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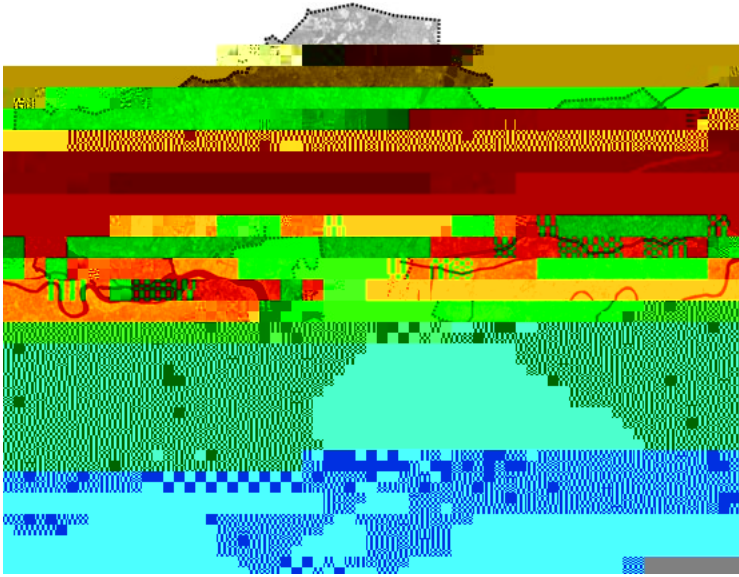
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# Introduction



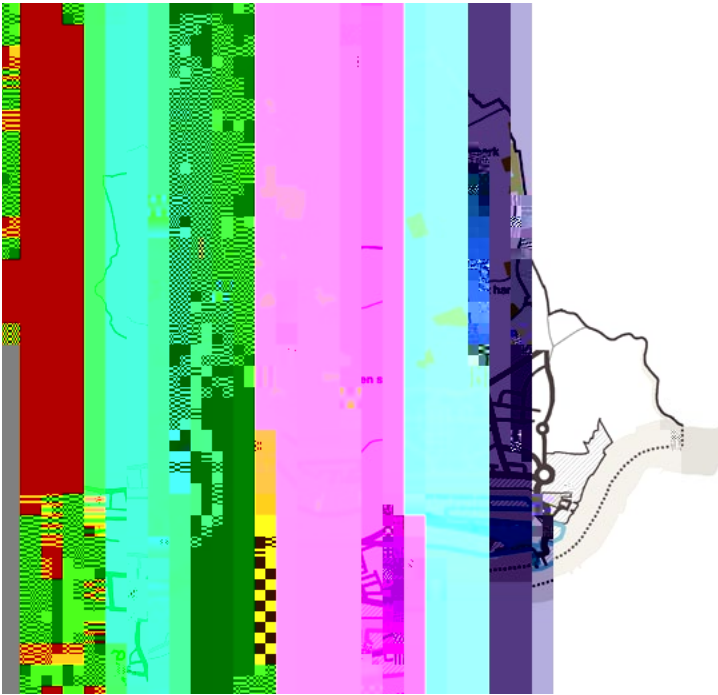
Over the past decade, London has gone through accelerating regeneration, led by strong mayoral visions that harnessed the strength of a market forces and state power (Carmona, 2012). On a global level, theorists such as Saskia Sassen have questioned the process of regeneration in world cities, noting a trend of “speculative government” (Goldman, 2011). In the midst of all the regeneration taking place across London, a tight squeeze on borough budgets due to the global economic crisis has led to a reduction of services, disproportionately affecting those on low incomes. We might ask the questions, regeneration for whom? And, for what purpose? (Frediani, 2013)

This design response takes these questions into consideration as it questions the current regeneration plan envisioned by the Newham Borough for the Royal Docks, and proposes an alternative vision for North Woolwich in particular. The regeneration interventions proposed here are inspired by progressive and inclusionary concepts around community empowerment through urban design.

To inform the design response, a study of North Woolwich was conducted through different lenses of analysis in order to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses and subsequent opportunities these present. These opportunities are synthesised into two main goals, to be implemented through several interventions. These goals are driven by overarching guidelines and principles, based on an alternative vision to the one currently pursued by Newham Council. Carried out in the short, medium, and long term, the interventions will revitalise the economy and enhance the quality of public realm in North Woolwich, while maintaining the area’s industrial heritage. In this way, North Woolwich is anchored and stabilised, at once re-establishing its identity and reinventing itself.







Source: Group C, Leftovers and Thresholds Report.  
 Grey swath highlighting the Arc of Opportunity

Newham's current plans for the Royal Docks call for building a legacy to the 2012 Olympic Games held in Stratford, whereby the socio-economically deprived borough reaches 'convergence' with the rest of London, offering its residents the same quality of opportunities as anywhere else in the city within 20 years' time. The strategy for reaching this ambitious goal is to attract investments in urban redevelopment projects, especially in the "Arc of Opportunity", for housing, tourism, and technology- and knowledge-based enterprise.

Using partnerships with Siemens, London City Airport, ExCeL, and University of East London, Newham plans to create a world-class business district in the Royal Docks that specialises in the knowledge, green, and technology economies. Newham also plans to build 2,500 new dwellings every year in the Arc of Opportunity to help meet London's housing shortage, but in contrast to the prevailing views about east London, make these homes a "place of choice to live." In addition, Newham envisions a strong weekend tourism economy drawn to the Royal Docks' privileged riverfront location and supported by high-quality urban design for the public realm and desirable restaurants, hotels, and leisure activities. It is expected to accrue to the wider Newham population in the form of new job opportunities and more amenities, and through more stable communities that are able to support vibrant town centres.

Newham has begun to set the stage for these expected new actors by starting to improve the landscaping in the Royal Docks as well as welcoming new transportation initiatives like the Crossrail, which will connect Central London and Newham with the southwest of England, and the DLR overground. As analysed in "Transportation and Infrastructures of (Im)mobility," these infrastructures have made access to the Royal Docks easier for people going to major centres such as the Airport or the ExCeL complex, but have done less for improving transportation options for local residents.



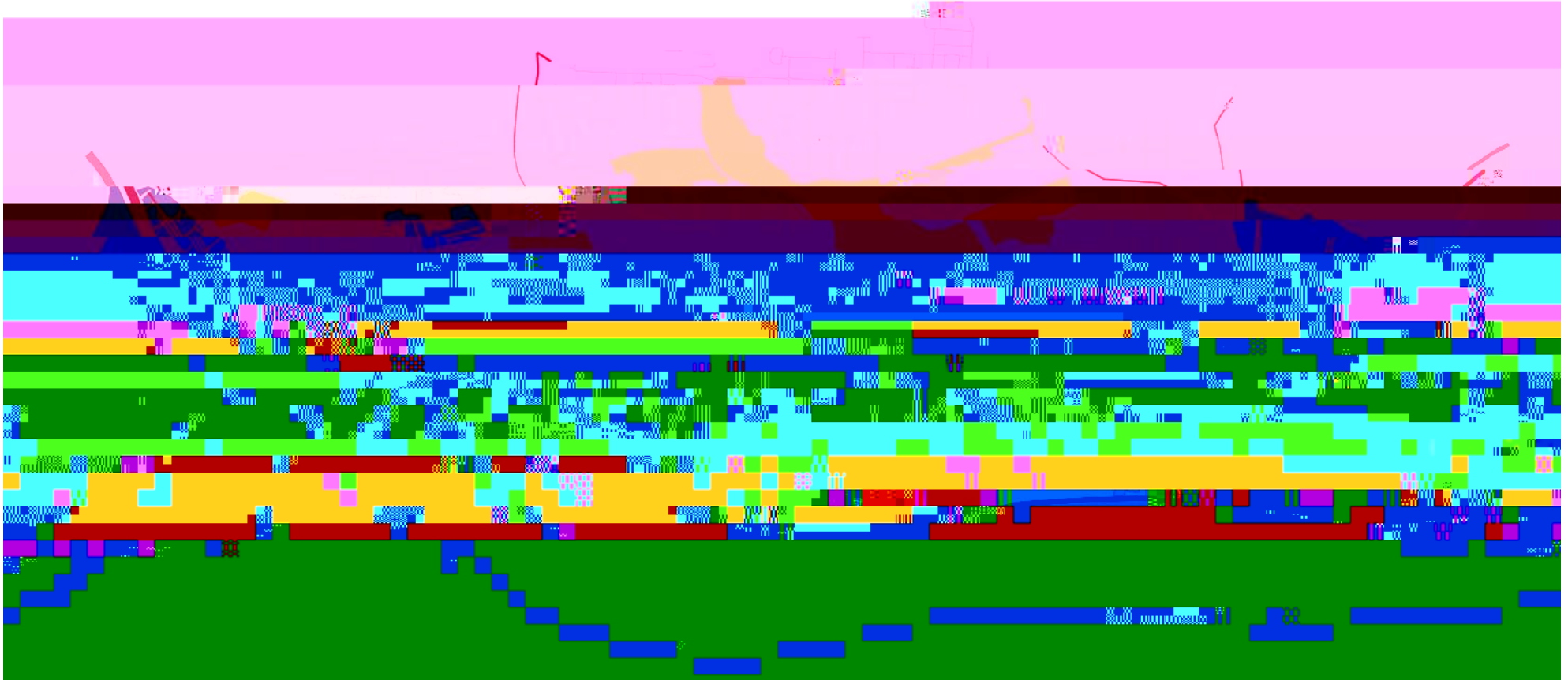


Image 1.2: map shows strategic development sites in Royal Docks



Newham's vision for the Royal Docks is laudable because it addresses the need for more stable communities, a revitalised sense of place in areas that have experienced economic decline, and better jobs. However, there are several problematic implications of this vision. The vision is based on attracting new, high value investments rather than improving the base of the economies and communities that currently exist in the borough, and especially in the Royal Docks. Injections of national and international capital into the area will demand high returns on investment, limiting the uses of these new developments to high-income reach for most Newham residents. The residential development at the east of North Woolwich, with its riverfront walkway that is publicly accessible only during certain hours, shows how new housing developments could potentially exclude non-residents from the public realm through urban design features such as gates and security cameras (see image 1.3). Finally, redevelopment on the borders of North Woolwich could result in rising land prices.

The changes expected to take place in the Royal Docks can be foretold by similar redevelopment for the Games and currently in Stratford. It is still up for debate as to whether the low-income local

# Synthesised Analysis

The urban and spatial analysis of North Woolwich through different lenses of analysis:


- Urban Fabric and Landmarks
- Cultures and Economies
- Leftovers and Thresholds
- Infrastructures and Spaces of (Im)mobility
- Open and Public Spaces

Of these thematic lenses provided a greater understanding of its political, economic, cultural and spatial dynamics, thus enabling us to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities to then create a vision for the development of North Woolwich. Various methods were used for the analysis including extensive mapping of features like typologies, open spaces, urban grain and location of landmarks; observation and sensory analysis as well as interviews with local residents. This section will visually represent the different lenses of analysis.

Image A: An analysis of the urban fabric and landmarks revealed an urban form that is characterised by coarse grain on both the eastern







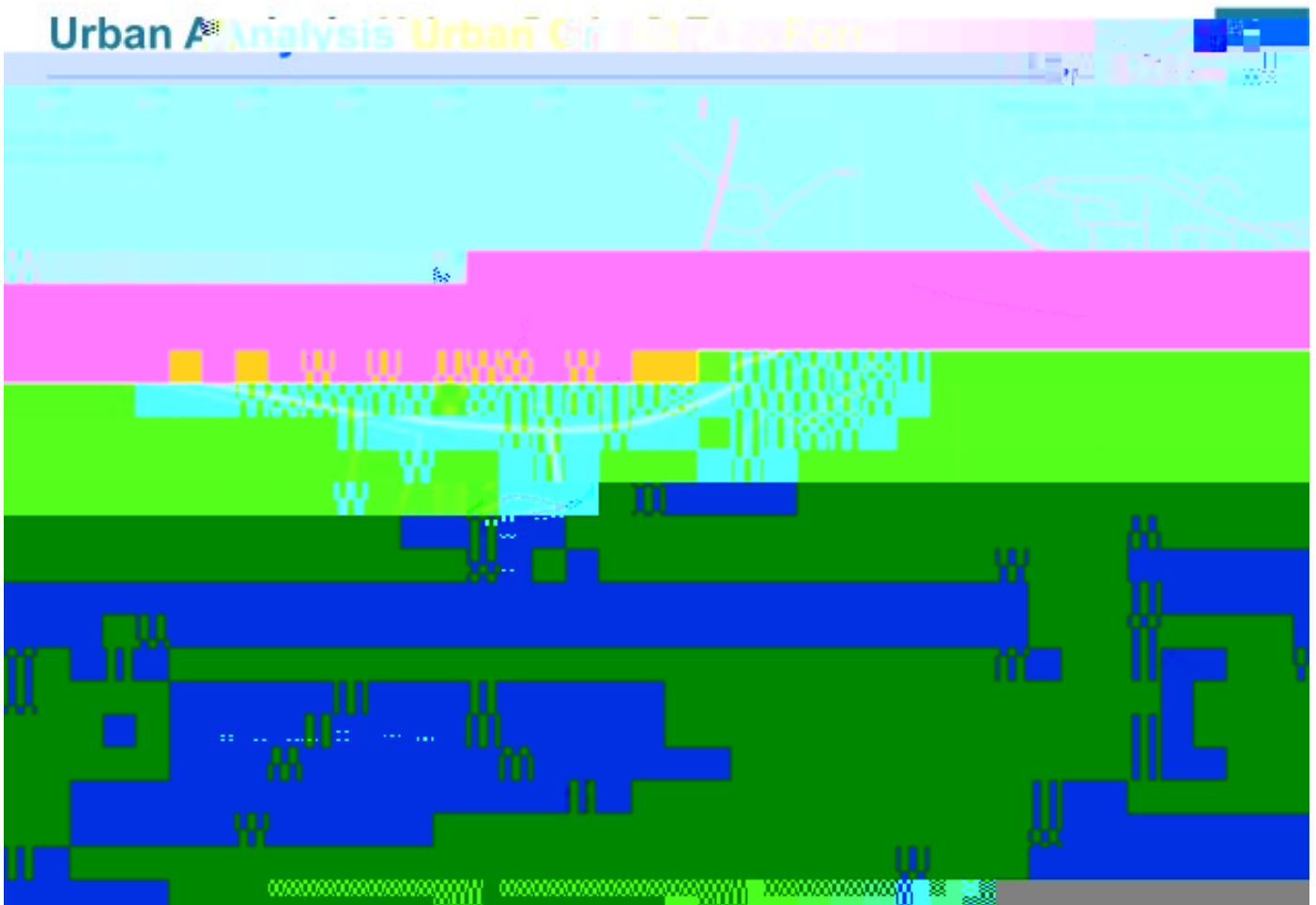
The SWOT analysis shows that there are a number of social, political, economic, and spatial forces that have had an effect on the spatial characteristics of the area.

At a macro scale it is possible to attribute the 'rise and fall' of North Woolwich as a focal live and work place to the political and economic forces acting on the area. Emerging as a strong industrial location, it thrived up until the closure of the dockyards in 1984. Gradually, the remaining industries have moved out, with the Tate and Lyle being the most prominent remaining economic entity, but still only operating at a lower capacity than at which it once prospered. London City Airport now stands as an image of global political and economic power, connecting North Woolwich to the global market, and is a symbol of the changing economic forces. The DLR and now Crossrail are also huge investments

The following maps represent the interrelationships of main urban elements that emerged and how to-weaknesses. The maps then visually represent the opportunities that have evolved from the strengths and weaknesses and how they subsequently inform potential sites of interventions. Furthermore, several external threats were recognised:

- Loss of industrial and cultural heritage
- Worsening economic crisis leading to eroding opportunities
- Increasingly viewed as a volatile migratory neighbourhood
- Increased isolation and disruption from Crossrail developments

Together, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats form the basis of the two core goals addressed by this development brief.

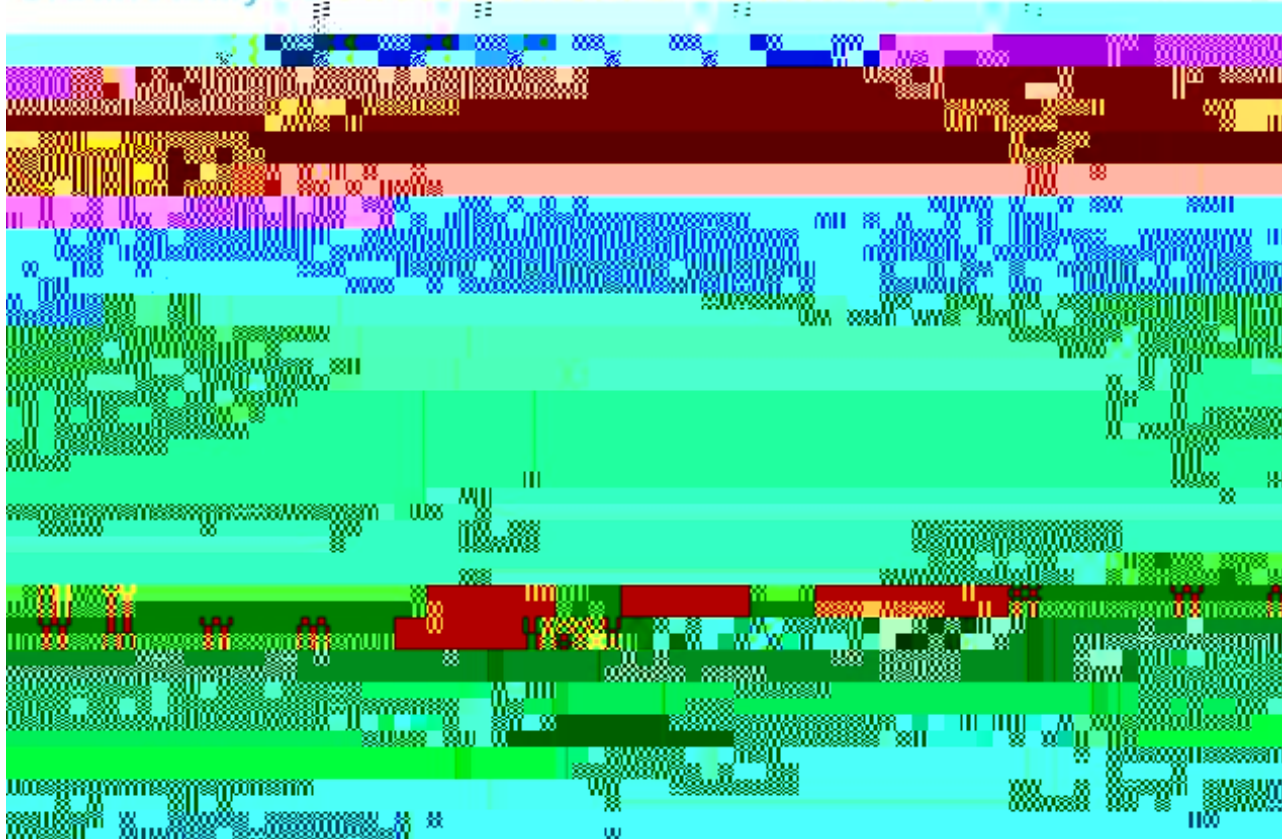


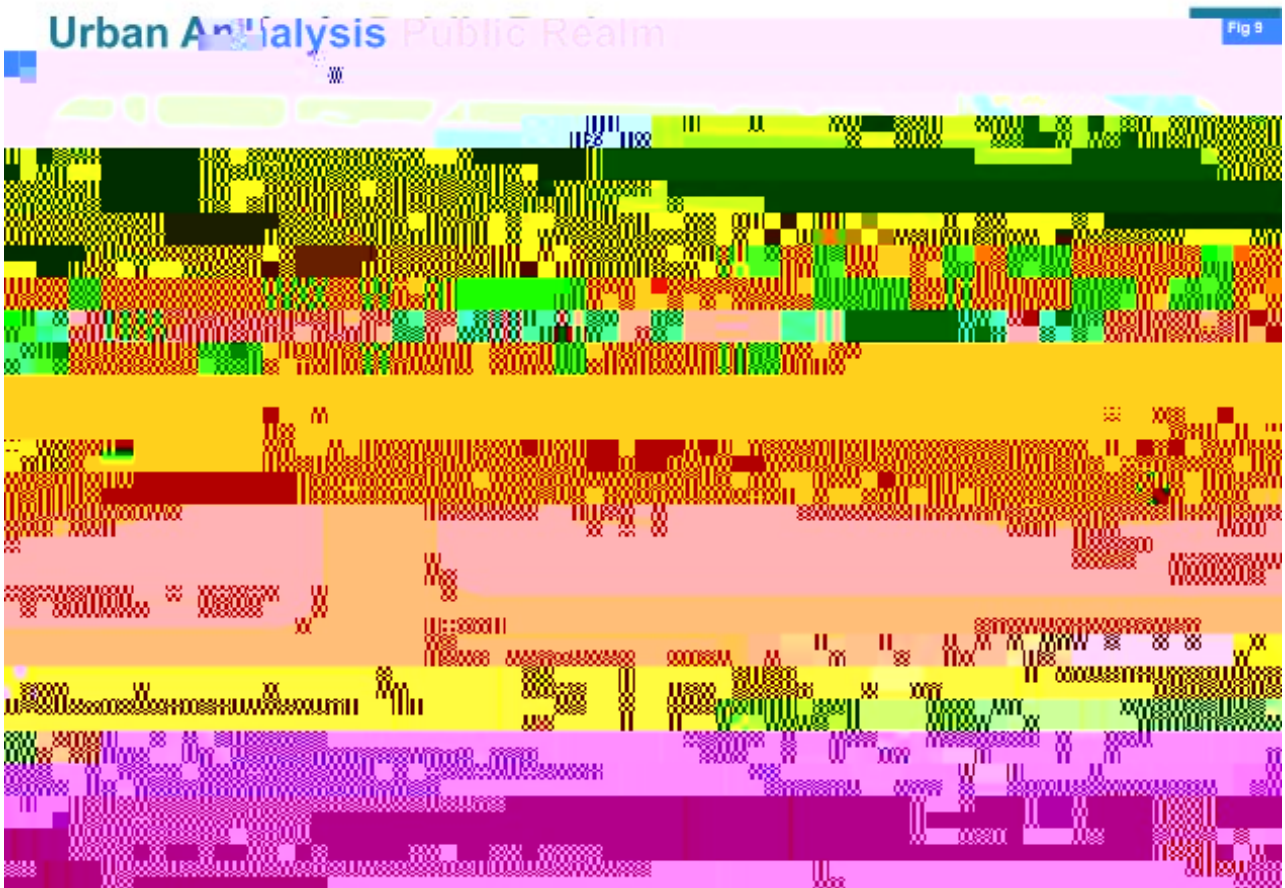
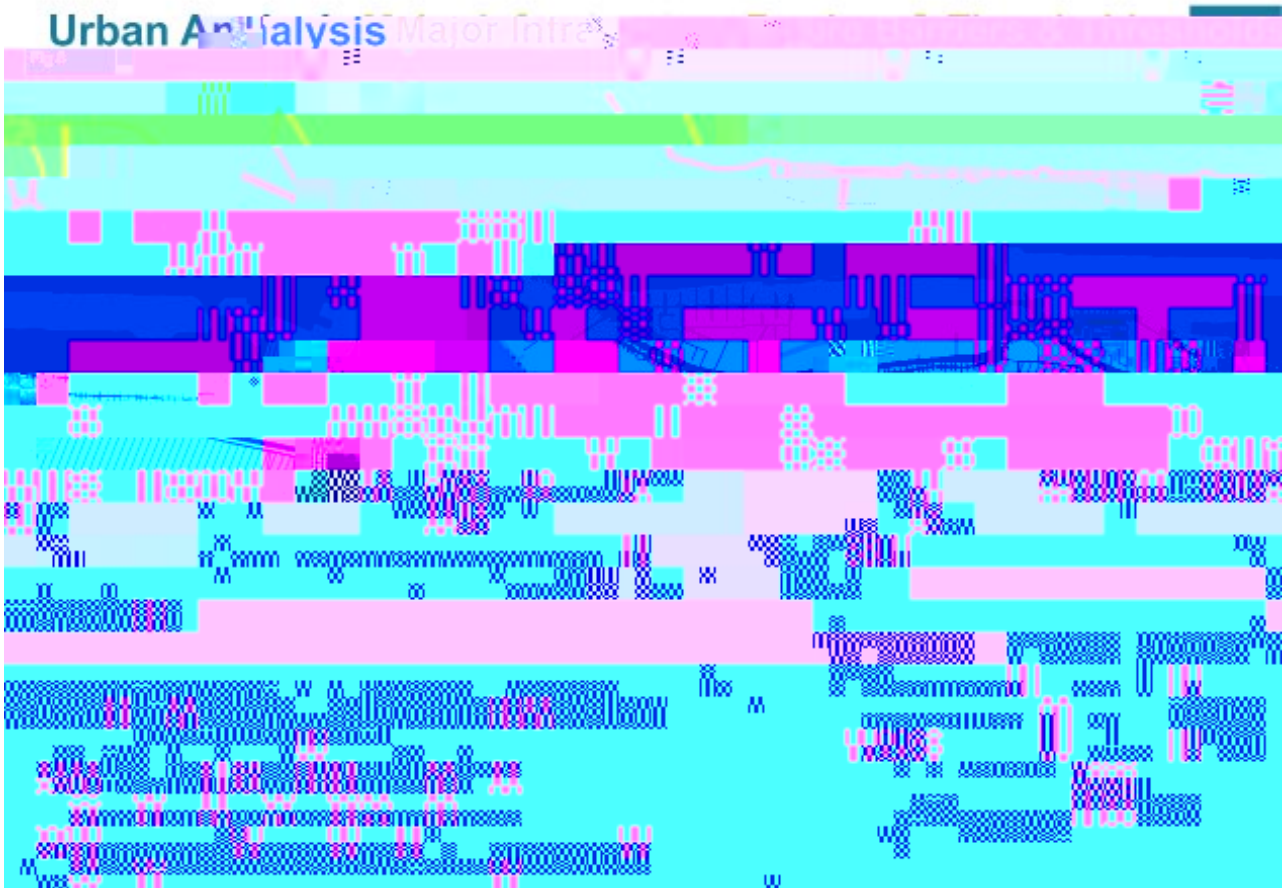




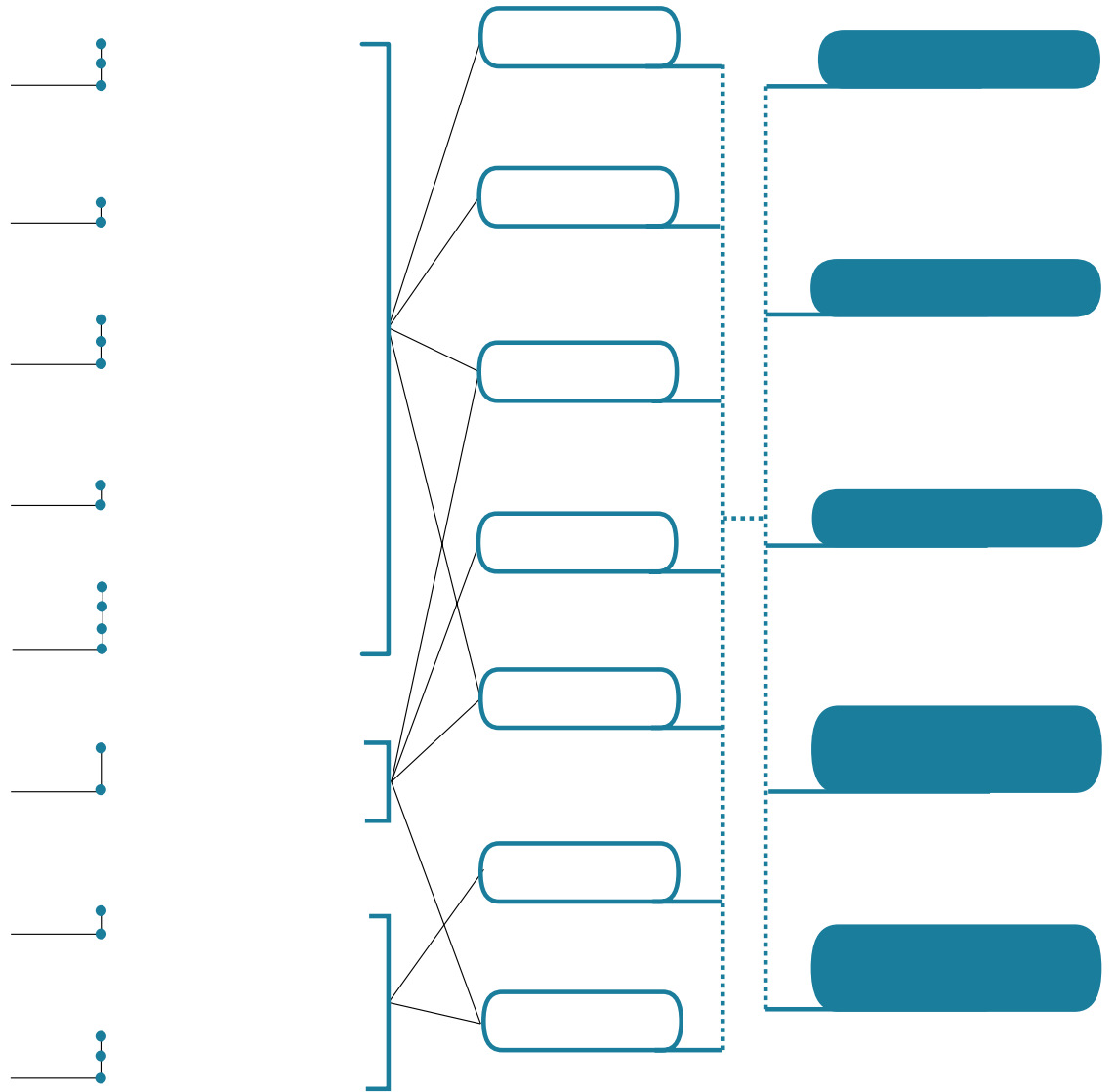
Urban Analysis Street Network & Connectivity

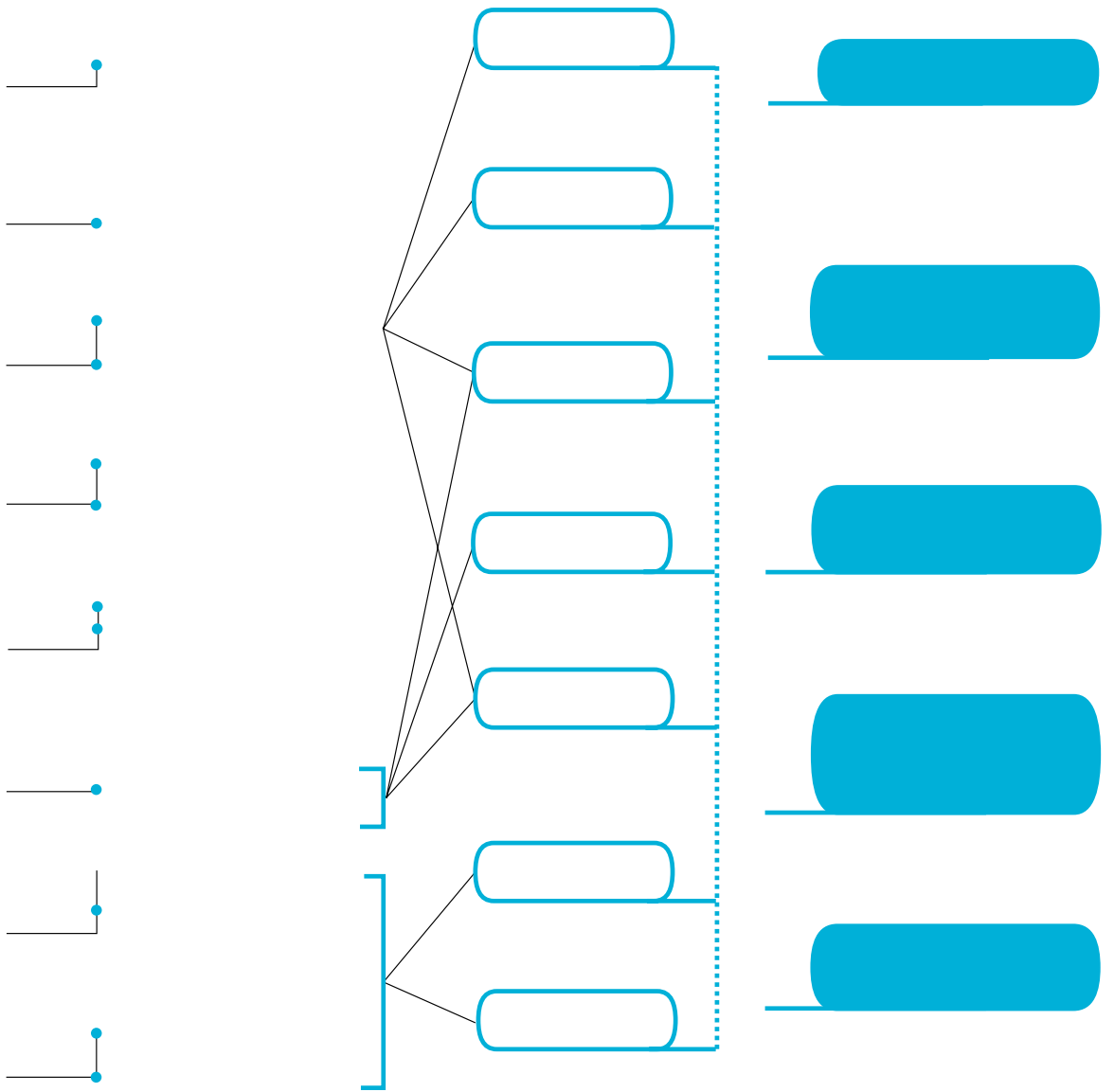
Fig 7













North Woolwich seizes its promising and unique heritage in order to provide its local residents, business owners, and visitors with a thriving, living and working neighbourhood.

Compared to the existing plan of the Royal Docks, this vision for North Woolwich could be seen as more modest in nature. However, it is still ambitious in the sense that it has the possibility of reversing the perception of environmental decline and image of dereliction through using local resources. As such, it will once again thrive as a neighbourhood providing affordable living and working opportunities with a mix of tenures to create a socially just and liveable urban quarter.

This design response is being driven by two overarching principles: connectivity and preservation of local industrial heritage. While participation is a key element to a healthy and long-lived urban transformation process (Sanoff, 2006, Atlee, 2003, Creighton, 1994), it is not explicitly addressed in this design response. The limited scope of this exercise and its focus on built data or time to satisfactorily analyse social dynamics in order to propose a participatory process. Nevertheless, this is an important area for further consideration in order to ensure a just and optimised development of North Woolwich.

### Connectivity

by their connections to elsewhere (Graham & Marvin, 2001). While this contention is explicitly linked to large-scale transportation systems, it also bears meaning for local social and economic connections. On the neighbourhood level, small-scale connectivity and in a variety of ways fosters well-being and sense of place (Lynch, 1960). This design response's aim is to encourage social and economic connectivity as well as physical connectivity within and around North Woolwich. In fact, these types of connectivity are inseparable; physical connectivity provides the pathways for social and economic connectivity, and social and economic connectivity provide the rationale for physical connectivity.

### Local heritage

North Woolwich is one of London's only remaining industrial areas and this is greatly manifested through its built form. This design response is in part driven by a principle that local heritage can be capitalised upon to revitalise the economy by providing opportunities to small and medium-scale businesses. The preservation of older, industrial buildings enables smaller businesses to operate within the area due to the lower costs while also providing a wider variety of building uses (Jacobs, 1961).



The guidelines represent pragmatic considerations as to how the design response's vision with the principles, are the basis upon which the interventions are being formed.

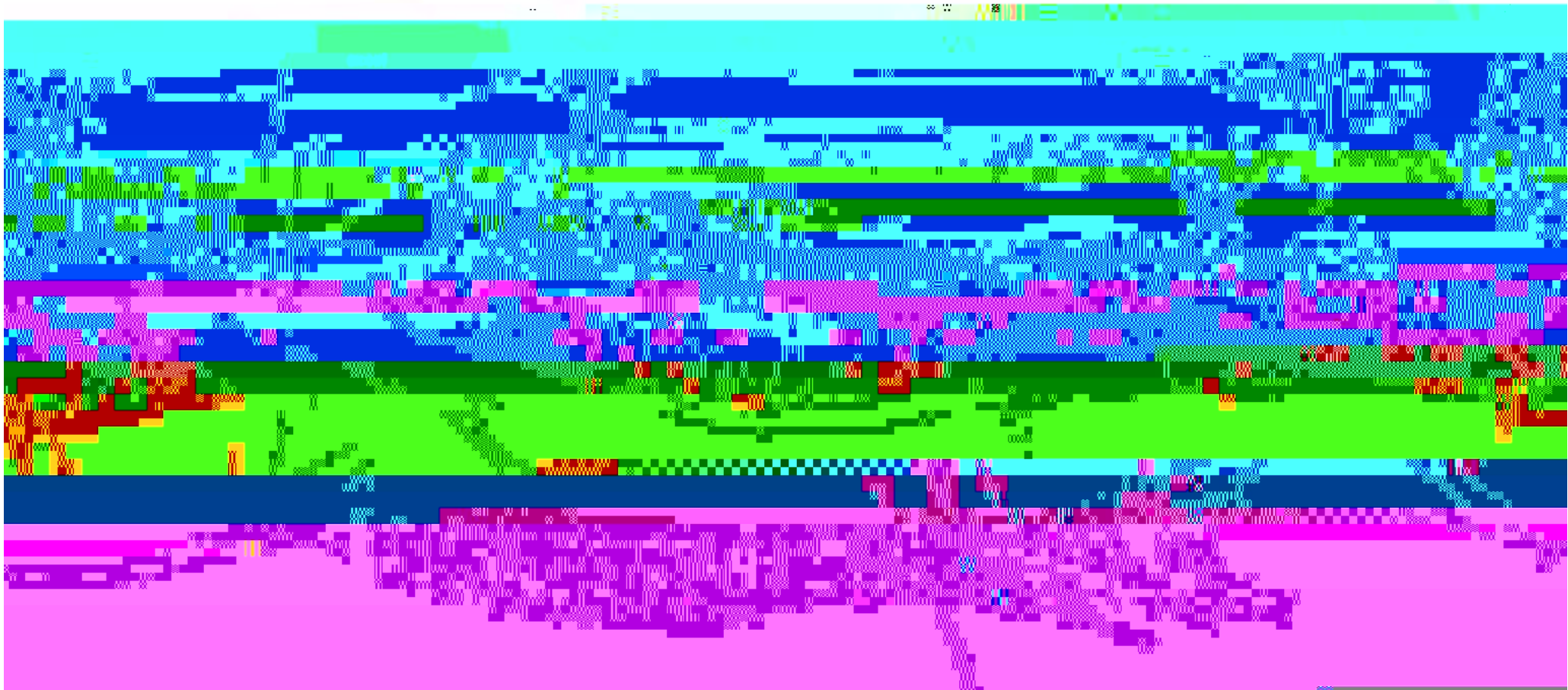
- Make the area more pedestrian and bike friendly
- Soften and reduce hard barriers
- Maintain industrial heritage style structures where possible
- Incorporate vernacular design at core and cleverly mesh with more contemporary structures
- Work with the existing community centres and emerging citizen groups to increasingly have citizen input and ownership over interventions
- Orient new structures towards small and medium businesses' needs for affordability and size

Goals

**Goal 1:** To enhance the quality of the public realm and the places for positive social interaction.

**Goal 2:** To revitalise economic activity by using industrial economy.

These two goals are to be implemented the design response's vision. The interventions are divided according to their potentiality in achieving either goal. Yet, in actuality, some of the interventions contribute to achieving both goals. Although all of these interventions are essential to the accomplishment of the goals, those that are most relevant will be 'zoomed' into, so as to provide greater insight and detail.



## Goal 1:

To enhance the quality of the public realm and the places for positive social interaction

Make Pier and Albert Roads more cycle and pedestrian friendly

Connect to East Silvertown, Woolwich, and Gallions Reach through a multiplicity of usable and attractive transport links. This includes walk, vehicular and cycle ways.

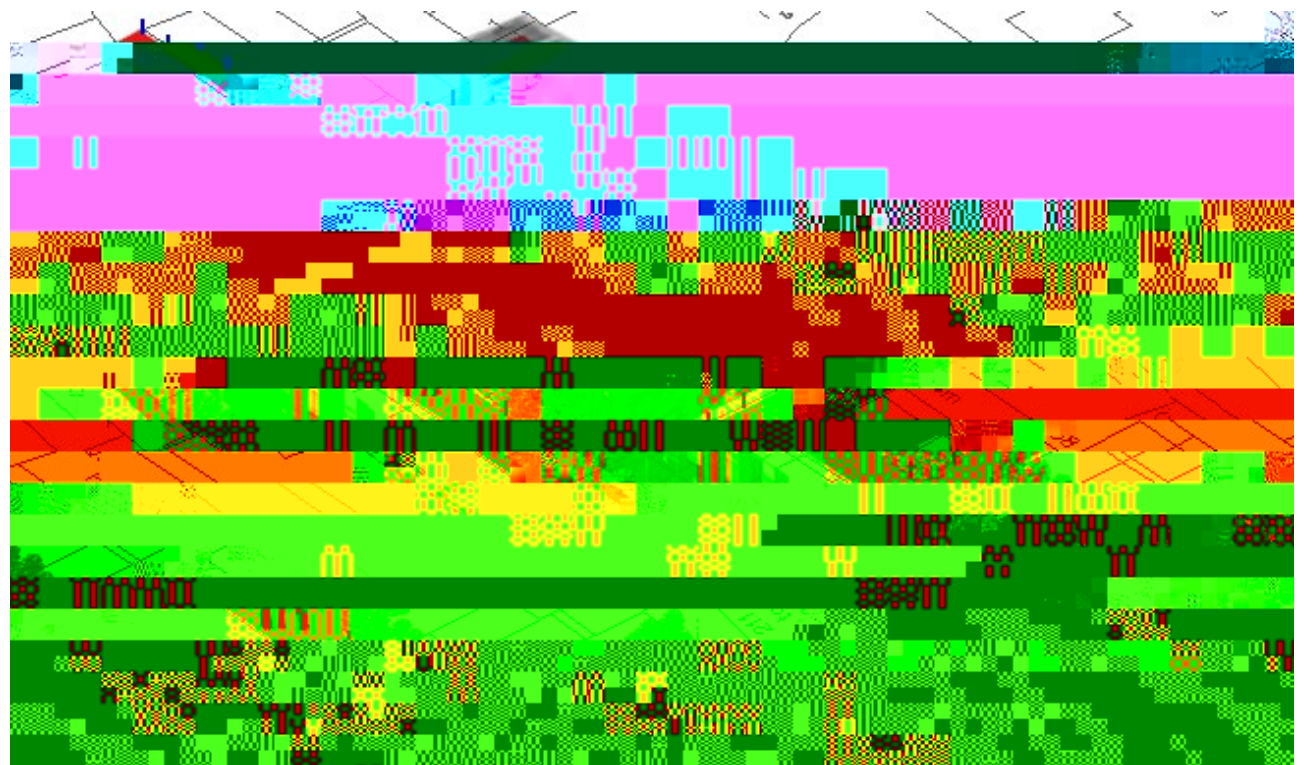
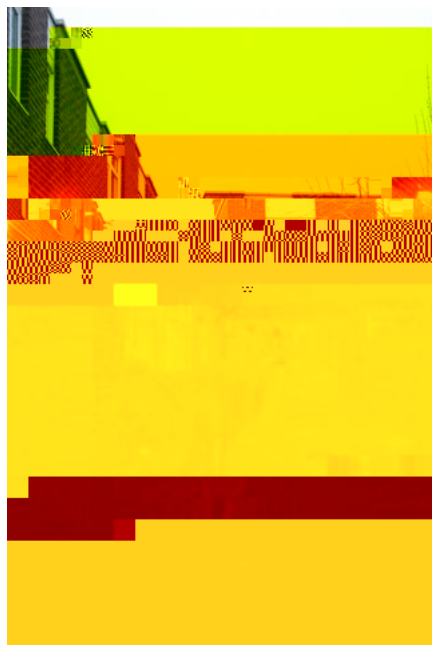
Ease severances made by infrastructure barriers via interventions such as a 'green' walkway.

Design coherent walkways throughout the neighbourhood, connecting public places and hidden pathways

Turn area between Ferry terminal and Royal Victoria Gardens into a soft-scaped park by rerouting

Create meeting, gathering, and event spaces, possibly by providing street furniture or using abandoned spaces for seasonal events

Create a waterfront promenade to link Royal Victoria Garden with Thames Barrier Park alongside the current industrial area.



Turn area between Ferry terminal  
and Royal Victoria Gardens into a



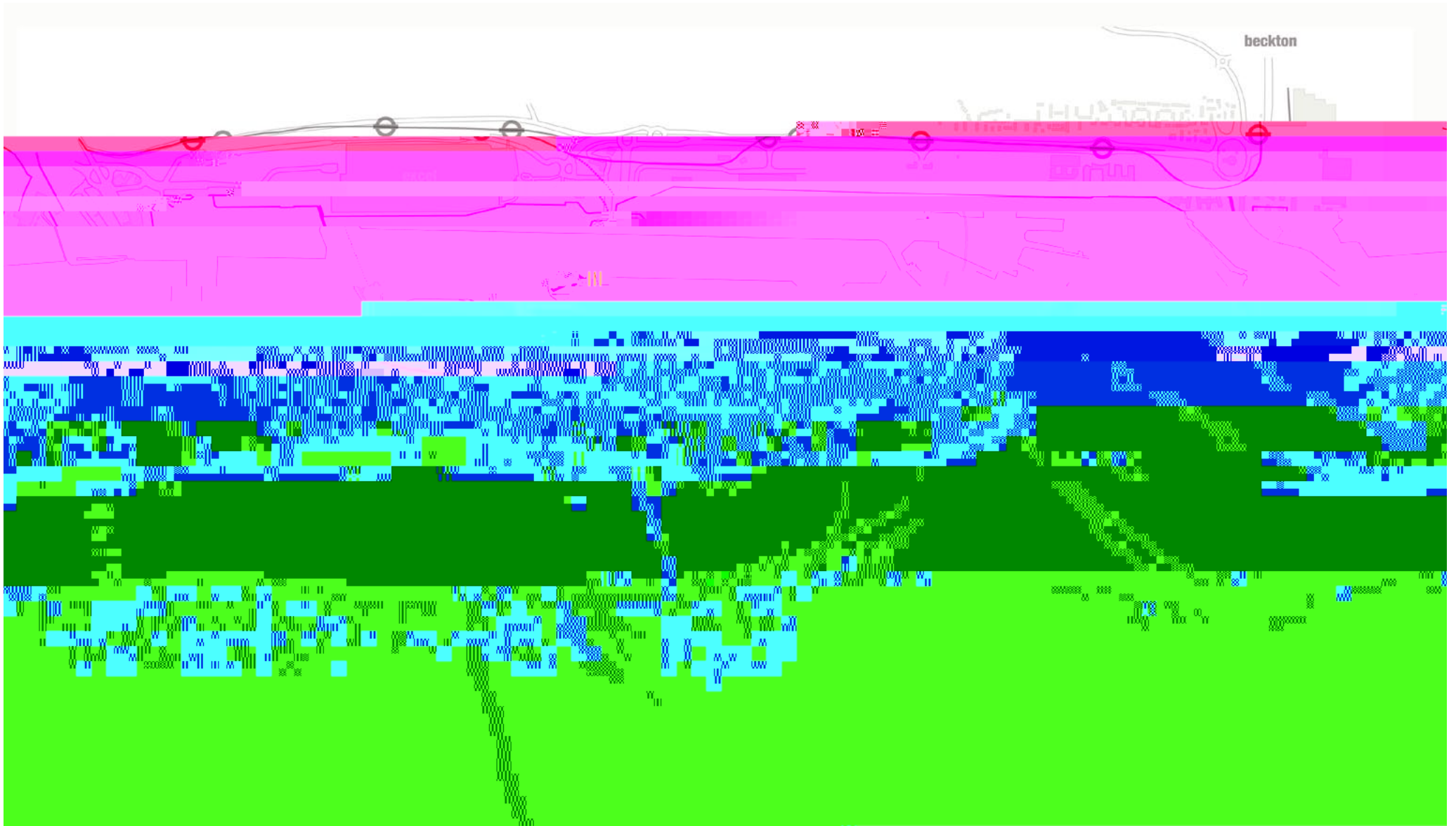


Image 3.7: The long term vision of the Royal Docks, including a “green” riverfront walkway connecting the Thames Barrier Park up to the urban forest in Beckton, and con-

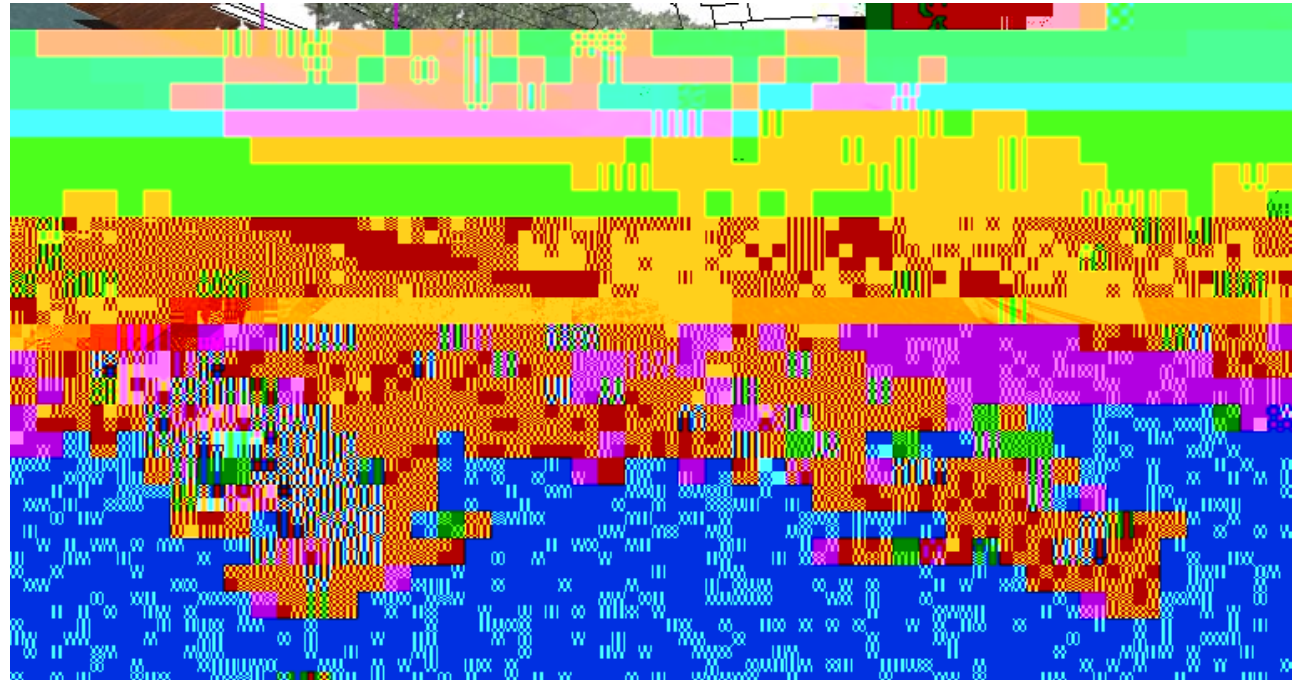
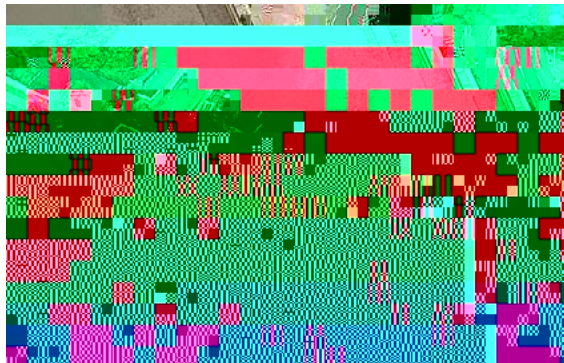








- Promote Sunday street markets or farmers market at the Pier



- Create a High Street connected to the foot tunnel as a central zone within the neighbourhood to attract people from Woolwich and other parts of London for shopping and leisure











