

Cultural infrastructure around the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park: mapping survey and report

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Published in November 2017



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Key to cover images (clockwise from top left):
demolition and reconstruction under way in Hackney Wick; parents and children leave the Discover Story Centre; view towards the Olympic Park and the International Quarter from House Mill; bar/café area at Stratford Circus; advertising for Stratford High Street regeneration

This report identifies and presents existing and new data on cultural infrastructure in the environs of UCL East. It is intended to inform the continuing development of the UCL East vision and to provide a baseline for monitoring the future impact of UCL East on existing cultural resources around the Olympic Park. It is also in line with new Mayoral and GLA initiatives to map effectively and protect London's cultural infrastructure, as one of the city's most important assets. We hope that the findings will be useful to all the organisations involved in the Cultural and Education District being developed in the Olympic Park as part of the regeneration of the wider area.

The report establishes that existing data on cultural infrastructure in the area is minimal, and in need of both updating and expanding. It also emphasises the distinctive cultural and geographic features of the different neighbourhoods that surround the park, all characterised by high levels of ethnic diversity and long-term deprivation, and the corresponding difficulty of dealing with the park environs as a cohesive entity. It shows how the industrial heritage and culture of the area was effectively erased by the redevelopment of the Stratford site for the London Olympics 2012, and that since 2006 a raft of new cultural policy initiatives led by the Olympic boroughs, the Mayor's office, and the LLDC have been launched to establish a new local cultural heritage identity linked to promotion of the knowledge economy and culture-led regeneration.

The new data gathered for this report shows however that there is a substantial network of community-based cultural organisations which either pre-date the Olympics, or owe their existence to Olympic legacy funding which has since been withdrawn. They perform an important role in sustaining resilience across the area's diverse populations. Many of these organisations lack permanent viable premises from which to operate, and most are finding it difficult to survive in the post-Olympic landscape. Based on findings from the qualitative research we conducted, the key reasons for this vulnerability are:

1. Shortage of funding and physical space for survival and development
2. Cultural disconnect between local communities and park resources
3. Potential threat posed by UCL and other 'big players'

In response to these findings, the report affirms the importance of UCL East in providing new resources for Humanities and Social Science research embedded in the local cultural context, and proposes three areas of short, medium, and long-term action:

1. a) production of publicly accessible data visualisation locating different types of cultural infrastructure geographically within the areas
b) renewal of emphasis within the UCL East vision on supporting existing social and cultural infrastructure
2. a) further work with local organisations to co-produce a manifesto of principles for cultural interaction with UCL East, focusing on scope of a new Urban Room at UCL East for shared activities
b) initiatives to bring together and invest funding in maintaining and extending datasets
3. co-curate with local people, and in collaboration with UCL colleagues across faculties, a new East London collection around which to develop research embedded in the local cultural context

1	Context and purpose of the research	6
2	Defining the area	7
3	Cultural development in and around the park Removal of local industrial heritage Cultural policy initiatives since 2006 UCL's role in defining local cultural heritage	14
4	The existing data: defining 'cultural infrastructure'	18
5	New data Shortage of funding and physical space for survival and development Cultural disconnect between local communities and park resources Potential threat posed by UCL and other 'big players'	21
6	Recommendations for future work Strategies for UCL to work with rather than displace the existing local cultural infrastructure through UCL East activities	25
7	Conclusion: implications for the UCL East Vision	26
	Selected bibliography	27
	Selected images	28

There is now a recognition at GLA and local borough level that London has become an unaffordable and intensely high-pressured environment for many of the activities through which the city's 'global' status gains its cultural capital, and that this is unsustainable if that status is to be retained. In this research, in line with some of the strategic moves the Mayor and GLA are making in terms of working to better map and protect 'cultural infrastructure', we have sought to identify, collate and present existing data on cultural infrastructure in the environs of UCL East. The purpose of this exercise has been to put together a coherent summary of the data that exists, and to begin to understand which communities, activities and spaces are currently at risk of displacement in the short, medium, and long term. Artists' studios are one concern, for example, but so too are small cultural enterprises, cultural venues, pubs, community-based organisations, churches, etc., which should be considered within an expanded definition of cultural infrastructure, and which contribute in important ways to social cohesion. It is also important to include cultural activities which have already been displaced in this discussion, in order to learn lessons as to how the cultural grain of the area can be protected in the future.

The existing data is minimal, as summarised below. Both quantitative and qualitative datasets and evidence have been sought, in order to present the complexity and diversity of the existing context of this part of London. Desk-based data collection has been supplemented by a workshop on cultural heritage in the Olympic area, and with six in-depth interviews with representatives from the area's extant cultural organisations. These activities have built on established collaborations with the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC), which took over planning powers from the Olympic Boroughs and is now the planning authority on and around the Olympic Park, Foundation for Future London, responsible for the delivery of the Cultural and Education District [formerly called Olympicopolis] and for the cultural programme in the QEOP, Hackney and Tower Hamlets Councils and the network of organisations involved in the UCL University-led Regeneration Summer School (2016).

The findings of the research are intended to be useful to all of the organisations involved in the Cultural and Education District being developed in the area. There are also specific lessons underscored for UCL as it shapes its strategy for embedding the new campus and activities in the area, and collaborating with SMEs and cultural organisations, alongside its international-scale partner institutions. The findings include suggestions as to how UCL and other institutions can monitor their impacts on existing cultural infrastructure, as well as identifying gaps in existing data and future work to address them. The evidence presented here is also of direct importance in thinking about the current and future presence and roles of UCL staff, students, graduates – particularly those in urban, cultural, architectural, fine art and other related disciplines and professions.

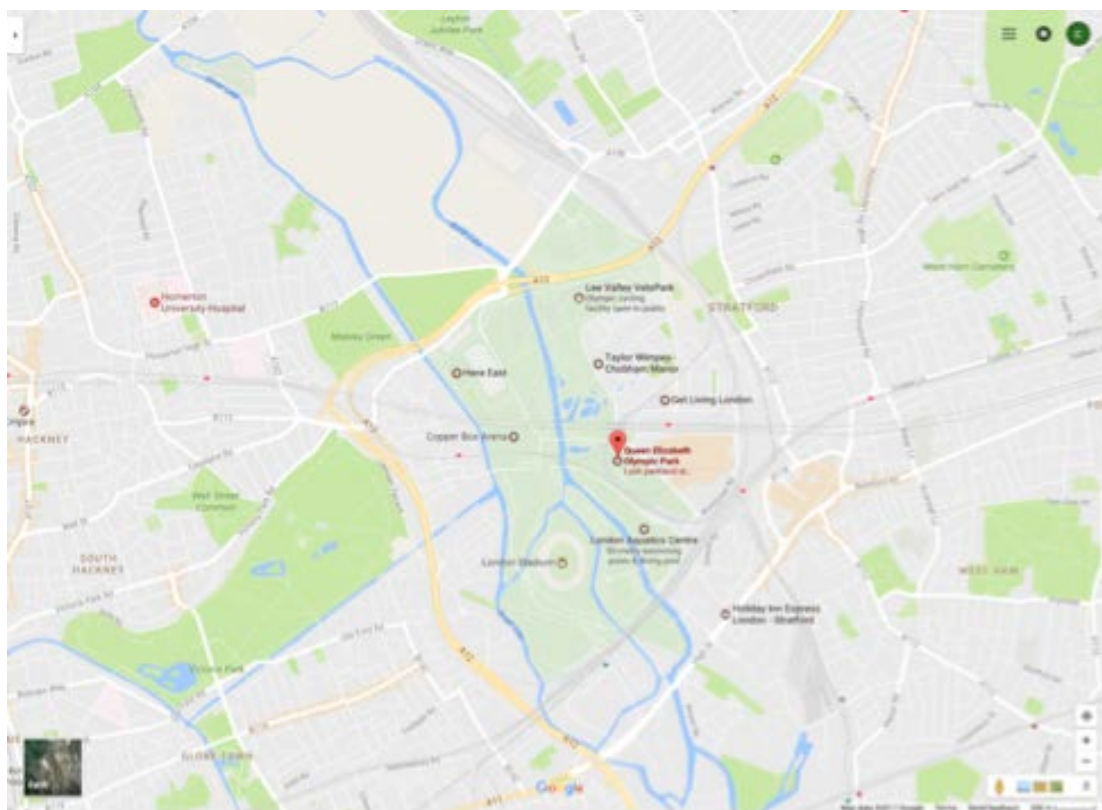


Fig 1: Map of the Olympic Park and environs, 2017. Source: Google Maps.

The environs of the Olympic Park fall under the jurisdiction of four out of the six 'Olympic Boroughs': Newham to the east and south (including areas of Stratford, West Ham, Plaistow), Waltham Forest to the northeast (Leyton), Hackney to the northwest (Hackney Wick, Homerton, South Hackney), and Tower Hamlets to the west and south (Fish Island, and Old Ford, Bow, Bromley-by-Bow, and Poplar beyond the A12). The Park itself lies at the intersection of the four borough boundaries, and has been under the planning jurisdiction of the LLDC since 2012. The LLDC is a mayoral development corporation formed under the provisions of the Localism Act, 2011, to replace the Olympic Park Legacy Company and deliver the legacy use and community regeneration pledged by the Olympic Delivery Authority for the park area, as set out in the Convergence Action Plan 2011-2015:

'The challenge of Convergence is to ensure that over 20 years the scale of disadvantage experienced by Host Borough residents is greatly reduced through: higher educational attainment; achievement of greater skills qualifications; increases in the number of economically active adults; reduction in child poverty; increase in life expectancy; reduction in housing overcrowding; reduction in violent and gang crime'.¹

1 Convergence Framework and Action Plan 2011-2015, p.1 https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_migrate_files_destination/Convergence%20action%20plan%202011-2015.pdf (last accessed 14th Aug 2017)

The LLDC promised a 'programme of change centred on Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park' stating that 'its success is enabled by new transport and digital infrastructure, and it will provide new homes and jobs, attractive parkland, world class sporting facilities (including a Premier League stadium), a thriving business community, a dazzling new arts and culture cluster, and a forward-looking education and innovation presence'.²

The LLDC's Local Plan (drawing on the content of the plans adopted by the four boroughs covering its area prior to 2012) covers the park itself and, in addition, the areas of Fish Island and Hackney Wick which fall between the Lea Navigation and the A12 boundary to the west; Stratford International Quarter and Westfield shopping complex to the east; and the area between Pudding Mill River, Stratford High Street, and Three Mills/ Bromley by Bow to the south.³ To the north, the park edge is bounded by the A106, dividing it from the expanse of Hackney Marshes, stretching towards the Walthamstow reservoirs.

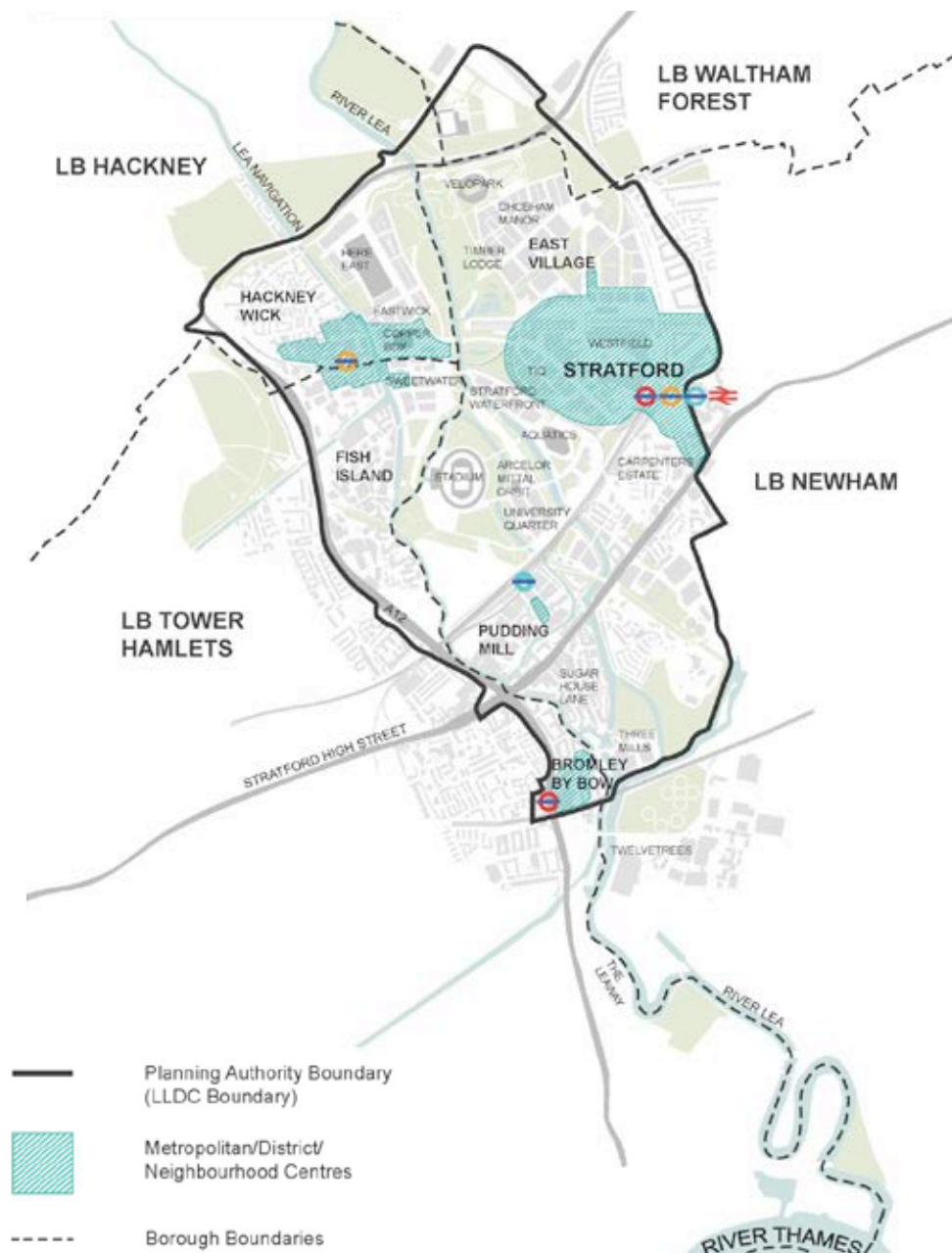


Fig 2: Plan showing planning authority jurisdictions in and around the park. Source: LLDC Five Year Strategy, p29.

2 Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and the surrounding area. Five year strategy: 2015-2020, p2. LLDC. <http://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/-/media/5-year-strategy.ashx?la=en> (last accessed 14th Aug 2017)

3 <http://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/planning-authority/planning-policy/local-plan>



Fig 3: Multi-lingual shop notice, Vicarage Road



Fig 3: Multi-lingual shop notice, Vicarage Road

Each side of the park is marked by a distinctive topography, demographic, and socio-cultural landscape, although for some of these areas this changed radically through the development leading up to the 2012 games. Stratford is the main shopping centre (Stratford Centre and Westfield Stratford City), with large swathes of small-scale residential streets extending outwards towards West Ham and Plaistow. It is also the home of the original University of East London campus and a number of further education colleges, as well as the Theatre Royal and Picturehouse, which have provided a focus for established local cultural life over many years. A significant number of new large-scale housing developments have been constructed around the Olympic site, including the new E20 neighbourhood, East Village, formerly the accommodation for athletes during the 2012 Olympic Games. Leyton undertook a transformation of its High Road for the Olympics, but never benefited from the same footfall as Stratford, and has undergone a certain degree of gentrification of its largely 19th-century terraced housing stock.

Hackney Wick and Fish Island now host the largest concentration of artists' studios and affordable workspace in Europe in canalside warehouses that once housed extensive smallscale industry, but which are rapidly being redeveloped as new housing, cheek by jowl with the existing Trowbridge Estate. South of the park within the A12 boundary, from Pudding Mill to Three Mills, the network of canals and rivers carves up a landscape formerly dominated by the historic tidal mills, which will be transformed by the 26 acre Strand East residential and work-space development.

All these areas are rich in ethnic and cultural diversity, and host a wealth of everyday cultural assets and creative production which is of significance to the capital. Yet, in base level socio-economic terms, the recent history of all the surrounding areas has also been marked by the 'persistent long-term deprivation' which was highlighted and

defined in the Convergence Framework, as quoted above.⁴ Of the four boroughs, and as summarised by Mintchev and Moore: 'Newham is one of the most deprived areas in London. According to the most recent data... its average household income in 2013 was £34,260, the second lowest in London after Barking and Dagenham... It has five ethnic groups (white British, Indian, African, Bangladeshi and Pakistani) that each make up 10% or more of the population, in addition to a number of smaller ethnic groups'⁵ (see also Table 1).

Table 1 Census data, ethnic diversity
*Newham Key Facts Jan 2017*⁶

PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE BY ETHNIC GROUP, MID-2016 GLA PROJECTIONS				
White				26.8%
	British			13.5%
	Other			12.6%
	Irish			0.7%
Asian/Asian British				46.1%
	Indian			15.0%
	Pakistani			10.4%
	Bangladeshi			12.4%
	Chinese			1.4%
	Other Asian			6.6%
Black/Black British				18.3%
	African			11.2%
	Caribbean			4.4%
	Other Black			2.6%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups				4.9%
Other Ethnic Group (including Arab)				3.9%
MAIN LANGUAGES SPOKEN BY NEWHAM RESIDENTS (TOP 10) (AGED 3 AND OVER)				
English	58.6%	Tamil		2.3%
Bengali	7.4%	Polish		2.0%
Urdu	4.4%	Panjabi		1.8%
Gujarati	3.3%	Romanian		1.6%
Lithuanian	2.7%	Portuguese		1.4%
INDEX OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION, DCLG 2015				
	Newham ranking* in London		Newham ranking* in England	
	2010	2015	2010	2015
Rank of average rank	2 nd of 33	4 th of 33	2 nd of 326	8 th of 326
Rank of extent	2 nd of 33	4 th of 33	2 nd of 326	25 th of 326
*1 st being the most deprived				

4 Convergence Framework and Action Plan 2011-2015, Mayor of London and Olympic Boroughs, p1. <http://www.growthboroughs.com/convergence/>, last accessed Oct 5th 2017

5 Convergence Framework and Action Plan 2011-2015, Mayor of London and Olympic Boroughs, p1. <http://www.growthboroughs.com/convergence/>, last accessed Oct 5th 2017

6 <http://www.newham.info/factsandfigures>, last accessed 14th Aug 2017

All areas around the Olympic Park have undergone and are continuing to experience significant change as a result of rapid urban redevelopment triggered by the Olympics. They are covered in the LLDC's Local Plan by a set of ' "Place-based policies" (see Table 2) which describe how key locations are expected to change over time, divided into four sub areas: Hackney Wick and Fish Island, North Stratford and Eton Manor, Central Stratford and the south of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, and Pudding Mill, Bromley-by-Bow and Mill Meads'.⁷ The effects of these policies and continuing investment have been and will be far-reaching, both for the shape of the built environment and urban landscape, and for the demographic of these neighbourhoods, as significant incoming flows of new residents transform the social landscape and infrastructure.

Table 2 Projected change as envisioned in the LLDC's Local Plan, 20XX, sections 6 to 9

Sub area 1: Vision Hackney Wick and Fish Island will become a more vibrant, diverse and well connected series of mixed and balanced neighbourhoods with places of social, cultural and economic activity. The established residential areas in the north, historic character in the centre, and industrial areas to the south, will have been complemented by a mix of new homes, employment workspace and community facilities around and within buildings of historic interest, a new Neighbourhood Centre and an upgraded railway station. These will be served by and have direct access to the open spaces and world-class sporting facilities of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. A new digital quarter of hi-tech, media, broadcasting and education activities will be clustered within and around Here East, and complemented by a significant presence of creative and cultural industries producing bespoke and artistic products west of the Lee Navigation.

Sub area 2: Vision North Stratford and Eton Manor will become an area of new high-quality housing, with generous new Local Open Spaces set alongside the parklands of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. This will become an area of vibrant new communities, a place for families to grow and stay. It will have unrivalled access to public transport, along with excellent schools, community facilities, local shops and services, and be within easy reach of the employment and business opportunities at Stratford and Hackney Wick. It will have access to affordable community sport and leisure activities and become a location in which people will aspire to live.

Sub area 3: Vision Central Stratford and Southern Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park will become a diverse area of new high-profile education and sporting facilities, retail, leisure and business expansion with high-quality housing alongside long-standing and thriving business and residential communities, all nestled within easy access of the parklands of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. The excellent public transport accessibility, with additional potential for international links, will continue to draw business and investment into the area, as well as provide the means of access for the multitude of visitors who come to the area as a sporting, leisure and cultural destination.

Sub area 4: Vision Pudding Mill, Bromley-by-Bow and Mill Meads. This will become an area of new business and residential communities that find a focus at a new District Centre at Bromley-by-Bow and a new Local Centre at Pudding Mill, with a secondary hub of employment and leisure uses in the north part of Sugar House Lane. The District Centre at Bromley-by-Bow will provide a new primary school, community facilities and public open spaces. A new DLR station at Pudding Mill and an enhanced Bromley-by-Bow Station will provide excellent public transport links to nearby work and leisure opportunities and good access to the rest of London. New and improved local foot and cycle paths will provide accessible and safe routes to the stations and local shops and services. The many new homes in Bromley-by-Bow, Sugar House Lane and Pudding Mill will meet a wide range of housing needs, while the new homes, business and other premises will have been sensitively and excellently designed, taking account of the historic waterside settings and the heritage assets within and around the Conservation Areas. By 2031, the Sub Area will have become a distinct series of new urban communities, well connected to their surroundings.

⁷ <http://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/planning-authority/planning-policy/local-plan>



Fig 5: Newham regeneration branding

The UCL East development is sited in sub area 3, Southern Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, bounded by Marshgate Lane, Montfichet Road and the railway lines. During the IAAF World Championships in summer 2017, the site was occupied by Hero Village, a temporary compound full of athletic-themed activities and merchandise to attract the fans. The transport and other infrastructure around this site separate it from the local neighbourhoods to which it is most proximate, which lie south and east of the park along the length of Stratford High Street, between the A12 to the west and Stratford town centre to the east. This area has been the focus of intensive redevelopment promoted by Newham Council under Mayor Robin Wales since 2012, under its slogan ‘A place where people choose to live, work, and stay’ (fig 5). It now features many new high-rise housing developments along the park edge, while Stratford High Street itself, having been notably overlooked during the games (in contrast to Leyton High Road to the north-east),⁸ is the subject of a new transformation programme (fig 6).



Fig 6: Stratford High Street improvements proposals

8 <https://www.theguardian.com/local-government-network/2013/may/23/high-street-regeneration-council-boost-revamp>

9 <https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/boris-johnson-the-olympic-park-will-be-the-albertopolis-of-the-east-8982871.html>, last accessed Sept 29th 2017

The UCL East development will be delivered by the LLDC as part of the extended cultural and educational development programme originally launched as 'Olympicopolis' by Mayor Boris Johnson in December 2013,⁹ and re-branded the Cultural and Education District under Johnson's successor, Mayor Sadiq Khan in 2016. This new designation is distinct from well-established destinations outside the park such as 'Stratford Cultural Quarter', comprising the Theatre Royal, Stratford Circus, and Picturehouse venues.

The other key institutions involved in the new Cultural and Education district will be situated on the Waterfront site, inside the park, close to Westfield and Stratford International. The LLDC states in its five-year plan (2015-2020):

'1.9 ...The new plan [Olympicopolis] puts education, arts and culture at the heart of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, *knitted into existing arts and culture and education provision and communities in the surrounding area* [author's italics].

1.10 It will help to draw visitors on from London's top 20 attractions and out into the wealth of cultural opportunities in east the key goals of the GLA's cultural tourism vision. Olympicopolis will also embed higher education, innovation and enterprise at the heart of the Park – by the end of this period, the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park area will host five universities, three of them newly located here in the next five years. It raises the ambition for delivering more jobs and opportunities for local people, and for utterly reshaping perceptions of east London.'¹⁰

Given these aims, what are the benchmarks and monitoring mechanisms through which the future impact of UCL East and the other anchor institutions on 'existing arts and culture and education provision and communities in the surrounding area' can be gauged? If this question is not adequately addressed, the risk is that in 'utterly reshaping perceptions of east London' the university and its partners will become complicit in sweeping away the cultural infrastructure and local heritage that already exist, and which developed over time in response to the needs of the diverse local populations. Furthermore, the recent history of cultural organisations that have already been displaced will be forgotten, rather than acknowledged and appropriate lessons learned.

10 Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and the surrounding area. Five year strategy: 2015-2020, p2. LLDC. <http://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/-/media/5-year-strategy.ashx?la=en> (last accessed 14th Aug 2017)

a. Removal of local industrial heritage

In November 2016, the UCL Urban Laboratory co-hosted a workshop on the university and urban heritage at Here East,¹¹ to explore what impact the arrival of UCL East in the Olympic Park would have on re-shaping narratives of cultural heritage and identity both for local communities in the area, and for the university community and institution. Among the participants were an archaeologist who had worked on the ‘Demolish, Dig, Design’ first phase of the Olympic project – the archaeological excavation of the site by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) that preceded redevelopment – and an ethnographer who conducted research to establish how community groups responded to the Olympic compact in 2010-12, and with tunnellers on the site during construction. They reminded participants that the rhetoric used to describe the Olympic park site and environs as an ‘industrial wasteland’ or a ‘fridge mountain’¹² was not recognised by many local people, for whom it provided an infrastructure supporting livelihoods and social relationships. Around 600 businesses and 1,000 residents were evicted to make way for the Games, while most of the evidence of the site’s multi-layered industrial heritage has been swept away through the remediation and decontamination process. Between 2007 and 2011 a radical transformation occurred which largely erased the existing cultural identity of the place to create a tabula rasa for a new kind of cultural life. This included the removal of all the archaeological remains to the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre in Islington. As one workshop participant noted, ‘The excavations finished in 2009, then there was silence until 2012 when the book [reporting on finds] came out...but that was very low-key; by that stage everybody had moved on to the Games itself; they didn’t want to talk about the archaeology, they didn’t want to talk about the fact this was an industrial place’ (workshop participant). However, apart from the literal removal of archaeological material, the tabula rasa form of development has also had a more widespread symbolic, aesthetic and material influence within the new residential, retail, and cultural developments that have taken shape since the Games since they make no reference to the industrial past and other aspects of the area’s cultural heritage – in direct contrast to the emphasis on technological innovation and cultural diversity in the fanfare of the opening ceremony in 2012.

b. Cultural policy initiatives since 2006

Instead of emphasising the existing culture and heritage of the area, a number of new policy initiatives were launched to promote arts, culture and creativity in the park and its vicinity, informed by the need to develop a new place identity, new connections between people and the park, and a new kind of cultural heritage narrative. In 2006 the Stratford

¹¹ as part of the 2016-17 programme of the Curating the City research cluster in the University of Gothenburg/UCL Centre for Critical Heritage Studies

¹² ‘For the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, over two square kilometres of disused warehouses and railway yards, scrap car and trolley-filled rivers were transformed into the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. ‘Fridge mountain’, one of the largest piles of discarded white goods, has been replaced by one of the largest shopping centres in Europe, Westfield Stratford City’. Liz Pearson, former Associate Dean of the School of Arts and Digital Industries at University of East London. ‘How the other Stratford lives’, *Arts Professional*, 23rd Jan 2014, <https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/magazine/270/article/how-other-stratford-lives>, last accessed Aug 16th 2017

Cultural Forum was set up, constituting a consortium of arts and cultural organisations in east London, which became Stratford Rising in 2010. It defined its remit as to 'broker new relationships between developers and organisations, ensuring the central place of arts and culture in the area's regeneration'.¹³ In 2010, LB Hackney's new cultural policy framework, Creative Hackney, provided a position statement on the role to be played by culture and the creative industries in the social and economic development of the borough, with specific reference to creating 'a sense of place' and 'social and cultural tolerance in the existing and new neighbourhoods', and to 'ensuring Hackney's cultural contribution arising from the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games is a key element of sustainable regeneration and neighbourhood renewal in the borough'.¹⁴ Newham also published its Newham Community Infrastructure Study (2010) setting out opportunities to develop 'cultural-led regeneration' in the borough which emphasised the role of the Olympics as a catalyst for future development and the need 'to ensure that [it] also delivers the right mix of supporting cultural infrastructure'. It further recommended 'that a mapping exercise of cultural provision is undertaken ... to identify the range of facilities provided and services offered... as well as any gaps',¹⁵ but this does not appear to have been implemented.

In 2011, the year before the games, the Legacy List charity was set up by the Mayor of London (Boris Johnson) and the LLDC to raise funding for art and culture, education and skills. Its mission was to 'make creative connections between people and the park by supporting imaginative and visionary projects... to create brighter futures for the communities in the neighbouring boroughs'. Between 2011 and 2013 it raised £2.5 m to support three core areas of art and culture, education and skills. By 2015, when it was wound up and replaced by the Foundation for Future London (see below) it had 'engaged over 500,000 people in 33 projects [including The Yard Theatre in Hackney Wick: see *interviews*], worked with over 120,000 school children and secured over £4m'.¹⁶

Following the games in 2012, the LLDC published a strategy for arts and culture, which highlighted the need 'to build on the heritage of the area by enlivening our public spaces and connecting with local communities'. Its programme was shortlisted in 2013 for the UK's Placemaking Awards. In 2014, following the mayoral decision to create a new cultural quarter on the park called Olympicopolis, the corporation's new Arts and Culture Strategy again underlined the significance of culture and creativity 'at the heart of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park' (in the shape of new permanent artworks and architectural icons), and its importance to transforming the area into a cultural destination: 'the Park is already emerging as a dynamic hub for east London's creative economy and a fantastic setting for festivals and celebrations'.¹⁷ It welcomed the announcement of the park's new centre for culture and education, including the prospective arrival of the Victoria and Albert Museum and UCL, which would 'undoubtedly grow the local creative economy, while using the Park as the focal point'. In addition, it promised to support creative workspaces and cultural infrastructure to develop creative talent, new art commissions, community activities, festivals and entertainment.

13 Entry in LLD Local Directory 2015: 'Long before the Olympic and Paralympic transformation, we were supporting, promoting and developing the well-established arts scene in Stratford. Dance and theatre companies, arts centres, music collectives, architecture practices, film and media companies, colleges, universities, artists' studios and creative organisations for children are all members of Stratford Rising and this list is growing as a new wave of creativity rushes to the area'.

14 Creative Hackney, cultural policy framework. London Borough of Hackney 2010, p 2-3

15 Newham Community Infrastructure Study, March 2010. Culture and Regeneration. [https://www.newham.gov.uk/Documents/Environment%20and%20planning/CommunityInfrastructureStudyCultureandRegeneration\[1\].pdf](https://www.newham.gov.uk/Documents/Environment%20and%20planning/CommunityInfrastructureStudyCultureandRegeneration[1].pdf), last accessed Aug 16th 2017, p 10-11

16 <https://uk.linkedin.com/company/the-legacy-list>, last accessed Aug 16th 2017

17 LLDC Arts and Culture Strategy 2014, Eyes, and minds, and dreams, and tongues, http://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/~media/qeop/files/public/lldc_artculturestrategy_webhigh.pdf, last accessed Aug 17th 2017

Foundation for FutureLondon was established the following year (2015) to raise funds for Olympicopolis and promote the development. It describes itself as ‘a game changer for communities in east London and beyond; a new powerhouse for innovation and creativity, through the unique collaboration of world-leading institutions including: Sadler’s Wells; University of the Arts London’s London College of Fashion; University College London; Victoria and Albert Museum; and the Smithsonian Institution’.¹⁸ The LLDC published a *Local Directory* of cultural and arts organisations in the vicinity, with a view to gathering stakeholders around the project in preparation for the Olympicopolis Stakeholder Forum on 9th June 2015. This document remains a valuable source of information ‘on many of the local organisations that surround the Park and are active in east London, with the aim of facilitating a greater understanding of east London and brokering new connections and relationships’.¹⁹ However it acknowledges that it is ‘not exhaustive’ and indicates an intention to ‘expand over time to include more organisations and create a more complete picture of all community, cultural and education activity in east London’, which has not so far been fulfilled.

c. UCL’s role in defining local cultural heritage

In considering the role of UCL as a contributor to the cultural infrastructure in the environs of the QEOP, it is important to note that the university’s original *Stratford Proposition* (2012) emphasised an intent to drive a positive legacy for the Olympics, and East London urban regeneration more widely, as is still the case. However, the initial proposition to develop the Carpenters Estate site with the London Borough of Newham was controversial, insensitively presenting the site as peripheral and a *tabula rasa*. The proposition did not include any substantive evaluation of the existing context in terms of cultural or heritage value, even while it emphasised the transformative potential of the university as a regeneration actor. The initial assessment referenced a ‘paucity of historic assets’,²⁰ demonstrating a limited understanding of wider cultural and social infrastructure. Neither did the proposition include any evidence for how the regeneration would benefit local communities, making overarching promises rather than detailing the mechanisms that might be necessary. Urbanists at UCL at the time pointed out that the assumption of a trickle-down effect in property-led market-driven regeneration was a highly contested notion. Part of the case was that UCL would be a ‘magnet for small, medium and large scale businesses’,²¹ and this argument was made within the context of the vision of extending East London’s ‘Tech City’. Again, however, it seems important to note – and respond to – critiques (including those by respected UCL scholars, such as Adam Greenfield) of the often unsubstantiated claims for the socio-economic benefits of technologically-driven utopic visions of ‘future cities’ and ‘smart cities’ – and to acknowledge potential detrimental social and cultural impacts.

UCL’s vision in 2012 laid out its intentions both to network with other strategically influential institutions and to work with local small businesses. Health, wellbeing, jobs, traineeships and widening participation were all, importantly, prioritised in the original narrative, but at that stage based on quite a generalised understanding of ‘local residents’ and ‘the local population’. Since 2012 many initiatives have helped to enhance understanding of existing communities. These have moved forward organically, which seems appropriate to an incremental and context-sensitive approach to regeneration. However, it has now become important to develop a more coordinated monitoring of UCL’s impacts and collaborations.

18 <https://www.future.london/what-are-we-doing>, last accessed Aug 17th 2017

19 LLDC *Local Directory* Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park 2015, p 3
http://www.queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/-/media/lldc/local_directory.ashx?la=en, last accessed Aug 17th 2017

20 UCL *Stratford Proposition*, UCL 2012, p 19

21 UCL *Stratford Proposition* 11th October 2012, p9 https://www.concreteaction.net/wp-content/Documents/Pre_Planning/Carpenters%20estate_UCL_stratfordproposition_Oct%202012.pdf, last accessed Oct 20th 2017

The initial *Stratford Proposition* led to an informal working group being set up bridging between UCL's urban and built environment academic and professional community and the UCL Estates project delivery team. This group, which paved the way for what was later re-named the 'Academic Challenge Panel', then disbanded and re-launched as the 'Critical Friends', discussed the wider and complex issues around the university's ethical responsibilities in regeneration and its potential to radically re-shape dominant context-insensitive approaches. At that time the UCL Urban Lab presented a well-received paper to UCL Council, *UCL and Newham: can UCL lead the way with community-led, evidence-based regeneration?* (2012) stating that 'there is an opportunity for UCL to lead the way with an ethical regeneration scheme that is exemplary both in process and content, led by the College's own expertise, and focused on the housing, health and employment needs of Newham's communities'.²² Yet the paper also criticised the university's lack of attention to the potential short, medium and longer-term gentrification effects of the scheme.

In their account of the initiative, Addie and Paskins summarise the collapse of the proposed Carpenters Estate redevelopment 'in the face of community opposition, the lack of appropriate housing options worked into the plan and the failure of UCL and Newham to agree contractual terms'.²³ However it was quickly superseded by discussions between Mayor Johnson and the new Provost, Michael Arthur, regarding UCL's continued role as an anchor regeneration institution in the QEOP, and the identification of a new development site within the park. Many positive actions have since followed, including the establishment of a UCL Public Engagement Officer (East) and a long-term case study-based research project on university-led regeneration,²⁴ hosted by UCL Urban Laboratory. The subsequent development of academic proposals have also provided an opportunity to think in more detail about the cultural and heritage context, and have been strengthened by being notably cross-sector. They include 'Design and Heritage', originally cross-faculty and now led as 'Culture Lab' by the faculties of Arts and Humanities and Social and Historical Sciences, and 'Global Future Cities Co-Labs', which combines a range of public-facing and interdisciplinary activity programmes on cities, bridging across the built environment, social and historical sciences and the arts and humanities.

These initiatives have opened up a broader conception of 'value' compared to the earlier narrowly delineated vision of extending 'Tech City'. It is better aligned with the vision for 'good growth' outlined by Mayor Khan at the recent 'Leading London' conference hosted at Here East (16th Oct 2017), in which the park has an important role to play as a world-leading example of positive regeneration: a 'world class public realm' that enables social integration and is founded on 'the achievements of the local community', in which UCL is an important pivot.

22 UCL and Newham: can UCL lead the way with community-led, evidence-based regeneration? (2012)

23 Addie, J-P and Paskins, J., 2016, University College London: leveraging the civic capacity of 'London's global university' in Goddard, J. et al (eds) *The Civic University: the policy and leadership challenges*. Cheltenham, UK; Northampton MA USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 257-279

24 Melhuish, C., 2015, *Case studies in university-led urban regeneration*. London: UCL Urban Laboratory

Sadiq Khan was elected Mayor of London in May 2016, replacing Boris Johnson who had been a driving force behind the delivery strategy for the Olympic legacy. Early on, Khan re-emphasised the importance of the Olympic park site and environs as a location for affordable housing, shifting the focus away from landmark cultural initiatives. At the same time, the manifesto document which he published in October of that year, *A City for all Londoners*, underlined the role of culture as 'another important part of my vision for "good growth"', and announced the new administration's intention to produce 'the world's first cultural infrastructure plan, giving an overview of all the city's cultural requirements to inform spatial and transport planning up to 2030'. The document defines the capital's cultural infrastructure assets as including '*all manner of venues and institutions including theatres, cinemas, music venues, pubs, skate parks, busking pitches, fashion studios and much more*', and emphasises the importance of using the London Plan 'to protect creative workspace, heritage and the night-time economy in London', as well as 'new policies... that would mean developers would bear the costs for soundproofing new homes, relieving pressure on the existing venues in an area – the 'agent-of-change' principle.'²⁵

But in 2017, a new report from the London Assembly Regeneration Committee, *Creative Tensions: optimising the benefits of culture through regeneration*, highlighted a conclusive lack of data in this area. While endorsing the principle that 'culture helps boosts communities', it also warned of the dangers of gentrification stemming from culture-led regeneration. It stated that 'more data on culture is needed for developing strong evidence-based policies and spending', and that what data does exist 'is out-of-date. There has not been any comprehensive statistical recording since the London Culture Map in 2010... the last major attempt to understand the extent of cultural participation and venues in London'. It criticised the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) survey 'Taking Part',²⁶ running quarterly from 2005 onwards, for only offering data on participation in culture and sport at national and regional levels, i.e. covering London as a whole, but not borough-by-borough: 'existing data is not sufficiently granular to support effective policy making.' Its primary recommendation was that 'The Mayor should develop better quality data establishing the location of venues, artistic groups and cultural events.'²⁷

In the Taking Part survey, cultural participation is defined by frequency of participation, reasons for participation, barriers to participation and attitudes to the sectors, in relation to six key fields: arts, museums and galleries, archives, libraries, heritage and sport. It thus indicates a rather narrower definition of what might be considered to comprise 'cultural infrastructure' than that set out in the Mayor's manifesto. It is also useful to compare it with the definition published in Newham Council's earlier Community Infrastructure Study, which states, "'Culture" can have a number of definitions, covering the arts, culture, media and sport. For the purposes of this report, it has been agreed with the Client that cultural activities in Newham include museums, galleries, heritage, theatres, cinemas and town centre festivals and markets'.²⁸

Notwithstanding the Study's recommendation that a cultural provision mapping exercise be carried out, Jane Kennedy, Research Business Manager in Newham's Corporate

25 *A City for all Londoners*, GLA Oct 2016, p 27.

26 Taking Part Survey, DDCMS, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/taking-part-survey>

27 *Creative tensions: optimising the benefits of culture through regeneration*. London Assembly Regeneration Committee March 2017, p 20

28 *Newham Community Infrastructure Study Culture and Regeneration*, p 1

services directorate, and coordinator of its bi-annual Household Panel Survey (NHPS, distilled in Newham Key Facts),²⁹ confirmed when approached for this report that ‘as far as I know there are no data sets relating to cultural infrastructure’ in Newham.³⁰ However in 2014 arts participation in Newham was reported to be one of the lowest in the country.³¹ The London Datastore, hosted by the GLA, holds four sets of data on ‘Use of public libraries, visits to museums and galleries, and engagement in the arts’ across the London boroughs from 2008-13 (minus 2009-10), as one resource of four relating to Arts and Culture (the others being number of pubs and bars 2001-16; tourism trips by borough; and number of premises licences and club premises certificates). In 2012-13, Newham’s adult participation in library services and arts events or activities dropped to an all-time low of 18%, the lowest of any borough except for Southwark at 17% for library use, and compared to London borough averages of 46.2% and 62.1% respectively. Of the four boroughs, Newham’s participation rates in all areas are consistently the lowest across the five-year span, with the exception of visits to museums or galleries in 2012-13 (36.5% compared to Hackney’s 32.6%) and use of public libraries in 2011-12 (47.5% compared to Tower Hamlets 42.2%, and also above the London average of 45.1%).³²

In 2014 the LLDC published a **Local Economy Study** which offers some useful data on the number and scale of businesses in the arts and culture sector within the four LLDC sub areas, and the relationship between economic activity and physical space. This study was based on a ‘walk-round survey’ and interviews over two weeks in 2014, and recorded some 653 business units in the area, of which 50% were deemed to be ‘creative’ following the definition given in DCMS 2001 Creative Industries Mapping Document: “those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property’. This included 218 arts and culture units in use, and 43 architecture and design businesses, as well as 69% of textile manufacturers, and 69% of businesses working within the sound and video industry (see Table 3).³³

Table 3 Selected findings LLDC Local Economy Study 2014

69% of all businesses (448) located in Hackney Wick and Fish Island (Sub area 1)
50% of all businesses occupy workshop type spaces
60% have a workforce of 5 people or fewer
43% of workforce local to area
46% of businesses moved into current premises within last 3 years
14 manufacturing-printing businesses occupy a building footprint 3.5 times larger than that of 218 arts and culture businesses
only 7% of arts and culture businesses agreed to be interviewed for the survey (the lowest %)

Finally, UCL itself has made some inroads on compiling data on cultural and other organisations in the area since 2013. UCL Culture has compiled a fairly extensive **Engagement Database East**, through the work of Kim Townsend, Public Engagement Officer East 2013-16, and Minna Ruohonen (2016 onwards), who have been responsible

29 <https://www.newham.gov.uk/Pages/Services/Our-research.aspx#NewhamHouseholdPanelSurveyNHPSWaves7and8>. It does not include data relating to cultural provision or participation

30 correspondence with author 2nd June 2016

31 Liz Pearson, Arts Professional 2014, as above

32 <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/use-public-libraries-visits-museums-and-galleries-and-engagement-arts>

33 LLDC Local Economy Study 2014. URS Infrastructure and Environment UK LTD and Markoandplacemakers.

for organising Creating Connections events at Stratford Library for several years with a view to linking up academics and volunteers from UCL with counterparts at local Stratford institutions such as University of East London, and a wide range of community-based groups. The UCL Urban Laboratory collaborated with Professor Michael Stewart in Anthropology and Greg Thompson, Creative Entrepreneur in Residence in July 2016 on the organisation of a second UCL East summer school on the theme of University-led urban regeneration, which brought together 38 UCL-based and local representatives to talk to student-age participants about local social and cultural issues. The Institute for Global Prosperity has been collaborating with the LLDC to explore what long-term prosperity means for communities in East London, working with citizen scientists and community representatives in three areas, Hackney Wick, Stratford and East Village, to produce a Prosperity Index accessible to local people. It has also established the London Prosperity Board, a partnership between UCL, government, businesses and communities, including LLDC and LB Hackney.

We have collated a range of relevant data from the sources described above. However we have not discovered any comprehensive and accessible database which also establishes an agreed definition of cultural infrastructure. Supplemented by internet searches, and local authority area-based web resources, the data we have compiled focuses mainly on arts and heritage-focused organisations and workspaces correlated to physical structures and spaces, and does not extend as far as schools, faith organisations, parks, pubs, cafes, shopping centres, festivals, and small businesses, all of which might be considered important parts of the cultural infrastructure of the area, in terms of supporting community identity and wellbeing, but would demand a significant amount of future work beyond the scope of this report.

In the following section we further summarise the qualitative findings generated by six interviews conducted with different stakeholders in the cultural infrastructure of the defined area, which provide some more in-depth insights into the perceived strengths and problems of cultural provision, participation and cohesion around the Olympic Park, as well as perceptions of UCL and the potential impacts of its arrival in the area. The interviews are supplemented by a visual survey of arts and culture sites around the edge of the park, from Stratford to Hackney Wick, and concluding at Three Mills to the south.

In June 2017 we supplemented our desk-based survey of existing data with some qualitative research around the park. This included a photographic survey of cultural infrastructure sites around the park, conducted on foot over two days; participation with local community groups and activists in a discussion event on ‘The Future of the Wick?’ at Stour Space; and visits to six different cultural organisations to interview stakeholders and acquire information in four key areas: venue type, activities and audiences; existing local cultural networks and support structures; prospects for development of cultural infrastructure in the next 5 – 10 years; and views on the prospective arrival of UCL in the area. The organisations we selected for interview were:

- **Together! 2012**, a disability arts organisation which runs clubs for disabled people in pop-up spaces around the borough of Newham, including the council-owned community centre of Vicarage Lane in the south-east;
- **Stratford and West Ham Community Neighbourhood at Stratford Library**, a council-run and funded operation which runs both the library and a continuous programme of cultural and community activities, with a focus on resilience;
- **The Yard Theatre and Hub 67** in Hackney Wick, performance and community spaces operating from temporary premises provided by the LLDC;
- **UEL School of Arts and Digital Industries**, which occupies space in the University Square Stratford development run for higher education purposes by University of East London and Birkbeck College;
- **House Mill**, a heritage site located south of the Olympic Park, which is completely staffed by volunteers and in the process of raising funds for a new restoration project which would include a significant culture and education programme;
- **Eastside Community Heritage**, which has worked on projects documenting the lives of ordinary people in and around Stratford since 1993 (established as part of Stratford City Challenge) and is now based in a parish centre in Ilford.

These interviews were set up with a view to providing snapshots of the cultural infrastructure in different geographical areas around the park, from the perspective of diverse organisations representative of contrasting areas of cultural life and activity: (following the order above) disability groups, library users and small-scale local activities organisers and participants; students and academics; arts practitioners in the under-30s age group; older local heritage volunteers; and ordinary local people from the area’s ethnically diverse communities. From the conversations conducted and recorded in a set of case studies which we have produced, a number of key findings come through, which are summarised below:

1 Shortage of funding and physical space for survival and development

Each of the organisations visited occupied a different type of space along the scale of permanence in the local built infrastructure and security of tenure (see visual survey). Together! 2012 doesn’t have a permanent address. It is dependent on pop-up spaces around the London Borough of Newham to accommodate its free and open arts clubs for disabled people, run by volunteers. This includes the council-owned community centre where the interview was conducted. It was set up as part of the Paralympic legacy, but now relies on precarious mainstream arts funding and support from local property developers. The Yard and Hub 67 – ‘a rare public-facing space in Hackney Wick’ – run a programme of theatre productions and community programmes in temporary premises provided by the LLDC in Hackney Wick which have a lifespan of around 10 years, following which they hope to occupy new purpose-built space provided within the redevelopment

of Queens Yard. Their funding lifeline from the LLDC Legacy List charity was cut off with the creation of Foundation for Future London and they rely on commercial rentals and events income. Stratford Community Neighbourhood delivers a continuous programme of community and cultural activities funded by Newham Council and through many other local partnerships, which is based at Stratford Library, a purpose-built, council-owned and run premises due for refurbishment with support from developer Lendlease. UEL's School of Arts and Digital Industries runs its performing arts department from University Square Stratford, a purpose-built development adjacent to Stratford Cultural Quarter in the town centre, which is shared with Birkbeck College. It also rents additional dance space in the Stratford Circus Arts Centre. However, the management and other departments of the School are based at its campus in Docklands, and Birkbeck College is said to be withdrawing from the Stratford site. The House Mill is a Grade I listed historic mill building south of the Olympic Park which is operated by volunteers as a heritage and education centre, dependent on Heritage Lottery funding and some rental income to remain open, and keen to identify alternative sources of revenue for future development. Eastside Community Heritage was originally based in Stratford Old Town Hall, but has subsequently moved to a number of different locations around and beyond the borough and now occupies rented space in the rundown Cardinal Heenan parish centre in Ilford.

All of these organisations have well-established reputations for delivering high-quality arts and culture provision to different local audiences around the Olympic Park, with the exception of House Mill which has been unable to develop a cultural engagement programme due to lack of resources, but hopes to do so in future. However, four out of six interviewees (excluding Stratford Library and UEL) expressed concern for continuing survival in coming years, based on the precarity of funding streams, absence of local borough support, and threat from larger organisations. In five cases of the six (excluding UEL), a view was further expressed that funding had become less available in the years since the Olympics, and the LLDC less approachable. It was said that LLDC officers 'speak a very corporate language' and do not make any effort to come out into the local community. Resources had been redirected into large-scale initiatives inside the park rather than the areas around it, and affordable physical space had become more scarce due to large-scale residential and commercial development supported by the LLDC and boroughs around the perimeter of the park. In a number of cases, hopes were pinned on the GLA as a potential provider of space and resources in short supply, particularly sites and buildings in its ownership, but with less evident faith in its capacity to provide protection for cultural resources through its policy frameworks, such as the Creative Enterprise Zone pilot, at least in the immediate vicinity of the park.

2 Cultural disconnect between local communities and park resources

Related to these concerns was an emphasis on the very significant cultural and physical divide between communities around the park, and the world embodied within the park itself, due firstly to physical infrastructure, and secondly to a perception that high-level sporting and cultural events are irrelevant to local concerns and identities. The park was described as 'foreign to everyone', physically and visually segregated from local communities by new high-rise building, and exacerbated by a lack of signage. The cultural disconnect is underscored by the fact that local people 'don't know how to walk there', and even though Newham councillors are working closely with the LLDC, 'they can't hold residents' hands'. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the new Waterfront development inside the park will simply be inaccessible to disabled visitors, with insufficient parking and inappropriate design, uninformed by input from disabled users: 'too complicated, the meandering paths, the aesthetic... it will be siloed space for under-40s'. Ultimately local residents are said to prefer to access cultural and community resources in familiar venues outside the Olympic park, such as the Atherton sports centre, Stratford Cultural Quarter (Stratford Circus, Theatre Royal and Picturehouse), or Central Park East Ham.

In addition, community diversity drawn along ethnic and religious lines (1,500 languages or dialects are spoken in Newham) has significant implications for definitions of cultural identity and appropriate provision of cultural infrastructure: 'we have people from every background' reports Together!2012, of whom the majority are observant of some form of religion. UEL has a 70% BAME student population, drawn mainly from the local area, and stresses the need to acknowledge issues embedded within cultural diversity and expectations if goals for widening participation and attainment in higher education are to be met. There are particular concerns around the loss of cultural diversity through Olympics-led regeneration – to younger, whiter, wealthier constituencies, who are more likely to engage with park resources in future, but will also displace existing communities who are being priced out of the Olympics boroughs.

Newham council follows a 'colour-blind' integration policy, which means a ban on borough-sponsored culturally-specific programming, focusing instead on issues around health and resilience in terms of cultural infrastructure. One interviewee explained that the idea that 'people bring their own culture with them' underpins the council's resistance to establishing a permanent local museum and collections. However, it does support a dynamic annual Newham Heritage Week which encompasses a wide range of activities organised by different local groups (including the long-established Eastside Community Heritage): walks, visits to historic sites, 'oral history bike rides', and workshops celebrating the borough's history and multicultural heritage. At the same time, informal multi-ethnic cultural infrastructure appears to be thriving in the units and stalls of the local Stratford shopping centre and along the high street, and no doubt in the network of myriad low-key churches and mosques across the area, overshadowed by the scale of costly new developments and high street 'improvements'. The question is both whether such diversity can be sustained in the face of the new large-scale institutional cultural initiatives which the LLDC is promoting at the expense of smaller grassroots organisations, and also what space there may be for new kinds of heritage initiative outside the park which, like House Mill, specifically engage with the longer history of the local area as the former industrial powerhouse of London.

3 Potential threat posed by UCL and other 'big players'

Among the interviewees, responses to UCL's prospective arrival in the Olympic Park ranged from disappointed and antagonistic, to positive and optimistic. On the one hand, UCL is seen as a good potential 'established partner', committed for the long-haul, which might be able to deliver on valuable resources for stressed local organisations as well as bring new audiences to venues, reinvigorating the existing cultural infrastructure. Hopes were expressed that the university's presence in the park could open up opportunities for partnership including new sources of funding, embedded joint training programmes, and access to physical space for exhibitions, events, archives, and even office use – at a suitable rent. It would help 'to put small organisations on the map'. UCL was also profiled as a good academic research partner for UEL particularly in the area of the attainment gap between BAME students and others, focused on the local context but also extending further east beyond Stratford to Barking and Dagenham and the Thames Gateway.

On the other hand, interviewees aired concerns that UCL was overlooking existing cultural resources, failing to learn from the experts who are already embedded in the surrounding communities, and, like the LLDC, speaking a language that no-one can understand, fast jeopardising local interest. There is a clearly articulated sense of surprise and dismay at UCL's rhetoric and new initiatives around heritage, archiving, making, performance, disability innovation, and even higher education itself, which not only fail to acknowledge and engage with established activities in these areas which have flourished locally for decades, but also threaten their survival. More than once, UCL was accused of wasting local organisations' times with meetings that led to nothing, and of showing an unwillingness to collaborate with experienced local stakeholders. A strong fear was voiced that ultimately UCL, along with the other 'big players' coming to the park, 'will wipe us out'. As one interviewee put it, 'If Newham has a choice of working

with UCL or us, who do you think they'll want to work with?' It is suggested that UCL's site within the perimeters of the Olympic Park will further contribute to the already uneven distribution of resources between cultural infrastructure inside and outside the park, and that it is neither in UCL's own interests, nor that of its neighbours, for the university to be sited inside the park given the significant disconnect between the park and local neighbourhoods and communities. Finally, it is suggested that UCL needs to expand its horizons of interest, beyond the already well-defined areas of regeneration, gentrification, and academic concern in Hackney and Newham, and further east to encompass the still-neglected areas of Ilford, Silvertown, Canning Town and Docklands which are in need of cultural and institutional investment.

Based on these core findings, this report proposes that there is considerable interest in engaging with UCL East among local stakeholders in the existing cultural infrastructure around the Olympic Park, who have waited for a number of years for more concrete information about the university's intentions, proposed programme of activities, and designs for a new campus. Yet there is also a certain degree of 'consultation fatigue' and wariness among interviewees and potential interviewees, most of whom had already met UCL academics or public engagement officers in some capacity in the past, or taken part in UCL Culture's Creating Connections events at Stratford Library, and sometimes been disappointed by lack of follow-up. In addition, there is considerable frustration at the lack of transparency around UCL's organisation and coordination between different staff members, departments and initiatives at UCL. Notwithstanding, a number of local stakeholders have expressed in principle a willingness to continue a discussion stemming from this research and interviews which might feed back into the planning and programming of UCL East and its outreach activities. Hence the report endorses the following areas of continuing work with local organisations, in the immediate, mid-term and long-term time-frames:

1 *Immediate*

- a) production of publicly accessible data visualisation locating different types of cultural infrastructure geographically within the areas, with details of activities and contacts, which would significantly update and expand the LLDC's Local Directory in a digital form, constitute a tangible resource for local communities arising from this report, and enhance coordination of UCL activities in the local area;
- b) renewal of emphasis within the UCL East vision on supporting existing social and cultural infrastructure, and better communication of these aspects.

2 *Mid-term*

- a) further interviews/ group sessions with local organisations to co-produce a manifesto of principles for cultural interaction between UCL East and surrounding neighbourhoods, with a focus on the potential of a new Urban Room at UCL East to provide a hub for shared activities, and to host local initiatives;
- b) seek to bring together and invest funding in maintaining and extending datasets.

3 *Long-term*

co-curate with local people, and in collaboration with UCL colleagues across faculties and through the Centre for Critical Heritage Studies (in which Urban Laboratory is a research cluster leader), a collection that has an East London focus. This could change every three years, and provide a long-term resource from which the University can learn and continue to develop research embedded in the local cultural context.

It is vital that as the vision for UCL East develops it continues to be grounded in the cultural infrastructure which already exists but is desperately short of the resources it needs to survive, flourish, and sustain future generations in the area. Furthermore, and as recently re-stated by Alan Penn, Dean of the Faculty of the Built Environment (24th Oct 2017, 'Eastern Update'), the vision for UCL East has a vital role to play in rebalancing and sustaining UCL itself – now comprising over 60% medical and life science disciplines, while other areas, notably Humanities, Social Sciences and Engineering have been 'starved of space for decades'. If UCL East is to succeed as a high quality environment for cutting-edge, collaborative research and teaching which will allow these disciplines to flourish and maintain an international research profile, it will need to ensure that it draws on strong support from local communities within the framework of a mutually beneficial and collaborative research agenda which has measurable impact on the cultural environment of east London.

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Together! 2012, West Ham



Stratford Library, Stratford town centre



The Yard Theatre and Hub 67, Hackney Wick



UEL: old and new (West Ham/ University Square Stratford)



The House Mill, Three Mills, Bromley-by-Bow



Eastside Community Heritage, Ilford

