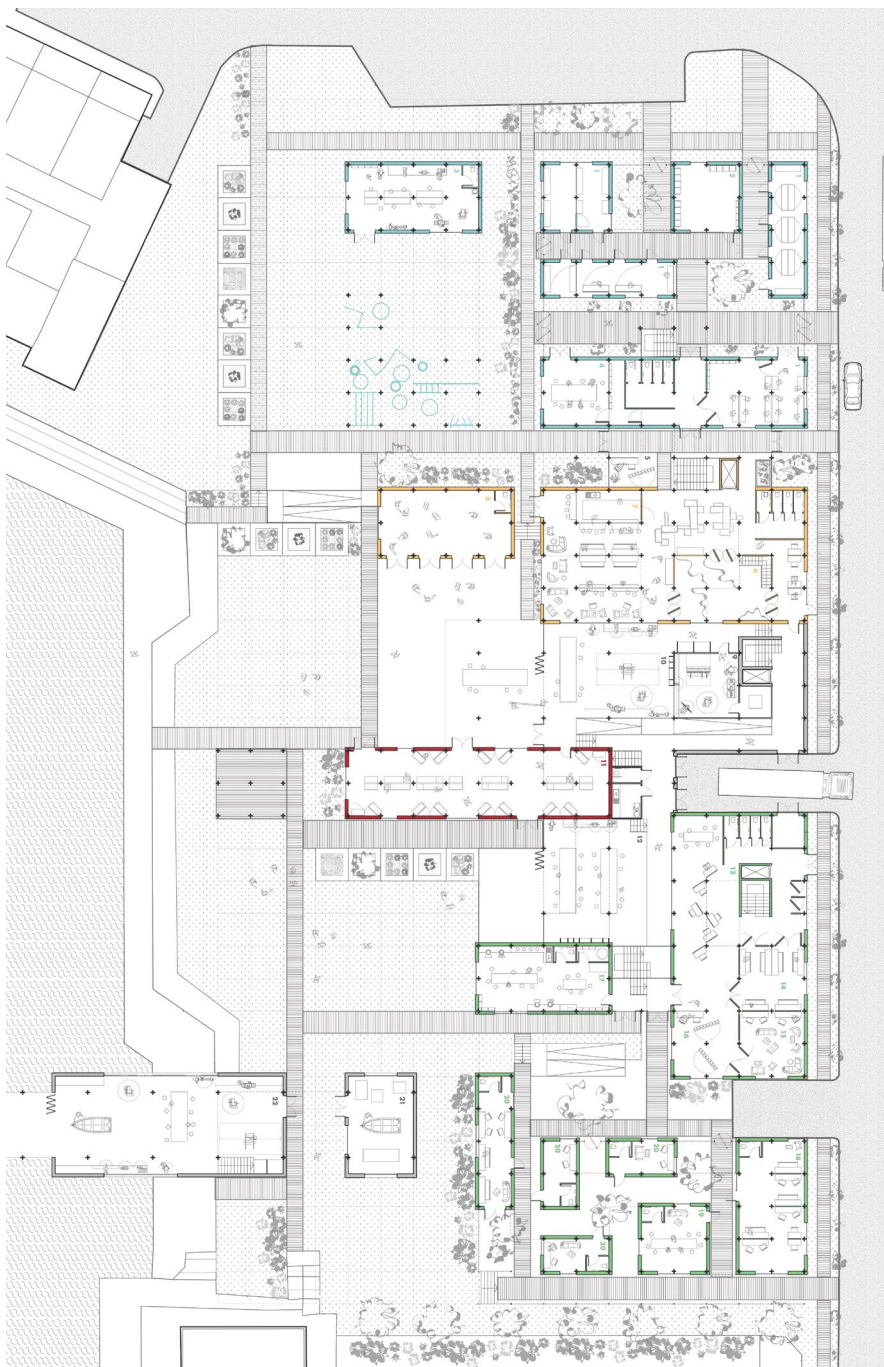
CAMILLE DAVISON

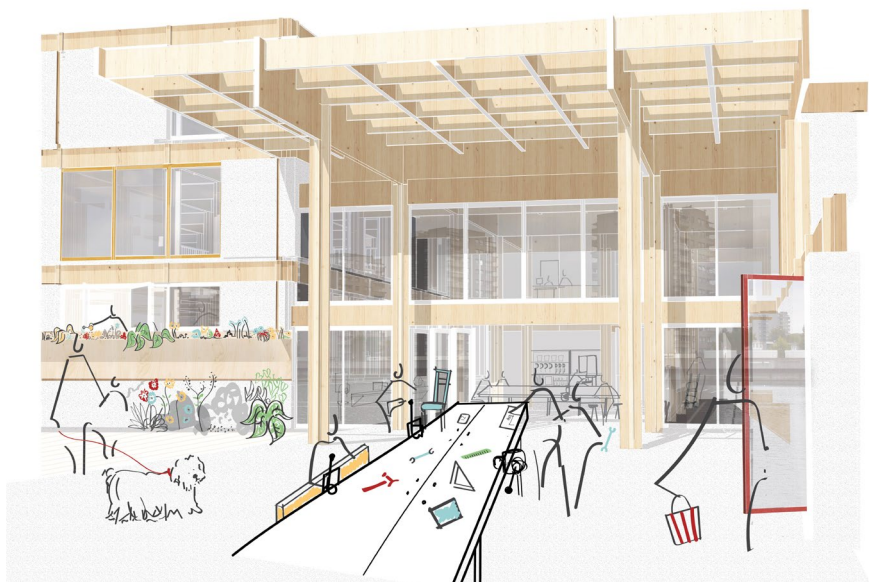
By building upon existing D.I.Y. culture throughout Thamesmead, this project initiates a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) to provide a platform for locals to run a D.I.Y. and Practical Skills Workshop Centre, replacing the social function of the nearby demolished Pyramid Club and extending neighbouring community facilities, generating activity upon a new, civic waterfront on Southmere Lake.

Providing the necessary skills and facilities to give locals the power to regain ownership of their community during a period of mass-development, this project also trials a cyclical relationship between four elements: Social, Training, Professional and Enterprise. Through optimising face-to-face social networking and creating spaces for rent and trading opportunities, the facility is theoretically able to generate revenue for reinvestment into the area and become self-sufficient.

In challenging the composition of a skill-based community centre, this project endorses a series of envelopes containing a dense modular structure. The structure is specifically tailored to the standard sheet material dimensions (2400x2400mm) to allow internal partitions to be created, modified and repaired within the in-between workshop facilities. This aims to reduce dependency on external forces and future-proof the internal functions which are prone to change as Thamesmead inevitably transforms.







▲ VIEW INTO WORKSHOP

◀ GROUND FLOOR PLAN - ACTIVITY ALONG THE WATERFRONT

▼ LAKESIDE ACTIVITY



## 4.2

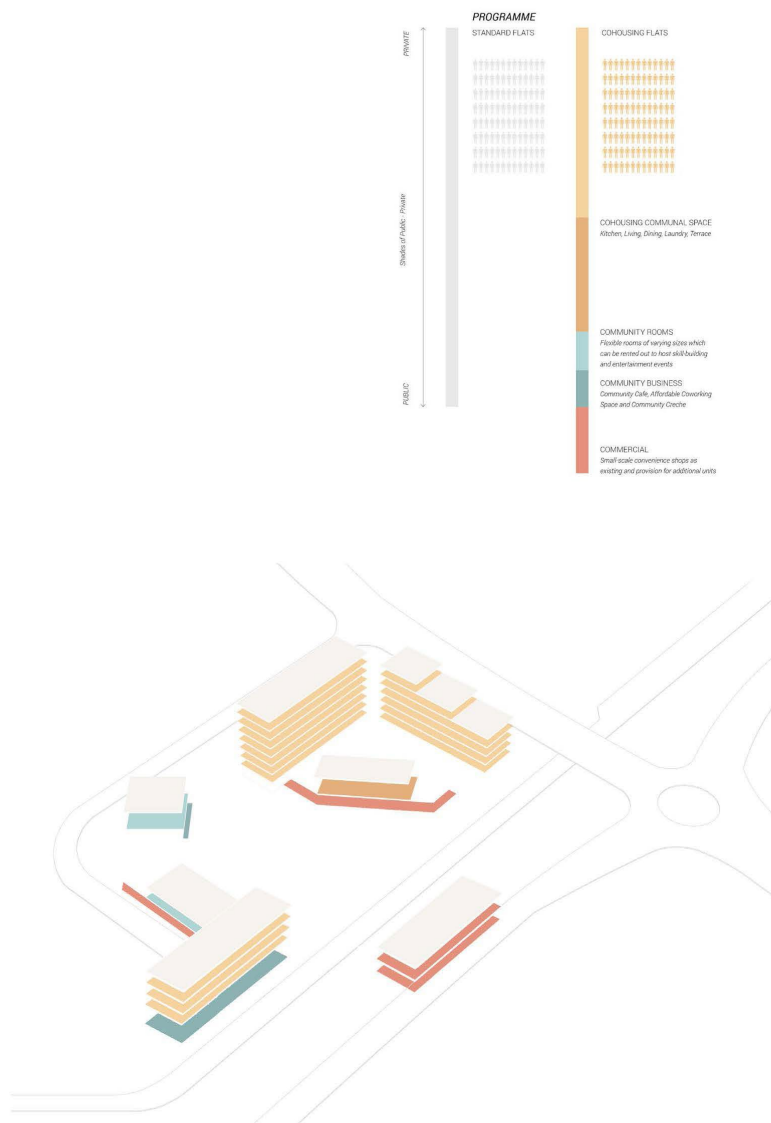
# COHOUSING IN THE CONTEMPORARY CITY

## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES IN THE METROPOLIS

KATIE HAY

This project takes a close look at the cohousing model and examines its relevance within urbanism today in addressing both the crisis of affordability and the crisis of community affecting our cities and everyday life. Using Thamesmead, a socially deprived area of East London, as a testing ground for the design thesis, it will examine cohousing in its most strained condition; where incomes are low, anti-social behaviour is high and tensions between the culturally diverse population are taut.

The proposal is to densify and redevelop an existing local centre in Thamesmead, through a mixed-use development integrating commercial units, co-working space and a variety of community rooms as well as cohousing and a sensitive restructuring of the public realm. It aims to demonstrate how the interweaving of cohousing into new mixed-use developments common in London's polycentric metropolis can create more sustainable communities as it enables groups to develop 'non-market relationships' and creates opportunities for the provision of community-owned space in a way which is feasible and practical. This is a project about affordable housing, ownership of space and community cohesion and its lessons can be applied widely across different locations and socio-economic conditions in London and abroad.







▲ ARNOTT CLOSE COMMONS



KAITE HAY - COHOUSING IN THE CONTEMPORARY CITY









## WATERWAYS MASTERPLAN

ZHIWEN CHEN, LUKAS DROTAR,  
RUAIRIDH MAXWELL, AMY WOOTTON

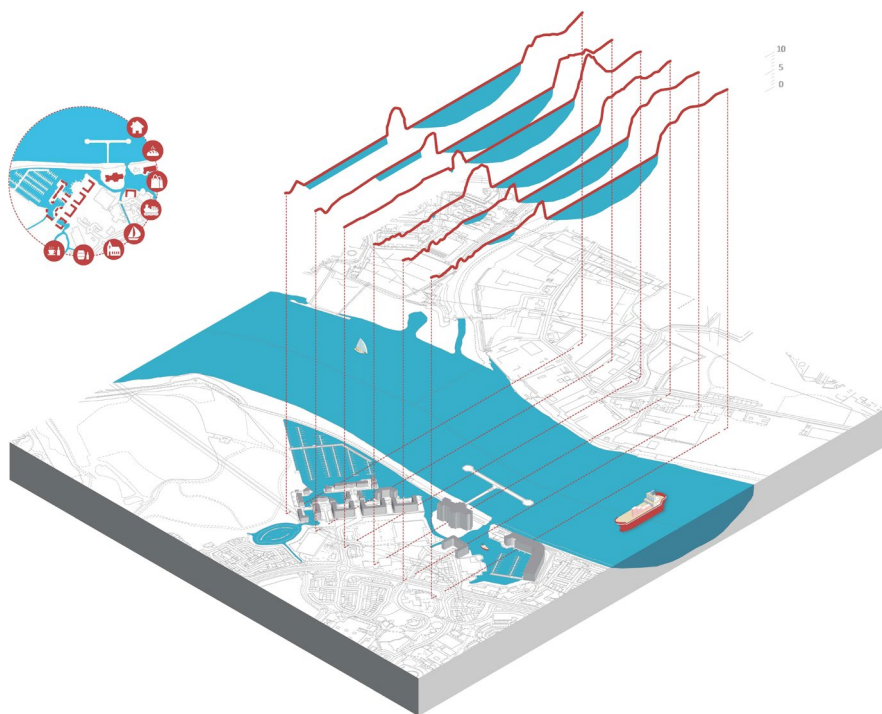
The *Waterways Masterplan* was an attempt to demonstrate how the existing system of waterways in Thamesmead could be harnessed and utilised to revitalise the area. When this masterplan was being developed, we considered the lakes and canals that already exist within Thamesmead, deciding to extend some canals to create and encourage new routes between key sites. We identified various sites of interest, spread across three scales. Small scale sites related directly to the canals, medium scale to the lakes, and large scale to the river Thames. Each of these sites was noted to have particular qualities, which could lend themselves to different functions within an interconnected system, facilitated by the similar interconnectivity of the waterways.

We decided to demonstrate how a micro-brewery could be set up within the site framework with 'key intervention zones'. Most proposals on the medium scale sites involved new buildings, all of which have some relationship to the lakes.

The largest intervention within representative case is the Marina, sited at the northern edge of Thamesmead, connecting to the river Thames. The marina has the opportunity to facilitate new transport links in the area as well as to incorporate new housing into the development, offering current residents the chance for genuinely affordable waterfront living.







- ▲ LARGE SCALE INTERVENTION - THE MARINA
- INTERVENTION AT THE HUMAN SCALE
- ▼ MEDIUM SCALE INTERVENTION - MICRO BREWERY





## THAMESMEAD REDESIGN

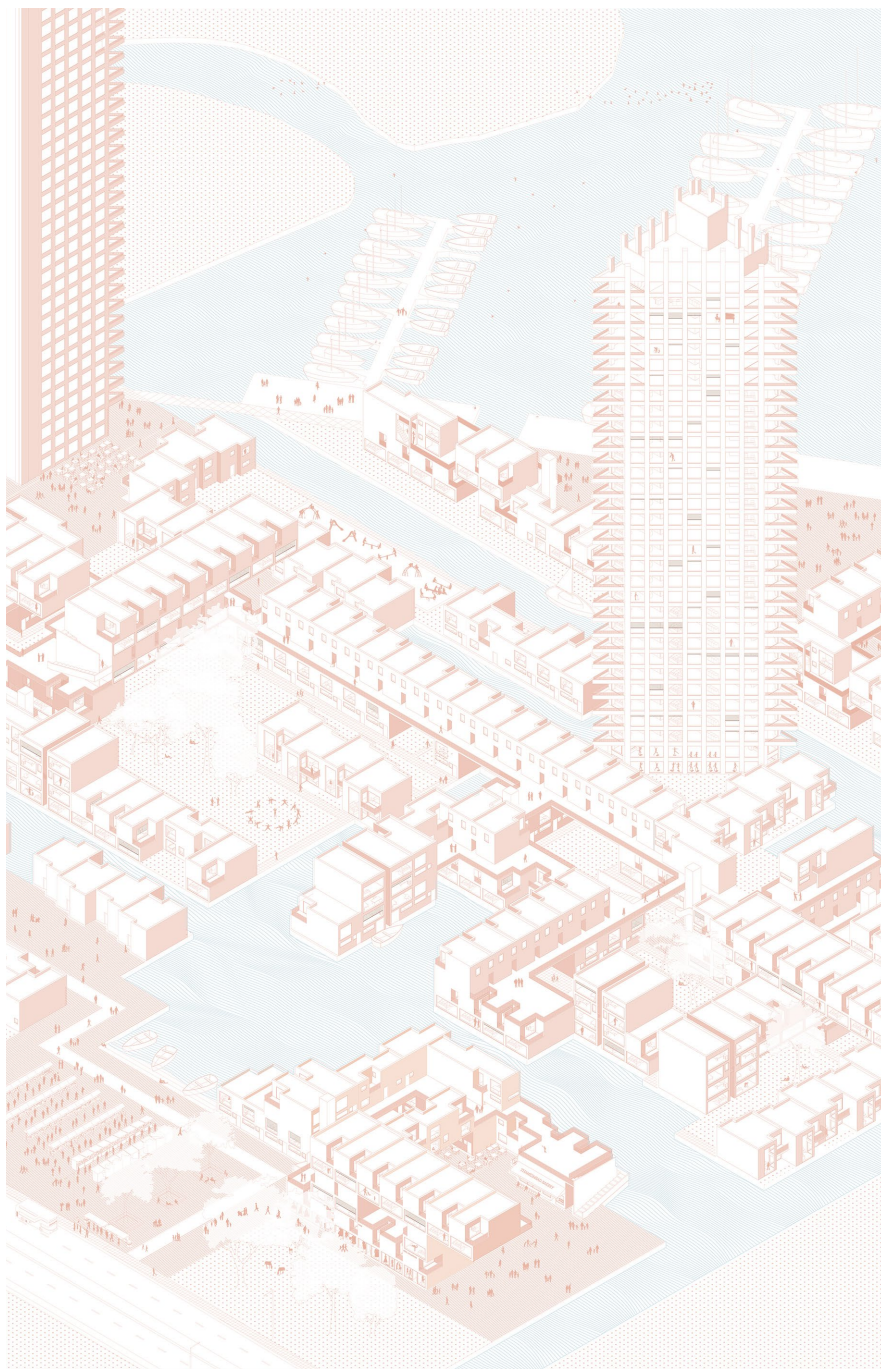
LUKAS DROTAR

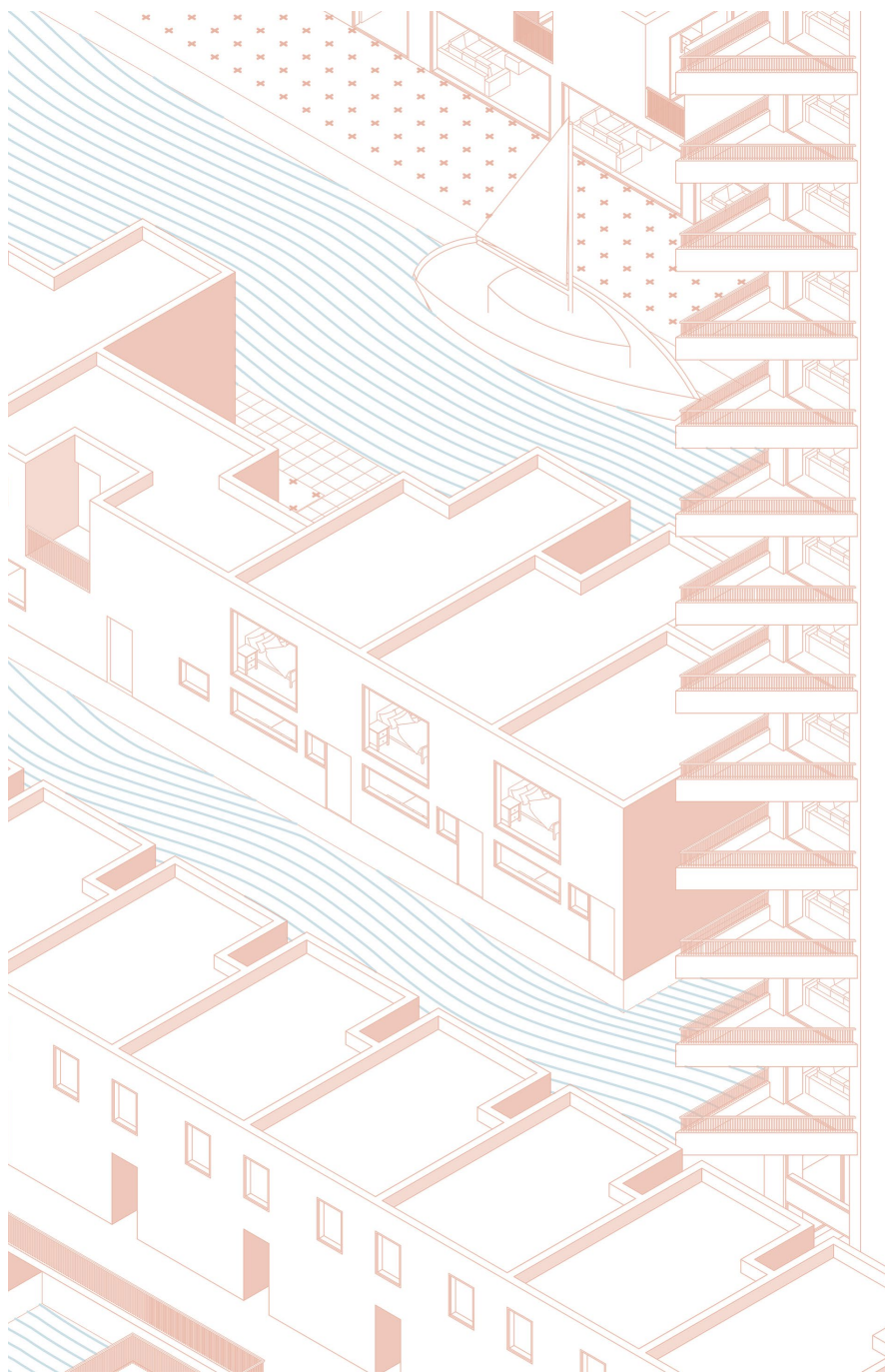
This project is the outcome of one year's worth of work. What follows is an examination of the original masterplan for Thamesmead, a major housing and urban development project from the late 1960s, exploring what can be learnt from the policies of the past whilst studying the spatial realisation of the original vision.

The emphasis of the thesis is on analysing and understanding the spatial principles used in the original masterplan of which I have applied for the New Thamesmead Town Centre. I believe that we must read the past as 'the template of its spatial structures', in order to be able to understand a New Thamesmead Town Centre. However, the new masterplan seeks to avoid the mistakes of the past.

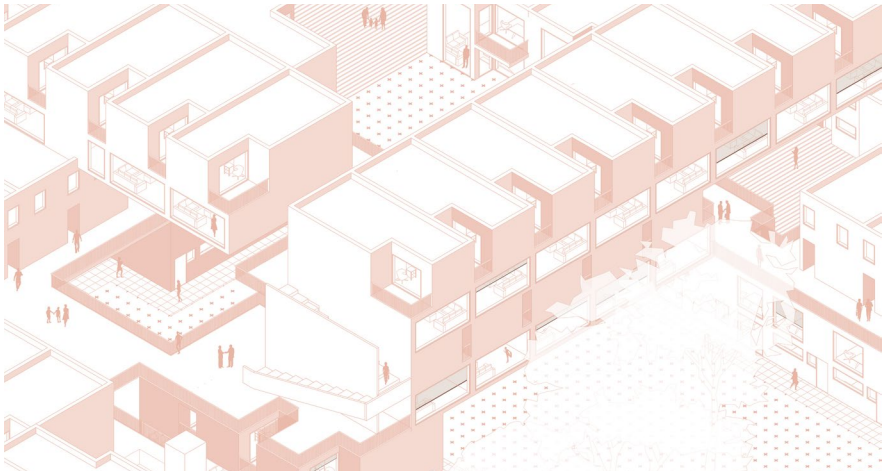
The rationalisation of the original masterplan was the key concept guiding the new masterplan. This was crucial in determining the scale and initial building blocks of the new plan, however it did not entirely define all the aspects of the design nor exhaust all meanings. It also defines the nature of the New Thamesmead Town Centre as an urban place of social and cultural form. The New Thamesmead Town Centre proposes to be linked by a large shopping area. This area would border a yacht basin and marina.







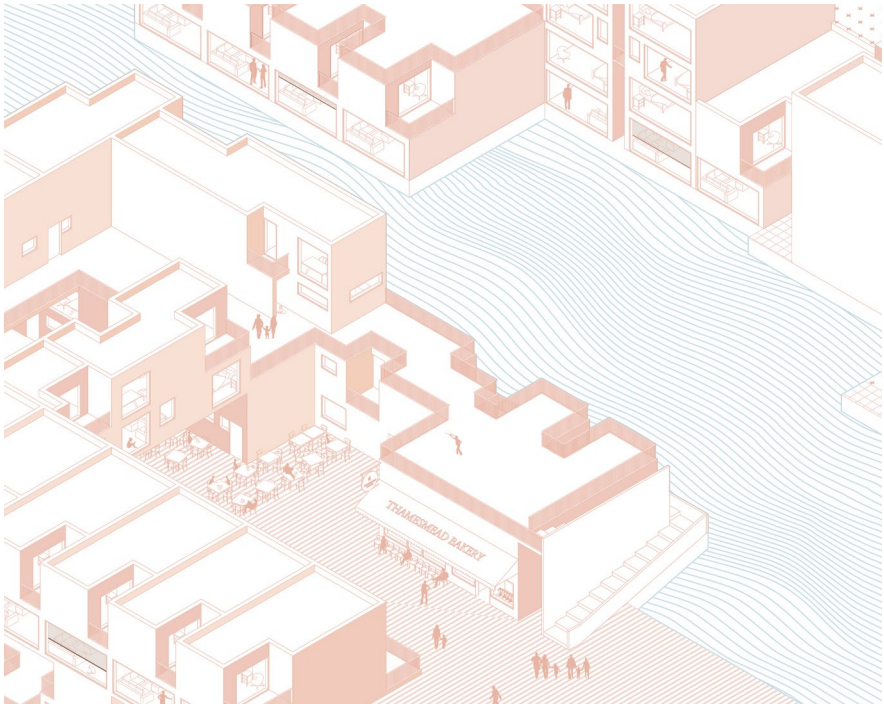




▲ MULTILEVEL PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS

◀ INHABITATION OF NEW THAMESMEAD TOWN CENTRE

▼ ADVANCED SPATIALITY OF NEW THAMESMEAD







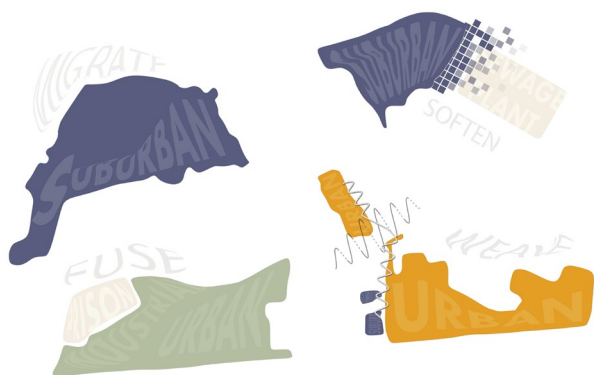


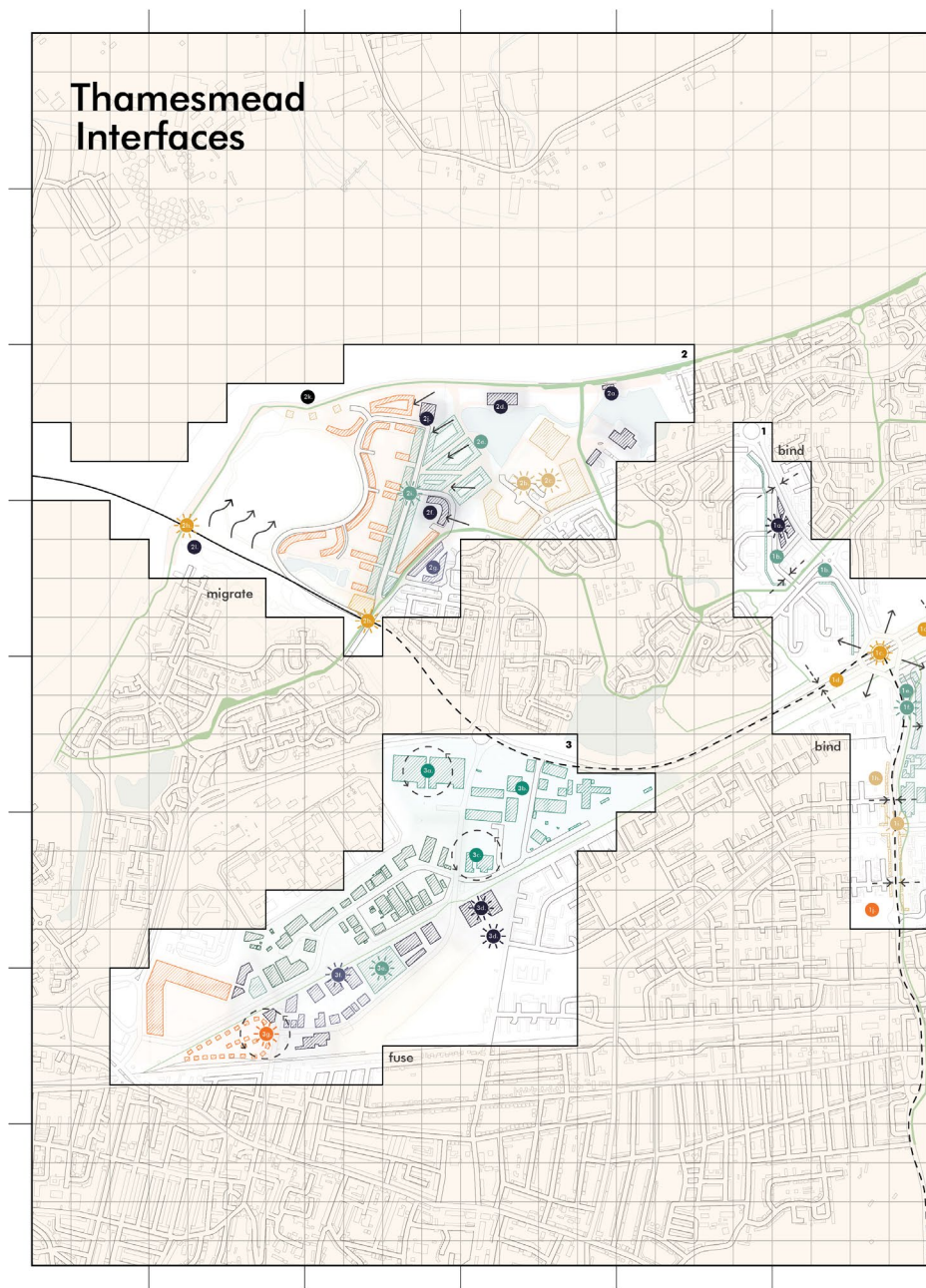
## INTERFACES MASTERPLAN

ANNA BATESON, YUNZHOU FAN, LUCY MEIN,  
NICOLA MURPHY, RACHEL SMILLIE

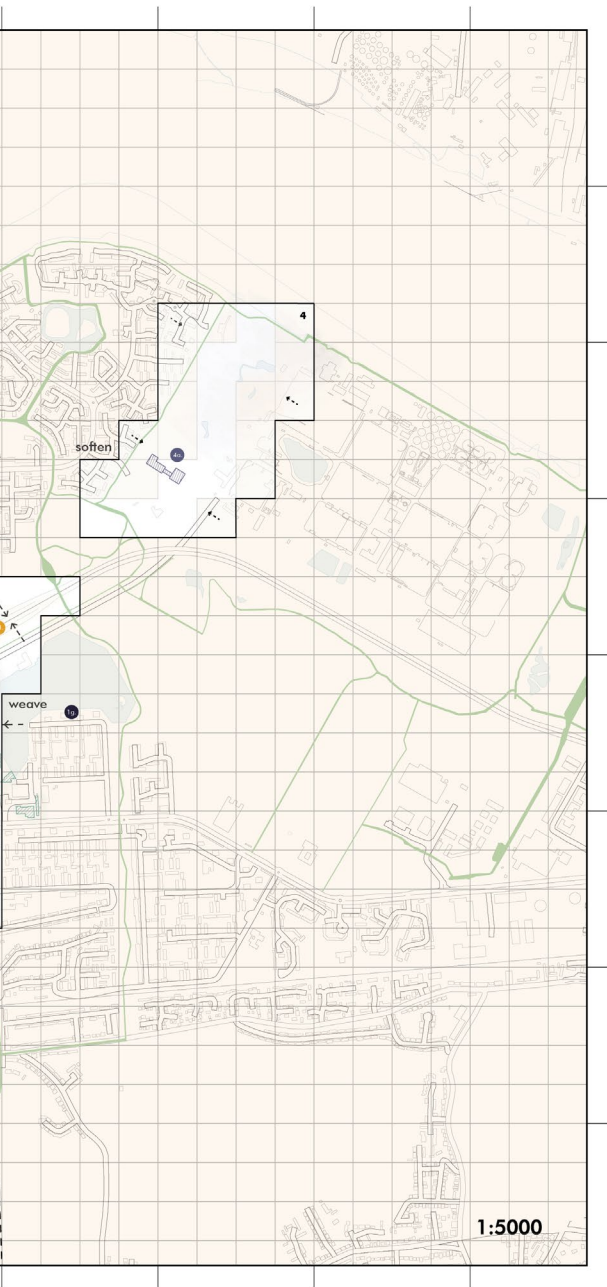
It is evident that Thamesmead can be read as a series of dislocated enclaves. These enclaves have emerged as a result of a history heterogeneous developments each with their own stakeholders, masterplans and manifest architectural language. A local excess of car-oriented routes and obsolete canals have magnified the disparity between these areas; the palpable physical divides provoking underlying social divides.

The resulting masterplan however, seeks not to find solutions within these enclaves but recognises that the junctures in-between offer a greater opportunity for reconciliation. The junctures that have been selected each demonstrate an interface between two sets of seemingly antagonistic ideas; the conflicting languages of suburban residential forms and urban residential forms that flank the north-south dividing road, the peculiar abruptness between Thamesmead's town centre and adjoining parkland, the stigmatic boundary between Thamesmead's three prisons and neighbouring industrial areas and the typological separation between suburbia and the hard edge of Crossness Sewage Treatment Works. The masterplan responds to each of these interfaces by proposing an associated 'action word' that informs the architectural intervention. These action words specifically address the fundamental characteristics of the physical interface whilst their ambiguity affords a certain flexibility in the ways in which the architecture may respond to more latent political, programmatic, and social interfaces.









- Residential
- Pedestrian Friendly
- Infrastructure
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Business
- Industry
- Education
- Community + Leisure

## WOLVERCOTE COOPERATIVE

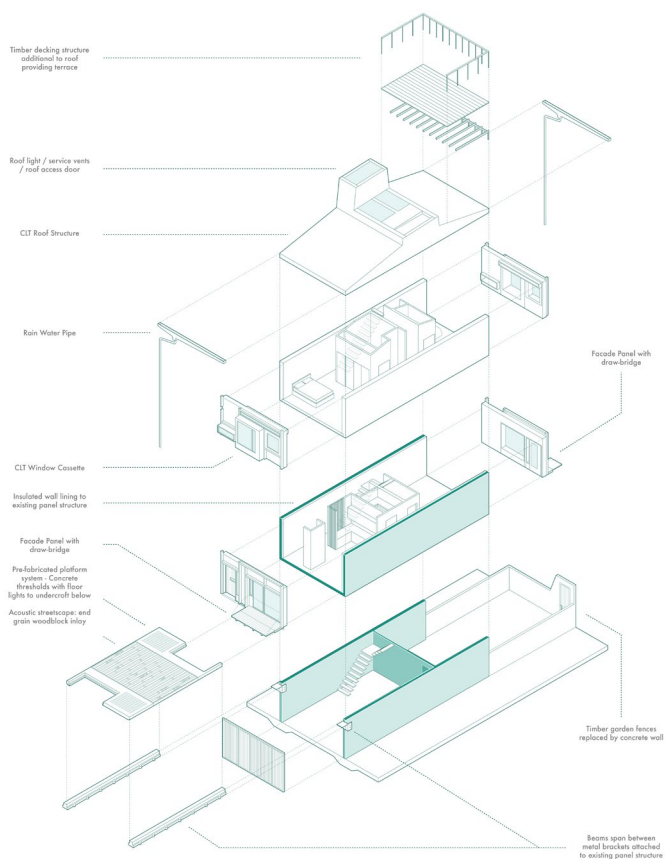
JAMIE WILSON

JAMIE WILSON - WOLVERCOTE COOPERATIVE

One of Thamesmead's original housing zones, on Wolvercote Road, faces imminent demolition within existing redevelopment plans, erasing the existing identity of the area. Imagining a scenario where current residents join together to form a multi stakeholder cooperative, the community is re-planned to incorporate new civic functions as well as anticipates and welcomes the incoming population to the area catalysed by the Harrow Manorway redevelopment. Existing prefabricated structure is utilised to create 40% densified housing with a mix of tenure/typology to accommodate a diversity of lifestyles. Previously dislocated entrances are re-unified by the creation of a new datum at +3.00m from ground level. This new datum not only provides an opportunity for street level interactions & front doors but also future-proofs the block against the increasing threat of flooding.

In 50 years, the predicted intermittent flooding has become a permanent feature of the landscape with a new water level of +2.5m. Whilst this dramatic change in the landscape leaves much of the complex submerged, new opportunities are created which see water as a positive aspect of Thamesmead: fulfilling the original intentions of the GLC.

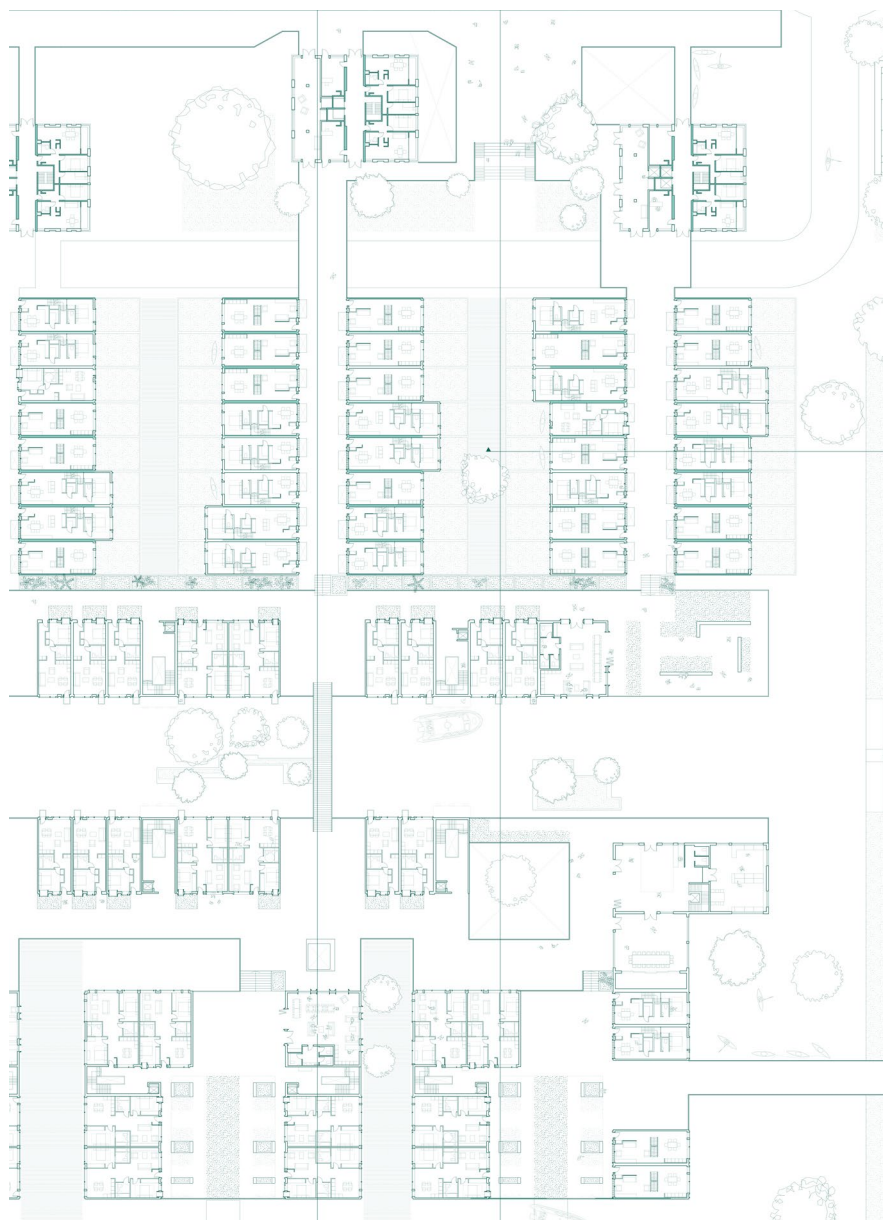




◀ EXPLODED AXONOMETRIC OF HOUSETYPE

◀ VIEW DOWN PROPOSED STREET

▼ SCHEMATIC PLAN



## THAMESMEAD HIGH STREET

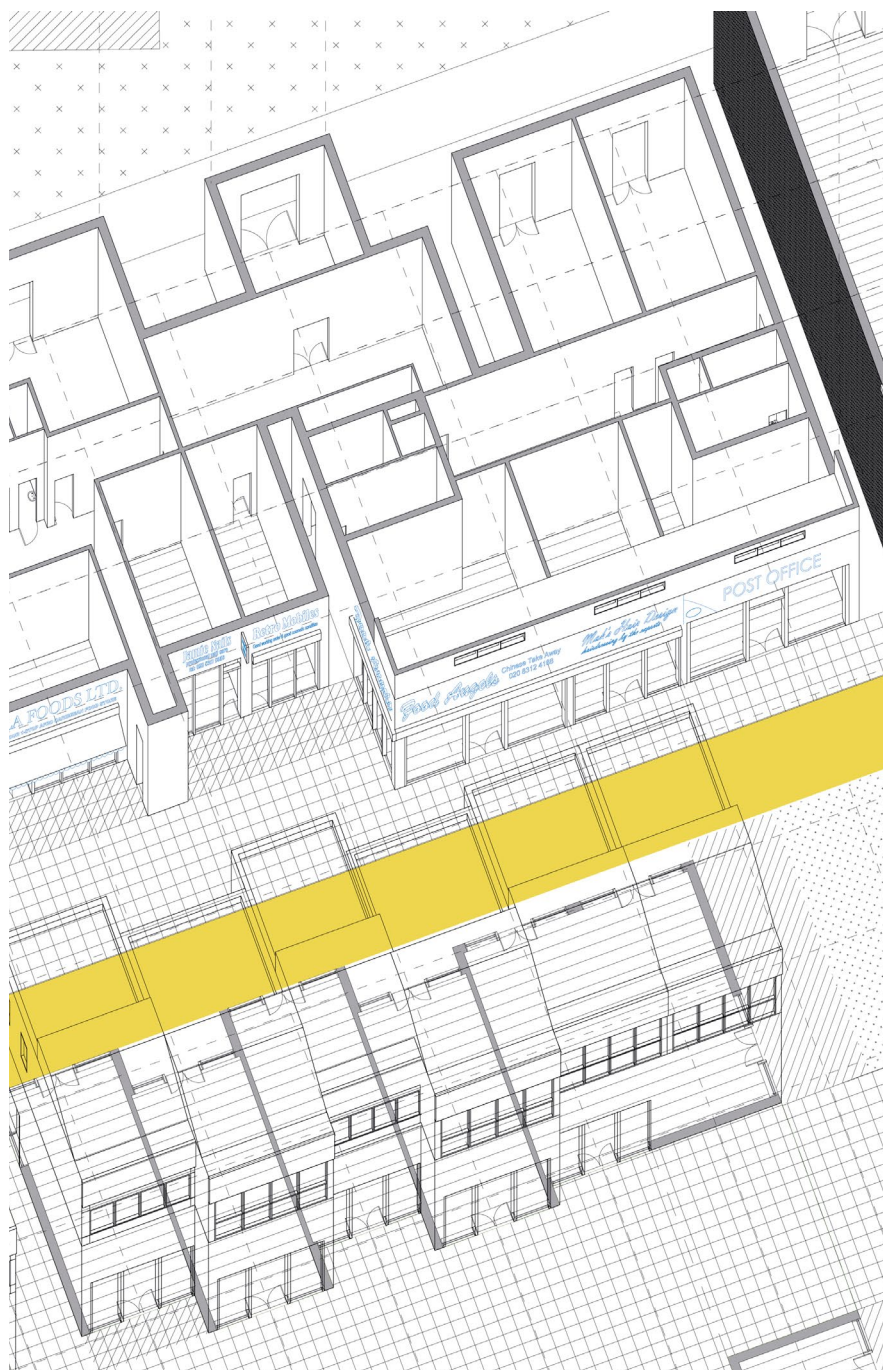
### BINDING THE QUASI-SUBURBAN INTERFACE

RACHEL SMILLIE

High streets are a product of the UK's urban fabric, historically rooted in a town's original market place from which they unsystematically accreted over hundreds of years. As a result, high streets are a ubiquitous piece of the urban whole and expressly represent the social, political and economic identity of a place whilst providing a context for the perpetuation of locality.

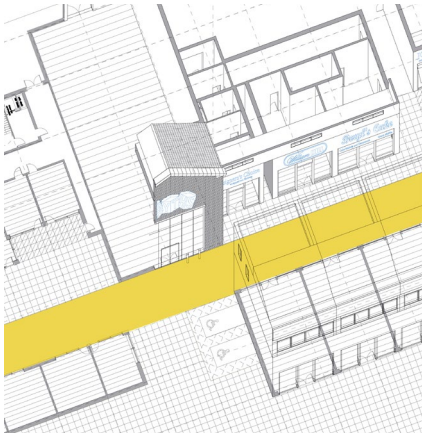
Thamesmead is a suburb of London whose local identity has been earmarked for mass regeneration. By adopting the high street as an urban precedent that has proven its capacity to resuscitate in the face of major structural changes in society, the thesis will pursue the potential for a new shopping street in Thamesmead that will provide a vehicle for the preservation of this local identity. By acknowledging that the site is a unique and locally significant meeting point between a multiplicity of programmes and complex suburban forms, the high street will seek to bind the unorthodoxies of this interface to establish its own set of architectural characteristics whilst consenting to the prospective urban future of the area.





RACHEL SMILLIE - THAMESMEAD HIGH STREET

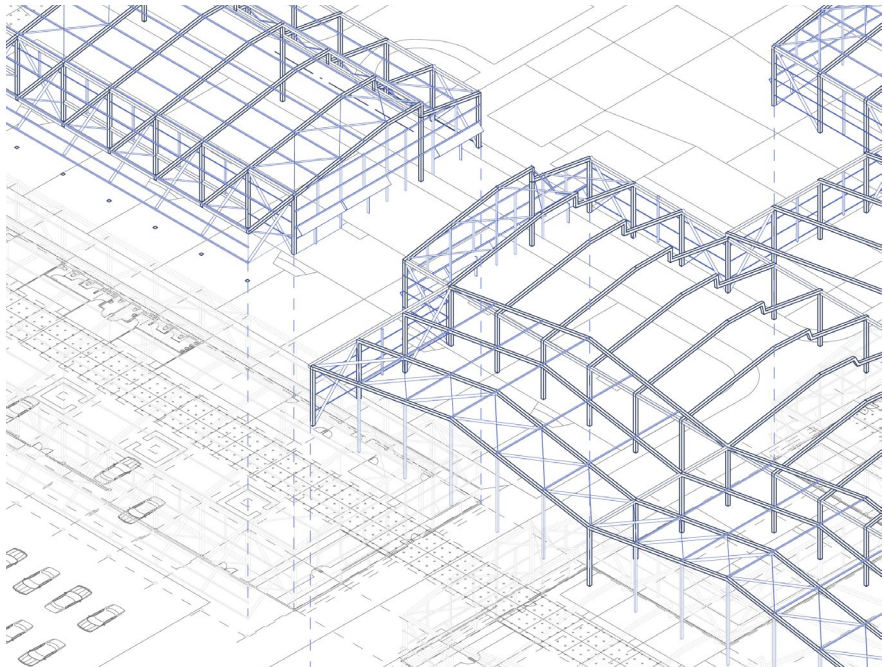




▲ THAMESMEAD HIGH STREET - PROPOSAL

◀ THAMESMEAD'S 'TOWN CENTRE' ON THE EDGE OF TOWN

▼ MARKET HALL AND ARCADE, THE BINDING AGENT



## 6.3

# THE COLLABORATIVE CATALYST

## CHALLENGING THE ROLE OF THE FACTORY IN 21ST CENTURY THAMESMEAD

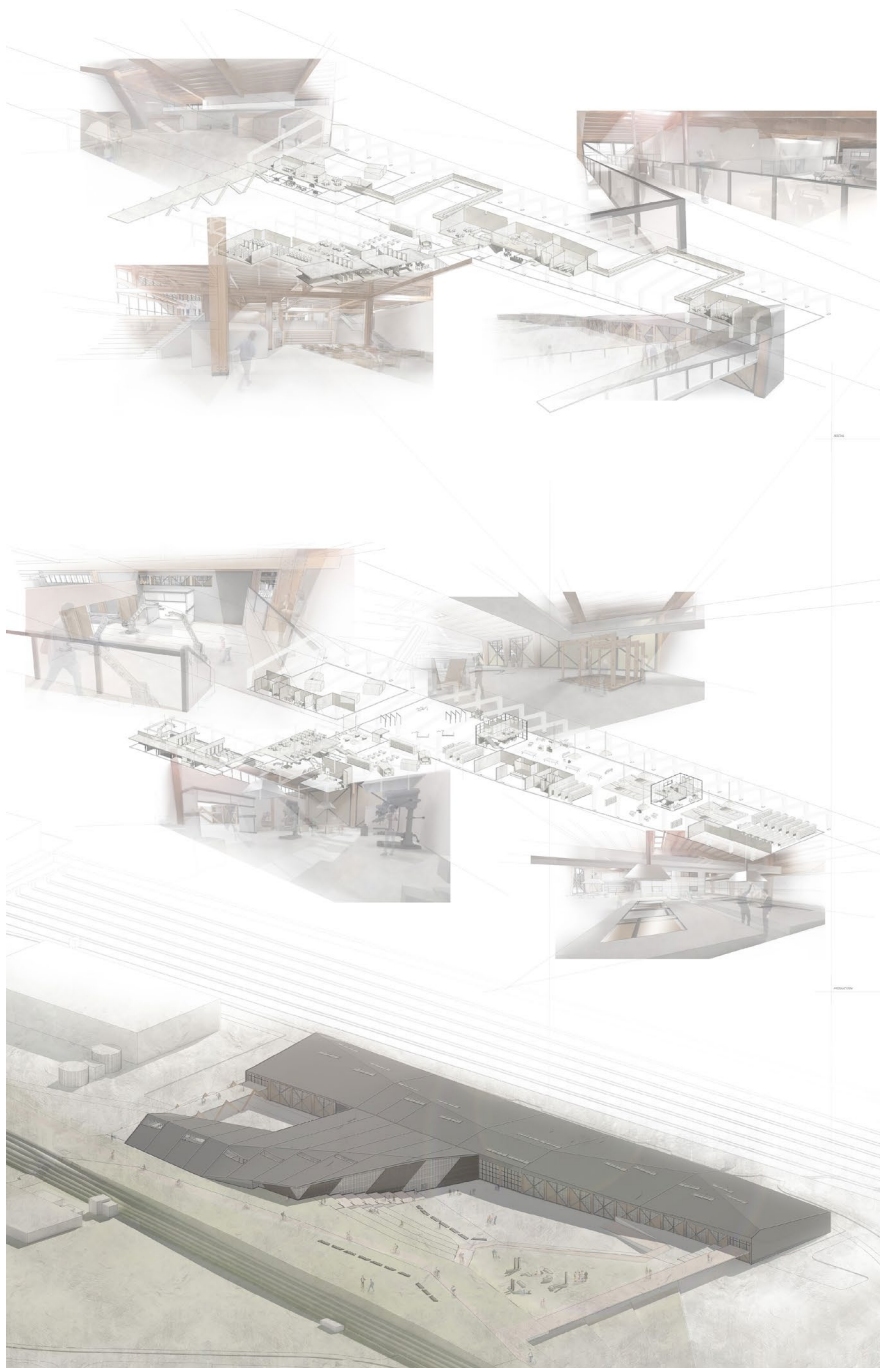
LUCY MEIN, NICOLA MURPHY

MEIN, MURPHY - THE COLLABORATIVE CATALYST

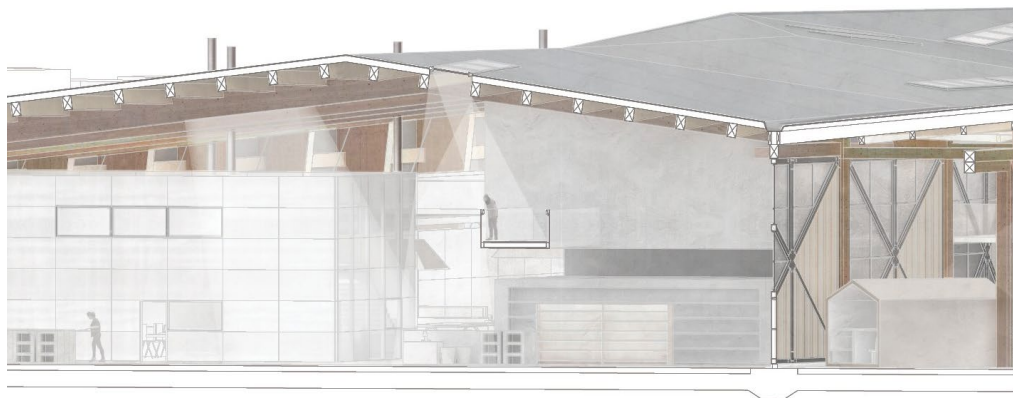
In the industrial era, the Factory was a hub for manufacturing and social activity – a place where workplace and community co-existed. However, with technology rapidly evolving within all reaches of society, the work-model of the Factory has disintegrated, and become disconnected to social activity. The post-industrial era abandons the Factory to its isolated location, causing land value and industrial importance to fall dramatically.

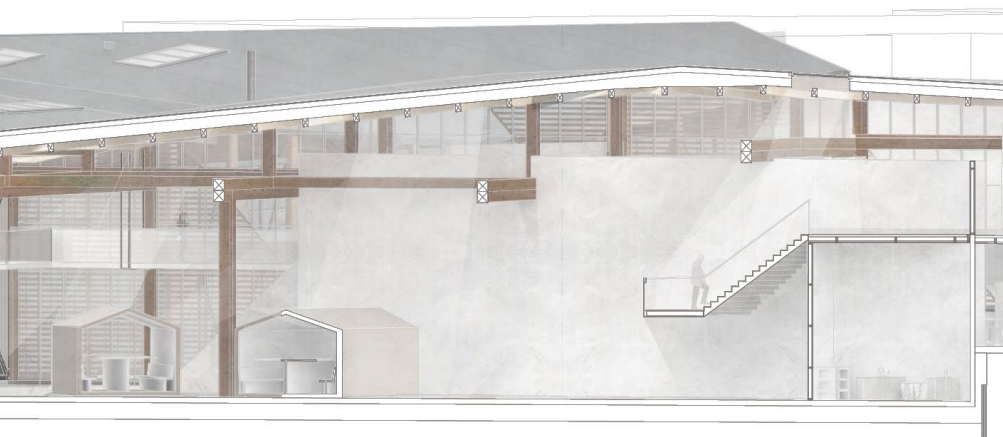
This proposal seeks to reimagine the Factory as a catalyst of social and physical importance. It sees the role of the Factory as a machine to fuse an interface between social and physical barriers through its application of spatial organisation and proposed programme. The project incorporates both digital fabrication and social engagement under one roof, resulting in the inhabit™ Factory – a dedicated facility that produces a CNC cut modular housing system. This provides housing to surrounding neighbourhoods in Thamesmead, the profits of which feed back into the Community Land Trust that occupies the site. This is the model that then funds business engagement and social activity under the same Factory roof. This project challenges the role of the Factory today and how it could become a place for both social interaction and the celebration of digital technology, to help solve social and political issues both within Thamesmead and across the UK.









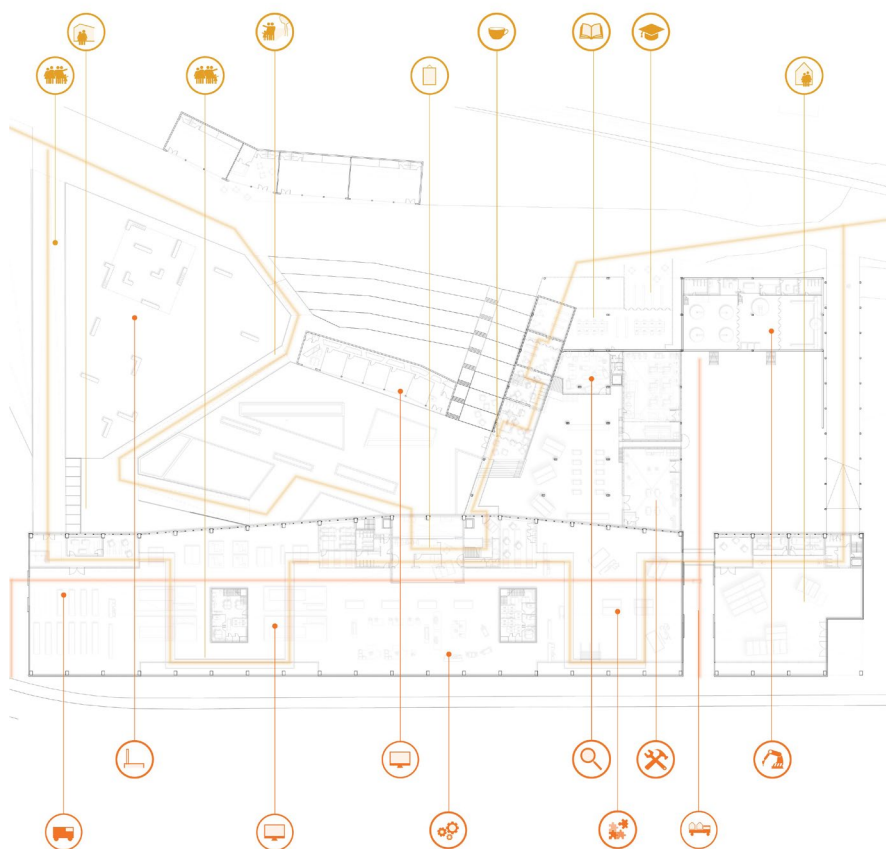


▲ FACTORY SLICE - INTERGRATED PROGRAMME

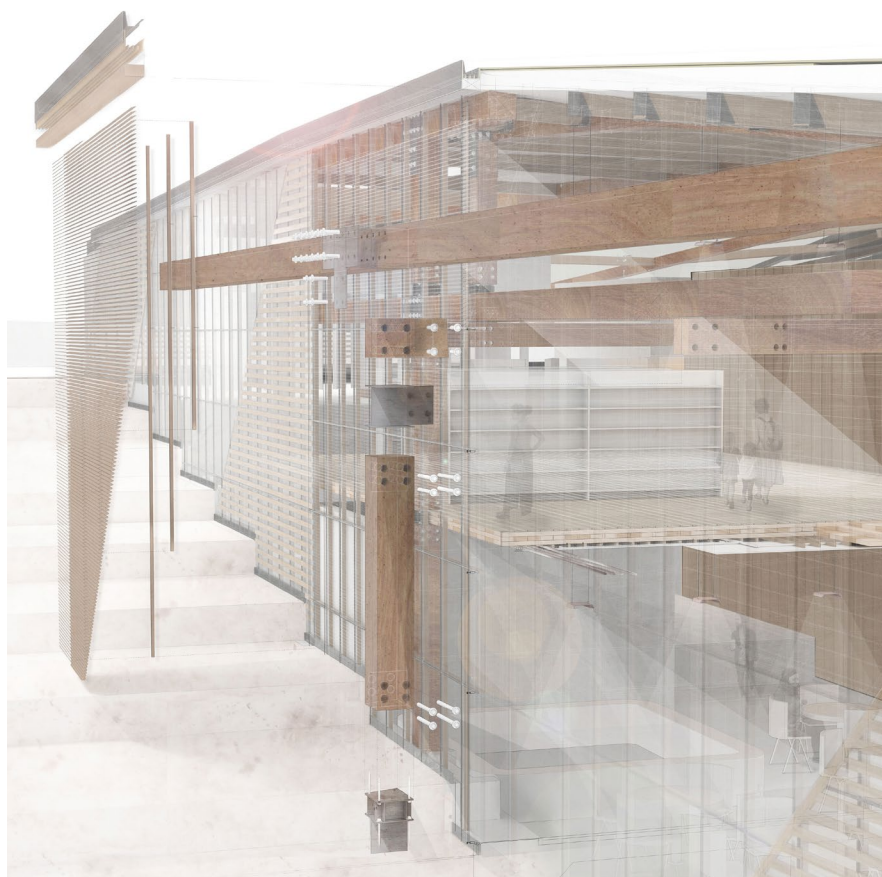
◀ FACTORY DETAILING - TIMBER AND ZINC

▼ FACTORY HALL - CNC PRODUCTION





- ◀ INTEGRATED PROGRAMME MAPPING
- ◀ ATRIUM - SHARED MAKING SPACE
- ▼ SOCIAL DETAILING - TIMBER AND GLASS



## A NEW AGORA

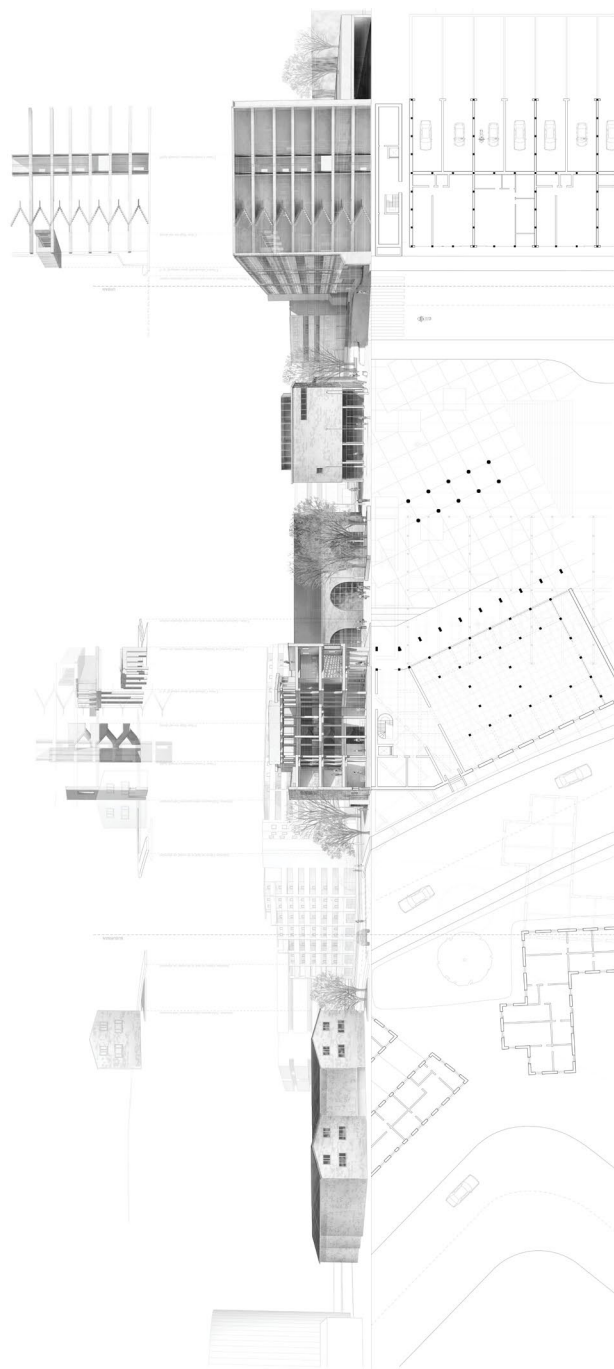
### WEAVING THE SUB|URBAN INTERFACE

ANNA BATESON

Thamesmead is formed of a series of fragmented enclaves. The perception of the ward is of a barren, brutalist dystopia defined by violence and crime. In reality, however, Thamesmead is comparable with most deprived suburbs of London. The perception of the suburb and its weak relation to the city will soon be redefined with the introduction of Crossrail and the likely addition of the DLR. This changed relation has helped earmark the area for regeneration and likely gentrification. The thesis examines whether through creating a defined public space which celebrates and accommodates the existing social form, the perceived value of the place can be altered, acting as an agent to prevent gentrification and social cleansing in the area.

The proposal looks to create this spatial form at the divisive interface between the urban perimeter block morphology of the Moorings, and the scattered suburban cul-de-sac typology of the Manorway area. It seeks to alter the relation of the singular building to the whole through rationalising the existing dichotomy of suburban and urban forms that front the site. In weaving these adverse architectural languages together, it is proposed that a cohesive rather than divisive interface can be formed in the shape of an *Agora*. This meeting space will continue the metaphor of weaving in its overlapping of program and people, seeking to reconnect the area socially and spatially, adding perceived value to the existing architecture.



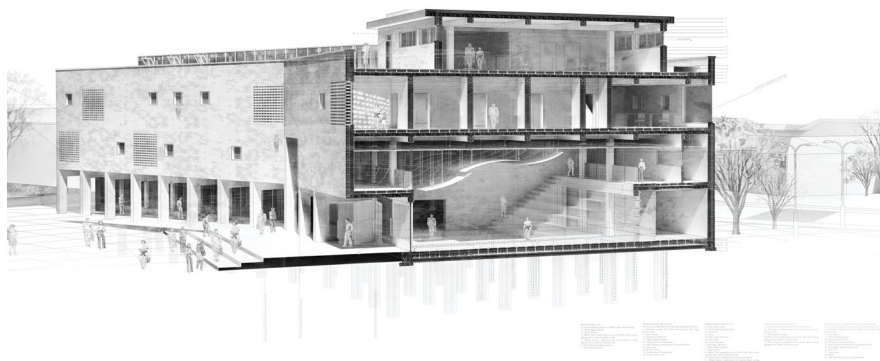


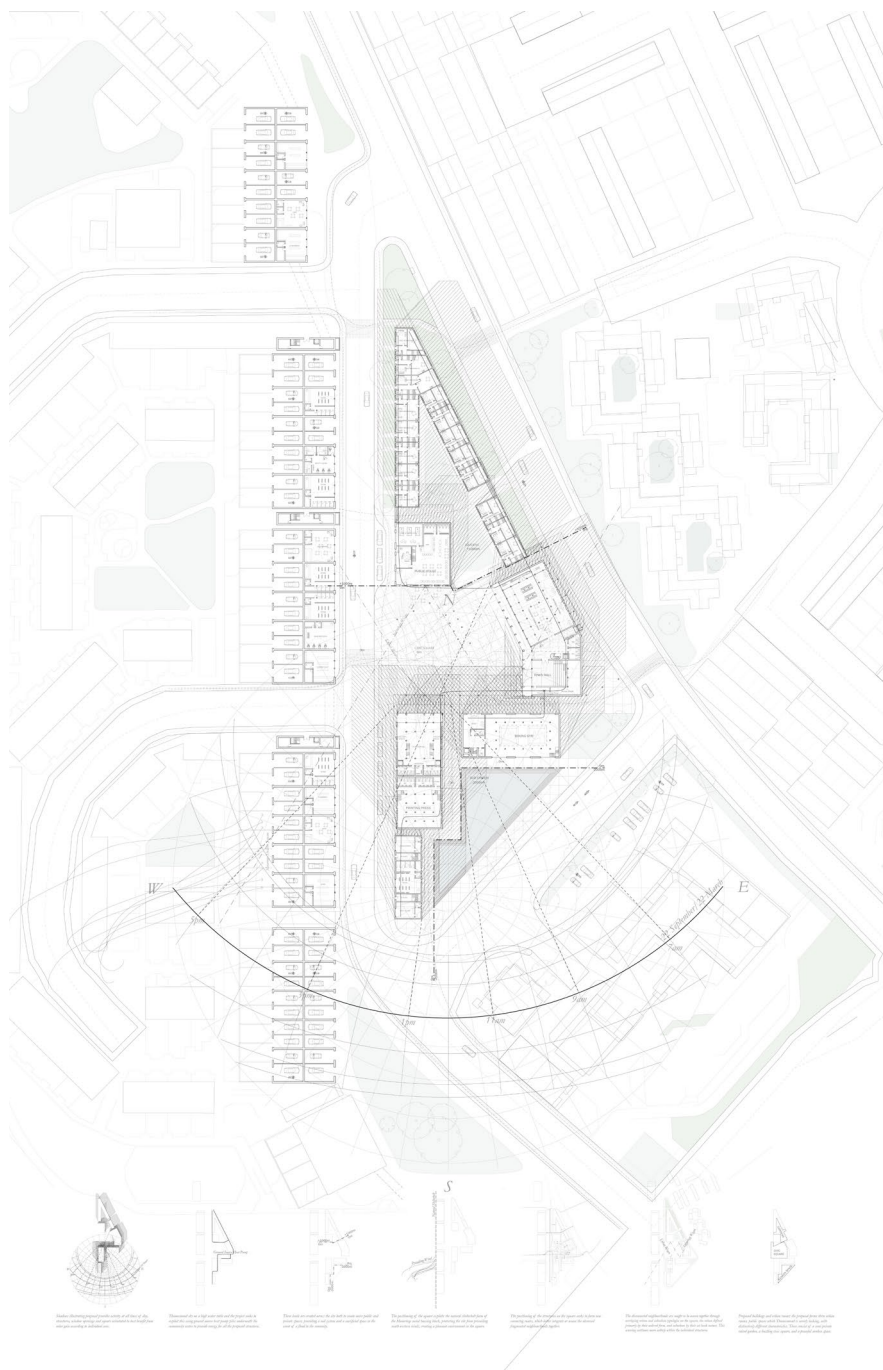


▲ MAPPING THE SPATIAL INTERFACES

► PROPOSED SCHEME

▼ BUILDING SECTION













## THAMESMEAD COMMUNITY COMMONS MASTERPLAN

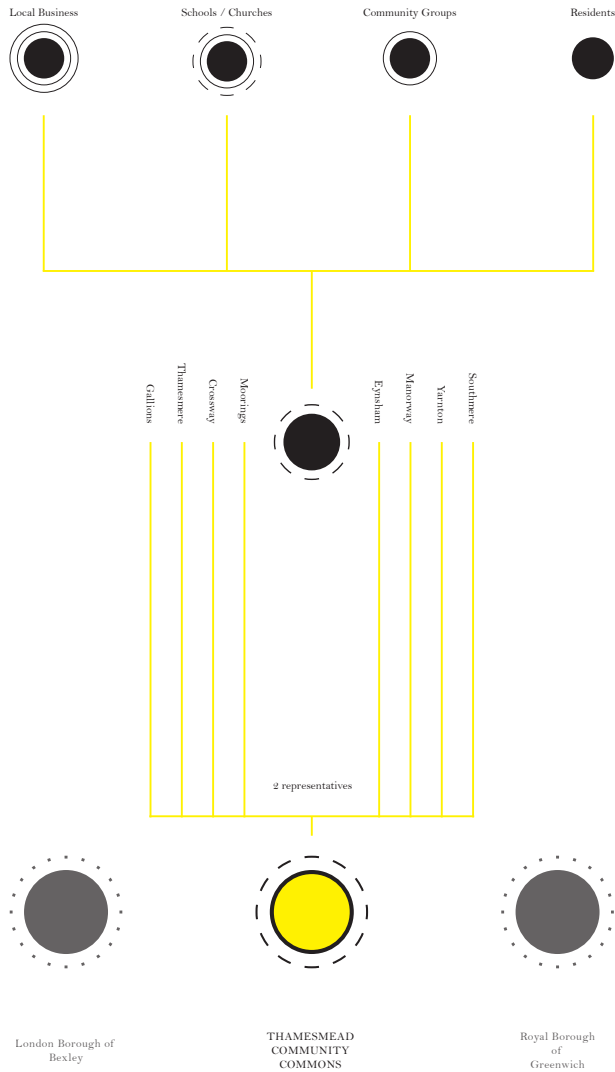
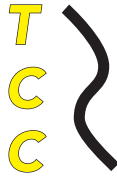
LAURA HAYLOCK, MANBIR KAUR, CATRIONA LYGATE,  
ARIANA MONIOUDIS, CALUM RENNIE

HAYLOCK, KAUR, LYGATE, MONIOUDIS, RENNIE - TCC

We propose the *Thamesmead Community Commons (TCC)* as a vehicle for empowering existing residents in the face of wide scale change and development proposed for Thamesmead. We believe that the failure of a future masterplan, alongside the loss of Thamesmead's identity, can be mitigated through a balance of bottom-up and top-down development. We propose the Commons as a framework for fairly elected residents to represent their neighbourhood constituencies on decision making platforms - such as the Regeneration Champions' Board - for issues which concern their immediate localities, as well as those which will affect Thamesmead as a whole.

By developing an understanding of the hierarchy and networks of existing social amenity, we have identified gap sites within the existing suburban fabric. Our Architectural proposals therefore seek to primarily strengthen and serve rather than displace the current community.

Thamesmead, from its inception till 2001, had a dedicated Newspaper and radio station. In celebration of Thamesmead's 50th anniversary, artist Verity Jane Keefe has revived this tradition through the *Earwig Community Press*. We imagine that the *Earwig* takes off; a place for local news, events and stories, and speculate it's future as a medium through which the TCC's message is communicated.



# THE ~ EARWIG

Issue 0001 | 1st 1st 17



THAMESMEAD IS NOW

free resident's paper

© earwig community press

Issue 0001

## Bargepole

More working men's clubs than pubs, there's nothing special about the booze, but the service is friendly enough and the clientele just gets on with the business of being down the pub. A pleasant surprise were the jovial punters, a couple of charming dogs and a wonderful Irish barmaid who was happy and most certainly not to be messed with.



## Local Education

**Feature:** Mulberry Park Children's Centre  
This modern facility provides full day care and is a central point of access for health services including health visitor's clinics. Together for Twos free entitlement places, stay and play activities, courses for adults and family support services for families with children aged 0-5 years.  
**Manorway's other schools include:** Boxgrove Primary School and Nursery, Mulberry Park Children's Centre, and Parkway's Short Stay School.

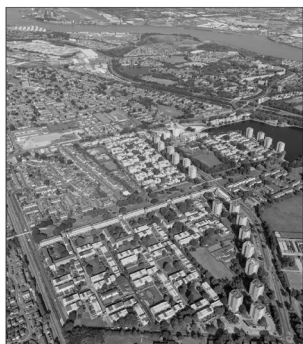
## Chivas Chicken Hut and Premier

A staple of the local culture, Chivas Chicken Hut, despite health and safety ramblings in the background has been on Thamesmead for the last 20 years. The wide spread distribution of chicken bones throughout our streets is a testament to the great value and flavour of Chivas offerings.



7

# THAMESMEAD COMMUNITY COMMONS



THAMESMEAD

COMMUNITY

COMMONS

special article

special article



**Southmere**  
Willow Bank Primary School, Seacourt Road  
Thursday 6th December 2017 at 1800pm



**Yanton**  
Parkway Primary School, 160 Middle Way  
Friday 8th December 2017 at 1800pm



**Manorway**  
Parkway Short Stay School, Lonsbury Way  
Wednesday 6th December 2017 at 1800pm



**Eynsham**  
Abbey Wood Library, Eynsham Drive  
Thursday 7th December 2017 at 1800pm



**Moorings**  
Jubilee Community Centre, Lytton Strachey Path  
Wednesday 6th December 2017 at 1800pm



**Crossway**  
Manor Close Community Hall, 40 Manor Close  
Friday 8th December 2017 at 1800pm

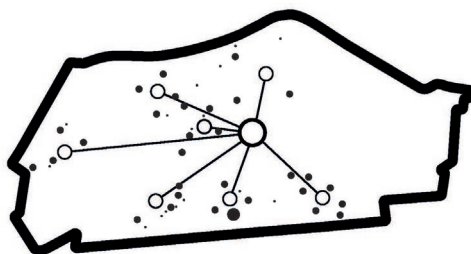
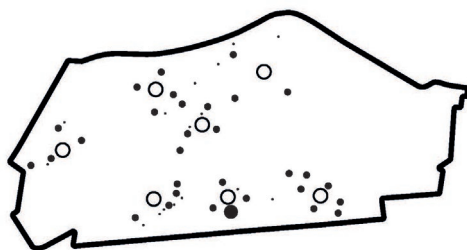
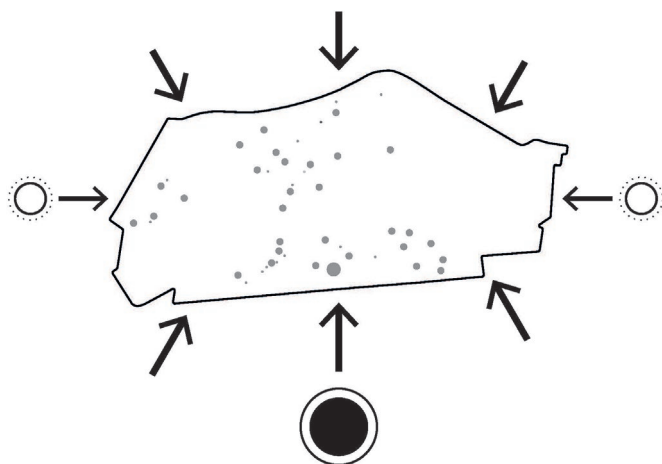


**Thamesmere**  
Woolwich Polytechnic School, Hutchins Road  
Thursday 7th December 2017 at 1800pm



**Gallions**  
Discovery Primary School, 101 Battery Road  
Friday 8th December 2017 at 1800pm

11



▲ EXTERNAL PRESSURES, EXISTING VALUE, STRENGTHENING VALUE

◀ THE EARWIG COMMUNITY PRESS REINSTATED

◀ SPECIAL ARTICLE FROM TCC

## AN-OTHER ‘HOUSE OF COMMONS’

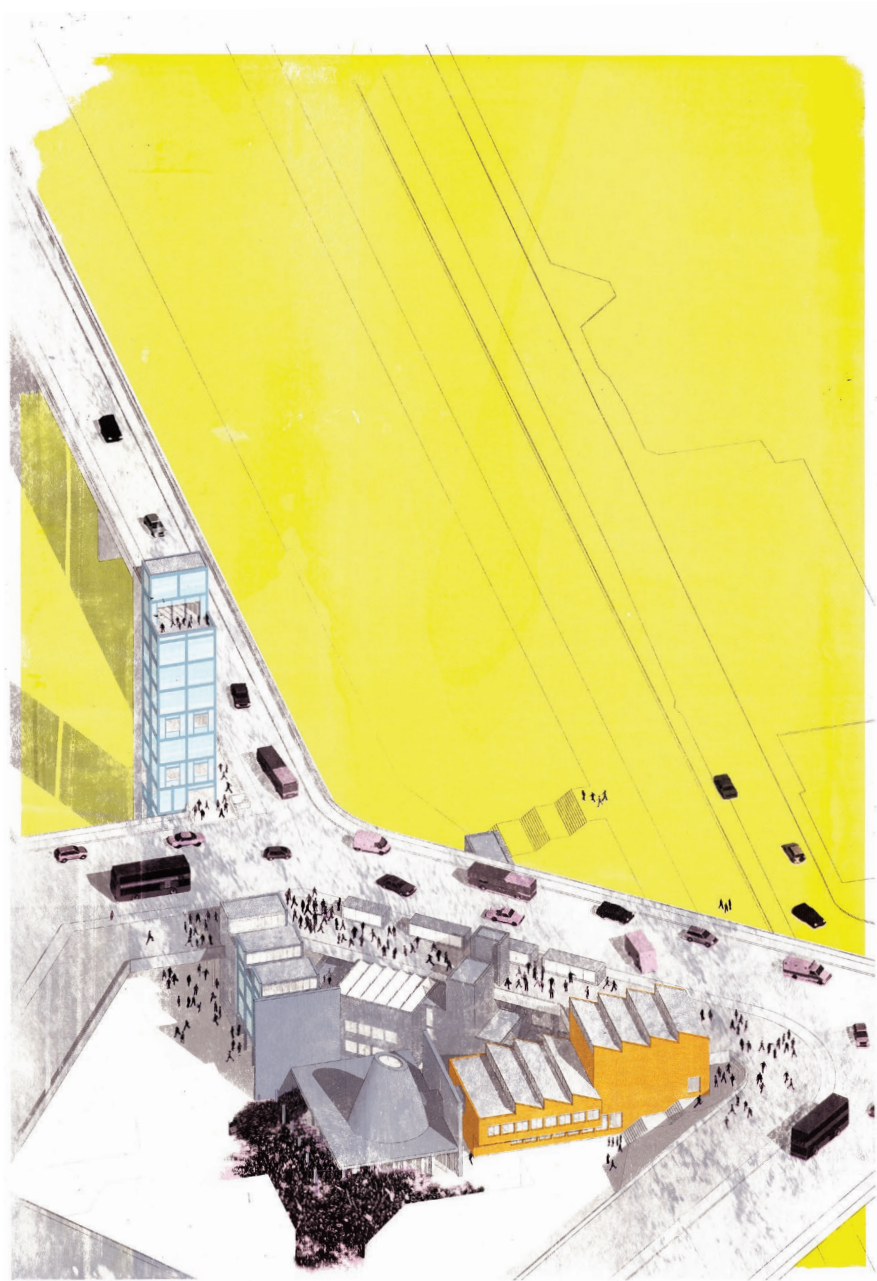
CALUM RENNIE

Thamesmead Community Commons (TCC) is a framework that facilitates multiple scales of autonomy in the life of Thamesmead; from its whole, to the local neighbourhood, to the street or yard.

*An-Other House of Commons* is situated in a proposed future of Thamesmead’s ongoing development, around the year 2040, where the TCC has grown to become a seat of local government. The project imagines the physical materialisation of the TCC in a new administrative and civic complex. This accommodates not only local authority offices and the Commons’ Chamber, but a Peoples’ Archive and a new centre for the reinstated local newspaper, The Earwig. Through this adjacency of programme, Thamesmead is empowered to determine its own future and begin writing its own past; deflecting the projected stigma that currently negates the lives of its vibrant communities.

The proposal sits at the geographic centre of the new constituency and on an intersection of current physical, political and social boundaries. It reverses the traditional model of the Town Hall through the emergence of the Commons’ Chamber from a space for contention. Its repositioning at the junction of public activity facilitates an unfettered opportunity for open and participatory debate, decision-making, representation, protest and celebration.







▲ A PERMEABLE GROUND

► CIVIC PRESENCE - TOWER AND CHAMBER



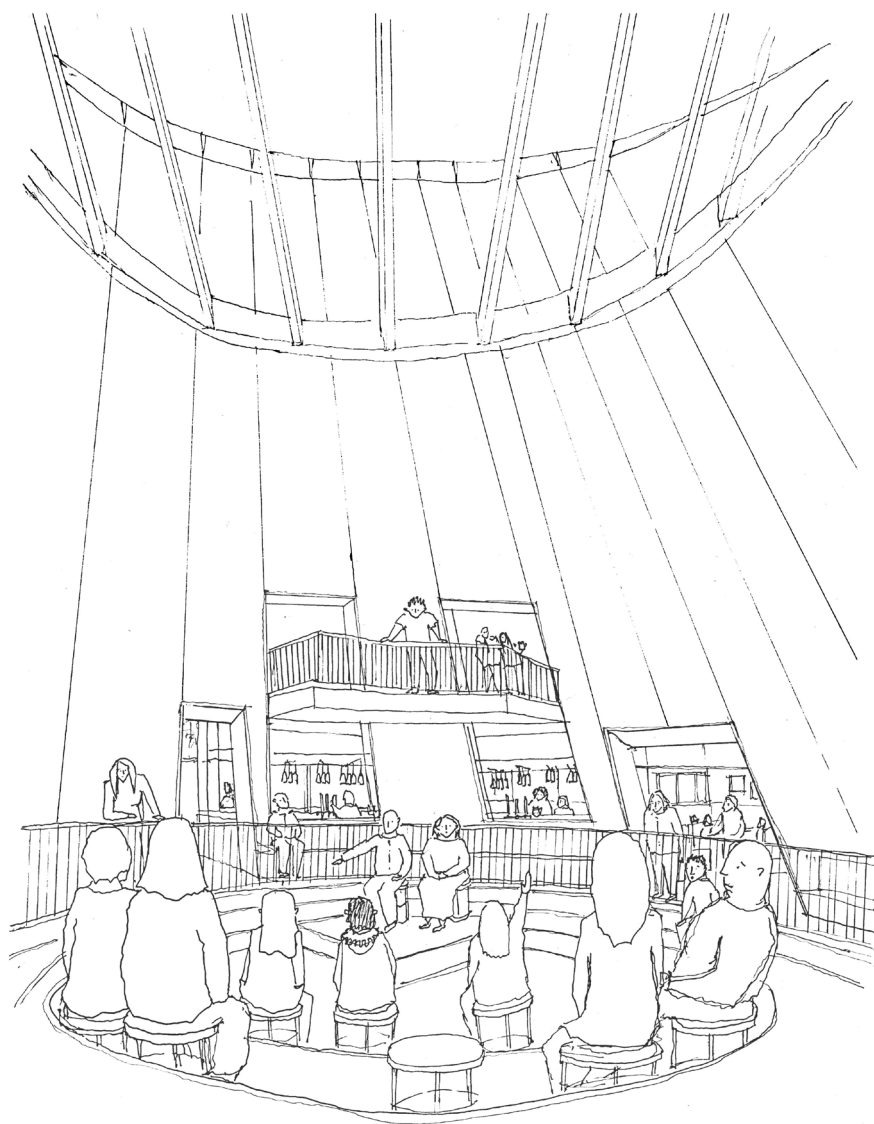
## THE PUBLIC HOUSE

### A SEAT FOR LOCAL COMMONS

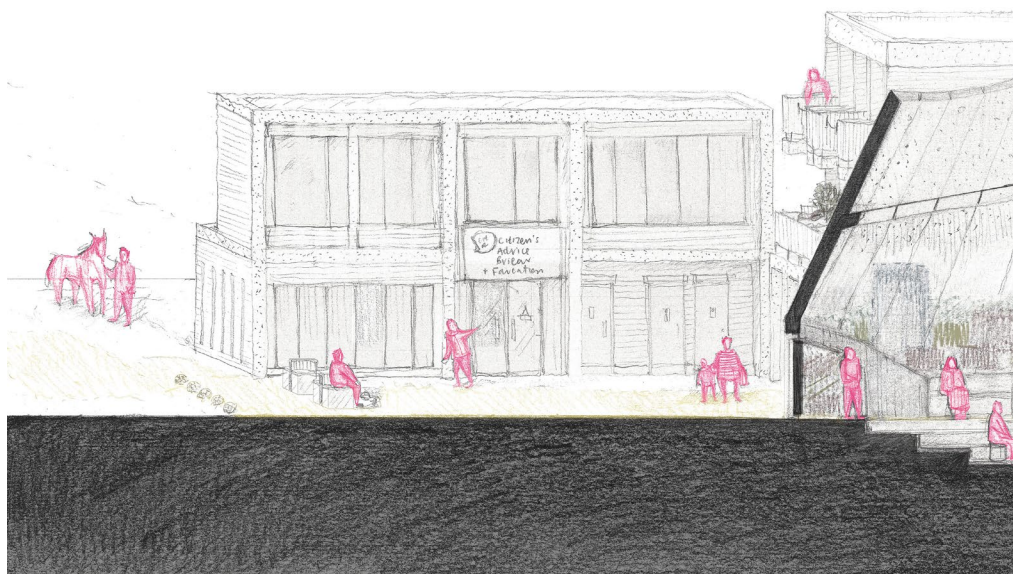
LAURA HAYLOCK

Pubs in Thamesmead have existed as the heart of local activity since the suburb's development in the 1970s. Recent plans to take Thamesmead through the second round of regeneration in its history have seen the number of social clubs and public houses drop from 8 to 3, with the future of the remaining establishments uncertain. This thesis considers the adaptation of the familiar public house typology to focus its use as a space for parliament at the local level.

This proposal furthers the argument of the Thamesmead Community Commons masterplan, which provides a framework for empowering the existing communities on Thamesmead to participate in the future changes to their area. A new local centre, within which the public house sits, serves as a shared amenity for local residents and as an integrating edge for the expansion of the Gypsy Traveller community site at Thistlebrook. Its location defends the Right to Stay Put of residents at Thistlebrook and the wider neighbourhood through enclosed commons, collective ownership and an architecture of permanence. *The Public House*, and the common ground within which it sits, re-appropriates rubble created by the demolition and abandonment of Thamesmead's lost social infrastructure.





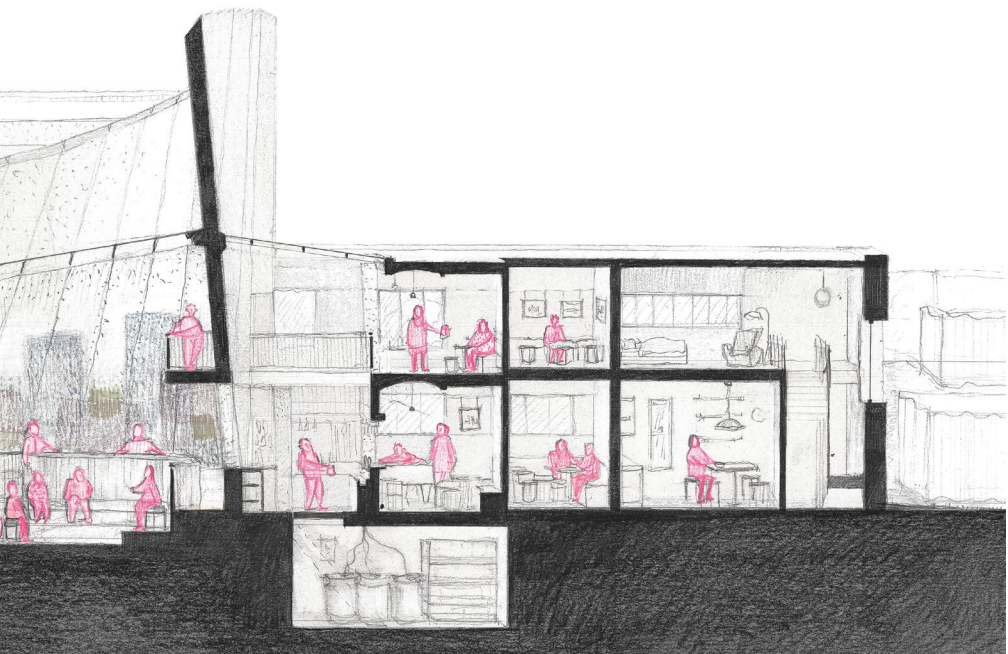




▲ A NEW LOCAL CENTRE ON COMMON GROUND AND THE PUBLIC HOUSE

◀ INSIDE THE PUB, A HOME FROM HOME

▼ ANIMATED SECTION OF THE PUBLIC HOUSE ON A WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON



## 7.3

# THE RIGHT TO STAY PUT, AT THISTLEBROOK

YANNICK SCOTT

YANNICK SCOTT - THE RIGHT TO STAY PUT, AT THISTLEBROOK

Sedentary living within the Gypsy Roma Traveller Community continues to represent a definitive cultural trajectory. The physical act of mobility inherent to a nomadic existence has become largely unattainable through highly restrictive statutory legislations and the privatisation of the commons. State-led attempts at settlement through the inadequate provision of authorised traveller sites has only served to reinforce feelings of exclusion, insecurity and containment. The emphasis of this enquiry considers an alternative, post-nomadic, housing typology; one which isn't indebted to nostalgia nor determined by prevailing societal norms. In this way, it can be thought of as an intermediary or hybrid third space between the hypothetically nomadic and the sedentary.

Specifically, this project aims to support the longevity of the well-established Thistlebrook Traveller site in Thamesmead, amidst pressures from a multitude of prospective, speculative and gentrifying developments, and corresponds with a wider masterplan framework which encourages community sustainability through bottom-up suburbanisation. The right to stay put is pursued through a community-led 'land-grab' and the negotiated distribution between local stakeholders, thus establishing an inclusive and localised civic platform.







▲ VIEW ACROSS THE CENTRAL YARD TOWARDS SHARED AMENITY BUILDING





▲ INTERIOR VIEW WITHIN A TYPICAL DWELLING

## MARKET FORCES

MANBIR KAUR

*Market Forces* have often played a significant role in the past failures of the Thamesmead development and will play a significant role in any future redevelopment. Since the collapse of GLC, Thamesmead witnessed a fragmented and a sporadic growth with clusters of communities emerging and establishing a strong sense of place and belonging. This has resulted in highly disintegrated neighbourhoods both spatially and socially. Thamesmead is at a cusp of radical change once again, many of the shared amenities and social spaces of these neighbourhoods have been gradually closed or demolished to make space for the new development. This thesis examines if failures and foreseeable gentrification of the area can be mitigated through a platform of exchange.

The thesis proposes the market as a typology, which will play the role of both commercial and social space. It will serve as an agent to strengthen the existing fragmented societies into a heterogeneous platform and integrate the existing communities to future communities by providing a place of dialogue. The proposal explores Thamesmead's identity as a 'live' concept, through a composition of permanent rituals and temporary dynamics, which anchors the existing grassroots and can transform with the future conditions. This will spatially invert the ideologies of the 20th century framework; which endorses a definitive urban form, by blurring the harsh thresholds on the site and acknowledging the disorders of everyday life.





▲ BLURRING SOCIAL AND SPATIAL THRESHOLDS





MANBIR KAUR - 'MARKET FORCES'

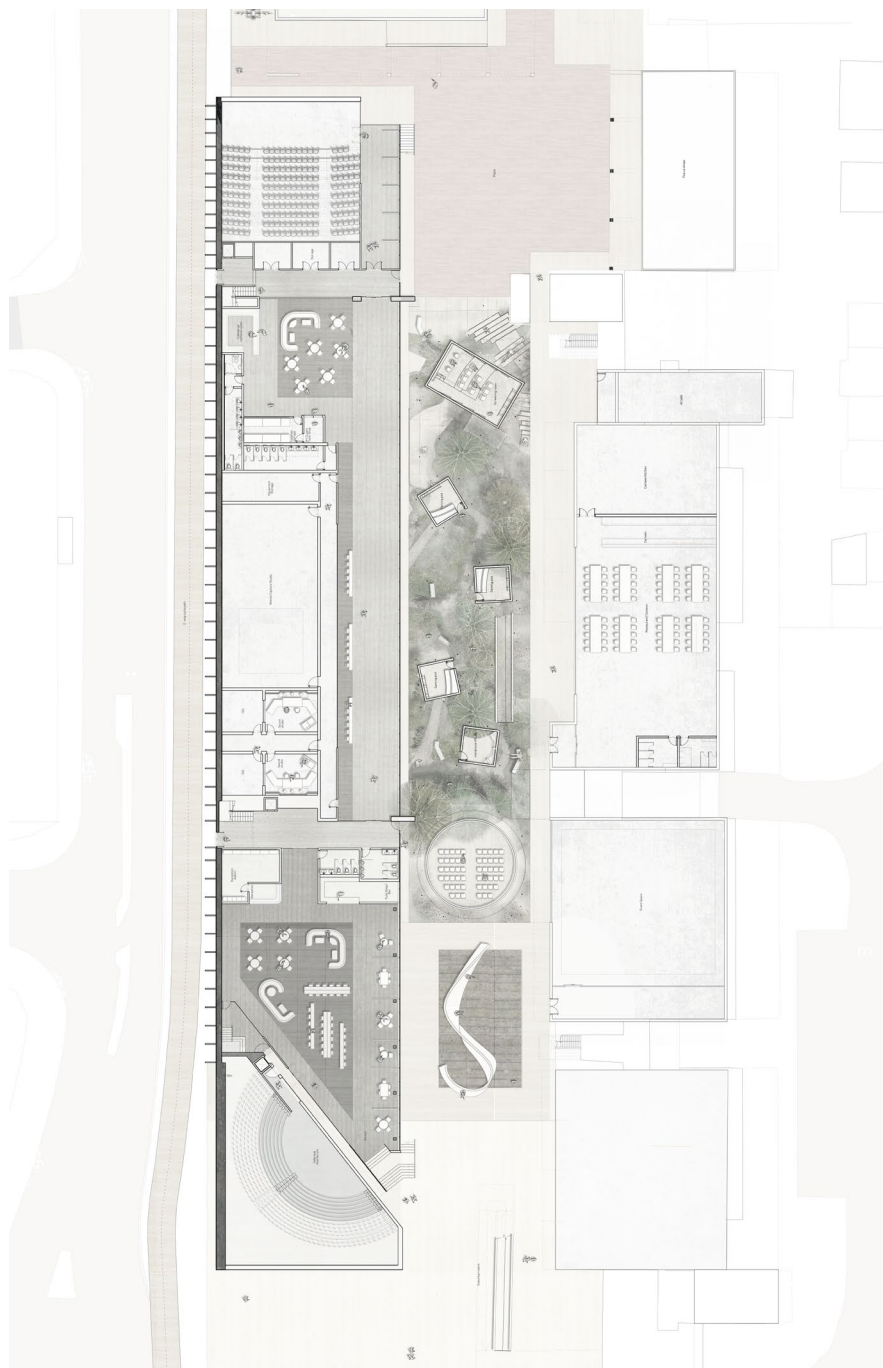


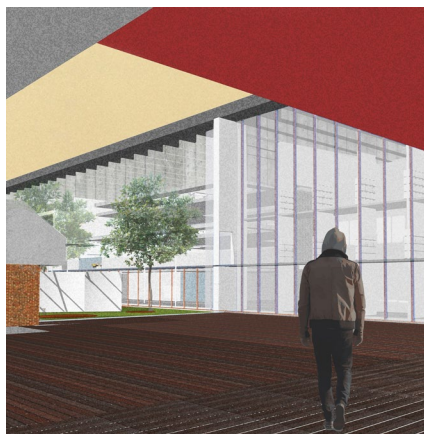
## LEARNING, INNOVATION + ENTERPRISE

ARIANA MONIOUDIS

Thamesmead has a significantly younger population profile than regional and national averages, yet, with a high standard and hugely varied education for younger ages, prospects become limited at higher and further education, with an obvious steer towards vocational trades. The project situates itself along a central route in Thamesmead and engages with one of the original and most iconic strips of housing that is now imminently facing demolition. In an area with such a dominant architectural iconography, the solution aims to aggregate and strengthen the existing identity while providing a new agenda for the area. It proposes a re-adaptation of the classic 1960's units, making them appropriate for 21st Century use and introduces elements of suburbia which never materialised from the original GLC plan, including complete vehicular and pedestrian separation.

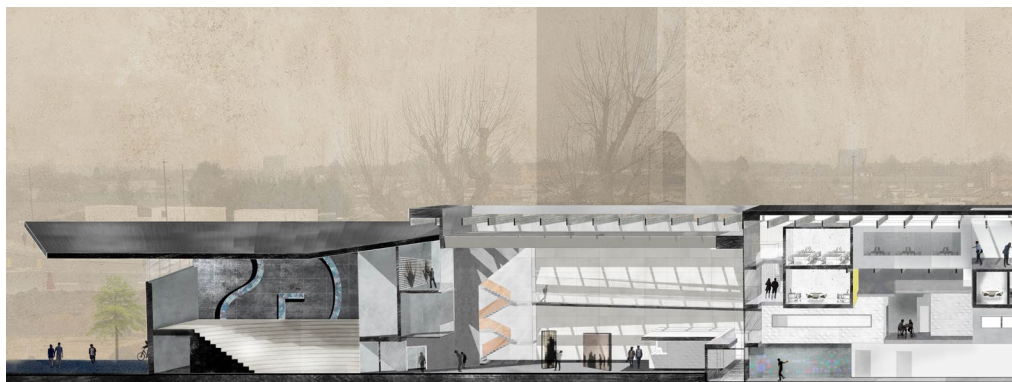
A new suburban thoroughfare is formed, disconnected from the road by a new co-working unit and Thamesmead School of Game Development where learners and businesses will benefit from the synergy of operating together. The solution also stresses the importance of public space as a device for connecting and articulating all the different functions. The further education facility inspired by an activity with an existing presence in the area, hosts a range of departments from coding to sound and animation, finally providing an opportunity for a new variety of skill development.

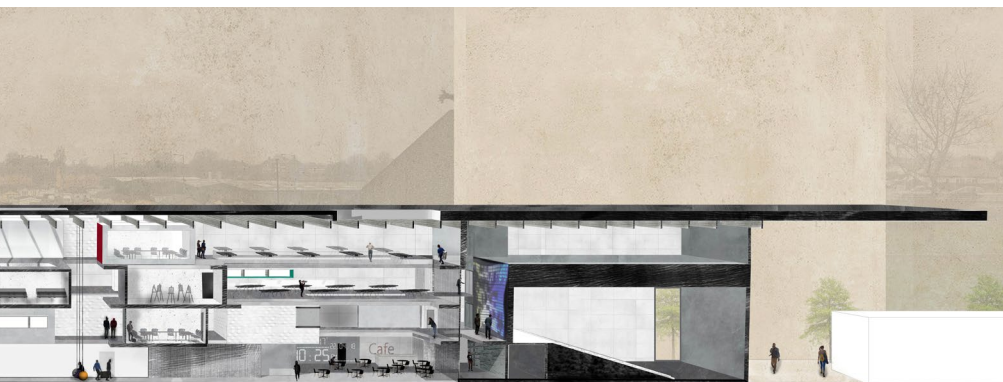




▲ SPACE AS EXPERIENCE DESIGNED FROM THE HUMAN SCALE

▼ DYNAMIC AND IMMERSIVE USER ENVIRONMENTS





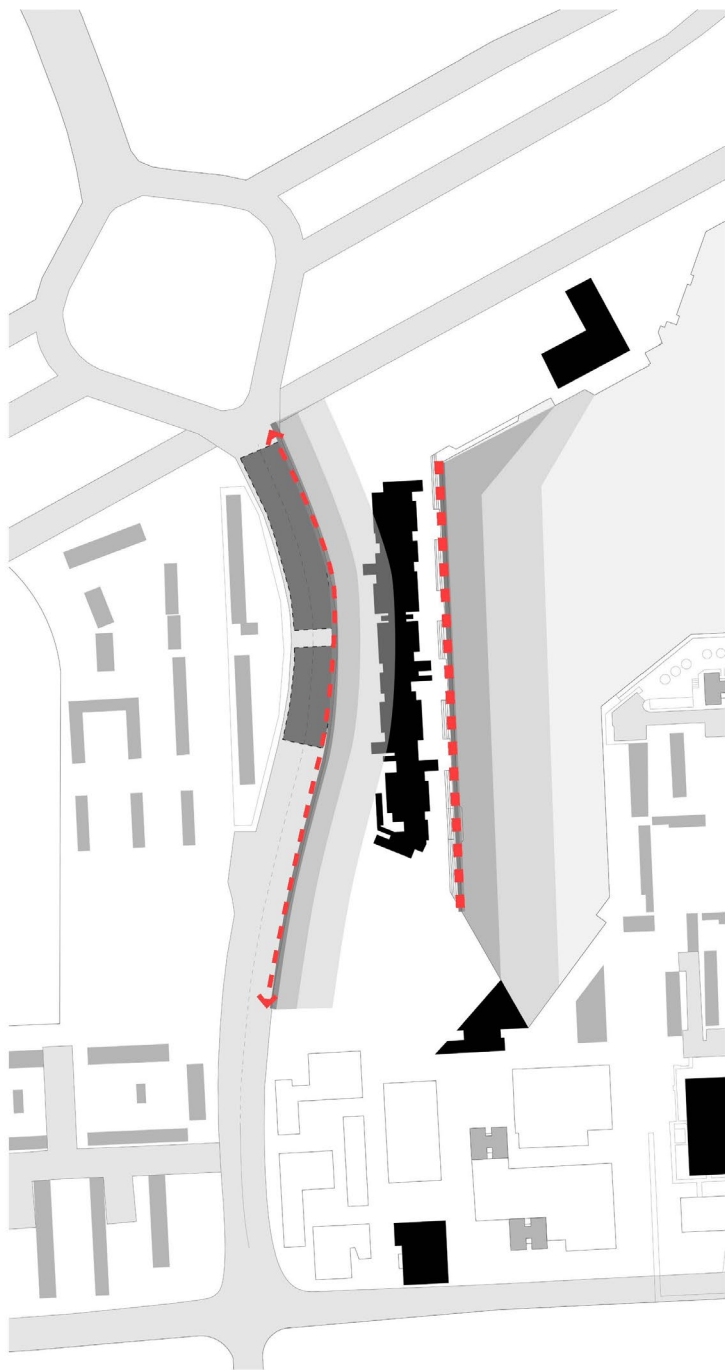
## URBAN MEDIATOR

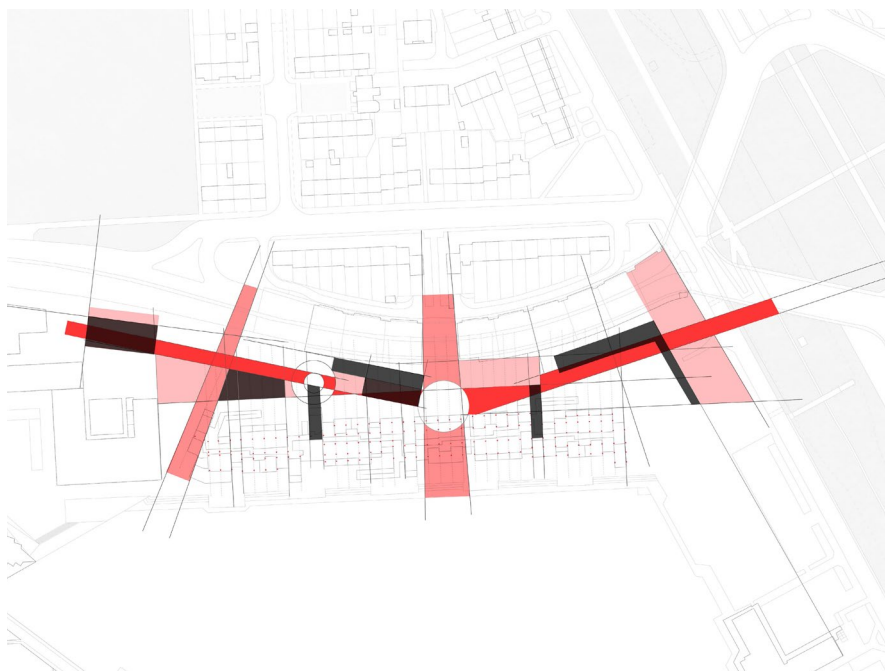
YUNZHOU FAN

Brutalist architecture had a distinctive contribution to social housing in the 1970s in the UK. Unlike the other suburban housing in Thamesmead, the existing linear brutalist building near Southmere Lake is mechanical, rhythmic and eccentric blocky in its appearance. It faces the peaceful lake in the east and on the west the motorway A2041. The most conflicting image can be seen here clearly (lake view, concrete building, useless green and hideous motorway with fast moving cars).

In order to preserve this iconic residential housing and attract local residents and life back, the new intervention aims to mediate conflict between the existing building and the motorway in a direct way and clear method. An urban mediator is placed in the gap between the two, providing automated car parks, working places, lakeside leisure area and diverse community supplements. What is visible here is the notion of modern green lifestyle with a classic concrete shell. Apart from living function, working and travelling also are taken into consideration. Walkable ground floor is featured with multiple connections with surrounding amenities and universal area.



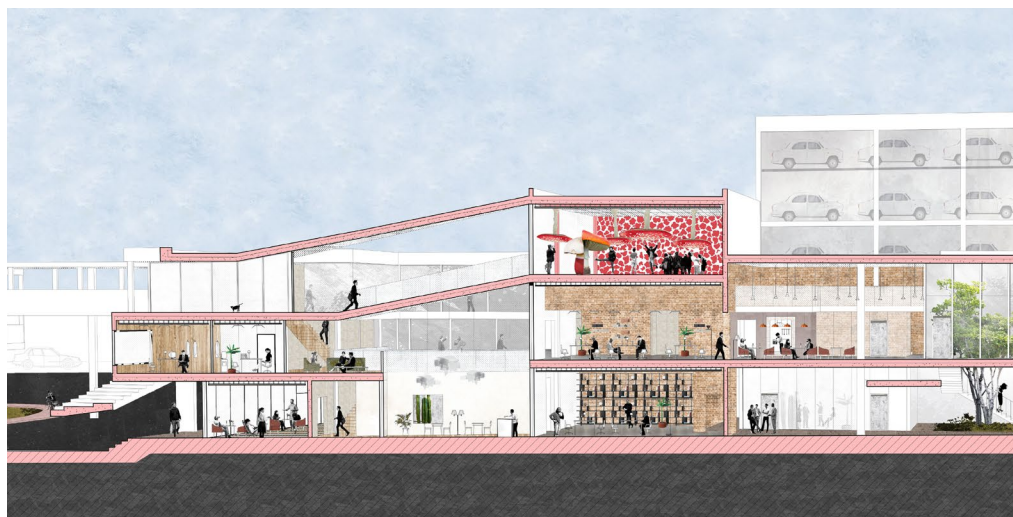


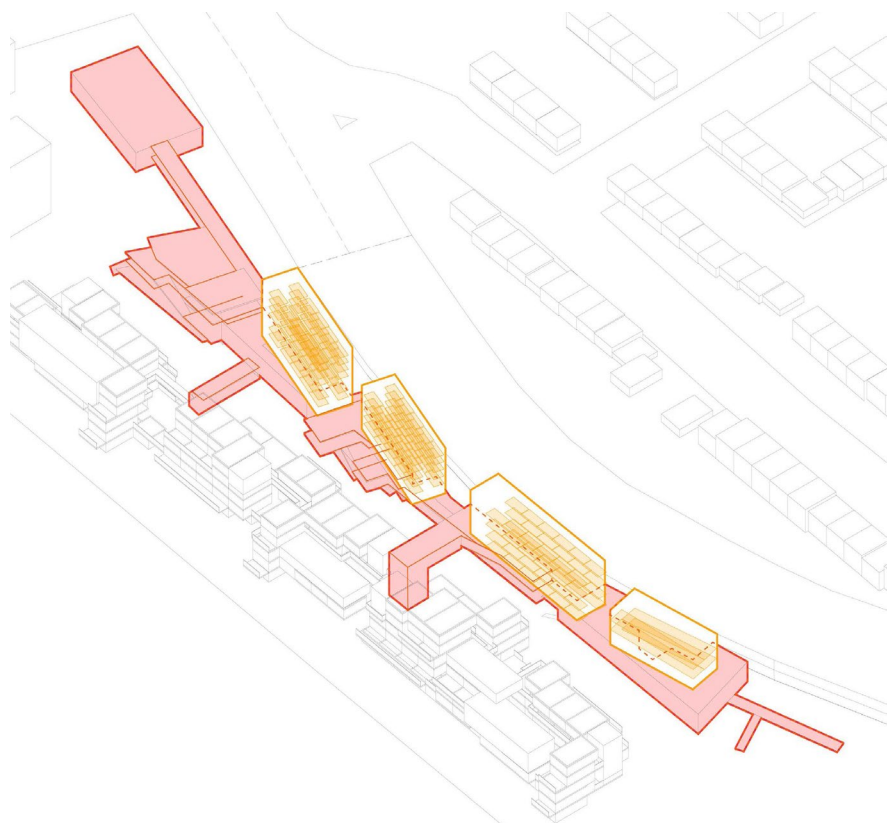


▲ ESTABLISHING SYSTEM

► HIERARCHY

▼ LIFE IN THE MEDIATOR





YUNZHOU FAN - URBAN MEDIATOR



## THE RIGHT TO OCCUPY

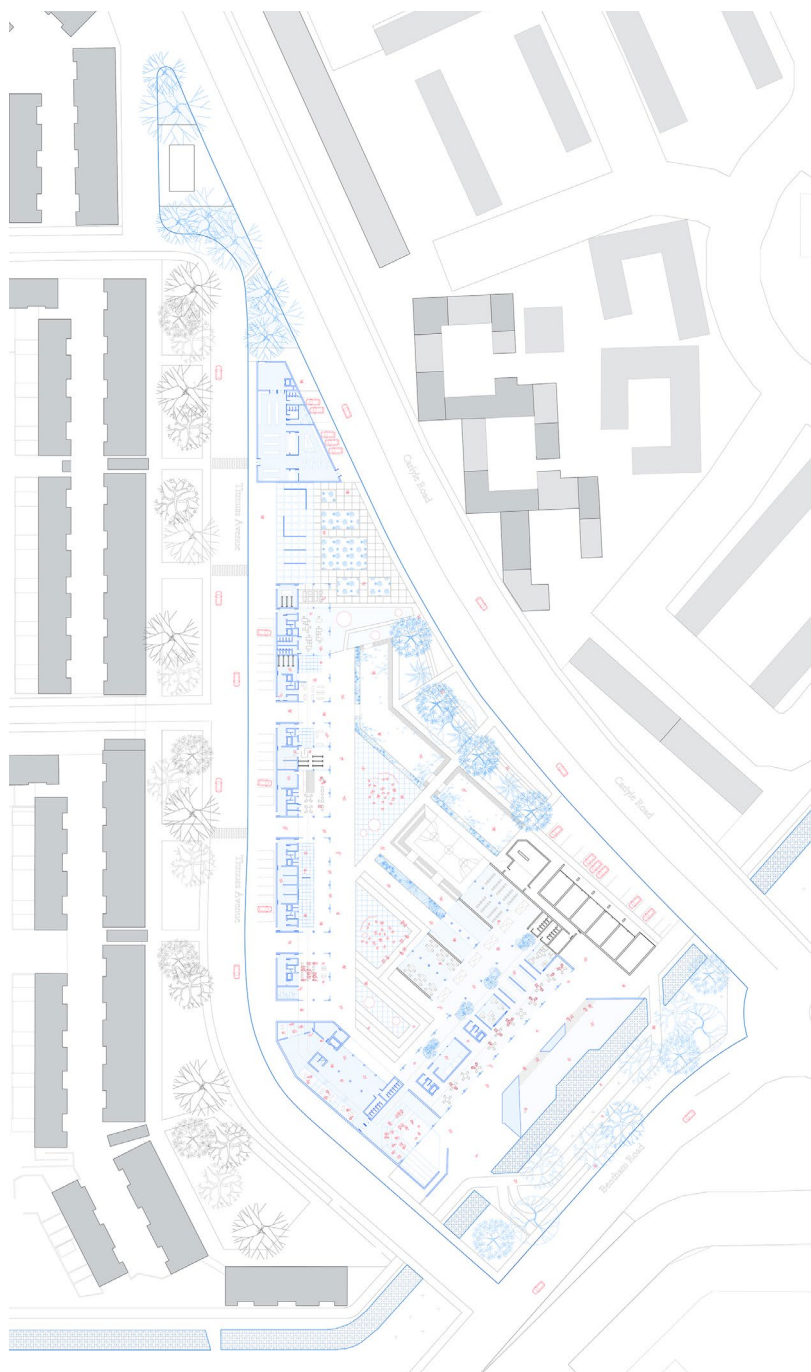
### A RENEWED PUBLIC SQUARE

RUAIRIDH MAXWELL

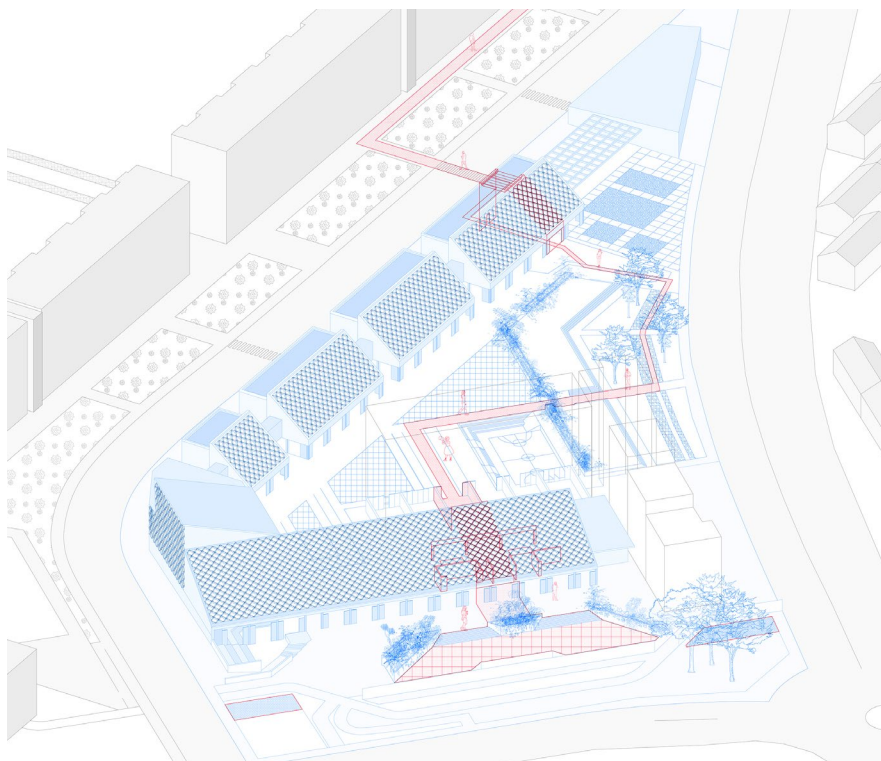
To an observer, Thamesmead appears as another hallmark of a problematic Brutalist legacy. Moves ventured in the original, optimistic plans for Thamesmead were left incomplete and have resulted in a concrete landscape of ramps, roads and fragmented places. This fragmentation is also found at the root of its various inhabitants, whereby independent communities have sprung up as their sole representations. And whilst these communities are active and lively, Thamesmead is lacking the public-natured space suiting their activities.

Yet Thamesmead is part of a larger, more sinister legacy affecting sites on a global scale: in what Don Mitchell argues in ‘The End of Public Space?’, spaces dedicated to public gatherings and social dynamics are disappearing, as the securitisation of space continues to run strong in urban planning. But it is precisely these spaces that enable communities to gather and converse; to appeal and occupy. And for Thamesmead, public space could be a method by which its communities can actively participate in the wider changes impacting East London as a whole.

Arnott Square, one such public space, has suffered under these concerns; an overly-policed fragment of space that once aimed to be something more cohesive. This proposal for a renewed Arnott Square seeks to be a model that views public space as a necessary instrument for community empowerment; a platform for Thamesmead’s voice.



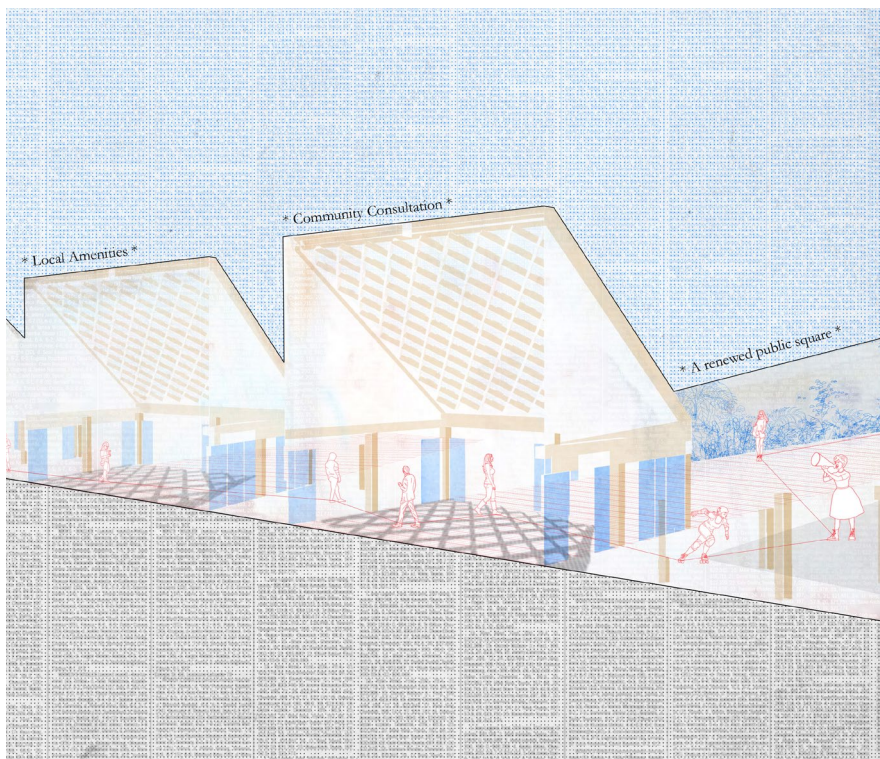




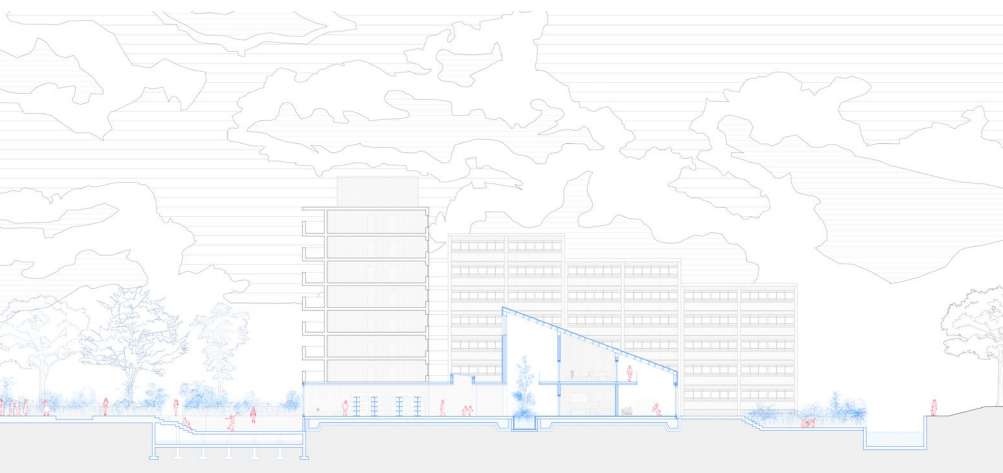
▲ ESTABLISHING A WORLD OF THE IN-BETWEEN: ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC SQUARE

▼ OCCUPYING AND HARMONISING WITH THE EXISTING





▲ BLURRING BOUNDARIES AND LIBERATING SPACE



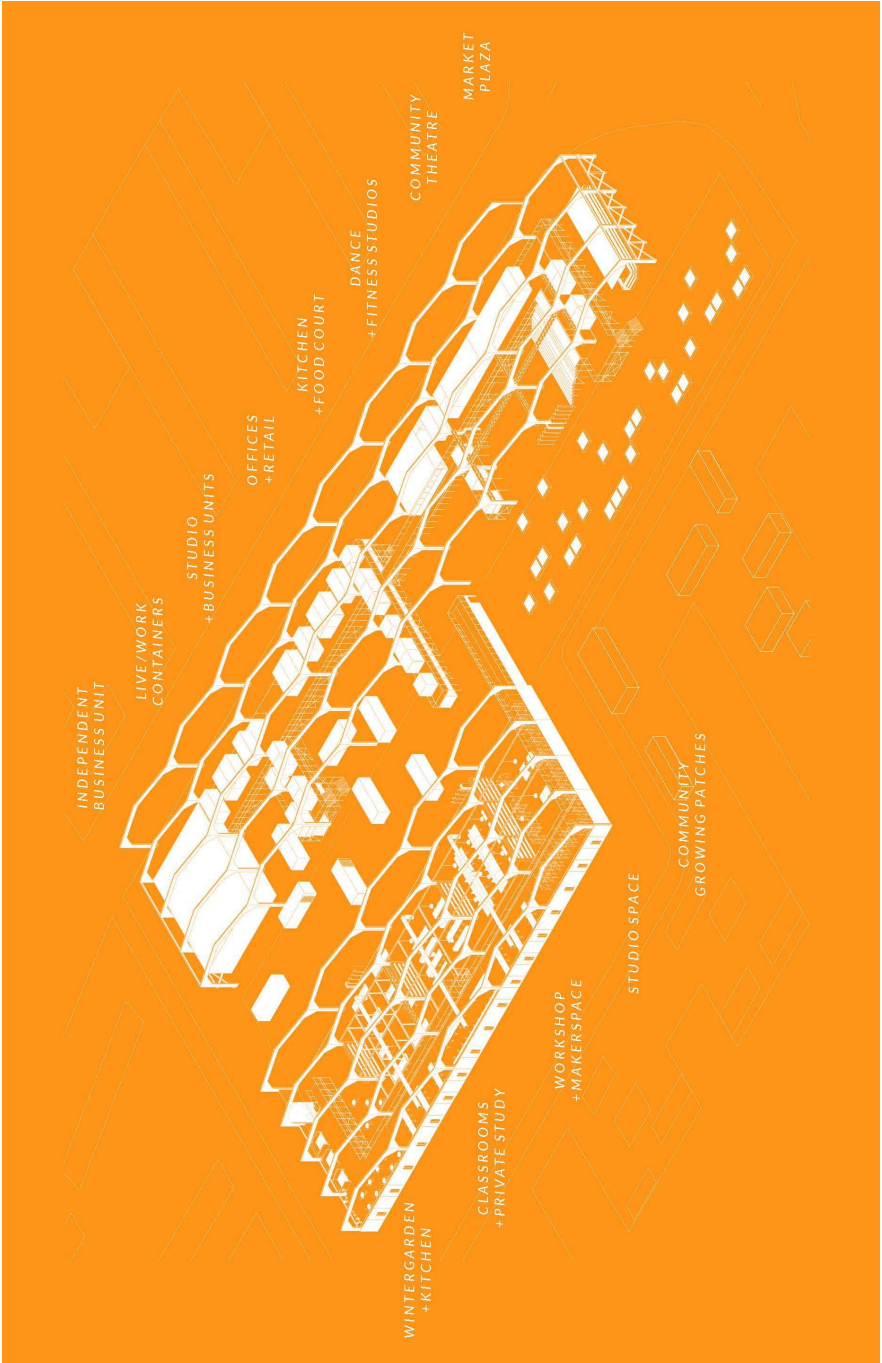
## THAMESMEAD ASSEMBLE PERMANENTLY IN THE MAKING

CATRIONA LYGATE

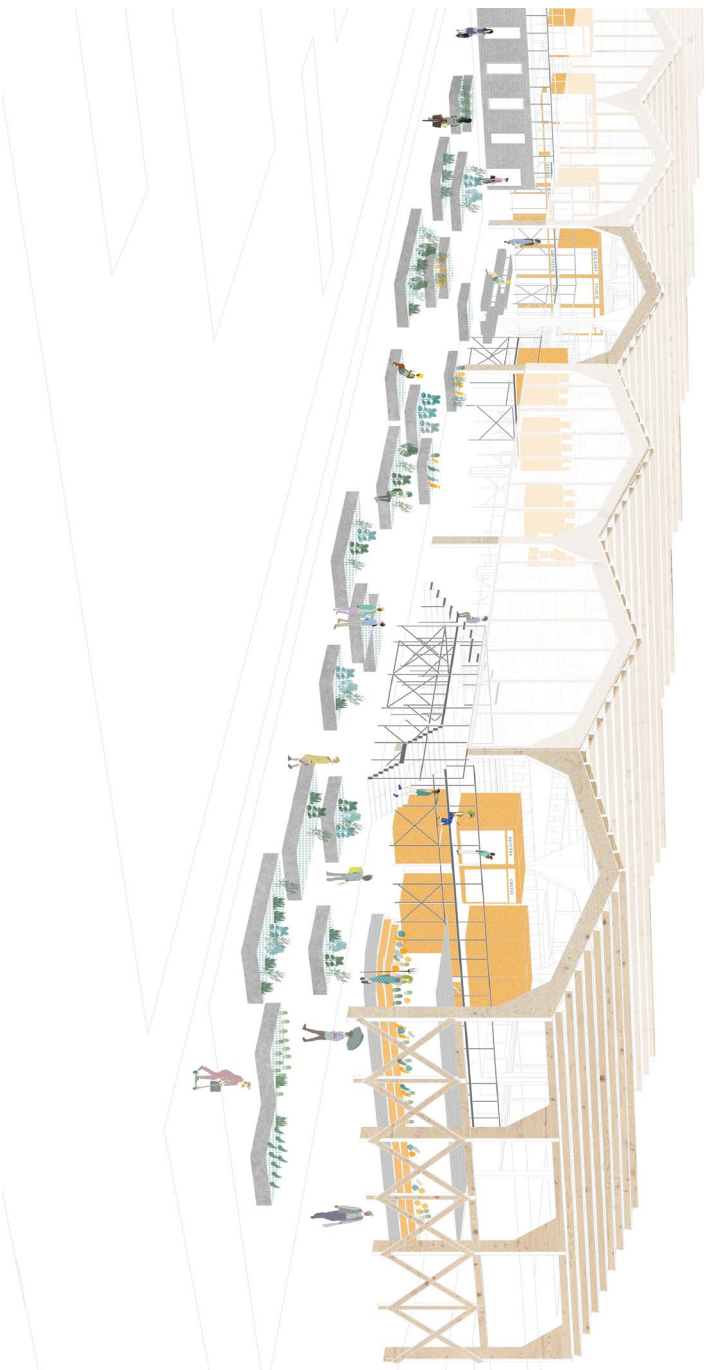
With Thamesmead facing its fourth regeneration attempt, this project questions the success and longevity of traditional architecture. The end of an architectural project conventionally means a building is 'finished', yet this leaves no room for flexibility or change in the years to come and in the case of Thamesmead, the architecture has become redundant every 10 - 20 years.

Alongside that, there is a fundamental disconnect between people and architecture, with little to no opportunity for people to shape their own environment.

Where this project challenges the norm; is to leave the project in a continual state of 'unfinished', in order to allow for aspects to move, grow and, fundamentally, respond to the needs of the community around it. The architecture is designed around deliberately low tech structural elements that allow for a high level of community participation, utilising self build, modular elements, that respond to a need for more employment opportunities in the area. The architecture strips back to the bare minimum in order to become accessible to the largest number of people and activity, itself becoming a mirror reflecting the needs and the wants of the people of Thamesmead.

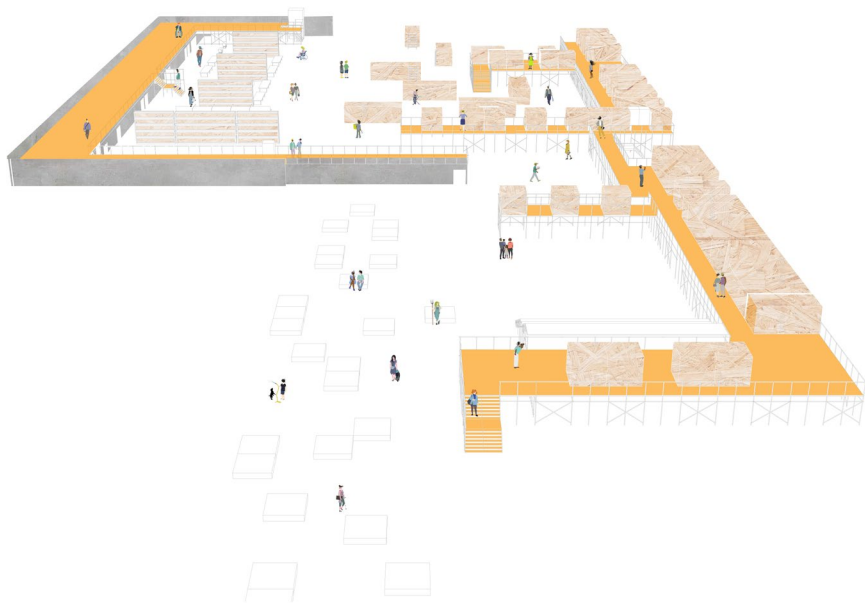


CATRIONA LYGATE - THAMESMEAD ASSEMBLE



CATRIONA LYGATE - THAMESMEAD ASSEMBLE





▲ CONNECTIVITY AND CIRCULATION OF SPACES THROUGH THE BUILDINGS

◀ VIEW OF THE GARDEN AND MARKET FROM THISTLEBROOK TRAVELLERS SITE

▼ VIEW OF THE KEY COMMUNAL KITCHEN AREA AND STUDIOS



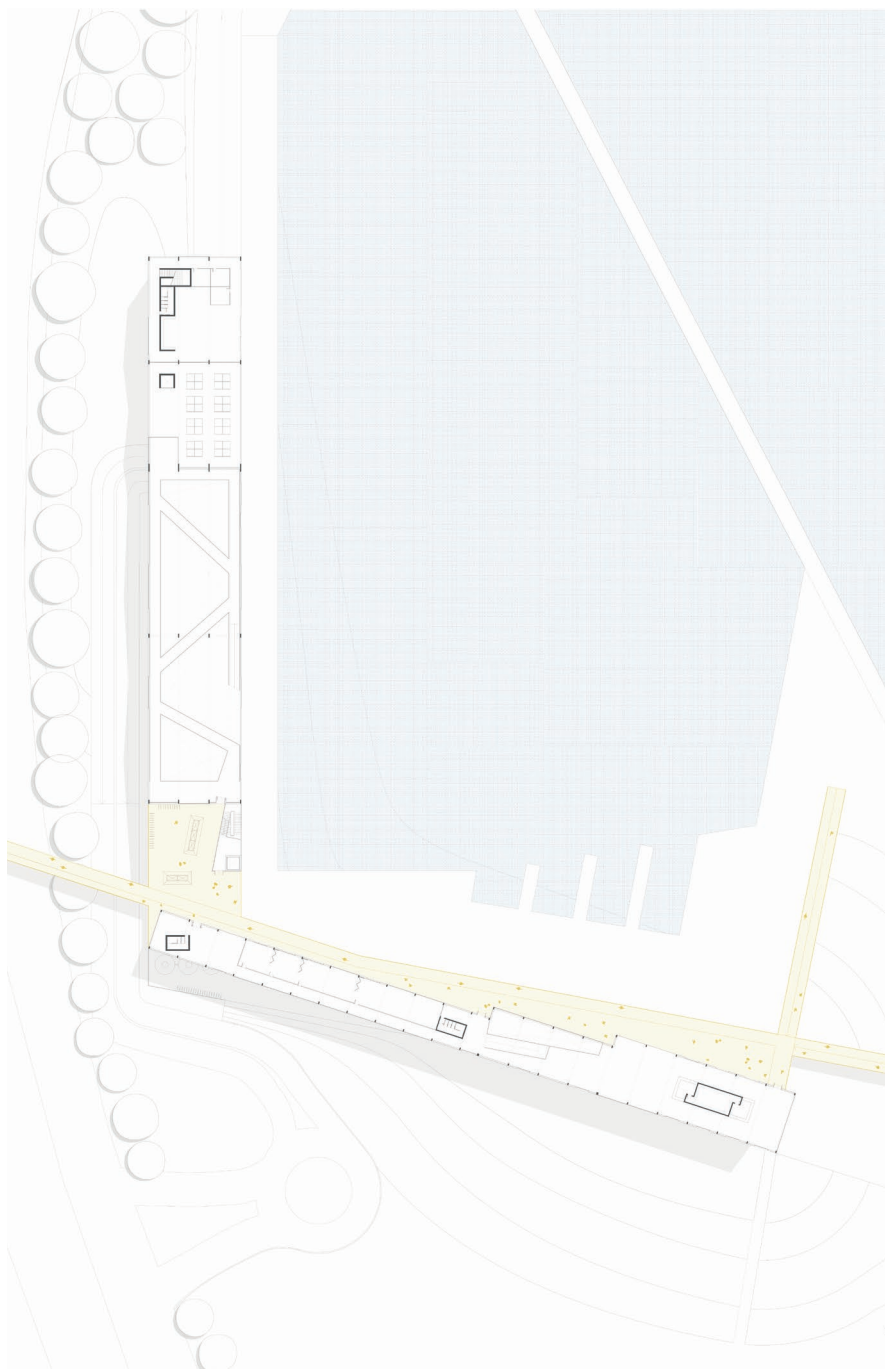
## THAMESMEAD: A FUTURE [PROOF] THE COMMONPLACE

AMY WOOTTON

Can Thamesmead be future proofed? This thesis is concerned with creating a first proof, an example of how the once dubbed 'futuristic town' of Thamesmead may be able to make itself more resilient for the future that lies ahead. Without obsessing over its broken parts, the project acknowledges the valuable assets that Thamesmead already has to offer, from materiality to sociability. In effect, The Commonplace acts as a microcosm for what Thamesmead could become in the future, inspired by the bottom-up community initiatives encapsulated within the transition towns movement.

Joined by a public passageway, the architectural proposal offers a paper recycling mill to support the local economy, and a programmatically diverse public wing to encourage unity within the community. The proposed lakeside development also creates a new connecting node between the Ridgeway and Birchmere Park, a route which is unavailable at present to pedestrians and cyclists. By enhancing and adding to existing resources on and around the site, the proposal will act as a first attempt at future-proofing, fundamentally by empowering and helping Thamesmead to work out how to help itself in the decades to come.







▲ THE PAPER RECYCLING MILL

◀ CONNECTIVITY - FIRST FLOOR PLAN

▼ THE PUBLIC WING









NO FISHING  
MEMBERS ONLY  
NO DAY TICKETS

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## IMAGE CREDITS

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Page 15 - Yannick Scott

Page 18 - Yannick Scott

Page 44 - Anna Bateson

Page 86 - Rachel Smilie

Page 96 - Yannick Scott

Page 120 - Laura Haylock

Page 162 - Calum Rennie

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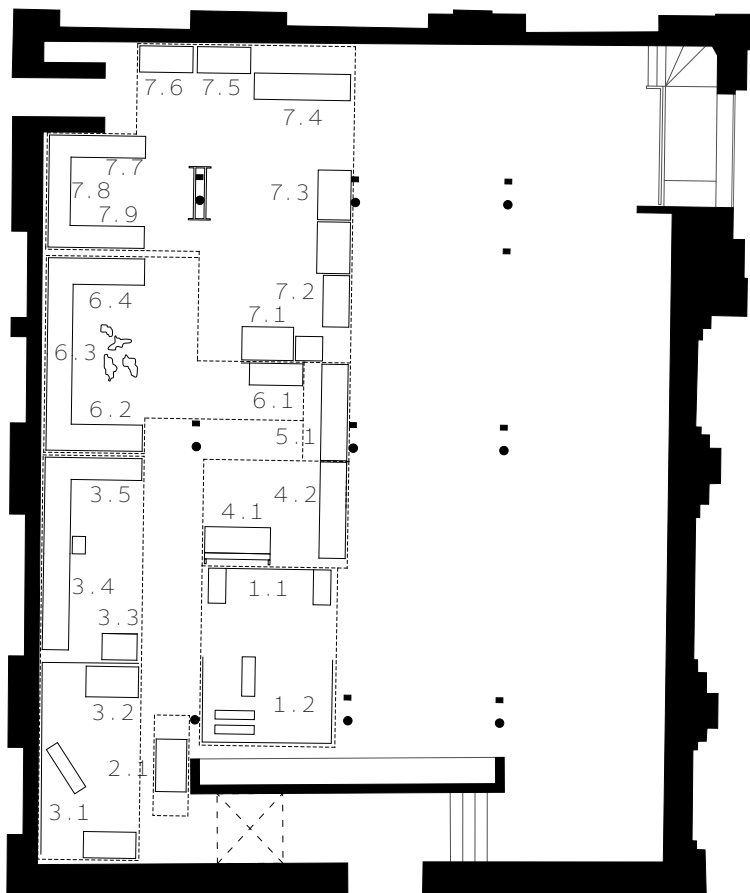
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- |     |                            |     |                              |
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| 1.2 | PLUS                       | 6.3 | COLLABORATIVE CATALYST       |
| 2.1 | LINKING SPACES             | 6.4 | THE NEW AGORA                |
| 3.1 | EXCAVATION + CONNECTION    | 7.1 | AN-OTHER HOUSE OF COMMONS    |
| 3.2 | MARSHLAND                  | 7.2 | THE PUBLIC HOUSE             |
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| 6.1 | WOLVERCOTE COOPERATIVE     | 7.9 | THAMESMEAD: A FUTURE [PROOF] |

# ESALA

Edinburgh School of Architecture & Landscape Architecture



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH  
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