

Lee, Lewisham | Development Brief

CULTIVATING CONNECTIONS

ESTABLISHING NETWORKS AND ENCOURAGING CENTRALITY

BENVGBU1:
Transforming Local Areas:
Urban Design for Development
Submitted to: Giorgio Talocci
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Figure 01 - Manor Lane Street (Source: Authors)

Executive Summary

Introduction

The area of Lee Green is located in South-West London, between the boroughs of Lewisham and Greenwich. This area is particularly affected by the major transformation that are interesting London, namely a significant population growth accompanied by a change in the structure and location of jobs.

The area of Lee was already recorded as a rural settlement in the 1086 Domesday Survey, but it wasn't until the 17th and 18th century that it developed into a landscape of country and weekend homes, and, later, as a choice area for wealthy London merchants to live. A further transformation occurred in 1866, when the railway connection made the transport to London quicker, attracting a new population of commuters in the area. Remnants of Lee's past are still traceable in its heritage.

Analysis

The study of the area was made through a multi-methods research conducted in several phases, comprising a transect walk, photograph analysis, secondary data analysis, direct observation and the realisation of surveys and semi-structured and unstructured interview with local residents.

The outcomes of the study allowed to highlight the main assets of the area, namely its rich past and heritage, its diversified population, its family-oriented character, the presence of an active and relatively organised community, and of a vibrant cultural and arts scene. The area is well-connected and has a satisfactory provision of local shops.

However, the cultural fabric of the neighbourhood is fragmented, divided by conflicting and competing interests that lack a coordinated development structure. Cultural activities are confined to specific spaces and temporalities, while underutilised spaces in the district centre contribute to the area feeling unsafe and muted. This, joint with heavy traffic during rush hours and an otherwise car-dominated environment, have led to a generally pedestrian-unfriendly and incohesive identity within the built environment, and to high levels of pollution. The neighbourhood is also characterised by a tectonic social structure, where different social groups occupying quasi-enclaved spaces are separated by thresholds while other groups are wholly excluded.

The planned developments in Lee may contribute to attract new investments. More importantly, the historical, green and blue features can be valorised, and the community fabric strengthened, provided that stakeholders are fully involved. Adversely, some trends in real-estate have the potential of threatening the character of the area, and new developments could damage the existing commercial as well as the urban fabric and endanger the district's heritage.

Design Framework

The vision that underlies this document is "Cultivating Connections; establishing networks and encouraging

centrality". This is realised through the principle of Integration with Preservation: the project aims to preserve the character of Lee and play on its existing assets to create a resilient and inclusive community, that can withstand future transformations which have the potential of exacerbating social segregation.

This principle is articulated in six guidelines (see Figure pp. 16-17): connecting movements and associations; fostering networks to channel resources for collaborative initiatives; regenerating and densifying unused spaces; optimising mixed-used spaces, mobilising existing skills, creative assets, and history; and promoting participation from different strata of the population.

Intervention

The aforementioned guidelines are translated into six strategies: connecting people and spaces through collaborative initiatives; valorising heritage and nature; creating and bridging new art spaces; enhancing local commerce; densifying and diversifying the uses of space; and expanding and coalescing residential space. These strategies, articulated in both material interventions on the built environment and immaterial initiatives such as workshops and activities, and involving local partners as well as external investors, draw a development model for the neighbourhood that is both financially and socially sustainable, while answering to the imperatives of a growing London district.

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1. Introduction



As the revised London Plan of 2016 indicates (Greater London Authority, 2016), London's population is expected to undergo major quantitative and qualitative change: an ongoing and accelerated growth will be accompanied by a change of structure in the population and of the employment sector. Meanwhile, racial and ethnic diversity is expected to strengthen, in a context already largely characterised by super-diversity (Vertovec, 2007).

The area of Lee Green is situated between two of the boroughs that will be greatly affected by those changes; Lewisham and Greenwich's population is expected to grow by 20-29% by 2036, with the number of jobs in the area expected to increase by 42,000, i.e. a 27.5% average increase (Greater London Authority, 2016). The two boroughs also present a very composite population, both socially and ethnically. Furthermore, Lewisham contains some of the wards of London which score the highest in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) (Greater London Authority, 2016).

Such major changes call for a careful and a forward-looking plan that aims to create a strong, resilient community in Lee, one that is able to accommodate change and recognise diversity as an asset. In order to do so, a double-action is necessary: firstly, by empowering the existing communities, giving them agency over the production of urban space and the continuous "process of making meanings and creating values" (Sandercock, 2006, p. 41); and secondly, creating spaces of encounter (Fincher and Iveson, 2008), intended not merely as quality public spaces, but as occasions for everyday "prosaic negotiations" (Amin, 2002).

This development brief considers both these dimensions.

It aims to empower actors that are already operating in Lee, actively involving them in the co-creation of places and their meanings, building upon existing knowledge and activism, and finally *cultivating* the potential that is already present.

At the same time, this brief aspires to weave and incite new connections: physical *connection*, by reclaiming urban space for its inhabitants; symbolic connections, by emphasizing the relation with history and nature in the area; and social connection, by creating spaces and opportunities of encounter.

CREAT

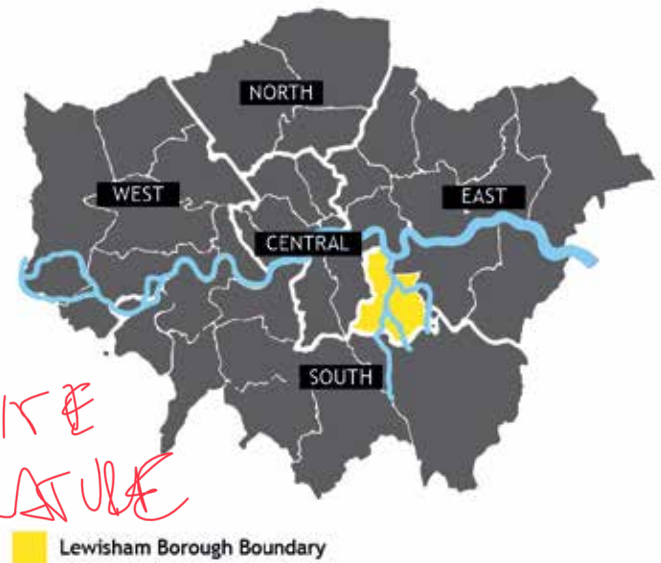


Figure 03 - Burnt Ash Road and Eltham Road (Source: Authors)

2. Context



Figure 04 - The Old Tigers Head, 19th century (Source: Lewisham Borough Photos)



Figure 05 - New Tigers Head, 2018 (Source: Authors)

2.1 History

Now a mixed-use, ethnically diverse district, Lee is populated by generations of residents and newcomers alike, it's current-day makeup a reflection of its rich past. The district was first recorded as a settlement in the Domesday Survey in 1086, and with a population of only 70 people, it was described as a small and dispersed village. By the 18th century, there were two buildings, one of which was located on Burnt Ash Road - now populated with various stores and restaurants - and the other being the historic Manor House Garden on Old Road, which continues to remain in its original locale.

South of Lee Green was primarily agricultural land, including farms and plant nurseries growing along the banks of the Quaggy River. This tradition of local production continues to resonate today; not with agriculture, but with the arts.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, Lee's landscape predominantly comprised of country and weekend homes, and became a popular area for wealthy London merchants to live. In 1825, a neighborhood referred to as Lee New Town was built, mainly housing servants and those working for the upper crust who resided in the larger houses in Lee as well as the neighbouring Blackheath Park. In 1866, Lee Station was opened, making the region more accessible for a wider range of people who worked in central London but lived in Lee and commuted to and from the area. Historically an elitist enclave for wealthy English tradesmen, Lee has become home to diverse segments of society, ethnically, socially, and economically - yet its heritage, present through identifiable and concealed landmarks, continue to be appreciated today.

2.2 Situating Lee in the London Plan

The London Plan is a statutory spatial development strategy (SDS) for the City of London, produced by the Mayor's Office. Published in early 2016 and amended the following year, it is set to operate over the next 20 to 25 years. It looks at integrated economic, social, cultural, environmental, and infrastructural frameworks to foster positive growth in London.

Under the Localism Act of 2011, communities are able and empowered to prepare neighborhood plans within their locality jurisdiction. The London Plan and its described approaches serve as a guideline to ensure local plans operate as part of a city-wide, cohesive urban strategy.

How are Lee and its future design strategies situated in the London Plan?

Below is a figure of several policies, in the scope of this development brief, which are central to guiding the redevelopment of Lee.

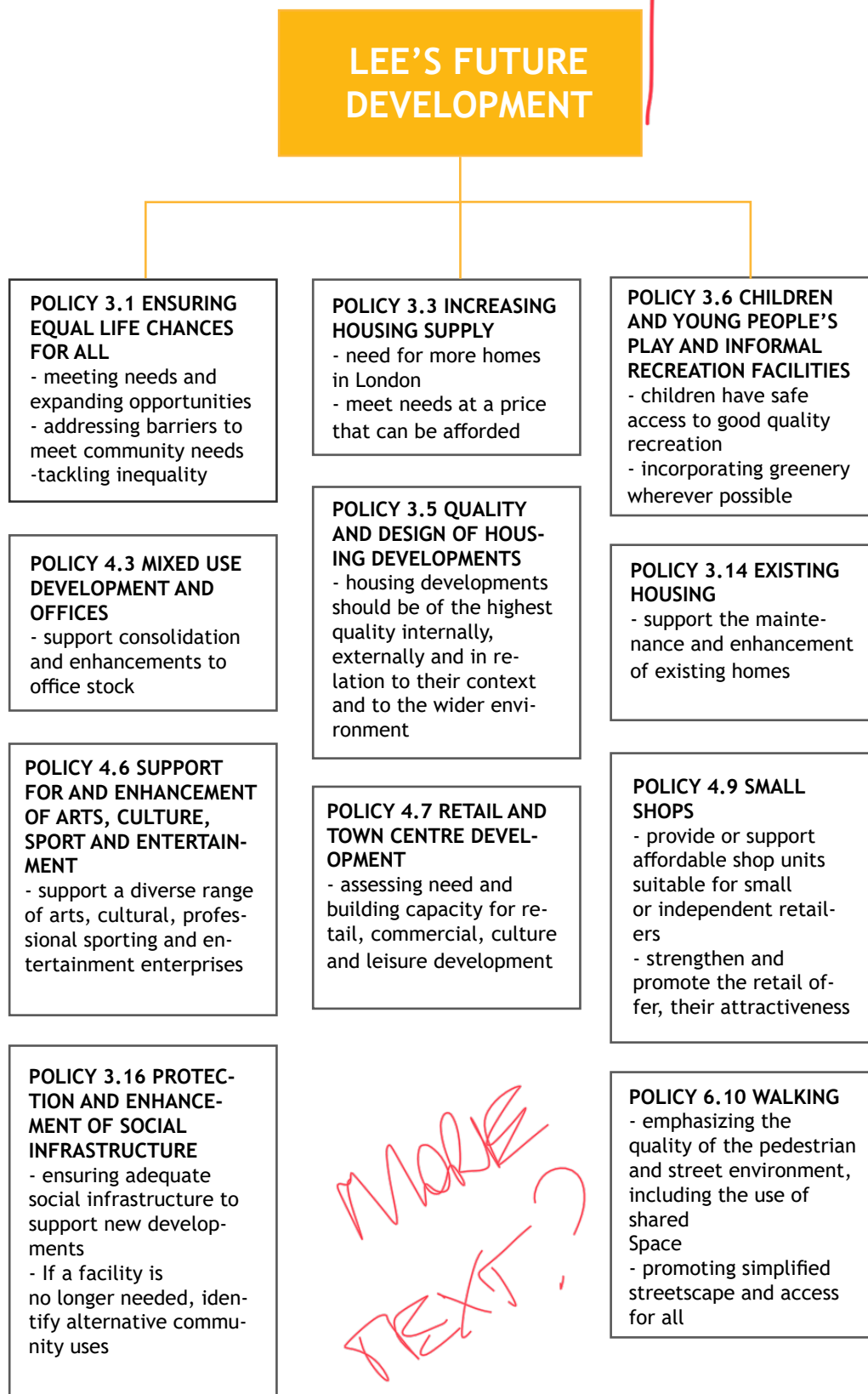


Figure 06: London Plan policies (Source: Authors)

3. Methodology

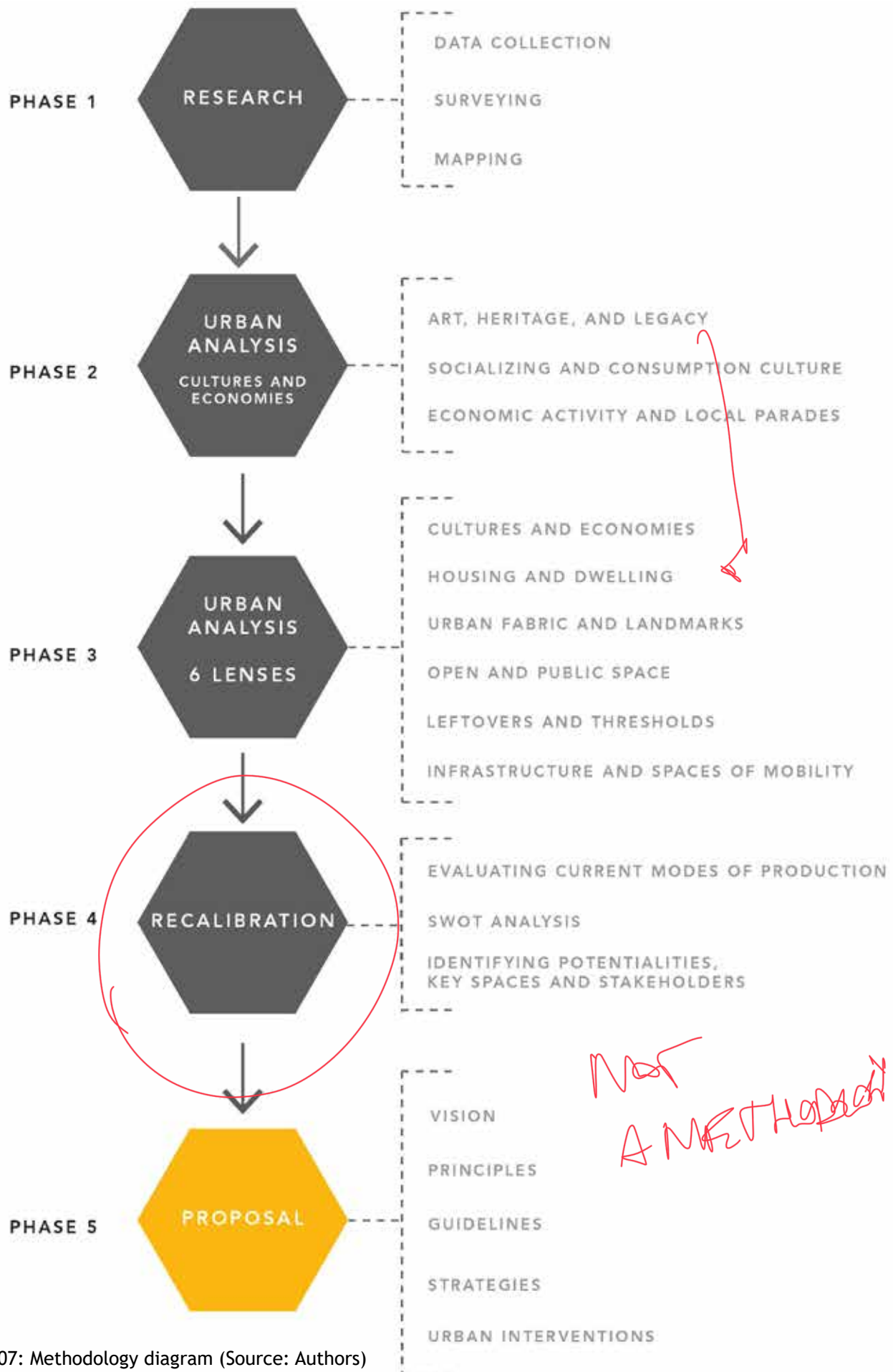


Figure 07: Methodology diagram (Source: Authors)

4. Synthesizing spatial dynamics in Lee

4.1 Cultures and economies

Cultural fragmentation, where different social groups are confined to particular spaces, prevents the genuine interactions and bonding needed to create a strong social fabric for Lee. Most socialising spaces that could favour an encounter between people of different origins and social strata are limited in their accessibility, favouring certain times of the year, such as parks, or are temporary in nature, such as art events and festivals. Moreover, the nature of those spaces and events appear to appeal only to certain profile users of particular demographic groups. Highly frequented, shared spaces which are permanent, could act as places of community-bonding - such as pubs and restaurants which proved to be social hot-spots in Lee - but are limited in encouraging organic intermingling between various members of the community due to the regular and segmented nature of their clientele. Associative indoor spaces which are co-produced, such as Deaf is Cool, are needed to enhance the frequency and depth of inter-class, inter-racial interactions.

The primary form of economic activity is the local commercial network, which presents an underexploited district center dominated by a single player - Sainsbury's - and is characterised by the abandonment of the majority of the Leegate Center. Other spaces which are conveniently located and have the potential to connect the outer, residential districts, to this town center, encouraging permeability and fostering sociability, include the abandoned Vauxhall garage and waterfront of the Quaggy River. Lee's local economic sector shows potential to be revitalised to increase the quality of shared urban spaces, especially during the night time and weekends. However, it is paramount to preserve and utilise the neighborhood's existing, local commercial activity, as, it is a valuable asset which can be used to optimise sociability and connection within the community. Outside the district center, a fair distribution of local parades provides optimal access to day-to-day retail, and should be maintained.

Heritage, as an overriding community asset, is found between these parades, historic quarters and houses, such as the Manor House Library, and in the culture and arts scene once dominated by famous writers, including Edith Nesbit. It plays a major role in fostering cultural and arts activity in Lee and upholding a character which gives the community a strong identity. Thus, heritage, like local retailers, has the potential to be a valuable economic and social asset which should be highlighted amidst redevelopments, to strengthen sense of belonging, interactions and connections in the neighborhood.

4.2 Housing and Dwelling

Residents of Lee recognised the neighborhood's character as firmly rooted in its history, with future developments ideally taking into consideration heritage and cultural identity, through their preservation. However, a major issue lies in the disconnect between housing and public spaces, as units of the built environment which should otherwise merge or have a sense of fluidity. This is partially the result of homeowners and renters in Lee being quite diverse in age, ethnicity, and income levels, leading to a conflict of interest in what re-development should prioritize, ranging from increased housing size to maintain Lee's familial nature, greater commercial engagement, to affordability and price control. Resolving this disconnect would enhance the potential for an improved sense of community and ensure consideration is given to divergent priorities.

4.3 Urban Fabric and Landmarks

Lee's urban fabric is, in large part, the outcome of historical periods and events legacy has manifested in a traditional, residential-dominated, landscape. The district contains a mix of historical and contemporary housing, and newer, commercial developments, in conjunction with several underused public spaces. The combination has led to an urbanity which, at times, feels severed in typology. The mix in types of housing, with modern and prosperous often placed alongside older and dilapidated, lends to the desire for redevelopment to secure uniformity, uphold heritage, and encapsulates the community's understanding of Lee's values and identity.

4.4 Open and Public Spaces

A major asset in Lee is the presence of green, public spaces, such as Manor House Garden and the Quaggy, which often act as rendezvous spots for locals to gather through permanent and temporal events, albeit limited to the warmer seasons. Furthermore, there exist central commercial landmarks, such as Sainsbury's and the Weatherspoon Pub, which are readily identifiable by community members and therefore have potential in encouraging flow and greater walkability. However, their capacity in doing so is limited by the majority of Lee Gate Center being underdeveloped and empty, and therefore unable to encourage a diverse population

using the space year-round and for mixed operation.

4.5 Thresholds and Leftovers

An analysis on thresholds and leftovers points to a lack of spatial cohesion in Lee, primarily due to the development cycle overlooking Lee's needs or exaggerating its issues. There are numerous confined social and residential enclaves that do not organically meld. Not only does this perpetuate a lack of contact and closed-off, collective conformity, but it also creates perceived borders of exclusion felt by many members of the community.

OK

4.6 Infrastructure and Spaces of Mobility

While Lee contains the basic routes of connectivity and accessibility needed in an urban district, it has a lot of potential for improved infrastructure to increase ease of mobility. In general, main roads and streets are well connected. However, sidewalks and cycling routes are very much detached from one another, limiting pedestrian circulation around the area. Moreover, the heavy flow of traffic on Burnt Ash Road and Lee High Road makes walking in the area not only difficult but unsafe. Car parking is limited, and the two main parking lots are privately owned making the neighborhood inaccessible to many residents and visitors of Lee. Fostering pedestrian connectivity between the aforementioned routes would allow for less blockages and encourage use of public space.

MAP
WOULD HAVE
BEEN MORE

5. Critical Identification of Strengths & Weaknesses

Lee has undergone significant change in recent years, with social and physical transformations having a direct impact on the existing urban and social fabric. Future re-developments which are projected to take place in the urban center will play an important role in this ongoing transformation. In order to understand the impact that will be incurred and possible implications these developments will have for the community, it is vital to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing existing movements and trends, and their primary actors, in relation to the various analytical lenses explored in the previous section. In doing so, the current modes of production are identified, and the room for manoeuvre can be assessed - one which can be manipulated to catalyse positive transformation.

NO REFLECTION ON STRENGTH?

CONSIDER WHY THESE ARE WEAKNESSES

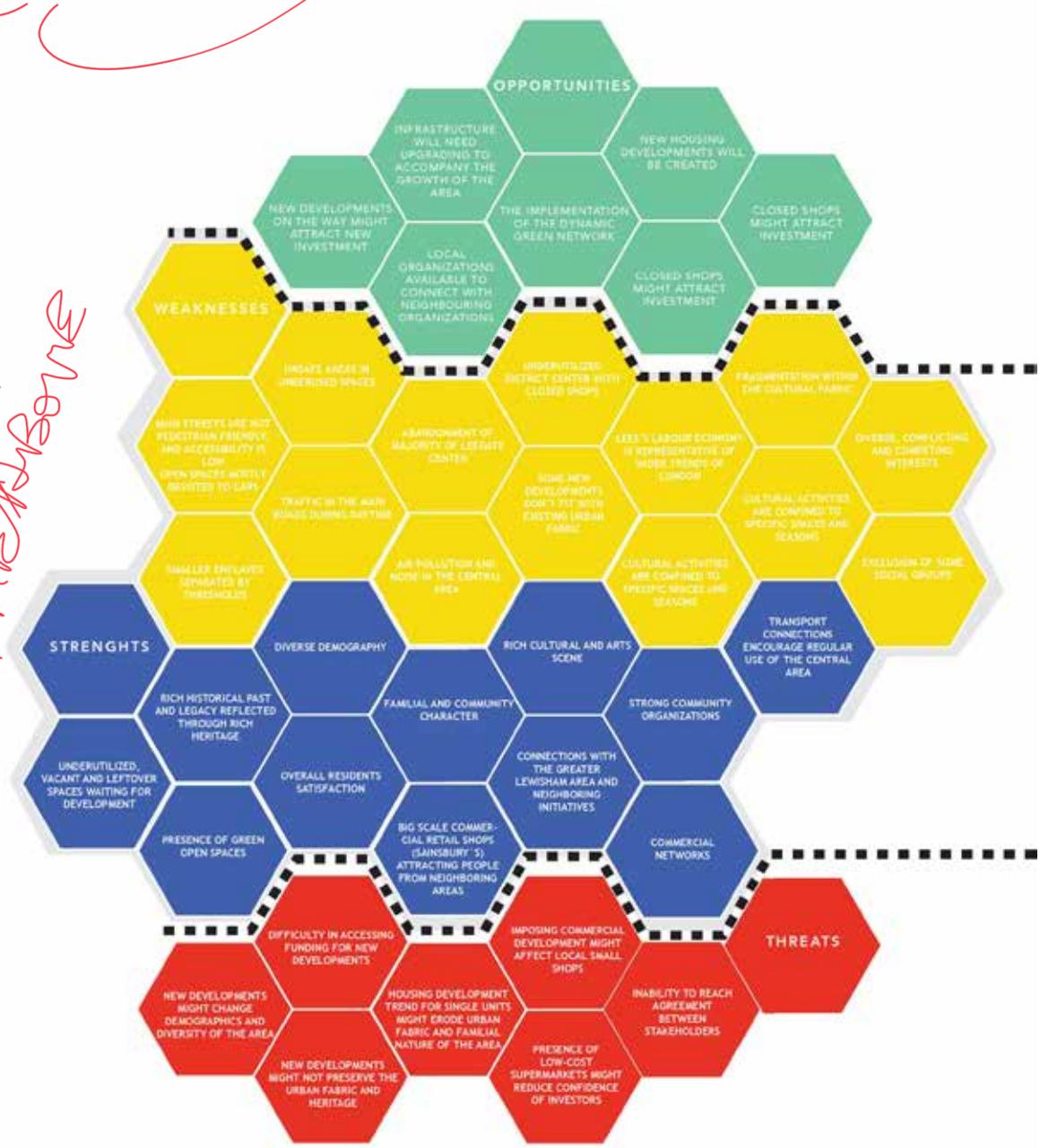


Figure 08: SWOT diagram (Source: Authors)

6. Design Framework

6.1 Vision

We envision a lively, diverse and engaging Lee, which integrates economic, social, and environmental ideals through multiscalar interventions. These interventions strive for community-wide impact beyond acupunctural and localized in their reach. This Lee is one that is accessible and responsive to its diverse social stratum, and contains organically-produced, inclusive public spaces. Here, linking key commercial and social spaces around Lee promotes fluidity and integration, such that communities and identities can connect, and all the while maintain diversity. Essentially, we envision a Lee with a renewed function of centrality, by fostering occasions of encounter.

We understand the urban as a complex object, made of

physical space as well as of people, of everyday practices as well as of power.

The role of an urban project is therefore intended to open new possibilities (Boano, 2017) and enable interactions to unfold in a way that diversity is recognised (Fincher et al., 2014; Sandercock, 2006) and dissensus is possible (Swyngedouw, 2011). Moreover, the failure of social mix policies based on contact theory or mere interventions on housing tenure (Fincher et al., 2014, pp. 16-24; Butler and Robson, 2003; Jackson and Butler, 2014) has shown that such strategies need to give attention to dimensions of the everyday.

That is why the guiding principle of our vision - integration with preservation - is translated into a holistic, multi-scalar intervention, incorporating local agency, building on local knowledge and finally, aiming at empowering local communities.

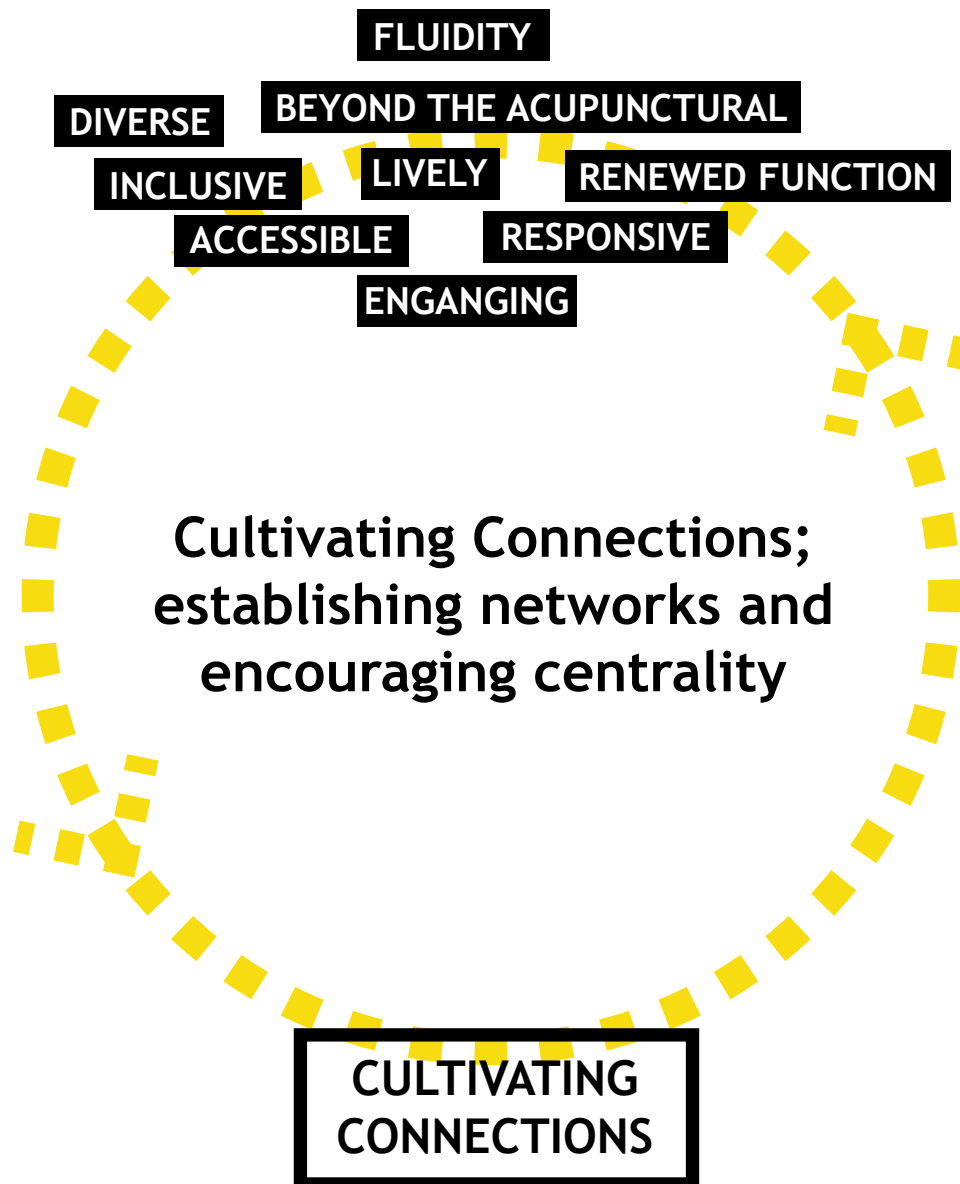


Figure 09: Vision diagram (Source: Authors)

6.2 Principle, Guidelines and Strategies

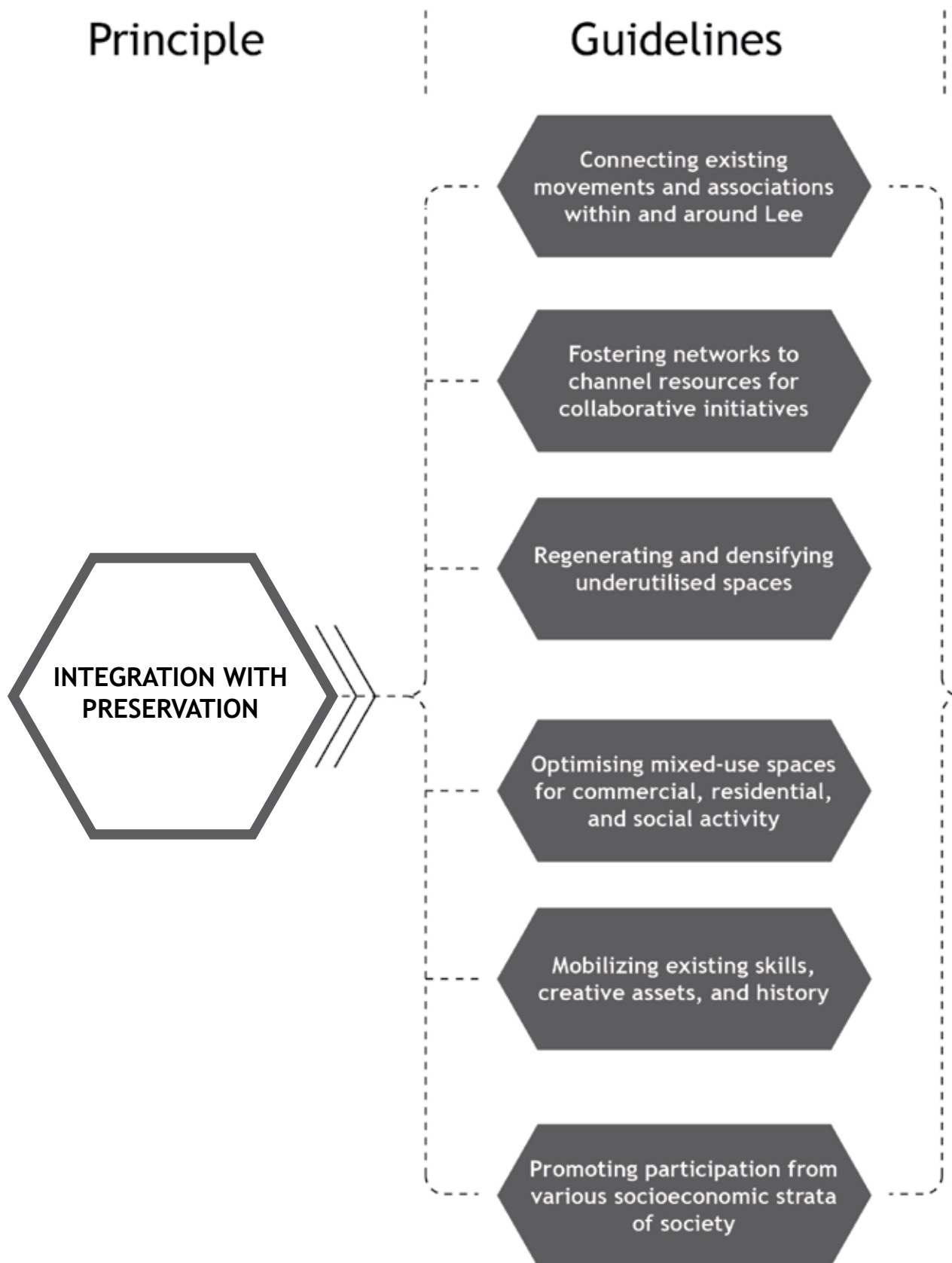


Figure 10: Principle, Guidelines and Strategies (Source: Authors)

Strategies

1. Connecting people and spaces through collaborative initiatives

Connecting and integrating local actors with current or future developments through a program of thematic workshops and participatory initiatives. These would take place in different locations, allowing the co-production of space through community engagement.

2. Showcasing heritage

Creating heritage appeal through a designated route using street signage to easily recognise historical and symbolic sites around Lee. This process would also include the upgrading of shop facades to preserve the historical identity of original buildings.

3. Creating and bridging new art spaces

Reinforcing creative skills and artistic potential by opening new spaces, and linking existing initiatives related to art and culture.

4. Enhancing local commerce

Improving the district centre by diversifying commercial activity which is, when possible, locally-sourced. This would involve the use of vacant and underutilised spaces to create more lively streets and commercial areas.

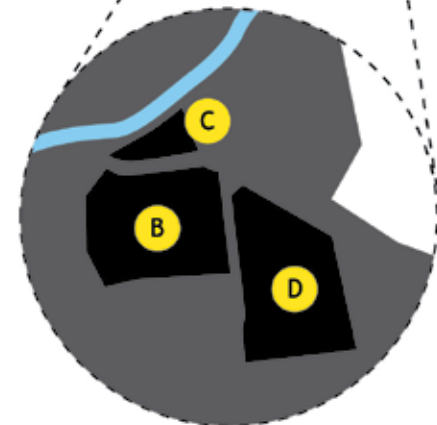
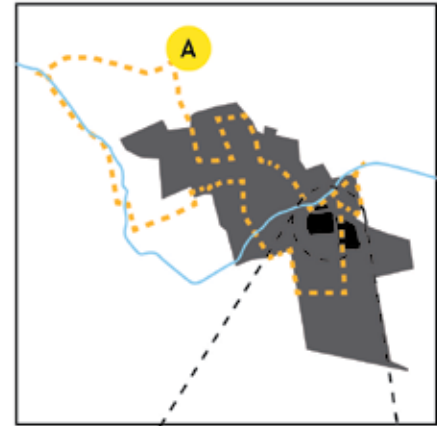
5. Densifying and diversifying uses of space

Increasing density in order to reduce building footprint, promoting mixed-use, active spaces, and strengthening district centrality.

6. Expanding and coalescing residential space

Increasing and diversifying the types of residential properties to include student, intergenerational, and family housing. Not only does this increase housing stock but it acts as a tool to heighten sociability and mixing of social strata.

Urban Interventions



A. Heritage and Conservation (activities; temporality; actors; funding; scale)

B. Sainsbury's: Urban Park

C. Vauxhall: Creative Space

D. Lee Gate Center: Hub for Co-production

7. Interventions and Design Responses

7.1. Lee and Beyond A| Heritage and Nature Walk

Scale: Regional

Temporality: Long-term

Actors: Local Government, Lee Manor Society, Lee Forum

Examples: Wayfinding strategy Adelaide, Studio Binocular
Basilica Sagrada Familia, Avanti Avanti Studio

The heritage walk consists of a designated route using street signage to easily recognise historical and symbolic and naturalistic sites in Lee as well as the surround-

ing areas. The local government together with the Lee Manor Society and the Lee Forum will implement the heritage signage in specific routes attracting not only locals but dwellers from the neighbouring communities; the naturalistic walks will include the green and blue features, and seek integration with the existing Water-link Way . Guided walks may include partnerships with local schools.



Figure 11 - General Map (Source: Authors)



Figure 12 - Heritage Walk Map (Source: Authors)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A The Old Tigers Head | L Lochaber Hall |
| B New Tigers Head | M Manor Park |
| C Lee Green Fire Station | N James Elroy Flecker's House |
| D Police Station | O St. Margarets Church |
| E Valuable buildings | P Merchant Taylors Almshouses |
| F Wetherspoon Pub | Q Boones Chapel |
| G Pillar Box | R Royal Oak Public House |
| H Stanley Unwin | |
| I Manor House | |
| J Ice House | |
| K Pentland House | |



Figure 13 - Wayfinding, Adelaide, Australia
Studio Binocular



Figure 16 - Basilica de la Sagrada Família,
Avanti Avanti Studio



Figure 14 - Wayfinding, Adelaide, Australia
Studio Binocular

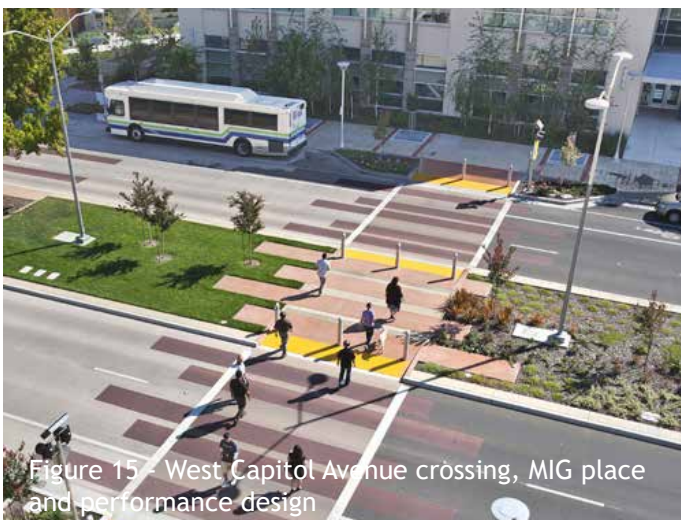


Figure 15 - West Capitol Avenue crossing, MIG place
and performance design



Figure 17 - Camille Walala intervention, Southwark
Street London

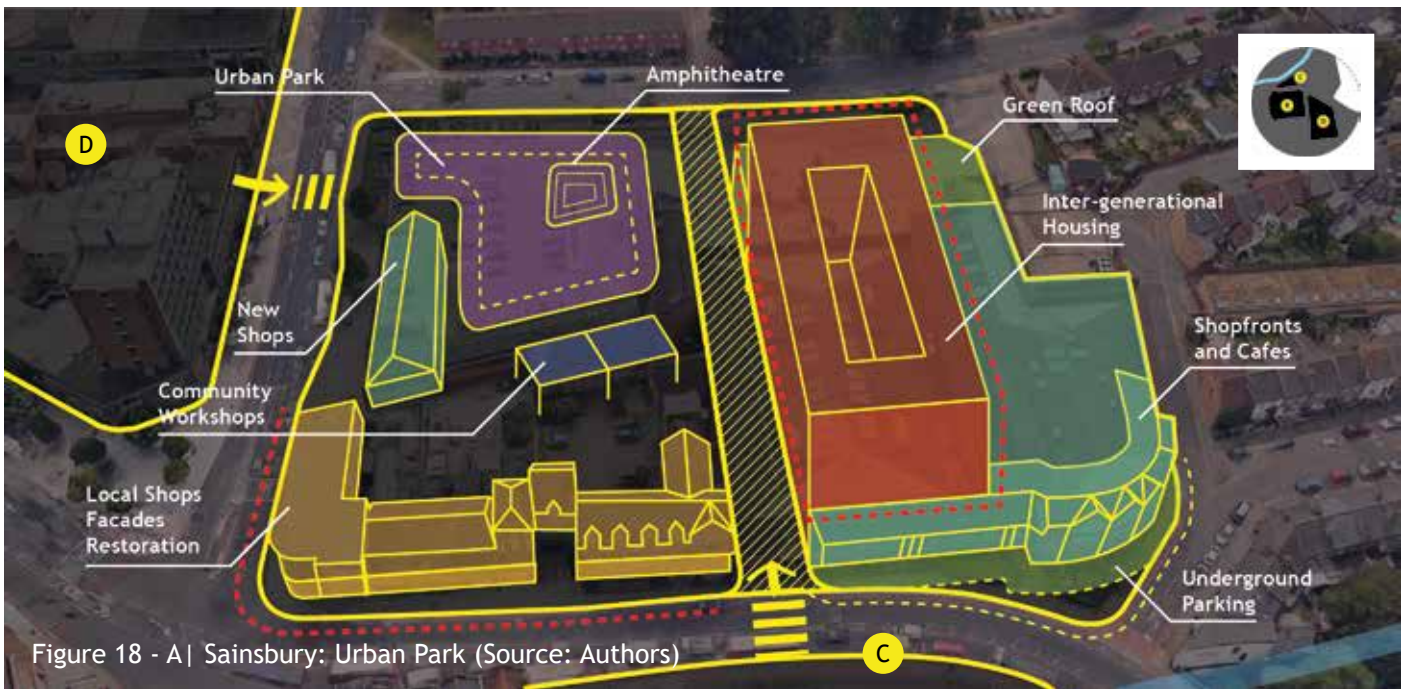


Figure 18 - A | Sainsbury: Urban Park (Source: Authors)

7.2. B | Sainsbury: Urban Park

Intergenerational Housing

Scale: Local

Temporality: Long-term

Actors: Future and current residents

*Examples: New Ground, senior women co-housing, Union Street, High Barnet, UK
Eastman intergenerational community, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA
Via Verde co-housing, Bronx USA*

Intergenerational housing allows for the elderly to live in a mixed tenure, mutually supportive community, with youth, either students or young working adults, with whom they share common recreational facilities and activity spaces. Rent is subsidized for those who carry out duties on the premise.

Amphitheatre

Scale: Local

Temporality: Long-term

Actors: Teatro Vivo, Lee Fair Share, Lee Green Lives, Lee Forum, Lee Manor Society, Hither Green Community Association, Lee Green Women's Institute, Lochaber Hall Community Center, Deaf is Cool

Examples: Masonic Amphitheatre, Design/Buildlab, Clifton Forge, Virginia, USA

This is an outdoor, covered amphitheatre, which will be used by the community for multiple, ongoing events to promote social gatherings, and enhance local performance and art skills. The space corroborates the offerings of various theatre groups and existing initiatives related to music.



Figure 19 - Via Verde, Bronx, USA



Figure 20 - Cineorama in Malkasten, Dusseldorf, Germany



Figure 21 - Via Verde, Bronx, USA



Figure 22 - Eastman generational Community, Milwaukee Wisconsin, USA



Figure 23 - Granby 4 Streets workshops, Liverpool, UK

The workshop portion underlying the amphitheatre activities is intended to bring together various segmented groups in society through their love for performance arts. They lead and undergo drama and other artistic workshops, for their own learning, as well as shape the programmes and schedules for how the amphitheatre will be used.

The community will create a funding scheme - either through public-private partnerships, through tapping into municipal funding, or applying for varied-source loans and grants - to refurbish facades of older buildings in the commercial areas of Lee. This will be done in partnership and in consultation with local business owners. The aims for this facade upgrade are twofold: firstly, to rehabilitate and showcase heritage and historic architecture, and secondly, to create a more unified front, through lettering and awning design.

Community Workshops

Scale: Local

Temporality: Long-term

Actors: Teatro Vivo, Lee Fair Share, Lee Green Lives, Lee Forum, Lee Manor Society, Hither Green Community Association, Lee Green Women's Institute, Lochaber Hall Community Center, Deaf is Cool

Examples: Granby4Streets, Liverpool, UK

Facades Restoration

Scale: Local

Temporality: Long-term

Actors: Local shops

Examples: Granby4Streets, Liverpool, UK



Figure 24 - Granby 4 Streets workshops, Liverpool, UK



Figure 25 - Granby 4 Streets before restoration, Liverpool, UK



Figure 26 - B | Vauxhall: Creative Space (Source: Authors)

B

7.3. C | Vauxhall: Creative Space

Gazebo Cinema

Scale: Local

Temporality: Long-term

Actors: Hither Green Cinema Club, Friends of Manor House and Manor House Library users

Examples: Cinemorama in Malkasten, Erika Hock and Philipp Fürnkäs, Dusseldorf, Germany

This cinema is a covered, outdoor space, used to host theatre nights and programs which will be developed by existing, local cinema clubs, such as the Hither Green Cinema Club. They will also collaborate with the summer film screenings, which currently take place in Manor House Garden.

Art Hub

Scale: Local

Temporality: Long-term

Actors: Lee Open Studio, Art Pelican Gallery, War, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music

Examples: Hackney Coworking Space, Main Yard Studios, Hackney, London

This is a hub for local artists and others who want to rent studio space for private work, as well as a co-working space for creative use. It operates as a collaborative between local galleries, musicians, and seasonal initiatives such as the Lee Open Studio, whereby earnings accrued from rent and fees are reinvested into the maintenance and continued operation of the space.



Figure 27 - Cineorama in Malkasten, Dusseldorf, Germany

Student Accommodation

Scale: Local

Temporality: Long-term

Actors: Students from Goldsmiths University of London students and Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance

Examples: Tietgen Dormitory, Lundgaard & Tranberg Architects, Copenhagen Denmark

This accommodation uses an area with limited development potential for student rental residences, as they are on demand and can consist of small units. Student housing does not generally require huge square meterage, making it appropriate for the small and irregularly-shaped plot of land. Having student residences will attract younger generations to the heart of Lee, adding a new, dynamic demographic to Lee's socio-cultural fabric.

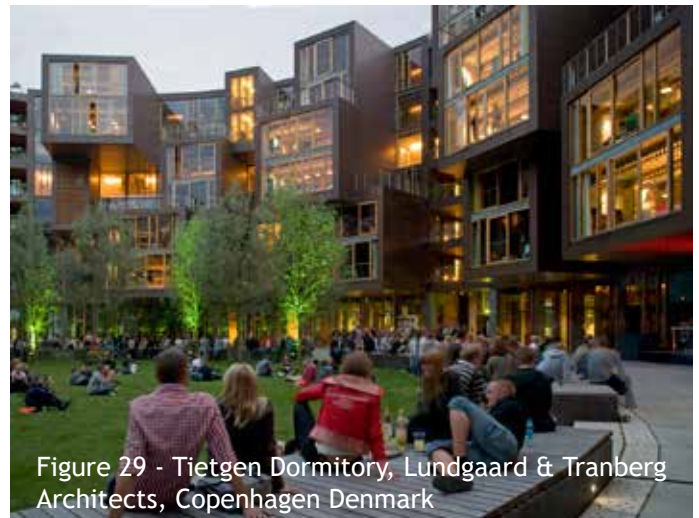


Figure 29 - Tietgen Dormitory, Lundgaard & Tranberg Architects, Copenhagen Denmark

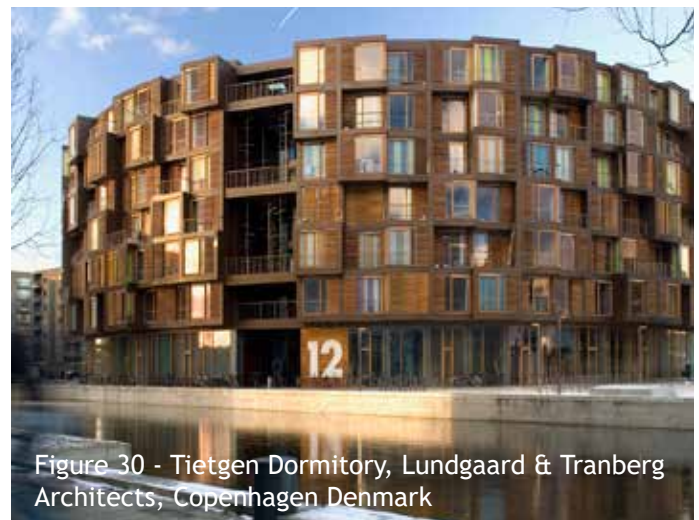


Figure 30 - Tietgen Dormitory, Lundgaard & Tranberg Architects, Copenhagen Denmark



Figure 28 - WHATAMI, Rome, Italy

Art Workshops

Scale: Local

Temporality: Short-term

Actors: Abbey Manor College, Trinity College, Lewisham Opportunity Pre School (special needs), Deaf is Cool, Forries Education, Lee Fair Share, Lee Green and Lives Arts Network/ Lee Green Open Studios

Local artists come together in these workshops to share their skills, promote art awareness and offer learning activities for children and youth. Bringing together students from various schools, and in collaboration with Lee Fair Share and Lee Green Lives, the workshops could also offer activities for the older generation.

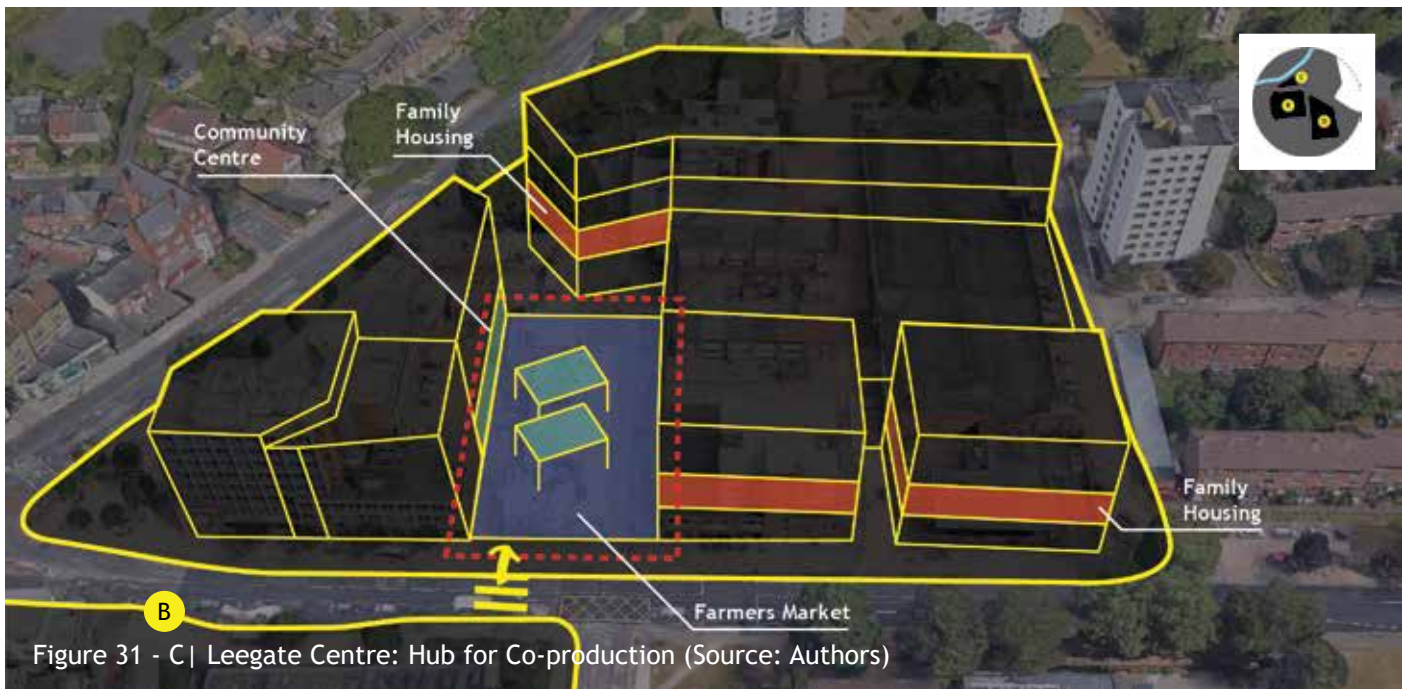


Figure 31 - C | Leegate Centre: Hub for Co-production (Source: Authors)

7.4. D | Leegate Centre: Hub for Co-production

Redesigning Project

Scale: Local

Temporality: Short-term

Actors: Abbey Manor College, Trinity College, Lewisham Opportunity Pre School (special needs), Deaf is Coo, Forries Education, Lee Fair Share, Lee Green and Lives Arts Network/ Lee Green Open Studios

This workshop comes as an integrating part of the Lee Gate Center redesigning.. It is conducted in collaboration with existing art networks and a range of students from various schools in Lewisham.

Farmer's Market

Scale: Local

Temporality: Long-term

Actors: City and Country Farmers Market CCFM, allotment users, Lee Green Women's Institute and Our Lady of Lourdes Brownies

Examples: Findlay farmers market, Cincinnati Ohio, USA



Figure 32 - Findlay farmers market, Cincinnati Ohio

The market is an outdoor, covered space, which allows for a fixed location to host weekly farmers markets. This is done in collaboration with the temporary farmers markets which are held at Manor House Gardens, being an established initiative led by the City and Country Farmers Market (CCFM). The market would offer space for locals who produce goods from their own homes, such as baking or preserves, herbs from the allotment located in Dacre Park, or produce grown in the community gardens.

8. Future Implications

How do the strategies and guidelines situate within the London Plan?

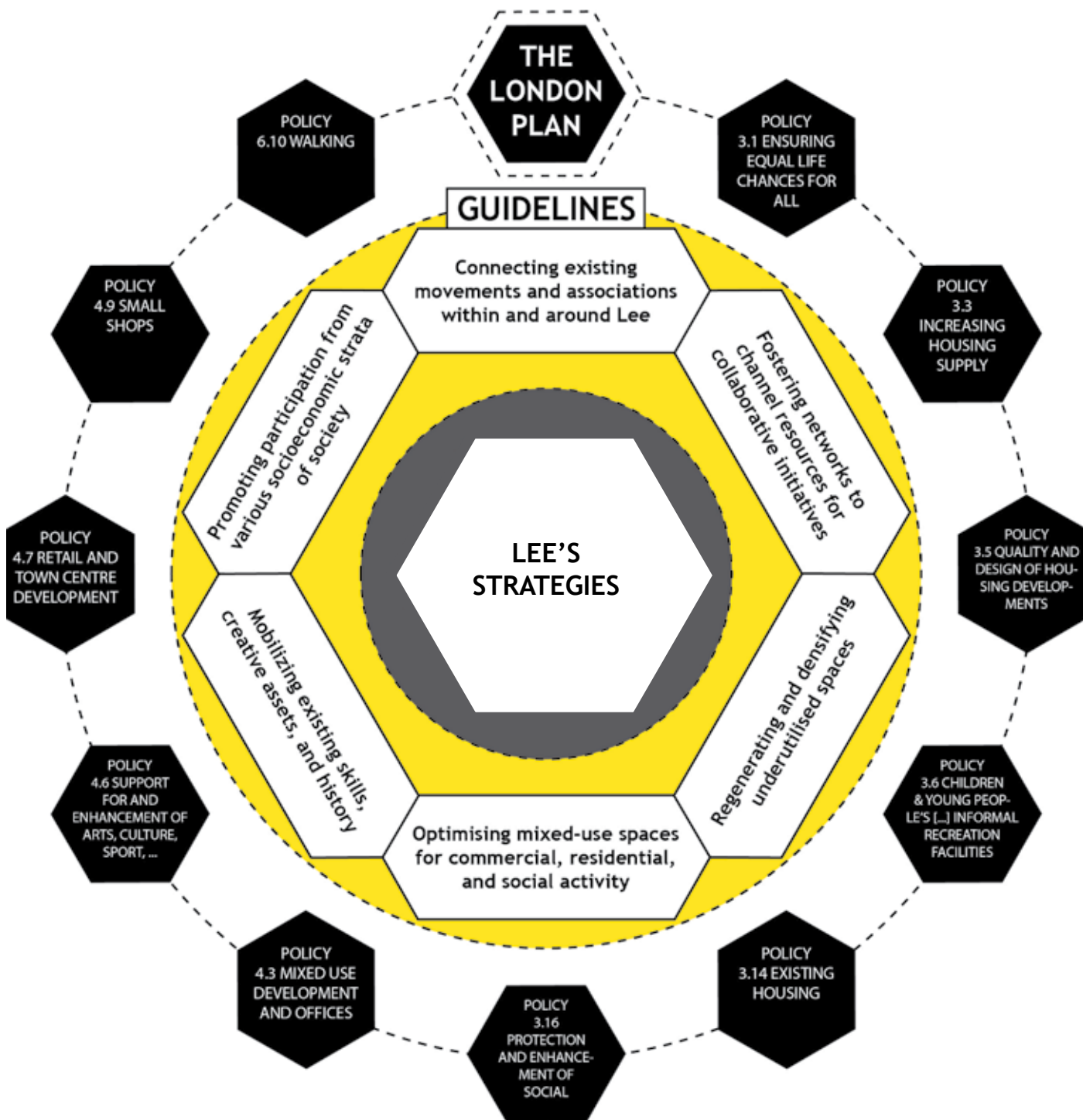


Figure 33: Future implications diagram (Source: Authors)

Conclusion

Throughout the elaboration of this strategy, the guiding principle has been to devise a development scheme that would consider as paramount the creation of a cohesive and resilient community, one that can adapt to the rapid changes that are interesting London.

Such a community can't thrive in uniformity, but has to embrace diversity, encounters and even conflict. To do so, local communities have to go beyond the limits of fixed identity and place, and converge towards a cosmopolitan community, redefined as a "productive process of social interaction" (Sandercock, 2006, p. 42).

It is this with this shift in mind that the context of Lee Green has been approached. The area presents a rich and yet fragmented social tissue, characterised by cultural and social tectonics (Butler and Robson, 2003) and segmented "third places" of sociability (Oldenburg, 1999), resulting in a loose and disconnected social fabric despite the presence of active but very dense associative clusters. In his seminal article "The Strength of Weak Ties", Granovetter (1983) showed the limitations of such clusters, as long as they are not extroverted by the presence of "weak" ties - the ties of acquaintance, of occasional collaboration, of casual encounter, of everyday interaction. These are the social assets that this strategy sets to incubate.

To do so, the spaces in Lee are invested, their potential maximised and channeled towards the creation of places of encounter and places of the everyday, physical and metaphorical stages where the community can continuously rebuild and reinvent itself.

Hence, heritage and nature are used to relink parts of the neighbourhood in new ways - as well as to link the neighbourhood itself to the wider area. The existing commercial fabric is valorised and the district centre

revitalised, offering an increased mix of uses, catering for different populations and different temporalities. Unused spaces are reinvented and activated, new spaces are provided, both for transit and leisure. These are mixed - allowing encounters -, open - supporting the creativity of the everyday (De Certeau 1980) - and flexible - available to be used and appropriated, re-signified and re-used by the community.

However, cultivating connections can't merely be a spatial, top-down project. Therefore, local partners are involved in the production and management of spaces, and the community itself is called to participate in the shaping and re-shaping of places through workshops and participatory actions.



Figure 34 - Leegate Centre (Source: Authors)

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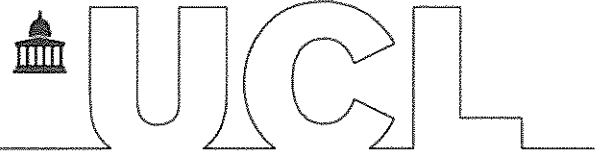
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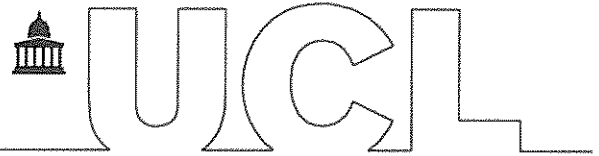
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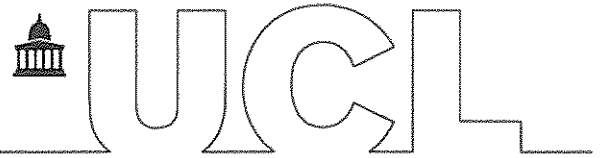
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