## **Practicing Awkward Space in the City**

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**PhD thesis** 

## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the work submitted in this thesis is my own.

Hannah Jones

12<sup>th</sup> May 2014

## **Acknowledgements**

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#### **Abstract**

In earlier research, I defined the concept of 'awkward space' in cities as 'ambivalent or unresolved spaces that are the remnants of a previous pattern of flow' (Jones, 2007, 70). The concept of awkward space is important because it offers designers and planners an insight into the latent affordances and informal practices that exist within the urban environment. These lie outside the realm of rational planning and design strategies. My aim in this thesis is to explore how and why we experience awkward space in the city in order to better understand how the concept could be used productively in co-design projects. My practice-based research builds upon a series of three case studies, which chart my own journey from conducting an individual and observational inquiry, to engaging in participatory design inquiries into everyday places. I stage two focused and selective literature reviews, which act as interventions to critically inform my understanding of awkward space and to help me situate and reflect upon my use of the concept in practice. I utilise a range of qualitative methods, practical mapping and design tools, and evaluative techniques. My overall conclusions are that awkward space can be used a generative concept for co-designing change agency at a local level, through framing 'otherly spaces' that support the emergence of a connected inhabitant knowledge. The thesis findings are primarily directed at designers and the design research community, although they are also relevant for architects, planners and community-based organisations.

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## Design research activities

This thesis research has contributed to the following selected research outputs including articles, conference papers and seminars and workshops.

#### **Research articles**

Jones, H., (2007). 'Exploring the Creative Possibilities of Awkward Space in the City', Landscape and Urban Planning An International Journal of Landscape Ecology, Planning and Design Editor-in-Chief: J.E. Rodiek. 12th November 2007. Volume 83, Issue 1. ISSN: 0169-2046. Pages 70-76.

#### Research conference papers

Jones, H., and Lundebye, A., (2012). 'Metadesign: A Dynamic Framework for Seeding Socially Responsive Design'. Out of Control, the 8th International Conference on Design and Emotion. Central Saint Martins School of Art and Design, UK. 11th – 14th September 2012. In conference proceedings. ISBN 978-0-9570719-2-6.

Jones, H., and Wingfield, R., (2010). 'MetaboliCity: How can Metadesign Support the Cultivation of Place in the City?' Young Creators for Better City & Better Life. SODI, CAUP Tongji University, Shanghai, China. 7th - 10th September 2010. www.cumulus2010tongji.org. In conference proceedings. ISBN number: 978-952-60-0046-6. Pages 310-319.

Jones, H., and Wingfield, R., (2009). 'MetaboliCity: How can Design Nurture Amateur Cultures of Food Production in the City?' Multiple Ways to Design Research: Research cases that reshape the design discipline. Swiss Design Network Symposium, Lugano, Switzerland, 12th and 13th November 2009. In conference proceedings. Pages 36-50.

#### Seminars and workshops

Jones, H., and Hauenstein, M., (2013). 'Mapping Llandeilo'. A four-week 'Vertical Studio' project with 1st and 2nd year BSc Architecture students using my PhD research methods and including a workshop with community stakeholders from

Llandeilo, Wales. Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff, UK. 22<sup>nd</sup> April – 10<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

Jones, H., (2013). Awkward Space. A five-week pilot project with MA Design Futures and MRes students at Goldsmiths, University of London. 7<sup>th</sup> January – 4<sup>th</sup> February 2013.

Jones, H., (2011). 'Co-evaluating Haberdasher: A one-day design workshop at the Haberdasher Estate'. A PhD research workshop with designers and members of the Haberdasher Resident's Committee at the Haberdasher's Resident's Committee Community Room, Haberdasher Estate, Shoreditch, London, UK. Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2011.

Jones, H., and Lundebye, A., (2010). 'Metadesign and Socially Responsive Design'. A three-day seminar with MA Design students at KHiO, Oslo Academy of the Arts, Oslo, Norway. Written and conducted by Hannah Jones and Anette Lundebye. 18th – 20th December 2010.

Jones, H., (2010). 'Awkward Space: Mapping, Building and Growing Spaces of Opportunity'. A four-week 'Vertical Studio' project with 1st and 2nd year BSc Architecture students using my PhD research methods and including lectures on awkward space, urban intervention and designing in teams. Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff, UK. 28th April – 19th May 2010.

Jones, H., (2010). 'Mapping Haberdasher: A one-day design workshop at the Haberdasher Estate'. A PhD research workshop with designers and members of the Haberdasher Resident's Committee at the Haberdasher's Resident's Committee Community Room, Haberdasher Estate, Shoreditch, London. UK. Sunday 21st March 2010.

Jones, H., and Wingfield, R., (2009). 'MetaboliCity: Urban Grow Kit Workshop'.

London Design Festival, London, UK. 26th September 2009. www.metabolicity.com

Jones, H., and Eysler, A., (2007). *'The Designer as Activist'*. A three-day seminar and workshop with students from the BA (Hons) Post-Industrial Design, Hyperwerk, Basel, Switzerland. 1<sup>st</sup> April – 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2007.

Jones, H., (2007). 'Experiencing Awkward Space in the City'. Postgraduate speaker at the ESRC Research Seminar Series, 'Rethinking the urban experience: the sensory production of place'. Salford University, Manchester, UK. 31st January 2007. http://www.sensescapes.co.uk/

# Chapter 1: An introduction to awkward space in the city

#### 1.1 Setting the scene

This thesis sets out to explore how and why we experience awkward space within the city and how the concept can become productive for collaborative design processes regarding the urban environment. The study is organised into two main parts. The first part, which focuses upon *exploring* awkward space, gathers together a range of observations about the emergence of awkward space amongst the inter-relationships between people, objects and the environment. The second part, which focuses upon *practicing* awkward space, embarks upon a participatory and collaborative design inquiry, where the concept of awkward space is used to seed creative conversations about the everyday that inform and inspire socio-physical interventions made by urban inhabitants within their local environment.

Central to this thesis study is the notion of awkward space. In previous research (See section 1.4), I defined the concept of awkward space as 'ambivalent or unresolved spaces that are the remnants of a previous pattern of flow' (Jones, 2007, 70). I explored how the concept of awkward space related to other contemporary spatial concepts within urban discourse that included, for example, 'uncanny space' (Vidler, 1994), 'non-places' (Auge, 1995), 'the spaces between buildings' (Ford, 2000), 'junk space' (Koolhaas, 2001), 'spaces of uncertainty' (Cupers and Miessen, 2002), and 'spaces of indeterminacy' (Lim, 2005). My research at that time proposed how awkward space might address modern urban alienation through offering 'creative possibilities' for the design of cities, suggesting four key qualities and characteristics that included:

- providing the city with zones of wilderness (Low et al, 2005),
- constituting an informal 'territory of affordance' (Gibson, 1979, Norman, 2004),
- actively engaging individuals (Lefebvre, 1996),
- and creating 'alternative flows' (Tschumi, 1998).
   (Jones, 2007)

This thesis research continues to explore and develop an understanding of the notion of awkward space. The following sections lay a foundation for the study by discussing my approach to several key issues.

#### 1.2 Research context and issues

My research case studies take place in Cardiff and London, UK. The case studies document everyday places, which include a local bus stop in New Cross, South London, a college campus in Cardiff, Wales and the Haberdasher housing estate in Shoreditch, North London. Each of the case studies represent an example of 'places where differences collide or interact', which form what Crawford defines as an 'everyday urbanism' (Crawford, 1999, 11). Everyday urbanism contrasts with 'normative', large-scale planning and design strategies. It is 'specific' and explores and responds to existing contexts so as to 'reinforce their qualities' (Haydn and Temel, 2006, 56). Everyday urbanism is constituted by the spaces that exist in between institutions, work places and the residential (Haydn and Temel, 2006, 56). My own research shares qualities and characteristics with everyday urbanism. Each of my case studies is responsive to the activities taking place within an everyday place and the issues and ideas generated by its users or inhabitants, acknowledging the 'life that takes place' within these situations (Crawford, 1999, 10). My research seeks to understand awkwardness as manifest within spatial relationships in the urban realm. I start out exploring the 'by the way' encounters of urban commuters and subsequently work with a small group of residents invested in the betterment of their local neighbourhood. The research therefore generates insights into awkward space that emerges through the multiple relationships between people and their everyday environment, from our logistical negotiations of space along a busy footway, to the feelings of unease around locations on a housing estate where drug dealing is taking place.

My thesis research initially asks the question 'How do we experience awkward space in the city?' I propose that awkward space is within and around the stuff of life and is played out through a 'meshwork' (Ingold, 2011) of dynamic relationships. Doreen Massey describes how 'thinking the spatial in a particular way can shake up the manner in which certain political questions are formulated' (Massey, 2005, 9). For Massey, in the context of political geography, this means that understanding space coupled with time, as open, relational and dynamic 'contemporaneous multiplicity'

rather than as a contained and static void, changes the way we engage with concepts such as the local and the global in our daily decision-making processes (Massey, 2004, 5). If we explore this proposition in the context of design, we can begin to shake up the existing structures that organise the social interactions between producers and consumers. I propose that temporarily framing and acknowledging awkward space as a dynamic and relational quality, rather than considering it to be an isolated problem, potentially allows for the discovery of turning points and opportunities to co-imagine and co-realise new social perspectives through a design facilitated process. Here, design moves away from its traditional role as a problem-solving activity to a possibility-seeking pursuit.

#### 1.3 Research aims and objectives

This research therefore aims to explore and develop a deeper understanding of the concept of awkward space and to experiment with using the concept to seed creative conversations about the everyday environment, which may or may not inform or inspire design interventions. My objective is to carry out observational studies and to involve small groups of people in collaborative creative design processes, situated within everyday urban contexts. Here, I am impacting with the group rather than on the group's everyday activities and environment. This requires developing a process where designers (including myself) and inhabitants learn from each other through a process of 'reciprocal elucidation' (Kester, 2004). This involves the designers learning about the limits of their tools and theoretical frameworks and the inhabitants discovering how to organise and make use of their practical knowledge of their urban environment. My design research process can be applied to design projects where designers or design students work in teams with community stakeholders, or with local government or organisations such as the Shoreditch Trust (http://www.shoreditchtrust.org.uk/), who work to improve the living conditions of urban neighbourhoods across Hackney, North London.

#### 1.4 Research background and stance

My fascination with awkward space began when I realised that the different angles of my sloping attic bedroom ceiling had an effect on my ability to get a good night's sleep. At the time, I was studying a BA in textile design and my work was focused on the relationship between textiles and architectural space. I set about documenting 'awkward space' within my then college building, defining these spaces as

'unconsidered blind spots that puncture the buildings we circulate' (Jones, 2000). For the outcome of my degree, I produced a hand-printed textbook and a series of site-specific installations, which highlighted awkward space through plans, narratives, primary-coloured vinyl and light. Afterwards, having gained experience working as an architect's assistant, I undertook an MA in Design Futures, where I continued to research awkward space. This time my curiosity led me to move out into the built environment. My MA dissertation posed the question 'How can an awareness of awkward space inform a more holistic design of the urban landscape?' In my dissertation, I speculated about establishing an interdisciplinary urban space agency, focusing on facilitating an informal territory of public space that would re-connect alienated individuals to the built environment.

Subsequent to my BA and MA studies, I have ten years experience in developing creative, collaborative methods and processes with architecture and design students, teams of professional designers, creative organisations and local communities<sup>1</sup>. Whilst my design research practice is collaborative and participatory, my work is not focused upon engaging end-user groups in delivering specific design outcomes, such as products, services or technological solutions. In this sense, my practice differs from earlier modes of Participatory Design (Ehn, 1992) and co-design (Sanders and Stappers, 2008). The overall aim of my practice is to support and empower an artful inventiveness in the everyday, highlighted and reflected upon through the creative conversations that take place within the workshops that I facilitate. The pioneer of 'design methods' John Chris Jones describes this 'beyond goal-orientated' design process as 'shared imaginative living' or 'creative democracy' (Jones, 1970). This has more in common with more recent developments in the field of community-driven participatory design and its links to social innovation (Björgvinsson, et al., 2012, DiSalvo, et al., 2012, Manzini and Rizzo, 2011). Here Participatory Design moves into the public realm with the main aim of empowering multiple voices in the community.

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<sup>1</sup> This experience has been acquired through several key design and research projects. These include being a member of the steering committee for the Attainable Utopias Network, 2003-2005 (www.attainable-utopias.org) and my role as a co-researcher on the AHRC/EPSRC funded 'Benchmarking Synergy-levels within Metadesign' project, 2005-2009, at Goldsmiths, University of London, principle investigator Prof. John Wood; and in my role as a research associate on a project entitled 'MetaboliCity', 2008-2009, which was funded by the Audi Design Foundation, run by the art and design studio Loop.pH and based at Central St. Martins.

I am curious to discover ways in which design can create temporary openings or otherly spaces<sup>2</sup> to converse in a place free of the boundaries between producers, consumers, experts and 'ordinary' woman and men. I relate my approach to an emerging culture of metadesign (Wood et al., 2005-2009, www.metadesigners.org last accessed 10<sup>th</sup> January 2014). Digital artist and metadesign researcher Elisa Giaccardi defines metadesign as 'a shared design endeavour aimed at sustaining emergence, evolution and adaptation' (Giaccardi, 2005). It places an emphasis on the design of frameworks and processes that support collaboration and emergence rather than on designing artefacts. The sustainable design lecturer, facilitator and writer Alistair Fuad-Luke defines metadesign as being about 'encouraging, shaping and catalysing' rather than 'directing or controlling' participatory design processes (Fuad-Luke, 2009, 151). Developer of open and adaptive human computer interface designs, Gerhard Fischer describes how in metadesign the process is left open so as to invite in the creativity of others (Fischer and Scharff, 2000). To apply this to an urban context, I draw upon methods and learning from community participation in urban planning (Sanoff, 2000, 2008). Here, the designer is focused upon setting-up the conditions for social activation and change agency; and resourcing a creative process whereby the solutions to emerge are the responsibility of all of the participants engaged. When applied to an everyday urban context, this open and collaborative approach can help to generate an understanding of, not only the physical properties of the environment, but also the socialisation of space. Human Computer Interaction (HCI) researchers Steve Harrison and Paul Dourish propose that it is through exploring the opportunities 'afforded' by space that we can collectively enrich our experience of the places in which we live (Harrison and Dourish, 1996).

Though my thesis research I have drawn upon elements of dialogical artistic practice (Kester, 2004, 2011) to further situate and inform my co-design practice.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> I discuss the notion of 'otherly spaces' further in Chapter 5, page 206.

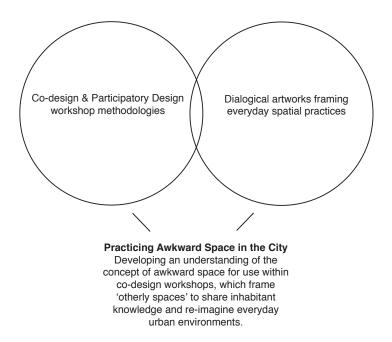


Figure 1.1 Developing and positioning my co-design approach

The inter-relationship between the areas of dialogical artistic practice and co-design informs my role and approach as a practitioner designing 'otherly spaces' that are applied into a co-design process (See Figure 1.1). The challenges of working with co-design and dialogical creative practices, such as negotiating peoples' different points of view, dealing with an element of uncertainty as to peoples' commitment to the process and being aware of shifts in and the balancing of power-relationships, are critically explored throughout my case studies investigations.

#### 1.5 Scope and focus of the research

Rather than carrying out an extensive survey of the phenomena of temporary space use in cities<sup>3</sup>, my thesis research seeks to understand how and why we experience awkward space; from the different ways that we individually perceive, discover meaning within and move through our urban environment, to our collective sensemaking processes and actions. My thesis proposes that through sharing 'awkward

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<sup>3</sup> Throughout my research I have become increasingly aware of the potential use of different parts of the city for social and creative enterprises. There are many inspiring examples of this, from the Brixton Village project in South London, where an old shopping arcade has been repopulated with locally-driven ethical and creative enterprise (http://spacemakers.org.uk); to a project that I worked on entitled 'MetaboliCity' (2008-2009) that uses a variety of places, such as old car parks and office windows, for urban greening and food production (www.metabolicity.com). Whilst projects such as these inform the development of my own practice they are not the central focus of this particular investigation.

narratives' (Sinclair, 2006, 16) of everyday places we can develop contextually grounded, connected and diverse 'inhabitant knowledge' (Ingold, 2012, 154). This knowledge might in turn inform socio-physical interventions or future decision-making processes regarding our urban environment. Here design opens up a shared 'knowledge space' (Turnbull, 2000, 20) where the creative interplay between design strategy and local tactics allows for new possibilities to emerge. Awkward space is used both as a loosely defined concept to seed collective conversations and as a benchmark for co-evaluating these collaborative experiences and their outcomes. So the focus of my design research is on the development of an understanding of awkward space to be used within a situated, inclusive, inter-subjective and emergent co-design practice.

#### 1.6 Methodological considerations

My qualitative research is situated within an interpretive and critical paradigm, drawing meaning from the 'everyday lived experience' of people and working with them to inform a transformation within their social setting (Neuman, 2000). In design research, the purposes for using a critical approach may include 'disrupting, emancipating or transforming the habitus' (Crouch and Pearce, 2012), whilst exploring the potential for further developing design practice. This requires a self-reflexive awareness from the researcher, in terms of the positioning of their practice in the context of the research investigation and understanding their relationship to the people with whom they are collaborating.

#### 1.6.1 The literature reviews

The purpose of my focused and selective literature reviews are to inform and mobilise my design practice. In this sense, the literature reviews break with tradition, acting as theoretical interventions that are dynamic, scene-setting and generative parts of the whole thesis. The first literature review 'Perceiving, moving and knowing through awkward space' supports and informs the development of my exploration into how and why we experience awkward space in the city; whilst the second literature review 'Framing and mobilising everyday practices through dialogical creative encounters' draws upon the findings from my collaborations in Case study 3 to situate and reflect upon my practice. Both reviews are thus interwoven with and responsive to the findings from the case study investigations. I also produce a short review on co-design and participatory design workshops. This is located in Chapter

4, informing the development of my research design for case study 3. The first review is situated alongside Case study 1 in Chapter 2 and the second review (Chapter 5) is located in the middle of the Case study 3 chapters in the text. Theories and concepts derived from the first review directly inform the approach to the design exercise that forms the basis of my second case study (Chapter 3). The literature therefore acts as both 'an aide once patterns and categories have been identified' (Creswell, 1994, 23) through the case study fieldwork, and as a resource for the development of tools and approaches.

#### 1.6.2 A methodological palette

Over the course of the study the research charts the trajectory from *exploring* to *practicing* awkward space. The methodological palette in Figure 1.2 highlights the organisation of the approach, theories and concepts, epistemological journey, tools and methods and researcher attributes that underpin this transitional inquiry.

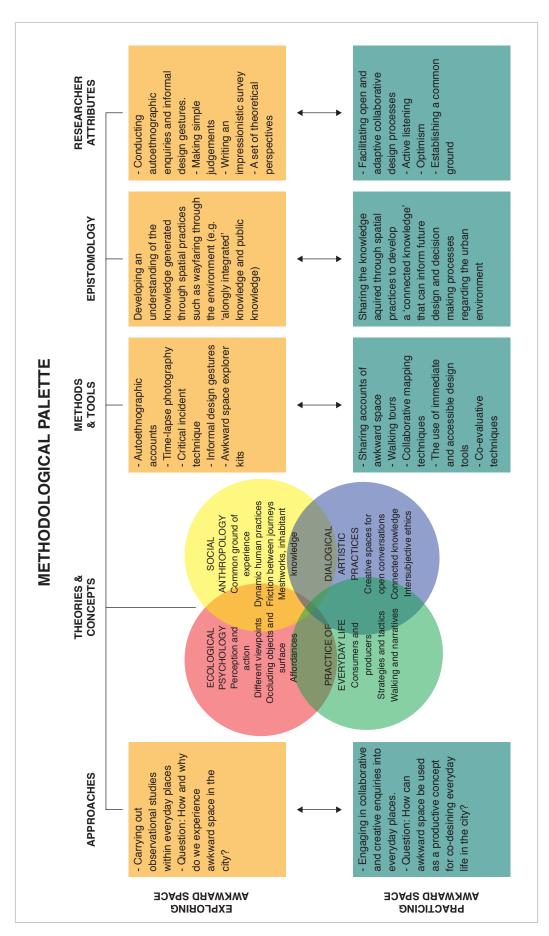


Figure 1.2 Methodological palette

#### 1.7 Overview of the thesis

Following on from my introduction, Chapter 2 presents an observational study of a local bus stop in New Cross, London. I selected this location as an example of an urban space that I found awkward to negotiate on an everyday basis. I engage with a range of social science methods and design approaches including autoethnography, time-lapse photography, critical incident technique and informal design gestures, to explore and capture the awkward inter-relationships between people, objects and the environment. This is accompanied by my first focused literature review, which draws upon theoretical perspectives from ecological psychology and social anthropology to help in my analysis of why the bus stop becomes awkward.

Chapter 3 presents my second case study. Here I use the outcomes from case study 1 to inform an observational design exercise including 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year architecture students from the Welsh School of Architecture in Cardiff. The students individually identify awkward space on their college campus. I then engage with the students to collectively re-imagine these spaces. I bring in designers with technical expertise in crafting deployable structures to train the students, who then collectively build a small-scale temporary intervention in response to their observational studies into awkward space. This study helps me explore the link between observation and engagement through participant involvement, which helps to ground my 3<sup>rd</sup> case study approach.

My third case study takes the form of a one-year programme engaging with a local residents' group on the Haberdasher Estate in North London. This includes preliminary meetings, a mapping workshop and a co-evaluation discussion. This socio-physical context was chosen because it represents an urban situation where a group of local inhabitants are deeply invested in and knowledgeable about their neighbourhood environment. Chapter 4 presents our workshop 'Mapping Haberdasher' where the residents highlight spaces on their estate that they characterise and interpret as awkward. In this workshop the residents collaborate with a small team of designers to explore, map and evaluate their awkward spaces. I facilitate the workshop using methods and design tools including, a walking tour, an awkward space explorer's kit, collaborative mapping techniques and a collective evaluation. These methods were developed from experience gained in Case Studies 1 and 2 and literature on co-design and participatory design workshop methods and

approaches. This study is followed by a second focused literature intervention, Chapter 5, which explores how dialogical artistic practices might frame and mobilise the everyday spatial tactics of ordinary people. Chapter 6 reports on a one year on co-evaluation discussion with the residents in which we refer back to the plan to assess the achievements made over the course of the year. This section leads into the conclusions in Chapter 7, which synthesis my research findings, state my contribution to knowledge, draw together the methodology and make further recommendations for research. Figure 1.3 presents a timeline highlighting the dates of each of my three case study inquiries.

The development of this research has not been linear but organic in nature. The structure of the thesis compiles my findings in the order of how each stage of the study was conceived. However, in some instances research insights emerged at different points in time. I have thus depicted the thesis structure as a river to illustrate the flow and dynamicity of producing such a document (See Figure 1.4). The largest curve in the river, which almost forms an oxbow lake, represents the Mapping Haberdasher workshop, which generated some of the most significant findings in the study. I use the river as a visual metaphor again in my thesis conclusions to chart the evolution of the concept of awkward space through my investigations (See Figure 7.2).

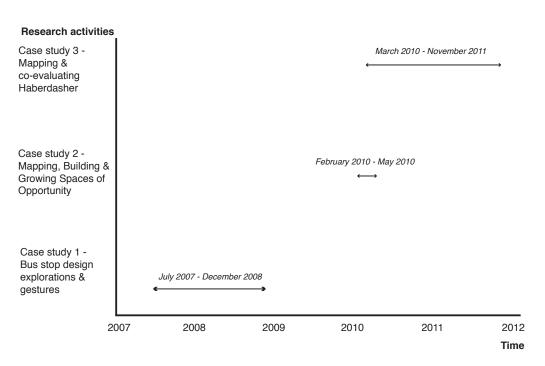


Figure 1.3 Case study timeline

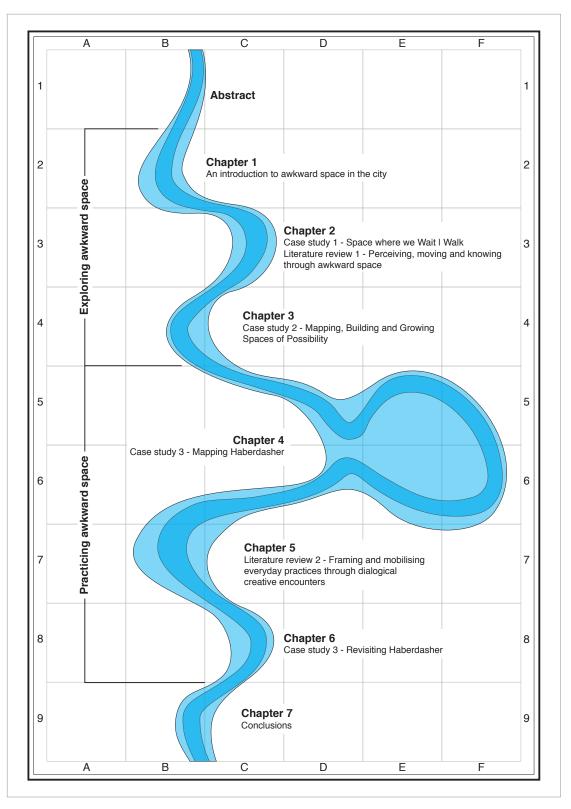


Figure 1.4 Thesis structure

### Chapter 2: Space where we Wait I Walk

#### 2.1 Overview

This chapter explores the broad and overarching question, 'How and why do we experience awkward space in the city?'. I undertook this as a first person, design-led exploration, rather than as a matter for scholarly research or predefined methodological approach, to allow my sensitivities and relevant issues to emerge in action.

The first section presents the findings from a case study documenting the awkward interactions taking place at a local bus stop in New Cross, South London. The study combines autoethnographic excerpts of writing and observational studies; with findings drawn from bus stop studies by Transport for London and reflections on an informal design gesture carried out in the space.

The second section presents the first focused and selective literature review of the thesis research, which explores how we perceive and act as we move through the urban environment. The review is organised into two parts, the first discusses 'The Ecological Approach To Visual Perception' by the ecological psychologist James Jerome Gibson (Gibson, 1979); and the second focuses upon the social anthropologist Tim Ingold's research into journeying through the environment. The literature review draws upon the early observations from my bus stop case study to seed a deeper understanding of how and why we experience awkward space in the city. The literature reveals insights into how we negotiate and manage awkwardness in different ways based upon our activities within a place. These insights inform a second design gesture within the bus stop environment. The review also reveals insights into the type of knowledge acquired through experiencing awkward space within the urban environment and suggests how this might inform a design process.

## 2.2 Introducing my approach to exploring awkward space at the bus stop

The following case study takes the form of an 'impressionistic survey' of my experience, as a pedestrian and occasional bus passenger, of a bus stop in New Cross, South London. This might also be defined as an 'autoethnographic' account. Autoethnography is a qualitative research method that 'combines characteristics of ethnography and autobiography' (Pace, 2012, 2). Ethnography is the field of study concerned with developing a deeper understanding of a social group's customs, beliefs and habits, usually obtained through interviews and participant observation. In contrast, autoethnography 'situates the self within the context of a culture, sub-culture or group, and studies one's experience along with that of other members of the group' (Duartes in Ellis and Boucher, 2000, 2). This is a subjective, rather than objective research method. As a researcher, I am drawing upon my own personal experience to develop my understanding of a particular phenomena, in this case, awkward space, and using this as a starting point to achieve a broader social understanding (Pace, 2012, 2).

The bus stop location was selected as my first case study as it constitutes an example of an everyday space that I experience as awkward. In an article entitled 'Case Studies as a Biological Research Process' Languish defines six basic case study types which are; the comparative, the representative, the best practice, the ones next door, the "cor, look at that" and the taxonomic'. (Languish, 1993, 362) The bus stop study is an example of what Languish defines as a 'next door' case study, which is partly chosen based upon an easy access to information, which was deemed appropriate for an observational study of an everyday place.

I originally carried out the study in 2007 and have later reworked the material to capture the main highlights. The study remains relevant as it contributes to the framing and development of my research. The study sets out to observe the interactions taking place between the people at the bus stop, the objects found in and around the bus stop and the bus stop environment itself. I make a series of 'simple judgments' about why it becomes an awkward space. In this case study I draw upon

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Alain de Botton uses the term 'impressionistic survey' to describe the personal account he makes about spending time in Heathrow airport in his 2009 book 'A Week at the Airport: A Heathrow Diary'.

John. C. Flanagan's 'Critical Incident Technique' (1954) to observe and gather data about the bus stop environment and users. Critical incident technique is a research method developed for the aviation industry that consists of 'a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behaviour in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems...' (Flanagan, 1954, 1). Flanagan describes how critical incident technique only requires 'simple judgments' of the observer. At this stage, identifying how the bus stop becomes awkward rests upon a set of simple judgments made by myself as the design researcher with personal experience of the bus stop. These simple judgments feed into an informal design gesture carried out at the bus stop.

#### 2.3 Setting the scene



Figure 2.1 New Cross Gate bus stop (0)

I begin my thesis research journey at a local bus stop (See Figure 2.1). The bus stop is an example of a place in my everyday<sup>5</sup> life where I experience what I describe as awkward space. This primarily occurs when I walk through the bus stop area as a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The everyday refers to 'the lived experience shared by urban residents, the banal and ordinary routines we know all too well - commuting, working, relaxing, moving through the city streets and sidewalks, shopping, buying and eating food, running errands.' (Crawford, 1999, 8).

pedestrian on my way back and forth to work. The following observations are taken from my research journal on the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 7th July 2007<sup>6</sup>.

'On approaching the bus stop I sometimes feel as though I am on a raft anticipating the rapids. Confronted with a crowd of other pedestrians and bus passengers mingling around the bus shelter, I am caught in a moment of uncertainty. There might be off-routing, possible collisions, and precariously close contact with others. I self-consciously cling onto my rucksack straps and swerve through the bus zone. When I get to the other side, I feel intact, unjumbled and streamline. I've made it through the onslaught of bus passenger action, the aligning and boarding of people and their chaotic interweaving through the space. I have overcome all obstacles; stray smokers, orange Sainsbury's bags and clunky, moody prams. I have successfully negotiated awkward space.'

'On the rare occasions that I wait at the bus stop for the number 21 bus to Newington Green, I am aware that I become a member of a temporary community of bus passengers. These passengers fill up the bus shelter, both sitting down on the seating provided and standing in and around the shelter. The bus passengers observe other bus passengers. From within the bus shelter, there is no view of the oncoming buses and so people watch for the movements of those positioned at the bus stop pole and flag and the edge of the shelter. The side panels on the bus shelter display advertising posters on the inside and the outside. I notice that the bus shelter regularly becomes run down, with broken seating and vandalized panels. It attracts a wide range of unusual miscellaneous objects such as spiky potatoes (a guerrilla art project?), pram wheels and crashed motorcycles' (See Figure 2.2).

The bus stop makes *me* feel awkward. It can also make me feel frustrated and annoyed. But mostly it makes me feel a bit uncomfortable or clumsy as I move through the environment. Throughout this study I aim to develop a clearer picture of how this happens. New Cross Road, also known as the A2, is a heavily trafficked road that leads to Dover. The traffic creates a lot of noise. When I exit New Cross Gate train station, listening to my headphones, the music becomes inaudible for the sound of motor vehicles. There are seven buses that regularly pull up to my awkward bus stop. When buses arrive simultaneously, bus passengers have to walk towards

and diagrams developed from my research journal material. The change in font signifies a change to a more personal voice.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> From this point onwards, I will be using Georgia font throughout the thesis to denote texts

where the bus driver decides to stop to board. They are also dropped off at different points along the footway. The buses include 'bendy' buses, which have multiple access points for boarding and alighting the bus. This means that people wait (and alight the bus) along the whole stretch of the bus stop area. Whilst in other cities or even different parts of London, the etiquette is to queue for a bus, at this bus stop people pile onto the bus without queuing. This might in part be because there is no clear point to queue up from.

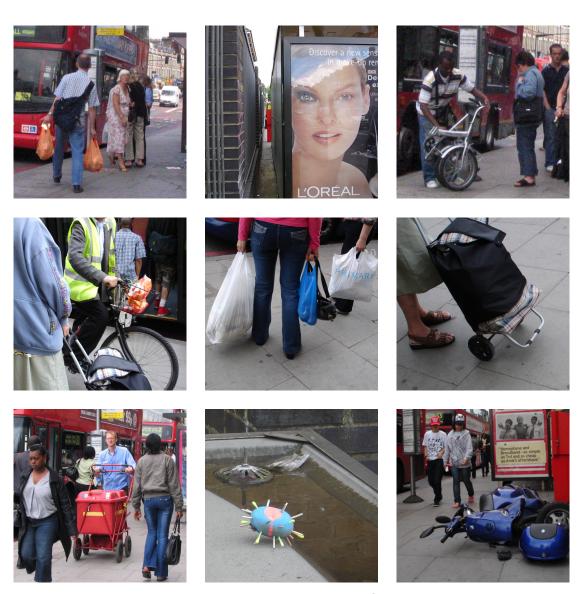


Figure 2.2 Bus stop details, photographed between July and September 2007

This bus stop is situated close to landmarks such as Sainsbury's supermarket, New Cross Gate Station, Goldsmiths, University of London and the Hobgoblin Public House (See Figure 2.3). It therefore not only operates as a bus stop for many buses but also as a footway for lots of pedestrians with differing individual goals.

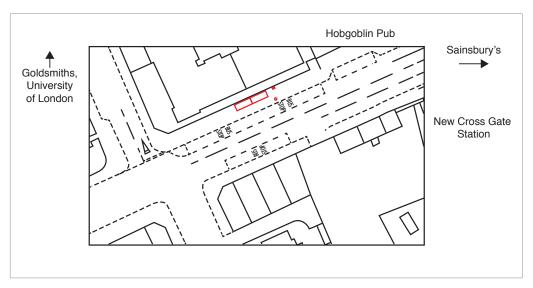


Figure 2.3 Plan of New Cross Gate bus stop O (in red) and surrounding context

To understand how this everyday place becomes awkward, I want to develop a comprehensive picture of the activities at play in and around the bus stop. Jane Jacobs, in 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities' describes how

'A city sidewalk by itself is nothing. It is an abstraction. It means something only in conjunction with the buildings and other uses that border it, or border other sidewalks very near it... Streets and their sidewalks, the main public places of the city, are its most vital organs' (Jacobs, c1961, 1992, 29).

Jacobs proposes that the streets and sidewalks of the city provide us with the opportunity to become entangled in and experience the public world of the city. It is along the pavements of cities that we engage in countless brief interactions with others. These are the 'by-the-way' (Jacobs, 1992, 62) relationships that form our everyday lives. I am interested in discovering how awkwardness impacts upon our negotiations of the sidewalk. I would also like to develop my understanding of the type of the knowledge that we take away from these public city experiences.

#### 2.4 Inquiries into bus stop design and environments

To discover more about the bus stop environment and the design of bus stops I contacted Transport for London (TfL). I wanted to obtain plans of the New Cross Gate bus stop (0) and to find out more information about its history. I corresponded with two members of the bus priority team at TfL. In July 2007, I spoke to the senior engineer for Lewisham who told me that I was lucky because plans of the bus stop were available due to a recent extension of the bus stop cage. The engineer

commented on how the extension had led to problems with over-crowding at the bus stop. I also had a note from another member of TFL who informed me that 'the footway used to be narrower than it is now, so crowding/ conflict at the bus stop may have been worse (though there are more buses and more passengers nowadays)' (Beswick, 2007, see Appendix A1, page 275). So from the point of view of the local TfL experts, it seems that this particular bus stop space becomes logistically awkward to manage due to overcrowding and a restricted pathway. This logistical understanding of awkward space offers a different perspective to my own feelings of awkwardness presented earlier, which were associated with the experience of interacting with people and objects within the bus stop space. Both interpretations add to the development of my dynamic understanding of the notion of awkward space.

TfL also provided me with three recent documents on bus stop environments. The first document, entitled the 'Pedestrian and Bus Passenger Conflict Study' (Atkins, 2005) was accompanied by case study entitled 'Bus Stop Design Guidance: Space Use Analysis of Crowding Patterns' prepared for Atkins by the Intelligent Space Partnership (Intelligent Space Partnership for Atkins, 2005). The other document, entitled 'Accessible Bus Stop Design Guidance' was written by the TfL Bus Priority Team (TfL Bus Priority Team, 2006). These documents present bus stop research findings acquired from gathering data through a range of methods including site plans, video footage, space analysis, and bus surveys.

The 'Pedestrian and Bus Passenger Conflict Study' provides a set of design guidelines that seek to improve the design of bus stop areas by taking into account the conflicting needs of the bus passengers and pedestrians who use them. Atkins discuss how

'Despite the pioneering work of Fruin (1970) into the issues of pedestrian movement, interaction and space published more than 30 years ago, there is a lack of research building on it. This is particularly true of the bus passenger's waiting environment on the footway and the interaction with pedestrians. Fruin noted how "little attention (has been) given to providing adequate areas for waiting pedestrians, or to assure that these pedestrians will not impede the flow of others.' (Atkins, 2005, 2-1)

One of the key design issues that Atkins have identified in their study is how the interactions between bus passengers waiting for a bus impede the flow of pedestrians who move along the footway through the bus stop area. In their report

they advocate the concept of 'total journey quality', recognising that 'bus passengers are also pedestrians at each end of the bus trip' (TfL, 2006, 2). They highlight the importance of approaching the bus stop environment as 'an interchange' rather than 'a location along a bus route where buses stop, comprising only of a post with a flag, and a cage laid on the road surface.' (TfL, 2006, 2). A TfL map of the features of a bus stop environment taken from the 'Accessible Bus Stop Design Guidance' booklet (See Figure 2.4) takes into account not only the physical characteristics of the environment, such as the bus stop pole and flag, but also addresses social aspects of the bus stop environment, such as security and convenience.

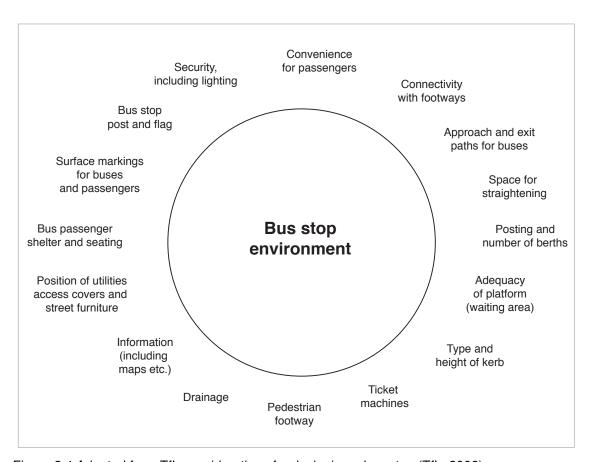


Figure 2.4 Adapted from TfL considerations for designing a bus stop (TfL, 2006)

TfL research indicates that awkwardness at bus stops results from the following issues:

- A 'conflict' between bus passengers and pedestrians negotiating the footway
- The interchanging roles of the bus passengers and the pedestrians

They aim to alleviate this problem by designing bus stop environments with a consideration of the layout of street furniture, such as bins and ticket machines and

to better understand the interchange between bus stop users. Inspired by the Intelligent Space Partnership's use of CCTV footage to document, map and analyse the interactions between bus passengers and pedestrians in the bus stop environment, I set out to record the bus stop activities using time-lapse photography of the New Cross Road bus stop.

# 2.5 Observational study of the bus stop interactions

On the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2007, I recorded my own set of observations of the bus stop environment, focusing upon the interactions between the bus passengers and pedestrians. I carried out my recorded observations at 12.30pm, which I had previously observed as being one of the peak travel times during the day8. I used time-lapse photography to capture the activities taking place at the bus stop over a period of approximately 15 minutes. 15 minutes was deemed appropriate due to the amount of material that could be produced within this given time frame. The camera was set up to take one photograph every five seconds, producing 159 photographs in total. I divided up the photographs into 60-second intervals, or 12 photographs and wrote short descriptions of the interactions taking place between the bus passengers and pedestrians in each of these time periods. (See Appendix A2 for an overview of the observational study, page 277). From the sequence of time-lapse images (See DVD Film 01), I identified a series of four critical incidents. These are moments when the configuration of people and objects in the environment make it more awkward for the pedestrians and bus passengers to wait in and walk through the space. Each critical incident is represented with an annotated drawing (See Figure 2.5 - Figure 2.8). They include a series of my own 'simple judgments' that describe what is going on in the picture. I chose the critical incidents by cross-referencing what I observed happening whilst filming in the space and the activities recorded in the photographs. In my view, four critical incidents stood out as especially awkward in this period of time. The remaining photographs did not capture awkward moments. They mostly show periods of inactivity at the bus stop.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> John Fruin, in a paper entitled 'Designing for Pedestrians: A Level-of-Service Concept', states that 'Time-lapse photography studies make it possible to establish the relationship between volume, speed, and human convenience at different pedestrian concentrations' (Fruin, 1970, 1). Time-lapse photography is a time-efficient way of recording both the flows of activities within a space and capturing individual stills of the space for closer inspection and presentation. At this stage in the investigation, I felt that using video film would produce too much data to effectively manage in a short amount of time.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Prior to this experiment I sat in a café opposite the bus stop and used a spreadsheet to record the number of users passing through the bus stop and the number of buses pulling up at different times of day.

A bus passenger stands talking to another bus passenger waiting for a bus standing at the edge of the bus shelter.

He has his back facing the oncoming buses and pedestrians entering the space. So whilst he chats to the other person he is oblivious to becoming an obstacle.

He holds a camera box in his right hand. This restricts the pathway for pedestrians moving through bus stop area.



A pedestrian skirts around him, close to the bus stop pole as she makes her way along the footway.

Figure 2.5 Critical incident 1

A bus passenger in black t-shirt stands in between the bus shelter and the bus stop pole and flag.



Other bus passengers wait along the edge of the pavement in good viewing position for the oncoming buses.

A bus passenger in a white t-shirt stands next to the bus stop pole and flag. He is casually reading the display panel on the pole.

Figure 2.6 Critical incident 2

- leans against the edge of the Another bus passenger bus shelter. becomes a bus passenger, standing in between the shelter and bus stop pole and A pedestrian arrives at the bus stop after four pedestrians have passed by. He flag with his feet either side of his bag. He is holding a shopping bag and an This clutters the pathway in between the bus shelter and the bus stop pole and flag, revealing how it is not only people who become obstacles but it is also the luggage that they bring with them into the space. umbrella.

Figure 2.7 Critical incident 3

Co-Ahead Market now.

the bus. Other bus

passengers wait along the

footway and around the bus

shelter.

A bendy-bus has pulled up to the bus stop. It drops off bus passengers along the footway whilst other bus passnegers move in to board

A pedestrian walks along the

roadside to avoid the cluster of waiters that have gathered

over time along the pathway that runs in front of the bus

Figure 2.8 Critical incident 4

The bus stop has started to

# 2.5.1 Findings from observational study

From the four critical incidents capturing the bus stop activities and from my experience of photographing the activities from within the bus stop area, I observed a range of issues that contribute to this space becoming awkward to negotiate and manage (See Figure 2.9). Firstly, the bus passengers that lean against bus stop pole and flag and the bus shelter edge whilst waiting for their buses, restrict the footway for the pedestrians. They form a temporary community, bound momentarily by a common interest in catching their buses and their shared sense of entitlement to wait within the bus stop zone. They also deposit objects along the footway, such as shopping bags, which create obstacles for the pedestrians. The bus passengers in conversation with other bus passengers or on their mobile phones, as well as those who are listening to headphones, are less aware of the pedestrians moving along the footway and so can also become obstacles. Bus passengers waiting in the footway along the front of the bus shelter can also block the view of the buses for passengers within the bus shelter. However, they also act as 'look outs' for buses for those bus passengers who cannot see from within the shelter. Pedestrians sometimes stop abruptly along the footway as they switch roles from pedestrian to bus passenger, immediately becoming an obstacle for other pedestrians. Bus passengers who alight buses along different points of the footway add to the chaotic flow through the environment when the bus stop is really busy. Pedestrians bring possessions with them into the space, such as bicycles and prams, which create more clutter in the environment. In order to avoid the crowds of bus passengers and pedestrians in front of the bus shelter, some pedestrians skirt around the bus stop pole and flag, coming precariously close to the road. Although I photographed the bus stop at a time that I had previously observed as being peak travel time and most busy, the bus stop was relatively quiet. Had the bus stop been busier, with more bus passengers and pedestrians negotiating the space the findings would have been accentuated, with more movement and extra clutter in the environment.

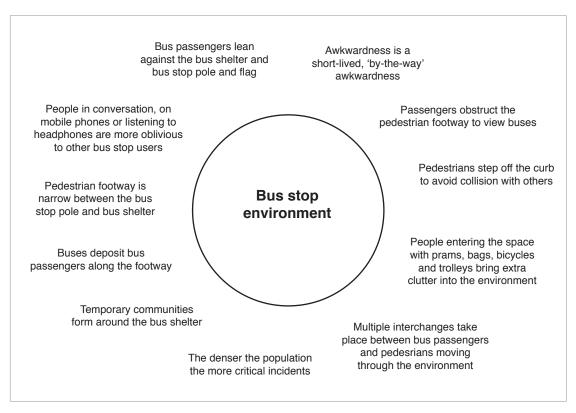


Figure 2.9 Awkward issues identified from the four critical incidents

# 2.6 An informal design gesture

In response to the findings from my observational study, I devised a design gesture aimed at affecting the interactions between bus passengers and pedestrians along the footway through the bus stop. I define a design gesture as a quick and informal testing out of ideas in the environment. With this design gesture, I aimed to disrupt the bus passengers waiting patterns to observe how this affects the pedestrian and bus passenger interactions along the footpath. Through the analysis of my critical incidents, I discovered that the bus passengers leaning against the bus shelter edge and the bus stop pole and flag restrict the footpath for the pedestrians moving through the environment. This leads to an awkward negotiation of the space. These awkward negotiations led to the feelings of awkwardness that I described earlier on in my recollections of my experience of the bus stop as an awkward space. My design gesture sought to affect a change in the flow of bus passenger and pedestrian interactions through this section of the bus stop environment by laying down two hazard tape squares at each of these awkward hot spots.

# 2.6.1 Use of the term 'design gesture'

I coined the term 'design gesture' to describe my integration of graphic markings into the bus stop environment. This action had less impact on people than an 'intervention' or 'prototype' and was therefore more akin to an 'artistic gesture'. The art and media theorist Ryszard W. Kluszczynski, in an article entitled 'Artistic Gesture: expression, communication, participation', highlights several key characteristics of an artistic gesture. These include the notion that no one in particular should perceive themselves to be the specific focus of an artistic gesture, although someone might (Kluszczynski, 2001). In this way, my own action in the bus stop does not aim to address any particular users of the bus stop. The graphic markings are an invitation to read something different into the environment or to perhaps initiate a dialogue. This is however left up to the decision of the bus passengers and the pedestrians. In terms of the power balance between myself and the bus stop users, a gesture is intended to be less imposing that an intervention. I am laying out graphics markings to invite a response, rather than building a brick wall to stop someone in their tracks. Design gesture is intended to provide a more dynamic method than a 'design sketch', which is a term coined by product and technology design innovator, writer and teacher Bill Buxton (Buxton, 2007). A design sketch describes a method for expressing design ideas for user experiences. A design gesture takes a sketch out of a 'workbook' and introduces it into the flow and interactions of a real life environment. It is therefore contingent to my working with awkward space, in that I am pursuing an understanding of awkward space as played out through the interactions between people, objects and the environment. It also reflects the sensing out of my own research role at this stage in the study, tentatively reaching out into the environment to test ideas and extend my observational study.

I have therefore used the term design gesture to refer to a less formal or directive type of intervention in the environment, which works with flow and interactions within an environment and invites, rather than demands a response. Design gesture is a contribution to design methods and forms a part of my approach to investigating awkward space.

## 2.6.2 Inspiration for the informal design gesture

Photographs that I had collected of urban graphic markings from my everyday experience of the built environment in London and from a visit to Tokyo, Japan in July

2007, served as an inspiration for my design gesture. These quick studies exemplify formal and informal visual way-finding solutions in the built environment. My first example, which is of the floor markings at Tokyo train station, is a formal urban way-finding solution (See Figure 2.10). These are professionally designed to organise the crowd of waiting passengers. The markings designate the different types of carriages on the train. For example, pink boxes painted onto the floor highlight where the ladies-only carriage will pull up to at the platform. These markings are easily recognisable as an urban 'wayshowing' (Mollerup, 2005) strategy for waiting in public space.



Figure 2.10 Floor markings in Tokyo train station, July 2007

In contrast, my second example shows hazard tape floor markings at New Cross station in London (See Figure 2.11). These represent an ad-hoc response to changes in the environment. In this case, the hazard tape highlights uneven ground due to the wear and tear of the station flooring. The intervention made in this space has probably been made by a non-specialist. It is possible that somebody working on improvements in the station has applied the tape. The squares have an uneven, handmade aesthetic.



Figure 2.11 Ad-hoc hazard tape markings in New Cross Gate train station, September 2007

I decided that it was the ad-hoc, contextual and undesigned qualities of the example of informal urban graphic markings that I want to work with in my design gesture. I proposed that the gesture would achieve the following because I wanted the gesture to:

- create a spontaneous response to the activities taking place within the bus stop, rather than execute a more considered, deterministic, long-term design intervention.
- appear temporary and informal, yet embedded within the context.
- provide an opportunity for me to physically engage with the space itself.
- prompt a potential reaction from people within the space whilst going about their everyday activities.
- temporarily disrupt the interactions taking place within the environment to further my understanding of the experience of awkward space at the bus stop.

# 2.6.3 Executing the informal design gesture

On the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2007, I re-photographed New Cross Road bus stop using timelapse photography. The bus stop was observed for 15 minutes, at the same time of day as the previous photography session. I identified two hot spots from the critical incidents and highlighted them using two squares of red and white hazard tape (See Figure 2.12).

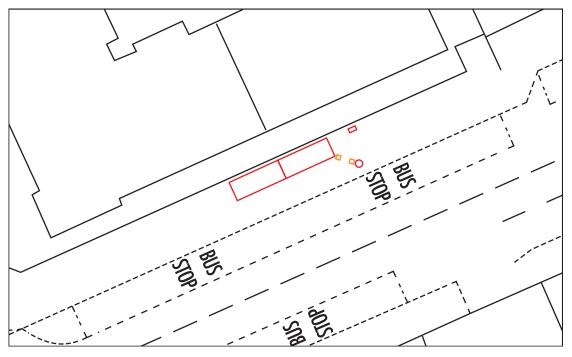


Figure 2.12 Plan of my design gesture, highlighting the hazard tape squares in orange

The size of the hazard tape squares was approximately 40cm by 40cm. I arrived at these dimensions based upon tracing the outline of my own fixed standing point and from my studies of the floor markings at New Cross Gate station. The hazard squares stood out clearly within the environment. The images in Figure 2.13 are taken from the time-lapse sequence of photographs (See DVD Film 02). The red arrows point to the two squares.









Figure 2.13 Hazard tape squares on either side of footway, stills from time-lapse sequence

# 2.6.4 Reflections on my informal design gesture

The hazard squares worked well as a visual tool to dissuade people who wait at the edge of the shelter and the space next to the bus pole from using these spaces. The removal of the two human obstacles seemed to temporarily ease the flow through the space. People were more patient when negotiating their way through the space and I witnessed occasions when people signalled for others to go first through the gap between the shelter's edge and the bus stop pole. This was perhaps a response to the hazard tape highlighting a potentially dangerous piece of paving, thus introducing an element of care into the interactions taking place. This meant that at times the flow through the space slowed down but did not become aggravated. It is interesting that even though the space became narrower i.e. physically more awkward (but large

enough to push a pram through), the flow of interactions became easier, i.e. socially less awkward.

Occupying the space when carrying out the design gesture provided an opportunity to engage with the bus stop users. Whilst laying down the hazard tape at the bus stop, one bus passenger waiting in the space, a lady with a pram, asked me what I was doing. On telling her that I was investigating how and why this space becomes awkward she remarked on how deep the bus shelter was and how it restricted the paving space. She described how very few people wanted to wait in the shelter because you cannot see oncoming buses and so they should make the shelter shallower. She also believed that this restriction in space created conflict situations with people arguing and becoming aggressive. She commented on how busy this bus stop became due to a large number of buses stopping. She noticed how the flow of people was messy and created obstacles in the space<sup>9</sup>. As a researcher, I found it useful to receive this feedback, having previously observed the space at a distance from the users. I enjoyed gaining a spontaneous response to the design gesture rather than, for example, formally interviewing people who use the space. This incident provided a seed that led me to later design dialogues (See Chapter 4, page 133). The design gesture was successful in supporting my earlier observations that bus passengers who lean against the bus stop pole and bus shelter edge contribute to the awkwardness in the environment. The hazard squares affected the behaviour of the people waiting and the people walking through the space, deterring them from depositing additional objects in these areas. The outcomes from the design gesture included a temporary ease in the flow of awkward interactions and a valuable insight into awkwardness, fed back from a bus passenger responding to the execution of the design gesture. Later, I tried out another design gesture in the bus stop environment but before describing that I will set the theoretical scene for exploring how and why we experience awkward space in the city.

## 2.7 Conclusions and further recommendations

This short case study documents my exploration into the activities taking place at a local bus stop that I experience as an 'awkward space'. To better understand how the space becomes awkward, I used the following observational methods:

• Firstly, I drew upon my own experience of the bus stop, creating a subjective autoethnographic account or 'impressionistic survey' of the space.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> This conversation is recorded in my case study journal, 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2007.

- Secondly, I consulted TfL to obtain general information about the design of bus stops and to gather data about the New Cross Road bus stop (O) in particular.
- Thirdly, I recorded the activities taking place at the bus stop using time-lapse photography. From the footage generated, I highlighted four critical incidents.
- Finally, I carried out an informal design gesture within the space to invite disruption amongst the interactions between bus passengers and pedestrians and to observe any changes in behaviour.

My autoethnographic account revealed that both pedestrians and bus passengers experience awkward space within the bus stop in different ways. As a pedestrian, the bus stop is awkward due to 'off-routing, possible collisions, and precariously close contact with others' along the footway; as well as 'stray smokers, orange Sainsbury's bags and clunky, moody prams' that clutter the path. I suggest that this constitutes a kind of "by-the-way" (Jacobs, 1992) awkwardness. The bus passengers' experience awkward space due to the restricted view of the oncoming buses from within the shelter and from other people standing in the way.

From consulting TfL, I discovered that the New Cross bus stop becomes an awkward space to negotiate due to a restricted footway and a dense number of users. TfL's report highlighted that the negotiation of the footway and the interchange of bus passengers and pedestrians are key contributing factors to 'conflict' at bus stops. The findings from my study echo those of TfL. The critical incidents drawn out from my observational study revealed that, on closer inspection, the space becomes awkward to negotiate when the footway becomes cluttered and through the multiple interchanges taking place between bus passengers and pedestrians. However, at a local level my study also revealed how the space becomes awkward when bus passengers wait around particular hot spots at the bus shelter edge and the bus stop pole and flag. My study also drew out additional, more detailed contributing factors to awkward space, including, for example, the lack of awareness of bus passengers becoming obstacles in the space when on the phone or talking in small groups.

From carrying out informal design gesture, I discovered that removing the human obstacles leaning against the shelter edge and bus stop pole by laying down hazard tape squares eased the flow of pedestrians through the space. The contextual, adhoc and informal qualities of the design gesture created an opportunity for an exchange with a bus passenger, described in my reflections on page 50. This

contributed an alternative perspective on the experience of this awkward space and prompted the realisation that I had previously been working at a distance from the other users of this awkward space.

In the following literature review, I continue to draw upon the findings from my bus stop case study to further develop my understanding of how and why we experience awkward space in the city.

# 2.8 Literature review one: Perceiving, moving and knowing through awkward space

This focused and selective literature review sets out to explore how we perceive and move through the environment and how this relates to our experience of awkward space. It also reflects upon the type of knowledge about the urban environment acquired through human practices such as wayfaring. The review is comprised of two main sections. The first section focuses upon the work of ecological psychologist James Jerome Gibson and the second section focuses upon the work of social anthropologist Tim Ingold. Concepts and theories drawn from the review are applied and woven through my bus stop case study to further develop an understanding of how and why we experience awkward space in the city. I have chosen to focus specifically upon the research of Gibson and Ingold in order to develop an understanding of awkward space that relates to both physical and experiential aspects of the urban environment. Gibson's ecological approach to perception, in particular his notion of 'affordance', recognises how human behaviour is directly connected to meaning discovered in the environment. Ingold's work builds upon this understanding, grounding Gibson's ideas within dynamic human practices, as played out in everyday places. This enables me to paint a picture of the travel patterns of the bus passengers and pedestrians at the bus stop, capturing awkward space amongst their flow of interactions.

#### 2.8.1 A review of 'The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception'

This review begins with an exploration into 'The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception' by James Jerome Gibson (1904-1979)<sup>10</sup>. Firstly, I provide a background

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> James Jerome Gibson was a radical psychologist who was fascinated by how we see the world around us. His research was primarily focused upon visual perception, which he defines as the information pick-up from light illuminated off surfaces onto the retina or optical array

context to Gibson's pioneering research into ecological psychology in the 1950's, focusing upon how it radically differed from the fashionable behavioural psychology of the time. I then engage with Gibson's understanding of the intimate coupling between perception and action in the environment. Referring back to the bus stop case study, I observe how the bus passengers and pedestrians perceive the bus stop environment directly in response to their individual needs as they move through its physical layout. Here, engaging with Gibson's terminology, I draw upon key concepts such as 'reversible occlusion' to reflect upon the different viewpoints of the bus passengers and pedestrians as they negotiate and manage this space. Finally, I explore Gibson's theory of affordances to gain a new perspective on how the physical properties in the bus stop environment permit different types of social behaviour. This study leads me to ask the question, how can an awareness of the different affordances used by bus passengers and pedestrians in the bus stop environment, inform a better understanding of their awkward spatial experiences?

#### 2.8.1.1 Background context

In the introduction to 'The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception', Gibson describes his point of departure from earlier scientific methods of understanding vision. Classical experiments in optics situated the perceiver in the laboratory in a fixed and static position, so as to study the eye's response to inputs from stimuli in the environment. Gibson proposed that there was more to understanding vision and the knowledge acquired by perceivers. He suggested that natural vision depends on the eyes in the head, on the body, on a surface, in the environment. Gibson's perceiver walks out of the laboratory and into the world. Gibson explored 'ambient' and 'ambulatory' types of vision, how we see the world as we survey it and move through it, turning our head to take in the 'ambient optic array'. This is a 'systems theory' inspired, relational and context-orientated approach to understanding perception (Gibson, 1979, 2). Gibson's research for the aviation industry during World War Two contributed a 'ground theory of space perception', which guided pilots in landing airplanes. He replaced existing research into *depth perception* with research into the *direct perception* of surface layouts. Gibson believed that we do not

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<sup>(</sup>Gibson, 1950, 1966). This review is therefore focused upon how we visually perceive the environment as we negotiate awkward space. I acknowledge that this leaves out other sensory forms of engagement within the environment and the awkward experiences relating to them.

perceive space<sup>11</sup> but that we rather perceive changes to the textured surfaces of the environment as we move through it.

In developing this new way of thinking about the psychology of perception, Gibson was opposed to prevailing theories of behaviouralism in the 1950's and later to the cognitive scientific approaches that grew out of behaviourism. He rejected the idea that sensory inputs are turned into perceptions by operations of the mind. He didn't believe in mental models of the world that represent lived-experience but in an imbedded psychology where people learn in direct response to perceiving the environment. He proposed that we extract 'invariants' from what he defined as the 'stimulus flux' to form our perception of the world around us (Gibson, 1979, 2). This activity includes the whole body moving through the environment, thus collapsing the dichotomy between body and mind and dispelling the theory that sensing and conceptualising are two separate functions of the human brain. Fellow ecological psychologist, Edward S. Reed, defined Gibson's great idea as 'this conception of information as "ecological" – as special patterns in the energy fields of the environment (not in the organism)' (Reed, 1997, 7).

#### 2.8.1.2 The intimate coupling of perception and action

The anthropologist Tim Ingold highlights several defining features of Gibson's ecological approach to visual perception<sup>12</sup>. He observes how in Gibson's theory, movement is an essential part of perception, so perception is actually a 'mode of action' rather than a prerequisite for it (Ingold, 2000, 166). This means that depending on what we are doing, we will be attuned to 'pick-up' different types of information. Ingold reflects upon Gibson's most significant contribution to the field, describing how 'the information picked up by an agent in the context of a practical activity specifies what are called the "affordances" of objects and events in the environment' (Ingold, 2000, 166). So a person isn't just passively receiving stimuli in their environment but rather they are an active agent, surveying the terrain for meaningful information acquired through the use of affordances. Ingold describes how 'novel perceptions arise from creative acts of discovery' (Ingold, 2000, 166) experienced when we respond to these affordances in the environment. So it is

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> I pick up on Gibson's definition of space later in my review of Ingold's work.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Ingold's book 'Perception of the Environment' (2000) explores Gibson's ecological psychology. I will come back to this work in the second part of this review.

through the repetitive activities that we carry out day to day that we learn to perceive a familiar context. This is a practical way of learning about our environment that Ingold defines as an 'education of attention' rather than a transmission of information (Ingold, 2000, 166). The type of knowledge that we gain from these activities is what Hungarian philosopher and scientist Michael Polanyi defined as 'tacit knowledge', a kind of embodied knowledge (Polanyi, 1966), which informs the perceiver-actors in their pursuits through the environment.

In the context of the bus stop, for example, a pedestrian is attuned to pick up specific information that will facilitate their journey along the footway. Awkwardness occurs when there are unforeseen changes to the surface layout, which hinder her or his progress through the environment. An example of this might be a bus passenger abruptly stepping out of the bus shelter to board a bus. This can lead to a momentary de-coupling of the pedestrian's perception and movement, which results in a temporary loss of meaning. The pedestrian must re-orientate their way through the environment, using different affordances to continue on their journey. The pedestrian who experiences the city in this way, learns from these types of awkward encounters and becomes better able to negotiate awkward space. Different cities 13 and different bus stops require different types of perceptual attunement. As discovered through my observational studies of the bus stop, the pedestrians must learn to walk around the bus passengers hanging out of the bus shelter and to watch out for bags deposited along the footway. It was also observed that this bus stop in particular is fairly chaotic with little order to the social patterns of alighting and boarding buses<sup>14</sup>. However, other bus stops might have an established etiquette for queuing in the space that pedestrians and bus passengers need to be attentive towards<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> For example, I have personally experienced how, as a pedestrian, moving through London and moving through Palermo in Sicily is remarkably different. Whilst London has a fairly organised pedestrian flow, Palermo relies far more on the use of wayfaring tactics. Lefebvre explores this further through his notion of the 'rhythmanalysis' of towns and cities (Lefebvre, 2004)

When I wait to board a bus with my mum in the centre of Cardiff, I often step out from the crowd when the bus pulls in to get on. My mum has scolded me in the past for not recognising that there is a queue of people before us. This creates another type of awkwardness, which involves me having to unlearn my New Cross bus stop habits.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> In my study I do not focus upon the cultural aspects of awkwardness, but rather on awkwardness that emerges within cycles of perception and action. Beyond the scope of my study, E T Hall's work on spatial proxemics is a cultural study of human 'perception and use of space' (Hall, 1968, 83).

#### 2.8.1.3 Perceiving the bus stop environment from different viewpoints

In this review, I focus upon how the bus passengers and pedestrians perceive and respond to information in the bus stop environment that they are attuned to pick up and the social interactions that arise out of this. The bus stop is in a state of flux. People anticipate, skirt, ponder, wander, pick bags up and put bags down; eyes dart, push, carry, wait and walk. As such, the bus stop environment is full of fixed and changeable objects and events. I now explore how perception of the bus stop environment differs for those who are static in the area and those who are moving through it. I also investigate how fixed and moveable objects in the environment present different challenges for travellers as they negotiate awkward space.

Gibson proposes that people probably see better when moving than when static. So, according to Gibson's theory, the pedestrians and the bus passengers boarding and alighting the buses are the more astute observers in the bus stop environment. The bus passengers who are seated in the bus shelter or gathered around the bus stop are relatively motionless and thus see the world from a fixed point of observation. The pedestrians and bus passengers on the move follow 'paths of observation'. A path of observation is comparable to 'an excursion, a trip, or a voyage' (Gibson, 1979, 197). Following paths of observation involves, re-orientation, 'place-learning' and 'way-finding' (Gibson, 1979, 198). Whilst the bus passengers scan the scene from a fixed point, the pedestrian's perception is ambulatory. There is a closer connection between the pedestrian's perception and movement, which means they are more attuned to the environment and more able to respond quickly to changes in the layout.

# 2.8.1.4 Occluding objects, surfaces and edges

Gibson proposes that the structure of the environment is progressively disclosed to the moving observer through a process of 'reversible occlusion' (Gibson, 1979, 79). Reversible occlusion describes the moment when a place or object that has been concealed from sight is revealed to the viewer thus becoming unhidden. Gibson describes how places (such as the bus stop) often constitute 'vistas' or a set of 'unhidden surfaces'. When you move through the bus stop the vista before you *opens up* and the vista behind you *closes in* (Gibson, 1979, 78). The most prominent occluding edges in the bus stop environment are the bus shelter edges that occlude the view into and out of the shelter. The cluttered bus stop environment includes

objects that interrupt the view. The bus passengers and pedestrians themselves can become occluding surfaces with occluding edges concealing the view of buses from others. Orientation through the movable objects in the environment needs to be relearned continuously. When people cannot see a bus coming from within the bus shelter, they often watch people who are standing in spaces that do afford a view. This creates what Gibson describes as a kind of 'public knowledge' (Gibson, 1979, 200). Awkwardness at the bus stop prompts the sharing of public knowledge and requires that some passengers with an occluded fixed viewpoint put themselves in the shoes of passengers with a clear view to get a sense of when the bus will arrive and thus obtain the information they require.

What are the differing viewpoints of bus passengers and pedestrians? In the following plans (See Figure 2.14 – Figure 2.21) I have adapted one of Gibson's illustrations from 'The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception' entitled 'The opening up of a vista at an occluding edge, as seen from above' (Gibson, 1979, 199). The illustrations present an overhead view of two pedestrians' moving along the footway in front of the bus stop. They are represented by green dots with arrows indicating their direction of movement or ambulatory perspective. The green occlusion shading indicates what is visually concealed from them. I have also shown the fixed-point perception of two bus passengers placed in the shelter and at the bus stop pole. They are represented by red dots with cusps, which indicate the view they scan from their fixed point. The red occlusion shading also indicates what is concealed from their vision. The black oblong shape represents a bus. The bus shelter, bus stop pole and ticket machine are also outlined in black. When the pedestrians and bus passengers are not the focus of attention they are also represented in black, as other objects in the environment. A scenario accompanies the illustrations, describing the unfolding of events taking place at the bus stop.

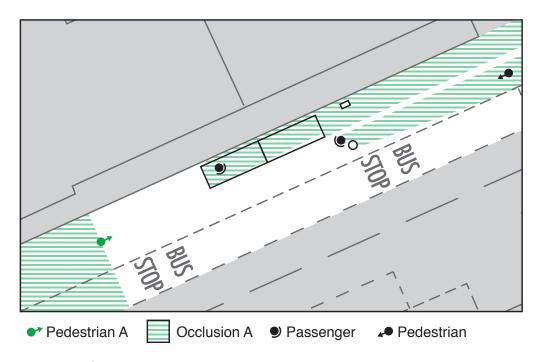


Figure 2.14 Occlusion diagram 1

Pedestrian A is travelling from left to right along the footway through the bus stop environment.

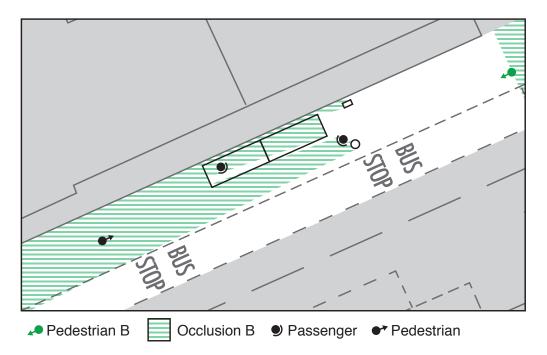


Figure 2.15 Occlusion diagram 2

Pedestrian B enters the scene, moving from right to left along the pathway.

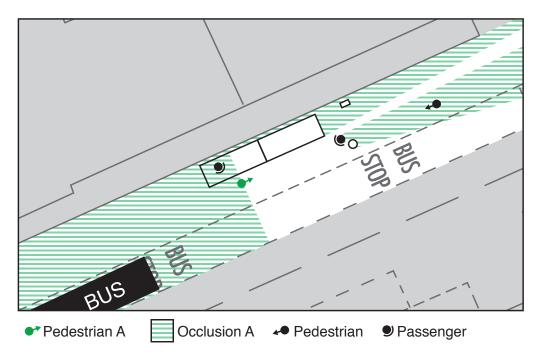


Figure 2.16 Occlusion diagram 3

As Pedestrian A walk's through the environment, the vista behind them closes in and the vista in front opens up. Meanwhile, the bus passenger standing at the bus pole occludes the pedestrian's view of the footway.

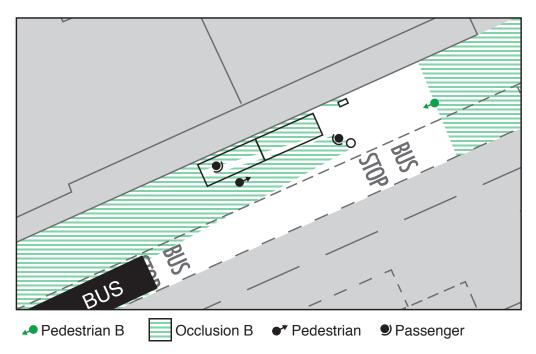


Figure 2.17 Occlusion diagram 4

Pedestrian A does not see Pedestrian B coming from the other direction and Pedestrian B does not see them.

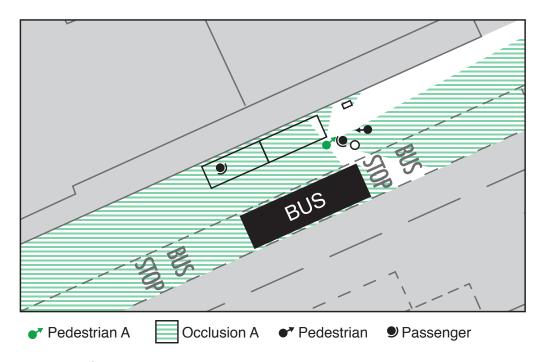


Figure 2.18 Occlusion diagram 5

Pedestrians A and B are hidden from view from each other until their paths converge at the point where a bus passenger is standing at the bus pole.

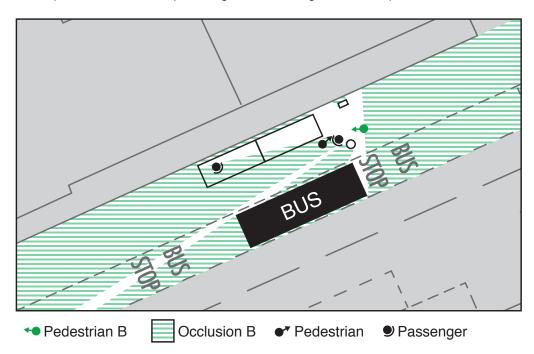


Figure 2.19 Occlusion diagram 6

In this awkward moment, all three characters must negotiate the space. At this point a bus pulls into the bus stop, with the potential for extra people alighting into the space along the pathway, this is cloaked from the view of Pedestrian B. Most of the bus stop surfaces, objects and edges are occluded from the vision of the pedestrians at this point.

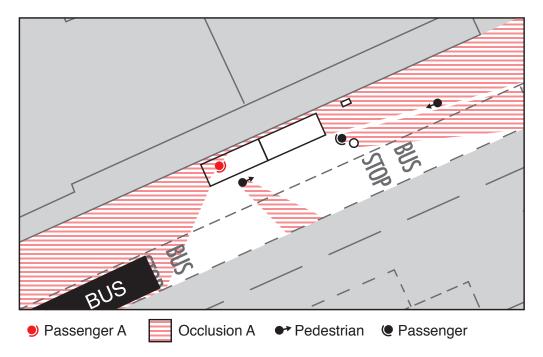


Figure 2.20 Occlusion diagram 7

Whilst the pedestrians' negotiate awkward space along the pathway, Passenger A is seated in the left hand corner of the bus shelter. They do not have a view of the oncoming bus. They can see another bus passenger stood waiting at the bus stop pole who has a clear view. They monitor the behaviour of this bus passenger to ascertain when the bus is coming. Whilst awkward for the pedestrians, it is advantageous for bus passengers' waiting inside the bus shelter to have a 'look-out' positioned at the bus stop pole and flag.

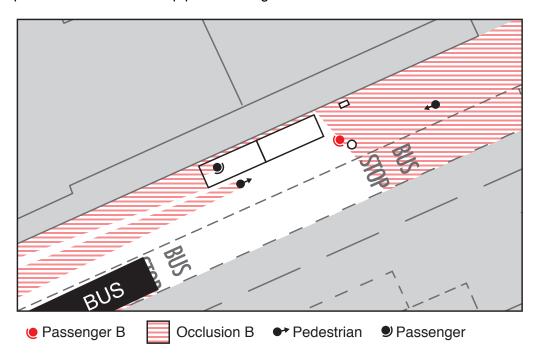


Figure 2.21 Occlusion diagram 8

Passenger B at the bus stop pole is facing the oncoming bus, unaware of an oncoming pedestrian behind them whose path is obstructed.

The awkward space scenarios played out in Figure 2.14 – Figure 2.21 isolate the interactions of four bus passengers and pedestrian types, to artificially construct a set of awkward instances in the bus passengers' and pedestrians' spatial negotiations at this particular bus stop. Applying Gibson's theory of reversible occlusion reveals how awkwardness emerges due to objects, surfaces and edges that prevent the users' a clear view of both the oncoming buses and the pathway through the environment. The images reveal how an advantageous position in the bus stop environment for a bus passenger, for example, standing with a view of the buses at the bus stop pole, might unintentionally create an awkward space for a pedestrian, whose pathway thus becomes occluded. Focusing upon the cycles of perception and action of the bus passengers and pedestrians reveals a new understanding of how they experience and manage awkwardness in different ways. For example, the bus passengers inside the shelter have their view of the oncoming buses occluded by the bus shelter's left hand side panel. They have a static viewpoint and scan the scene for information they need. They rely on a kind of public knowledge obtained through monitoring the behaviour of people who are positioned with a good view of the road. The pedestrians, on the other hand often have to negotiate moving objects that obstruct their journey along the footway. The pedestrians are able to perceive changes in the bus stop whilst on the move. They are able to quickly adapt to a changing layout by attuning themselves to different information to steer their way and avoid collision with others, developing skills in wayfinding, re-orientation and place-learning.

# 2.8.1.5 Exploring the layout of the bus stop environment

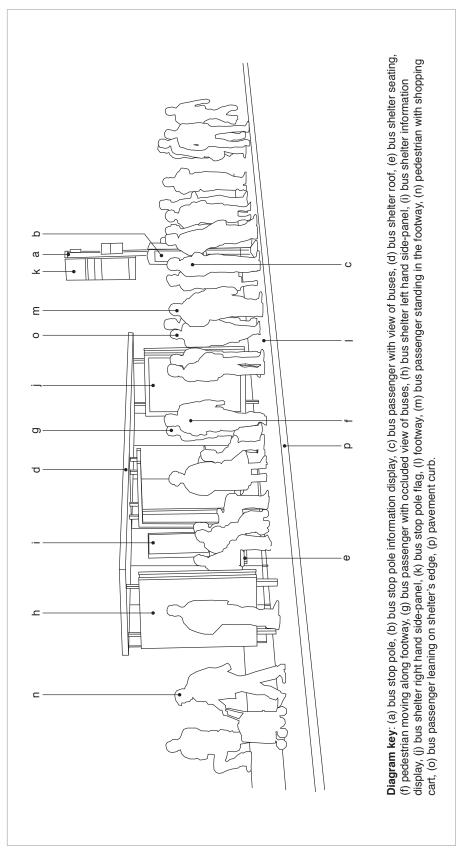


Figure 2.22 The bus stop environment, users and objects

From exploring the differing viewpoints of the pedestrians and bus passengers, I now focus on Gibson's approach to analysing the physical properties of the environment (See Figure 2.22). As I have described so far, J. J. Gibson's ecological psychology provides a way of measuring the physical properties of the environment in relation to how they are perceived and responded to by the animals that inhabit it (Gibson, 1979, 7). Gibson differentiates between the environment and the physical world that preceded animal life. The world we live in is our terrestrial environment. This is a place filled with people, animals, villages, cities and bus stops. A bus stop is what Gibson would define as a nested man-made niche. In the same way that a rock pool in the natural world attracts life due to its beneficial physical properties, a bus stop is designed to provide shelter, safety and display information for the passengers that temporarily inhabit it. However, the bus stop is not a distinct component of the environment, it has overlapping functions with its surroundings, which literally spill into and leak out of this place. Hence, we have pedestrians, who collide with other objects, creating an awkward spatial interplay at peak travel times. Gibson was keen to show that the world of interactions between people, things and the environment is measured differently to the physical world that is measured by physics. Ecological psychology assumes there is a mutual relationship between animals and their environment.

Understanding the negotiation of awkward space at the bus stop requires an insight into the behaviour of bus passengers and pedestrians in direct relationship to the physical properties of the environment. My concept of awkward space differs for example, to the notion of 'uncanny space' (Vidler, 1994) where the feeling of unease in an architectural environment is purely subjective, a psychological projection onto a physical place. Affordances cut across an objective-subjective divide, referring at once to the experience of the organism and to the properties of the environment. Awkward space is experienced by a person in direct relationship to the physical properties of that person's immediate environment.

## Attached and detached objects in the environment

Gibson identifies three elements that form the environment. These are substances, surfaces and a medium. Substances form surfaces and objects. The objects that are fixed to surfaces within the environment are 'attached objects'. Objects that are brought into the environment and that are almost completely surrounded by a

medium are 'detached objects' (Gibson, 1979, 39). Gibson observes how 'an attached object of the appropriate size permits a primate to grasp it' whilst 'a detached object of the appropriate size to be grasped is even more interesting. It affords carrying, that is it is portable' (Gibson, 1979, 39). Attached objects in the bus stop environment include the bus stop pole and flag, the bus shelter, a ticket machine and a bin. Detached objects include the bus passengers, the pedestrians with their possessions, buses, and other miscellaneous objects, such as rubbish, that gathers in this place. The footway through the bus stop is a cluttered surface. Negotiating awkward space at the bus stop involves negotiating the configuration of attached and detached objects within the environment. The bus passengers or pedestrians that negotiate this space are also detached objects that need to be negotiated by others.

#### The affordances of awkward events

Gibson describes how the environment is 'both permanent in some respects and changing in some respects' (Gibson, 1979, 13). The changing layout of a surface is described by Gibson as an 'ecological event' (Gibson, 1979, 95). Within the bus stop environment, ecological events include the 'animate deformations' of the bus passengers and pedestrians as they move around and the 'repositioning' of detached objects through 'displacement'. These constitute the 'rearrangements of the furniture of the earth' (Gibson, 1979, 96). Events 'demand or invite appropriate behaviours' and offer affordances just like objects or places. A busy footway, strewn with moveable objects demands careful negotiation when making one's way through. Gibson notes, for example, that 'an approaching object affords either contact without collision or contact with collision' (Gibson, 1979, 102). A pedestrian wheeling a bicycle through the bus stop environment is an event that may afford the clearing of the pathway by bus passengers who obstruct the way. The bus passengers can choose to allow the bicycle through the space. However, they could also choose not to move for the oncoming bicycle and in this case the owner would have to respond by using different affordances within the area to avoid collision. Awkward events such as these within the bus stop environment require the bus passengers and pedestrians to engage in spatial negotiations that are resourced by affordances within the environment.

Affordances as resources for 'doing being ordinary' at the bus stop

When somebody brings a large object into the bus stop environment, such as a pram or bicycle, it tests the limits of what the ethnomethodologist Sacks defines as 'doing "being ordinary". Sacks states that 'there is a job of being an ordinary person, and that job includes attending the world, yourself, others, objects, so as to see how it is a usual scene' (Sacks, 1984, 417). It is up to the temporary community that is formed at the bus stop to decide whether or not this behaviour will be normalised (e.g. the crowd parting for a cyclist to move through the space). If anybody becomes noticeable at the bus stop they are not 'doing "being ordinary". This activity also requires a situated 'public knowledge' shared by bus passengers seeking information to action their needs from the behaviour of others. Thus, affordances become resources for the collective practice of doing being ordinary.

#### Discovering meaning within the environment

The activities taking place at the bus stop, are nested 'episodes within episodes' (Gibson, 1979, 101). Each individual person in the environment experiences things from their own personal perspective. The Baltic German biosemiotician Jacob von Uexküll, described an individual's 'sphere of influence' as their 'umwelt'. Whilst Gibson proposed that people discovered meaning within the environment, von Uexküll believed people impose meaning upon the environment (Uxekull, 2010), creating a kind of personal bubble. In reality, perhaps both these things are taking place. Gibson's viewpoint is exemplified by expectant bus passenger waiting for their bus to arrive who leans against the bus shelter edge or the bus stop pole to 'take the weight off their feet' whilst having a clear view of the oncoming traffic (See case study 1, critical incidents 3 and 4, pages 41 - 42). The bus shelter edge and pole have not been designed with the intention of supporting leaning bus passengers but the physical properties of these attached objects meet the needs of the passengers in that moment. Thus, the temporary comfort offered to the bus passenger is a value they discover in the environment (Gibson, 1979, 33).

# 2.8.1.6 Design, architecture and affordance

In this section, I carry out a short review of the concept of affordance, which explores Gibson's original definition and includes developments to and applications of the concept in the fields of design and architecture. This helps me to reflect upon my own

use of the concept in developing an understanding of how and why we experience awkward space within the built environment.

Gibson's notion of affordances originates from the field of Gestalt psychology. In the 1920's and 30's, the German psychologists Koffka (c1934, 2005) and Lewin (Lewin, 1951) developed concepts such as 'valence', 'invitation theory' and 'demand character' to describe phenomenal objects (Gibson, 1979, 138). The 'invitation character' of an object or 'aufforderungscharakter' as Lewin described it, refers to how 'the postbox "invites" the mailing of a letter' or how 'the handle "wants to be grasped" (Gibson, 1979, 138). More recently the term 'product semantics' has been used to describe the use, for example, of particular forms and colours in industrial and product design to induce specific emotional reactions to objects. (Krippendorff and Butter, 1984, Julier, c2000, 2013). German engineer and design researcher Klaus Krippendorff and German Industrial designer and researcher Reinhart Butter define product semantics as 'the study of the symbolic qualities of man-made forms in the context of their use and the application of this knowledge to industrial design' (Krippendorff and Butter, 1984, 4). Product semantics are also based upon a mutual relationship between user and object, the user and object 'adjust to each other, cognitively and behaviourally' (Krippendorff and Butter, 1984, 4). Gibson's notion of affordance differs from these concepts because affordances are 'invariant' properties of the environment. They do not change with the changing needs of the humans or animals that take advantage of them.

The German semiotician Martin Krampen, in an article discussing semiotics in architecture and industrial/ product design, highlights how 66 years prior to Gibson's definition of affordance, Jakob von Uexküll, mentioned previously, coined the term 'counter-ability'. This terms shares a similar meaning to affordance, in that 'counter-ability' refers to the meaningfulness of an object or an environment to our existence. Again, this term differs to affordance in that affordances do not depend upon the 'need of the organism but on... an organism-environment fit' (Krampen, 1989, 128).

Cognitive scientist and pupil of J. J. Gibson, Donald Norman, introduced the term affordance to the field of design in his book 'The Psychology of Everyday Things', subsequently republished as 'The Design of Everyday Things' (Norman, 1988, 2002). Norman's subjective handling of the concept differs slightly from Gibson's more

physical notion of affordance. In his discussion on our interactions with everyday things, Norman refers to both the 'perceived and actual properties of the thing', stating that 'affordances provide strong clues to the operation of things' (Norman, 2002, 9). This means that we can do away with unnecessary information in the environment. The design of door panels and handles, for example (as Lewin previously observed), can suggest how they are to be used. We don't need a big sign saying 'push me - pull me'. Norman offers a prescriptive 'set of guidelines' for 'what certain everyday objects should afford and should not afford' (Maier, Fadel and Battisto, 2009, 395). Here, a study of affordances is intended to inform designs that enable positive user behaviours and avoid failures that may result from the design process.

In the field of Human Computer Interaction (HCI) design, American design researcher William Gaver describes how 'affordances refer to attributes of both the object/ environment and actor' (Gaver, 1991) and can inform a deeper understanding of the interactions between people, design and technology. In an article exploring the social as a potential material for design, Gaver explores the value of the concept of affordance, proposing that

'The more we can understand social behaviour in terms of its material context, the better can design efforts be focused on relevant attributes... More than this, design itself can serve as a methodology for better understanding social behaviour and its underlying affordances.' (Gaver. 1996. 111)

Gaver and his Interaction Research Studio team based at Goldsmiths, University of London have developed design methods, such as Cultural Probes (Gaver et al., 1999) and combined these with ethnographic approaches from the Social Sciences, to create speculative technologies that are deployed and documented in real-life situations. These projects provide a window into how people live with things and how things live with people.

Also within the field of HCI, computer scientist Paul Dourish and engineer, artist and designer Steve Harrison, through their research based at Xerox, explore the affordances of space in the 'appropriate behavioural framing' of collaborative systems, such as collaborative virtual realities (Harrison and Dourish, 1996). In an article entitled 'Replacing Space: The Roles of Place and Space in Collaborative

Systems', they critically explore the use of the term 'space' to represent our everyday surroundings. The authors observe that

'since many aspects of our behaviour seem to be organised around spatial elements of the everyday world, then we carry over these patterns of behaviour to virtual environments by designing them around the same affordances for action and interaction that the everyday world exhibits – doors, windows, walls, distance, proximity or whatever (Harrison and Dourish, 1996, 75)'

They propose that the term 'place', which is used more frequently by architects and urban designers, is a more fitting term to describe the cultural expectations, values, and habits imbedded within a particular social setting. They assert that 'a space is what it is, but a place is how it's used' (Harrison and Dourish, 1996, 69). Here they draw upon Christopher Alexander's concept of 'pattern language', which aims to loosely codify how a city is lived (Alexander, 1979). Harrison and Dourish's research suggests that affordances can offer prompts or indicate patterns of behaviour in virtual and real place-making scenarios.

Alongside research into affordances within the field of design, architecture and engineering researchers have also explored the affordances of building elements and spaces (Koutamanis, 2006), in computer-aided architectural design software (Tweed, 2001), and in developing an affordance-based approach to architectural theory, design and practice (Maier, Fadel and Battisto, 2009). The latter study focuses upon how

'The concept of affordance provides an alternative way of viewing the design of environments, emphasizing the complementarity of the relationship between environments and their users, i.e., between the form of buildings and the resulting behavior of their occupants as the building "functions" in practice' (Maier, Fadel and Battisto, 2009, 404)

This research relates in particular to the development of my own understanding of affordance in relationship to awkward space within the built environment. Maier, Fadel and Battisto remind us that

'As Gibson points out, individual properties of either the artifact (color, density, size, etc...) or the user (strength, age, height, etc...) are not in and of themselves affordances, but taken together can determine whether a specific affordances exists, such as the ability of a specific person to walk on a specific floor' (Maier, Fadel and Battisto, 2009, 397)

In the case of my bus stop study, an affordance exists when a specific person (a specific pedestrian) is able to walk on a specific floor (pavement through the bus zone); or when the environment permits a specific person (a specific bus passenger) to lean on a specific surface (bus shelter wall). Particular examples of architectural affordances offered by these researchers include buildings' affording shelter for occupants, windows' affording the transmission of light and floors' affording the support of furniture (Maier, Fadel and Battisto, 2009, 396). The authors also propose that architectural features such as columns, afford not only the support of building load but also particular meanings, such as power and prestige (Maier, Fadel and Battisto, 2009, 403.). In the same sense, a marble floor surface might afford a sense of luxury, whilst a cracked pavement might afford signs of neglect or wear. Krampen describes this as the 'connotative meaning' of buildings and objects (Krampen, 1989, 134).

Maier, Fadel and Battisto define two distinct classes of affordances, including 'artifact-user affordances (AUA)' and artifact-artifact affordances (AAA)' (Maier, Fadel and Battisto, 2009, 397). An example of an AUA at the bus stop is the paved surface that supports the users moving through the space. This is a 'directly' useful relationship to the users. An example of an AAA is the bus shelter wall, which support the bus shelter roof. This expresses a relationship that is 'indirectly' useful to users. The authors apply their theory to Modernist influenced public housing projects, which have failed. These include Pruitt-Igoe in St. Louis and Cabrini Green in Chicago. In each case, they describe how

'The building achieved its intended affordances of providing high density, inexpensive housing. It's failure was due to the macro-scale unintended negative affordances that resulted in such bad actual living conditions' (Maier, Fadel and Battisto, 2009, 399).

The authors offer a specific example of the unintended negative affordance of the hallways of Pruitt-Igoe, which were designed for community interaction but instead afforded a haven for criminals (Maier, Fadel and Battisto, 2009, 407). The failure of this building project is identified as being due to 'demographic shifts, poor management and maintenance, as well as actual design flaws' (Maier, Fadel and Battisto, 2009, 399). They propose that a better understanding the affordances of proposed buildings could help to avert design failure later on, suggesting that the use of quantitative matrix-based design tools can help to pre-empt such failure <sup>16</sup>. These tools provide

'a means for comparing actual behaviours with the intentional affordances of a structure, and documenting solutions to problems encountered in practice, so these problems can be avoided in future projects' (Maier, Fadel and Battisto, 2009, 407).

Later on in my thesis research, I conduct a case study at a social housing estate in North London. These reflections on the negative affordances that emerge through unforeseen changes in the built environment help to feed into this later discussion. However, rather than using affordances to problem solve, i.e. to checklist what has gone wrong in order to learn better next time, we use affordances as prompts for possibility seeking, drawing upon affordances latent within awkward space to opportune new user behaviours in the environment.

At a more theoretical level, Maier et al. propose that affordances provide multidisciplined design teams with a common unit to be used in the pre-design phase, which bridges Vitruvian ideas of 'form and function' (Maier, Fadel and Battisto, 2009, 401). It provides engineers and designers with a shared language to discuss the built environment that cuts across physical and behavioural considerations, to create more coherent design solutions (Koutmastis, 2006, Maier et al. 2009). The American landscape historian J. B. Jackson observed that

'Form and function rarely coincide for very long in any environment, no matter how conscientiously it may be designed. There eventually occurs what the French term

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> For quantitative design tools for assisting designers in identifying and managing affordances in relationship to user behaviour and building structure in design phase, see Galvao and Sato 2006.

décalage (literally, an unwedging) – a kind of disharmony between the two that calls for remedy.' (Jackson, J, B, 1997, 367)

In this sense, the concept of affordance might inform a collective design remedying of awkward space, which has emerged as a result of a slippage between form and function in the environment (e.g. a vandalised bus shelter seat that not longer affords seating).

Affordance is a fascinating concept for designers and architects because it offers a kind of holding place between an understanding of the physical characteristics of something and its availability for use in multiple ways. In this short review, I have explored how the concept of affordance has been developed and applied in various ways to design thinking and practice. In the context of my own research into developing a deeper understanding of how and why we experience awkward space in the city, the concept of affordance can be used as a resource for engaging with a local urban context and discovering the physical and user behaviours underpinning the emergence of awkward space in the city.

In this review so far, I have analysed the perception and movement of urban inhabitants and formed an awareness of the affordances on offer within the environment for different users with different needs. This has enabled me to develop a new perspective on the emergence, negotiation and management of awkward space amidst our organism-environment relations. Awkward space may result from a decoupling of perception and action within the environment, which lead users to seek alternative affordances to action their needs. Affordances can offer prompts or clues as to how an urban setting is being used both intentionally and unintentionally, bridging the physical properties of the environment and the behaviours taking place. The concept has allowed me to begin to understand the relationship between the physical negotiation and social or personal experience of awkward space within the built environment. In the next section, I carry out a second design gesture in the bus stop environment and reflect upon its effect upon the users' patterns of movement within this awkward space.

#### 2.8.1.7 Affordances and my design gesture

At 7am on the 2nd of December 2008, I carried out a second design gesture in the bus stop environment<sup>1718</sup>. As with my first design gesture, I recorded the space for 15 minutes. Setting up this early in the morning gave me time to lay down the floor markings when the space was fairly quite, in the lead up to the morning traffic. I recorded the space using a Flipcam, digital camera shaped a bit like a mobile phone, therefore trying something slightly different to the time-lapse camera used in the first design gesture. The Flipcam produced low-resolution files that were also easy to work with. The Flipcam was also a more discreet object that my camera and computer used in the first design gesture, which meant that I had an even less invasive presence in the space. With this design gesture I aimed to further my observations of the bus passengers' and pedestrians' use of affordances, through reengaging with the bus stop environment (See Appendix A3 for supporting materials, page 282).

Again, I integrated graphic markings into the bus stop environment. I laid down a red wayfaring line along the footway to guide the pedestrians moving through the environment. I also introduced three blue occlusion 'cusps' for the bus passengers waiting at the edges of the bus shelter and the pole and flag (See Figure 2.23 and Figure 2.24). These cusps were placed at the 'awkward hot spots' originally highlighted in my first design gesture. They were intended to mark the key areas frequently used by bus passengers waiting for a bus. The blue cusp shape was intended to encourage a different movement to the red wayfaring line. Whilst the red wayfaring line was intended to be strong and yet allow for a meandering through the space (to support a less directional motion trough the space due to probable people traffic to negotiate), the blue cusps aimed to create softer movements, cradled around the hot spots. I observed how these graphic markings affected the bus passenger and pedestrian movements through the space.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> See page 44 for an overview of my first design gesture.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> I was accompanied by fellow design researcher Dr. Mathilda Tham, who helped to execute the design gesture.

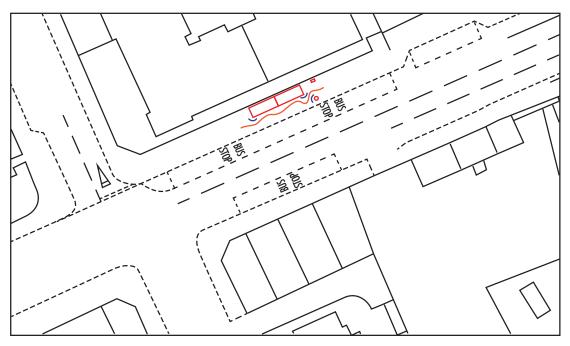


Figure 2.23 Plan for my second design gesture at the bus stop



Figure 2.24 Photographic still taken from a film capturing the second design gesture

#### 2.8.1.8 Reflections on the design gesture

Whilst the Flipcam produced digital files that were also easy to work with, the quality of the recordings was not as good as the photographs used to in my analysis of my critical incidents. Also whilst the Flipcam was more discreet to use in the bus stop environment, it seemed that it actually made people feel less comfortable when they did observe the camera. I was less approachable as before when I was clearly stationed in the space and nobody questioned my activities. This made me aware of the balance of being present in an everyday environment as a researcher recording behaviour, finding the right level of presence between too subtle and too overbearing. I think in this respect, the time-lapse recordings hit a better balance.

I observed that bus passengers used the straight section of the red line in a similar way to the yellow line on the underground. They lined up behind it whilst waiting for the bus and then crossed it when they needed to board the bus. This was an unintended but interesting finding, the only similarity being the width of both lines. The red line afforded the perception of distinction or discontinuity in the space. The red line was actually designed as a wayfaring path for pedestrians. This use of the line was successful in the case of a pedestrian who wheeled their bicycle confidently through the space along the red line (See DVD Film 03). This was an intentional use of the red line, which supported an existing behaviour in the environment. By adding new physical markings to the bus stop surface layout, I was able to support existing human practices within the environment but also invited in new unexpected behaviours. The design gesture provided me with a different perspective on the negotiation of awkward space and the use of affordances in the environment.

# 2.8.2 Conclusions

How can an awareness of the different affordances used by bus passengers and pedestrians in the bus stop environment, inform a better understanding of their awkward spatial experiences?

In this section I have used Gibson's theories to further my understanding of how and why we experience awkward space in the city. Through applying key concepts from ecological psychology to the activities at the bus stop I have further developed my understanding of how we negotiate awkward space. I am inspired by Gibson's notion of direct perception and his understanding of the closely coupled relationship between perception and movement through the environment. I propose that awkward

space signifies a de-coupling between perception and action and momentary loss of meaning regarding our use of the environment to satisfy our human needs.

I have created a way of analysing awkward space through a Gibsonian lens, achieved through mapping out the differing viewpoints of pedestrians and bus passengers and highlighting the objects and surfaces that are occluded from their vision. The illustrations help me to articulate the different ways in which people go about negotiating and managing awkward space at the bus stop.

The pedestrians and bus passengers perceive the bus stop environment as awkward in relation to their independent pursuits in the environment. They overcome or manage awkwardness by utilising different affordances and through this enact different (sometimes novel) practices and generate different types of knowledge. The pedestrians are engaged in wayfinding, place learning and orientation, as they respond to the changing landscape. The bus passengers, on the other hand, form a collective or public knowledge within their temporary community. All the bus stop users are developing an 'education of attention' through their cycles of perception and action within the environment.

After observing the different affordances used by the bus passengers and pedestrians, I carried out a second informal design gesture. I aimed to use my observations of the bus passengers' and pedestrians' use of affordances to influence the awkward spatial relationships at the bus stop. The gesture was successful in supporting some practices in the environment and managing awkwardness, whilst also inviting new practices into the space that managed awkwardness in an entirely unpredicted way. Again, the light touch of the design gesture was important to gently attune rather than redirect the flow of interactions.

The next section of this literature review focuses upon grounding my understanding of dynamic human practices that are played out within the urban environment. To support this inquiry, I engage with the work of social anthropologist Tim Ingold. Ingold is deemed particularly relevant to this investigation as his research situates ecological perception at the heart of understanding human practices, habitats and the development of 'inhabitant' knowledge, helping me to continue to build upon my findings from the previous literature review. I continue to use the bus stop as an

everyday urban scenario to explore Ingold's ideas and to continue to develop my understanding of how and why we experience awkward space in the city.

# 2.9 Reviewing the work of Tim Ingold

#### 2.9.1 Introduction

In this review, I engage with Tim Ingold's<sup>19</sup> research into how we perceive the environment as we move through it. In the first part of the review, I bridge the work of J. J. Gibson and Tim Ingold, providing a background context to Ingold's work that highlights his own engagement with ecological psychology. I also explore the differences in approach and language used by Gibson and Ingold and the impact this has on developing my understanding of awkward space. In the second part of the review, I focus upon Ingold's discussion about travel, using his contrasting concepts of 'transporting' and 'wayfaring' to explore and describe the movements of the bus passengers and pedestrians through the bus stop. In the final part of the review, I explore Ingold's recent writing about 'meshworks' and the type of knowledge spatial practitioners' develop as they move along entangled pathways through the environment. Here, I refer specifically to 'awkward spatial practices'. I propose that as we negotiate awkward space in the city we develop a practical, situated and environmentally dependent knowledge of the lived world that could be useful for design.

# 2.9.2 Background context

Tim Ingold draws upon a range of different fields to develop his anthropological approach including phenomenology, cognitive science and ecological psychology. In his book 'Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill ', Ingold explores the historical relationship between psychology and anthropology. He begins with an account of different cultural and cognitive forms of anthropology. Here, for example, he draws upon the work of the early social anthropologist Emilie Durkheim, who proposed a psychology of the collective mind. Durkheim believed that sensing takes place at a personal, individual level, whilst conceptualising occurs at a

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Tim Ingold is a social anthropologist who has written broadly on topics including production, history, dwelling, and most recently, lines. Ingold's research endeavours to challenge an 'end-directed or teleonomic conception of the life-process' with an understanding of how every living being is 'instantiated in the world as a path of movement along a way of life' (Ingold, 2011, 4).

public, social level (Ingold, 2000, 158). Ingold also describes the work of British anthropologists Edward Leach and Mary Douglas, who suggested that our perception of the world around us takes place through the 'imposition of a culturally transmitted form upon the flux of experience' (Ingold, 2000, 158). Ingold also refers to the work of Clifford Geertz, who, in the same vain as Durkheim, Leach and Douglas, divides sensing and conceptualising, to propose that culture is a framework of symbolic meanings that give shape to raw experiential data. This viewpoint assumes that the misunderstandings that arise between people from different backgrounds occupying the same place are due to a clash of different cultural codes. Ingold criticises these forms of social anthropology that separate the mind from the body in the world. He rather advocates J.J. Gibson's understanding of psychology, which proposes that perceptual activity consists not in the operation of the mind upon the bodily data of sense, but in the intentional movement of the whole being (indissolubly body and mind) in its environment' (Ingold, 2000, 166). Ingold adopts this approach to champion a form of social anthropology that places the human, body and mind, in the lived-world where they are continuously evolving through a relationship with the environment that surrounds them.

# 2.9.3 A common ground of experience

Within the field of social anthropology, Ingold also draws upon the work of French sociologist, anthropologist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu, whom he compares to Gibson in the sense that they both imbed perception and cognition in the practical ways in which people go about their everyday lives. Bourdieu proposes how people generate 'sensibilities and dispositions' that add up to what terms the 'habitus'<sup>20</sup>. Bourdieu describes how the habitus 'functions every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks' (Bourdieu, 1977, 83). Ingold suggests that the habitus shares qualities with Gibson's landscape of affordances, where information is plentiful and available to perceiver-actors attuned to pick it up to action a multitude of specific needs. Ingold also draws upon Bourdieu's notion of 'body hexi'. This term describes the ways in which our bodies become attuned or even trained to move around and respond to an environment they are familiar with. This provides Ingold with a different way of understanding how people adapt to their surroundings and

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> I pick up on Bourdieu's ideas about how people generate practical know how through their everyday activities in my second literature review, page 188.

each other that is at a level of shared collective sensing rather than through the negotiation of cultural codes. Ingold highlights how both Gibson and Bourdieu collapse the dichotomies between subject and object, mind and nature, and intellect and sense. Gibson's ecological approach to perception places Ingold's anthropological fieldworker on a 'common ground of experience' with local people within a given context. This provides the fieldworker with a way into a context and an ability to begin to build a shared language with a local community<sup>21</sup>.

# 2.9.4 An exploration into human practices

Whilst Gibson allows us to engage with the bus stop at the abstract level of animals and humans, objects and terrain, his long-term view of the relationship between animals and the environment is abstract and fairly static. Gibson didn't devote much time to exploring the social and cultural dimensions of human life. He only briefly mentions other people or animals in the environment that 'act back' or 'interact' with each other, briefly mentioning that 'behaviour affords behaviour' (Gibson, 1979, 135). Ingold, on the other hand, draws us closer to dynamic and grounded 'human practices', such as the waiting and walking patterns of the bus passengers and pedestrians. His theories are drawn, for example, from anthropological studies into navigation techniques of Micronesian seafarers and the wayfaring trails of Walbiri, aboriginal people of the Australian desert (Ingold, 2000 and 2007). In the context of my own research, this grounded perspective enables me to extend my study of the bus stop, to explore the differing journey qualities of the bus passengers and pedestrians and to look more closely at the friction that emerges between the bus passengers and the pedestrians and how this contributes to the space becoming awkward.

# 2.9.5 A flow-based description of the world

Gibson uses an objective language of ecological mechanics to describe the environment. This is rooted in his professional background in psychology and the discourse of the time. In my Gisbonian account of the bus stop, it becomes a place where avoiding *collision* is usual, where the footway becomes *restricted*, where people become *obstacles* and surfaces *occlude* viewpoints. Ingold points out that Gibson struggles to reconcile his relational understanding of the environment with an

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> This idea later informs the development of my role as a designer working with different communities and the collaborative methods I use to engage with everyday urban contexts.

older objective view of the physical world (Ingold, 2011, 78). In Gibson's theory animals *adapt to* the physical world, utilising ecological niches that offer beneficial properties for different forms of life. Ingold, on the other hand, argues that we have *co-evolved with* the environment that surrounds us and that every living thing is an 'unbounded entity' that is 'in-formation' along an entanglement of pathways (Ingold, 2011, 87). In this book 'Lines: A Brief History', Ingold charts the trails and traces created or left by different human practices, from weaving and calligraphy, to way finding.

Ingold pursues this evolving, flow-based description of the environment further by distinguishing between 'objects' and 'things'. He criticises Gibson's use of the terms 'attached and detached objects'<sup>22</sup> to describe the clouds, trees and bus shelters in the environment. He believes that a tree should rather be considered as an entanglement of lines that connect it through the soil with the earth. He describes Gibson's use of the term 'object' to describe a cloud as bizarre, stating that it is an ephemeral, changing thing (Ingold, 2011, 87). It might be worth noting here that Gibson himself acknowledges that the tree is actually an 'idealised' attached object. He describes the moment when the apple dropped on Newton's head and gravity was discovered as 'a sequence of ecological events, stating 'as the seasons changed, the apple had to grow and ripen before it could fall, collide, and finally decay' (Gibson, 1979, 94). So in this particular line of argument that Ingold pursues perhaps he doesn't appropriately acknowledge the dynamicity of Gibson's ecological environment. For Gibson, a tree would be an attached object as well as an ecological event depending on your perception of change in the environment.

Ingold draws upon the German phenomenologist Heidegger's poetic notion of 'things-thinging in a world-worlding' (Heidegger 1971, 167) to describe the intertwining of people, objects and the environment and how things 'leak' into other things and influence the things around them. At the bus stop, rather than understanding the clutter in the environment as discreet objects, we can imagine the weight of the rucksack of the pedestrian in front of you pulling you through the space and how things rub against other things leaving trace elements. Ingold also refers to the American phenomenologist Hurbert Dreyfus' interpretation of Heidegger's ideas

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> I refer to Gibson's definitions of 'attached' and 'detached' objects on page 64

about how things present themselves to us. Dreyfus describes this as the 'availableness' or 'occurentness' of things (Dreyfus, 1991, 60-87). Only when things fail to respond in the flow of use do they no longer become 'available' but 'occurent'. This idea can be applied to the pathway through the bus stop environment. When the path no longer becomes free to use due to things obstructing the way, the pedestrian is faced with the question 'how do I get through here? This awkward moment signifies an interruption in the flow of meaning, in terms of the practical meaning discovered through using multiple affordances in the environment. The pedestrian thus becomes disorientated, their situated sensibilities and disposition challenged, they need to discover another way of getting through the space. A new meaning is recovered through the use of alternative affordances within the environment.

### 2.9.5.1 Summary

I have introduced Ingold through his engagement with Gibson's ecological psychology. I have highlighted how Ingold has adopted an ecological approach to psychology in order to place human beings, mind and body, in the world. Whilst Ingold champions Gibson's work he is also critical of his use of language. This is interesting to reflect upon in the context of my own investigation of the bus stop. The language that I have used to describe the bus stop is also rather removed at times from the grounded practices taking place. Ingold therefore opens up a new perspective to explore the bus stop that is connected to human practice and uses a language that is more flow-based, reflecting the dynamicity of the users, the environment and awkward space.

### 2.9.6 Wayfinding through the bus stop environment

This section explores Ingold's differing concepts of transport and wayfaring and how they can be applied to the activities at the bus stop to better understand the awkwardness that emerges between the bus passengers and pedestrians.

In the essay 'To Journey along a Way of Life: Maps, Wayfaring and Navigation', Ingold proposes that our ability to orientate ourselves in our surroundings is not necessarily stored in cognitive or physical maps but that we continuously attune ourselves to our environment. To develop this theory Ingold engages with ideas from ecological psychology that explore how we create meaning directly in response to our engagement (as actor-perceivers) with the environment that surrounds us. He draws

upon J. J. Gibson's concepts of 'reversible occlusion' and 'paths of observation' to explain how our understanding of the environment develops directly in relation to our movement along pathways. He describes these paths of observation as 'continuous itineraries of movement' (Ingold, 2000, 226). This is a skilled performance that is developed through practice and experience. Ingold uses the example of a Micronesian seafarer, who 'feels his way towards his destination by continually adjusting his movements in relation to the flow of waves, wind, current and stars' (Ingold, 2000, 239). This can be compared to the pedestrian traveler, who responds to the 'stimulus flux' as she or he makes their way through the bus stop as they walk along the pavement.

In 'Lines: A Brief History' Ingold extends his theory of wayfinding by making a distinction between two different types of travel. These are 'wayfaring' and 'transport' (Ingold, 2007, 75). He compares wayfaring to Paul Klee's notion of 'taking a line for a walk' and describes how the free flowing wayfarer is 'continuously on the move... he is his movement' (Ingold, 2007, 75). I propose that the pedestrians are wayfaring through the bus stop in New Cross. Most of them ultimately have a destination to reach, which means that they are not completely free flowing but for them the bus stop is a 'somewhere... on the way to somewhere else' (Ingold, 2007, 81). As they are drawn along this passage they respond to changes taking place in the environment, shopping bags in the footway, passengers blindly stepping out to board the bus. These random acts prompt sidestepping, pausing for other people traffic, and other such adjustments to the movements of the pedestrian, whose perception and locomotion are 'intimately coupled' (Ingold, 2007, 78). The pedestrians negotiate awkward space at the bus stop by utilising wayfaring tactics to avoid collisions with other things in the environment. These logistical reflections on awkward space can be connected to my own feelings of 'uncertainty' and 'self-consciousness' when experiencing awkward space, wayfaring through the bus stop (See page 32).

In contrast to the wayfarers, Ingold introduces the notion of transport as a 'destination-orientated' practice (Ingold, 2007, 75). Transport is not necessarily defined by the use of mechanical vehicles, such as the bus. For example, Saami herdsmen hunt using snowmobiles, but this is an activity that is very much attuned to the environment (Ingold, 2007, 78). Driving in a traffic jam through London might also be more akin to a wayfaring experience, where you are constantly attuned to the

movements of other vehicles and people in the environment. Travelling in the back seat however might be more akin to being transported, where you might be more sensually engaged in the activity within the vehicle than the landscape outside that you are moving through. The bus passengers aren't following *along* a pathway like the pedestrians, but being transported *across* the environment from 'location to location' (Ingold, 2007, 77). Ingold states that it is the disconnection between locomotion and perception that distinguishes transport from wayfaring (Ingold, 2007, 78). At the bus stop, whilst the bus passengers are sitting and standing, they might take in the ambient scenery around the bus stop but they are static in the environment relative to the moving vehicles. Whilst the pedestrians and bus passengers are clearly passing through the bus stop on their way to different places, the bus stop marks a point on a designated route for the bus passengers. For the bus passengers waiting, the bus stop and the bus are both microcosms to which they are 'temporarily exiled whilst in transit' (Ingold, 2007, 77). For the bus passengers alighting the bus, the bus stop is a 'point of re-entry' back into the world.

Passengers remain with their baggage in the bus stop area awaiting the next stage of their journey. This is both a waiting and weighted place. If Gibson tells us that we are open to more information about our environment if we are on the move, in contrast to the attuned pedestrians, the bus passenger's experience is one of 'enforced immobility and sensory deprivation' (Ingold, 2011, 152). The bus passengers experience awkward space through sitting or standing in one place, from the restricted viewing of buses and whilst crossing the busy footway to board and alight the buses. The pedestrian and bus passenger users of the bus stop environment are engaged in different perceptual activities. The bus passengers wait for movement to arrive whilst the wayfaring pedestrians are movement.

The pedestrians trail along pathways following the 'trace of a gesture' whilst the bus passengers follow a 'route-map' (Ingold, 2007, 78). The pedestrians move through the bus stop environment primarily in two directions. All pedestrians share the same immediate goal within the bus stop environment, which is to move through this busy space to get to where they individually need to go. Some pedestrians travel in groups and some alone. Pedestrians may follow other pedestrians in front of them who clear the way through. These trails become interwoven with other pedestrian trails to

create a loose knot of entangled pathways. In contrast, Ingold defines routing as the following of 'point-to-point connectors' (Ingold, 2007, 73). Ingold notes how

'(I)n practice transport is never perfect... There is always some friction in the system. Thus unlike the wayfarer who moves with time, the transported traveler races against it, seeing in its passage not an organic potential for growth but the mechanical limitations of his equipment' (Ingold, 2007, 102).

The bus passengers are at the mercy of the bus system. For them the bus stop environment is a 'connector' along a transport 'route'. To illustrate the point-to-point connectors that join up to form a route, Ingold uses the metaphor of a line that has been cut up. Each of the segments is 'wound up like a thread' and 'packed into the confines of a spot' creating 'a scatter of dots' where 'all the energy, and all the movement' is focused (Ingold, 2007, 73-74). If I apply this metaphor to the bus passengers waiting inside the bus stop they can be pictured as a cluster of static points. They have an energy that is wound inwards. In some cases this fixes them to a spot with a sense of added gravity. They are 'compact and isolated' (Ingold, 2007, 74) within the broader New Cross environment, blinkered and awaiting the next stage of their journey.

This metaphor can also be scaled up to describe the bus stop itself as a static node that forms a part of a transport network. I propose that at the bus stop, the pedestrians' entangled trails are interrupted and redirected by a 'scattering of dots' made by bus passengers en route. The bus passengers are waiting to board the bus, whilst the pedestrians have to negotiate the pathway in an ad-hoc fashion. These differing journey qualities create a friction between the bus passengers and pedestrians. Ingold suggests that these issues arise in the city when people are 'compelled to inhabit' an environment that is designed for 'occupation' (Ingold, 2007, 102). Bus passengers *occupy* the bus stop, whilst pedestrians *inhabit* the place in a different way. Ingold explores the notion of inhabiting place further, criticising the use of the term 'local' to describe someone who lives in a place because of the implication that the person in bound to that place. Ingold rather uses the term inhabitant, as someone who is continuously practicing place, moving through and shaping and being shaped by the environment.

The bus stop has been designed as a transport node, a 'strategy' aimed at 'containing' and 'channeling' bus passengers 'across' the urban landscape from a to b to c in a transport network. However, in come the pedestrian wayfarers 'tactically' threading through and amongst them. Ingold notes how

'The architecture and public spaces of the built environment enclose and contain; its roads and highways connect... Yet the structures that confine, channel and contain are not immutable. They are ceaselessly eroded by the tactical maneuvering of inhabitants whose 'wandering lines' (lignes d'erre) or 'efficacious meanderings' – in de Certeau's words – undercut strategic designs of society's master builders, causing them gradually to wear out and disintegrate' (Ingold, 2007, 103).

Here de Certeau's inhabitant wandering lines follow an order, which responds directly to the routes planned by the authorities. This tension between strategy and tactics is explored further in Chapter 5, page 191. Awkward desire lines<sup>23</sup> are trailed through the bus stop, when, for example, pedestrians are knocked off route by bus passengers and follow alternative pathways around the edge of the bus stop pole. These small altercations can lead to the use of affordances that are outside of or have been unconsidered by the city's strategic designers and planning officials. In an article exploring the notion of affordances as 'resources for resistance' to the dominating structures of 'power-knowledge' explored by Foucault<sup>24</sup>, authors Michael and Still observe how

'in the disciplined environment of the street the body is never completely governed – always there is lurking an organismic body ready to make use of affordances invisible to its disciplined counterpoint' (Michael and Still, 1992, 882).

Exploring the relationship between pedestrian trails and bus passenger routes surprisingly opens up a way in which to understand the negotiation of awkward space as a political act. Whilst Michael and still propose that a 'playful' engagement with affordances in the environment extends 'organism-environment relations beyond power-knowledge' (Michael and Still, 1992, 882), I propose that this is what is actually taking place through the ongoing negotiation of awkward space at the bus

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Desire lines are informal pathways created by walkers that usually indicate the quickest way through a place. They have been used as a metaphor for intuitive design and even anarchism, suggesting a defiance of authority. I define 'awkward desire lines' as informal paths forged by wayfarers seeking alternative ways through the environment when the configuration of things becomes difficult to negotiate or manage.

I pick up on these ideas again in Chapter 5.

stop. The bus passengers and pedestrians make use of 'latent affordances' in the environment that have the potential to reveal unconsidered possibilities for action in the environment and social practices that are alternative to the strategies<sup>25</sup> laid down by planners, local councils and urban designers.

# 2.9.6.1 Summary

This section explored the difference between wayfaring and transport in the context of the bus stop in New Cross. I proposed that the pedestrians walking through the bus stop behave the most like wayfarers, weaving their way through the environment. I suggest that the bus passengers are more connected to a transport service, waiting for the bus. This enables me to understand the friction between these different users in relation to their differing journey qualities. For the pedestrians, their perception and locomotion are coupled, whilst for the bus passengers, they are disconnected from movement; they are waiting for it to arrive. This impacts on their experience and helps us to understand awkwardness as emerging within these human practices. I also begin to explore the notion of affordances as 'resources for resistance' utilised by spatial practitioners as they tactically manoeuvre their way through the environment<sup>26</sup>.

# 2.9.7 Meshworks and the generation of inhabitant knowledge

This section sets out to explore Ingold's proposition that wayfaring pathways become entangled to form a 'meshwork' or 'place'. In order to understand how I am approaching the concept of space and spatial practice I draw upon work of political geographer Doreen Massey. I also describe the type of knowledge that is accumulated whilst moving along these pathways or through engaging in spatial practices.

In 'Being alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description' Ingold asserts that 'space is nothing, and because it is nothing it cannot be truly inhabited at all' (Ingold, 2011, 145). Ingold (in the same vain as Gibson) conceives of space as 'a void, as non-world, as absence' (Ingold, 2011, 142) and rejects its use to describe our practices in the lived world. Ingold refers back to the word 'raum' or 'room', which

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> The concepts of 'strategies' and 'tactics' are explored in more depth in the second part of my literature review, page 191, where I engage directly with the work of Michel de Certeau. <sup>26</sup> I revisit this idea in Chapter 6 of the thesis, in evaluating the spatial tactics of the residents on the Haberdasher estate in Case study 3.

implies that space is contained, isolated, and pocketed. He finds this a non-useful word to describe the lived world, which he understands as dynamic, and played out along pathways.

Whilst Ingold writes 'against space', he notes that the geographer Doreen Massey writes 'For Space' (Ingold, 2011, 142). Massey defines space as

'the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions... the sphere of possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality... the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist... always under construction... a simultaneity of stories-so-far' (Massey, 2005, 9).

Ingold agrees with Massey's vision of a 'a domain of co-presence, of relationships-in-practice, of the entanglement of multiple lifelines as they become caught up with one another in going their respective ways.' (Ingold, 2011,142). However, he cannot describe this as space. Instead, he describes places that are a part of an interwoven meshwork of wayfaring pathways. My understanding of space echoes that of Doreen Massey. I approach space as a dynamic plenum<sup>27</sup>, full of multi-potential and played out through complex relationships as they unfold in the world. I propose that if 'space is practiced place' (de Certeau, 1984, 117), awkward space is enmeshed within the ongoing practice of places and things that can become difficult to negotiate or manage. Figure 2.25 illustrates the notion of space that I am working with in my study. The terms in the circle on the left describe a classical notion of space, whilst the terms in the circle on the right describe an alternative conceptualisation of space (See Massey, 1992, 2005 for further discussions on the political significance of a dynamic understanding of the spatial).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Throughout the history of philosophy there have been two opposing ideas about space. In ancient Greece, Parmenides and Zeno believed that space was full and they called this notion of space 'the Plenum'. Democritus and the Atomists disputed this idea, declaring that space is empty and called this notion of space 'the void' (Bohm, 1980, 242). The idea that the world is divisible into tiny particles called atoms and that these atoms move around in empty space has created the backdrop to how we understand reality today. However, the quantum theorist and philosopher David Bohm describes how experiments in modern physics reveal that 'what we perceive through the senses to be empty space is actually the plenum, which is the grounds for the existence of everything, including ourselves' (Bohm, 1980, 243). He redefines the plenum as an immense, multidimensional 'sea' of activity, where the things that we perceive emerge and are 'generated and sustained' and submerge and 'ultimately vanish'. Thus, in physics we move beyond the indivisible and immutable particle-based reality, to a reality of waves, ripples and vortices. This creates an image or a metaphor for how I am approaching space in terms of our social and environmental relations.

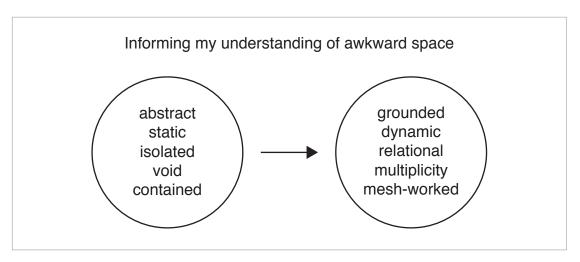


Figure 2.25 Working with a dynamic notion of space

The bus stop can simultaneously be described as a 'node' that belongs to a transport 'network' and a 'knot' in a 'meshwork' (Ingold, 2007, 80) of entangled wayfarers' pathways. The term 'meshwork' was originally coined by the urban theorist Henri Lefebvre in 'The Production of Space' to describe 'the reticular patterns left by animals, both wild and domestic, and by people (in and around the houses of the village or small town, as in the town's immediate environs)' (Lefebvre, 1991, 117-118). Here, we can imagine the invisible trails and traces of people, animals and vehicles through and around the bus stop and its immediate environment<sup>28</sup>. Ingold defines 'meshwork' as an entanglement of 'lines of life, growth and movement' (Ingold, 2012: 63). Ingold argues that we inhabit the entangled meshworks we move through rather than occupy places. In this respect, the bus passengers and pedestrians, as well as other practitioners of awkward space are therefore urban inhabitants rather than local occupants or human subjects<sup>29</sup>. Ingold's refers to the research of the biologist and mycologist Alan Rayner<sup>30</sup>, who uses the fungi as a biological metaphor to describe the construction of pathways through the lived world,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> This connects up to Alexander's notion of a 'pattern language' (Alexander, 1979).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Throughout the study I use the term urban inhabitants and inhabitant knowledge in general to describe my participants, rather than locals and local knowledge. This is to reflect the dynamicity in Ingold's definition.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Rayner's theory of natural inclusion describes how 'space is continuous, intangible, receptive; boundaries are fluid, energetic, formative. Each within the other... produces the natural energy flow of 'place-time'; neither, alone, is capable of forming anything capable of moving anywhere' (Rayner, 2012, 2). In a conversation with him about awkward space, he described how it is not space that is awkward but the configuration of things in a place (Rayner, 2012). In his terms we are talking about practicing awkward place-time or the awkward energy of action in the flow of place-time.

in preference to philosophers Deleuze and Guattari's metaphor of the rhizome. Ingold approaches everyday places as entanglements, knots, and interwoven wayfaring lines. Awkwardness is inherent in a knot or entanglement. I am proposing that there is a value in understanding the awkwardness within this complexity, rather than unravelling things and arranging them in categories of neatly wound up balls. Understanding awkwardness within a meshwork enables us to orientate our way through it, engage in way finding, place learning and place making, drawing upon the knowledge generated along the way to inform this process.

The scientific theorist David Turnbull, in his book 'Masons, Tricksters and Cartographers' (2000), explores the 'messy, spatial and local' production of knowledge in society through practices including science. Turnbull criticises our current paradigm of science, which is dominated by objective measure, arguing that we should not divorce knowledge from its site of production and its 'knower'. He refers to the knowledge we develop as we move through the geography of a location as 'laterally integrated' knowledge (Turnbull, 2000). Laterally integrated knowledge refers to a practical understanding of the landscape. In Turnbull's work, this idea is explored in relationship to, for example, informal mapping exercises. If I created a simple map for someone to describe my journey to work through the bus stop, it would include personal landmarks and information particular to my experience of the local area. This would offer different information to, say, a map provided by Transport for London (TfL). The TfL map would include more 'vertically integrated' knowledge (Turnbull, 2000), which describes a classified, hierarchical and categorical type of knowledge.

Ingold, inspired by Turnbull's work, defines the knowledge gained whilst wayfaring through a meshwork as 'an alongly integrated, practical understanding of the lifeworld' (Ingold, 2011, 154). This knowledge is 'forged in movement' along pathways in a meshwork rather than 'derived from locations' (Ingold, 2011, 154). This means that it is acquired through and imbedded within urban inhabitant's spatial practices. A dynamic living map of some sort might better capture this type of knowledge. I propose that whilst negotiating awkward space pedestrians develop an 'alongly integrated' knowledge through this 'field of practice' (Turnbull cited in Ingold, 2000, 228) and that this particular knowledge has a value for design. From my own experience of weaving my way through the bus stop, I recognise that I am ready to

negotiate the pathway with others when it becomes busy. This is an embodied sensibility that has developed through countless similar experiences in this place. I don't know if I would be able to map the knowledge I acquire through my engagements with the bus stop but I do recount these experiences in stories that I share with others. This provides a hint at how this local or inhabitant knowledge might be accessed and shared with designers.

Ingold states that 'the epitome of alongly integrated knowledge is the story' and that stories 'draw together what classifications split apart' (Ingold, 2011, 160). So, to journey through the bus stop environment is also to 'story' one's way through it. Ingold echoes Turnbull, proposing that knowing is similar to travelling (Ingold, 2011, 159) because it unfolds over time; and that it is comparable to mapping in the sense of a continuous tuning into the environment. After using the bus stop environment for a number of years, it doesn't become a less awkward space. However, you acquire the ability to negotiate the awkward configuration of things. Here the traveler's perception and action becomes 'fine-tuned through previous experience' (Ingold, 2000, 220). This is a skilled awkward performance. The pedestrian feels their way towards a destination, adjusting their movements in relation to alighting busloads of people, Sainsbury's bags and prams, 'responding to the flow of perspective structure' as they 'journey through a landscape' (Ingold, 2000, 239-240). As we negotiate awkward space we generate an inhabitant, 'alongly integrated' knowledge. This differs from the vertical knowledge or power-knowledge that controls the planned, programmed and strategised environment. Although planning and design decisions in part might reflect an acknowledgement of inhabitant knowledge, such as, for example, the TfL engineer's decision to extend the bus stop cage to provide shelter for the increased number of passengers (See case study one, page 35).

# 2.10 Conclusions and further recommendations

My initial bus stop case study captured the activities taking place at the bus stop with time-lapse photography and created short descriptive accounts of four awkward critical incidents (See pages 39 - 42). The visual representations in Figure 2.14 – Figure 2.21 build upon my early bus stop observations and design gesture findings to provide a deeper layer of analysis and a clearer understanding of the awkward spatial interactions taking place between the bus passengers and pedestrians at the bus stop. These components combined offer a potential new and alternative form of

spatial analysis to the studies carried out in the reports by Transport for London, which focus upon the negotiation of the footway through the bus stop (Atkins, 2005). Some of the ingredients of this approach might include:

- Revealing the interactions taking place between different users of the bus stop space using time-lapse photography,
- Testing out design gestures in the environment to facilitate flow and;
- Using Gibson's theory of reversible occlusion to increase visibility for users moving through the environment.

Tim Ingold's exploration into travelling through the environment further develops my understanding of how and why the bus stop in New Cross becomes awkward, by focusing upon the differing journey qualities of the bus stop users. I explore the various ways in which the bus passengers and pedestrians perceive and act in the environment in relation to whether they are a part of a transport network, or wayfaring along pathways through the environment. Whereas Gibson's research indicated that awkward space emerged due to collision, obstruction and occlusion, in Ingold's terms, awkward space signifies an interruption in the flow of meaning that occurs when affordances become unavailable and alternative possibilities need to be sought. I propose that this can lead wayfarers to discover alternative practical meanings within the urban landscape, which might afford different types of behaviour. Thus, the networks that are designed and strategised by master planners or transport officers become enmeshed with the wayfaring pathways of pedestrians who tactically manoeuvre their way through the environment. The knowledge acquired whilst moving along these pathways is a practical form of inhabitant knowledge that differs in nature from the 'vertical' power-knowledge structures laid down by strategists, local authorities and planners, although these structures might be informed in part by inhabitant knowledge.

My short review on the concept of affordance and its relationship to design and architecture theories and practices, revealed how identifying and understanding affordances within the built environment has helped researchers develop methods for avoiding failure within the design process. Affordances can offer prompts or clues as to how the physical built environment is used and the patterns of behaviour of its inhabitants. In the case of my investigation into how and why we experience awkward space in the city, I am interested in:

- Latent affordances within awkward space prompting new possibilities,
- The use of the concept or affordance within situated, collaborative design processes that draw upon local or 'inhabitant' knowledge;
- The ecologically imbedded nature of Gibson's affordances. That is, how
  affordances unite physical, environmental and behavioural aspects of
  everyday places, so that in exploring awkward space, we are looking at the
  mutual and dynamic relationship taking place between people and their
  environments as they move through public space.

Gibson and Ingold's work offers a way to explore awkwardness at the level of involved perceptual activity and sociality. It is about our ecological-corporeal relations, the way our body becomes attuned to the environmental surroundings. Ingold's approach to social anthropology situates the human being, mind and body, within the environment in attunement with other people and things; and the fieldworker in a real life setting sharing common ground with other inhabitants.

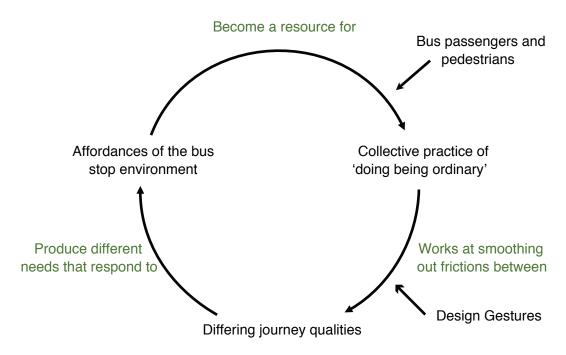


Figure 2.26 Flow of interactions at the bus stop

Figure 2.26 illustrates how affordances become resources for the collective practice of 'doing being ordinary', which in turn works to smooth out differing journey qualities. These produce different needs that respond to affordances within the environment.

The diagram also includes my 'Design Gestures', which seek to gently attune the flow of interactions through the bus stop environment.

Ingold is inspired, as am I, by Gibson's idea that the world becomes a meaningful place for people through being lived-in. Through undertaking this literature review, I have become interested in how the *city* becomes a meaningful place for people through being lived in and how the experience of awkward space forms a part of this generation of meaning for different groups of people. At this stage of the research, in my role as a design researcher, I have been careful not to impose too heavily on the bus passengers' and pedestrians' movements so as to create any power in balance through my presence in the space. My use of the term 'design gesture' rather than 'design intervention' reflects a light touch, a tentative moving out into this real life context. Figure 2.27 begins to map my research approach, highlighting the difference in my approach to the bus stop studies conducted by TfL.

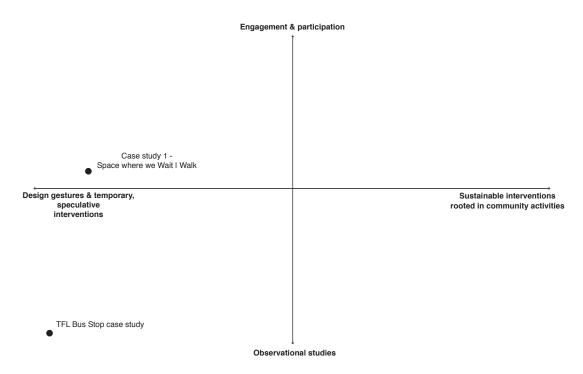


Figure 2.27 Matrix positioning my research approach at the bus stop

In the next stage of my research, I want to further my understanding of how design can sensitively provide new ways of accessing and sharing the knowledge acquired through experiencing and negotiating awkward space as we move through the urban environment; and how this might inform socio-physical interventions within the environment. Table 2.1 outlines the considerations for the next stage of my research.

#### Key insights and questions to inform the next stage of the research A context-orientated approach - Gibson's How might ecological perception ecological approach to perception places theory inform an approach to design Ingold's anthropological fieldworker on a that is context-orientated and engaged 'common ground of experience' with local in the local? people within a given context. This provides the fieldworker with a way into a context and an ability to begin to build a shared language with a local community. A dynamic understanding of space - My How can design acknowledge the understanding of space echoes that of ecological-corporeal relationships that Doreen Massey. I approach space as a underpin the experience of awkward 'dynamic, relational, multiplicity', full of space? multi-potential and played out through complex relationships as they unfold in the world. Thus awkward space is approached as embedded within human practices. The integration of practical know-how -How can design draw upon inhabitant Understanding awkwardness can help to knowledge acquired through spatial maintain healthy meshworks, enabling us to practices, such as wayfaring? re-orientate our way and engage in way finding and place learning, drawing upon inhabitant knowledge generated along the way to inform this process. Activating latent affordances - Urban How can design activate the latent inhabitants make use of 'latent affordances' affordance within awkward space to in the environment that have the potential to catalyse informal practices? reveal unconsidered possibilities for action in the environment and informal practices that are alternative to the strategies laid down by planners, councils and urban designers.

Table 2.1 Emergent insights and new questions to inform further research

# Chapter 3: Mapping, Building and Growing Spaces of Opportunity

# 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from my second case study, which took the form of a pilot design exercise. The case study aimed to explore how observational studies into awkward space might inform a temporary socio-physical intervention within the urban environment. The exercise was planned in February 2010 and carried out April 2010 in Cardiff Civic Centre, Wales, involving 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of architecture from the Welsh School of Architecture (WSA)<sup>31</sup>. The approach, tools and methods developed for this study were informed by the research findings from Chapter 2. This entailed, for example, applying theories and concepts from ecological psychology and social anthropology to the surveying and mapping of awkward space within the everyday environment (See section 3.2.4, page 101 for further details).

# 3.1.1 A design exercise

To further develop upon the findings from my previous research, I devised a project entitled 'Mapping, Building and Growing Spaces of Opportunity' that set out to engage students of architecture in individual and collective observational studies of awkward space within their everyday college campus<sup>32</sup>. These studies fed into a collaborative intervention made within their college surroundings. The project was organised into four key stages, which included surveying, mapping, re-imagining and intervening within awkward space. Each of the project stages drew upon concepts and theories explored in my first literature review, to continue to investigate how and why we experience awkward space in the city and to begin to apply this understanding to a design process. The outcomes of the design exercise were a

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> The WSA runs an annual project entitled Vertical Studio for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students, inviting artists, designers and architects to pitch project proposals for the studio, which are design research related. My proposal was one of fourteen proposals to be accepted (http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/archi/v-studio-2010-studio\_2.php).
<sup>32</sup> Please see Appendix B1, page 287, for a detailed project brief, written in February 2010.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Please see Appendix B1, page 287, for a detailed project brief, written in February 2010. Whilst the design exercise was conceived and written after the bus stop case study, the project itself ran after the initial Haberdasher workshop (Chapter 4). I am locating it before the Haberdasher case here to show the development of my research approach.

collection of individual psychogeographic atlases, a pair of collaborative maps and an intervention in the form of a small-scale architectural installation.

The following chapter begins with an overview of the research. This is followed by a presentation of each of the project stages, describing the process and highlighting key insights. I then discuss the outcomes of the design exercise and critically reflect upon the research findings. The chapter closes with my conclusions, further recommendations and reflections on the research process.

# 3.2 Research overview

# 3.2.1 Selecting a case study

I considered several different pathways forward for my research after spending time working at the bus stop. One possibility was to continue to develop my design gestures into more prominent interventions within the bus stop environment. Ideas included, for example, installing a periscope device in the shelter to provide different views of the oncoming buses for the bus passengers waiting in the space. I decided not to take the research in this direction for several reasons. Firstly, I wanted to move on from the bus stop space to explore another example of an everyday urban environment. This was in alignment with my original aim, which was to explore awkward space within the city. Secondly, I didn't want to develop my role and practice as a researcher into the area of prototyping technical interventions. I felt that this sat outside of my design expertise and background experience. And thirdly, I wanted to open up my design research process to engage participants in identifying awkward space within their everyday context, to enrich and diversify interpretations and characterisations of awkward space, thus enabling me to continue exploring how and why we experience awkward space in the city. I considered working with different case study trial groups, including professional architects and planners within my design network. Finally, I decided to pursue an opportunity to conduct a design exercise involving the students of architecture from the WSA in Cardiff based upon a positive experience running a Vertical Studio project the previous year (2009). The success of this project indicated this would make a good context for my second thesis research case study. I made the following assumptions based upon my previous experience:

- The students would be at a satisfactory level to understand the concepts I
  would be introducing and would be open to engaging with a broader context
  of design.
- They would be comfortable and productive working in teams.
- They shared a local urban environment.
- They would be committed to the overall project.

#### 3.2.2 Research context

I decided to locate the project within the students' everyday college environment. This included the Bute building, which houses the architecture school and the surrounding civic centre area of Cardiff (See Figure 3.1). I wanted the students to draw upon a shared urban context, a 'common ground of experience' that they could discuss together as a student community. This would mean that they could combine their local knowledge of the area with the practical and specialist design knowledge acquired on their course. One of the students highlighted the choice of site as a key reason for selecting this particular project out of the Vertical Studio project options, describing it as 'an opportunity to look at our everyday surroundings in a different way'<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Oliver's project expectations, taken from my research journal notes, 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2010.

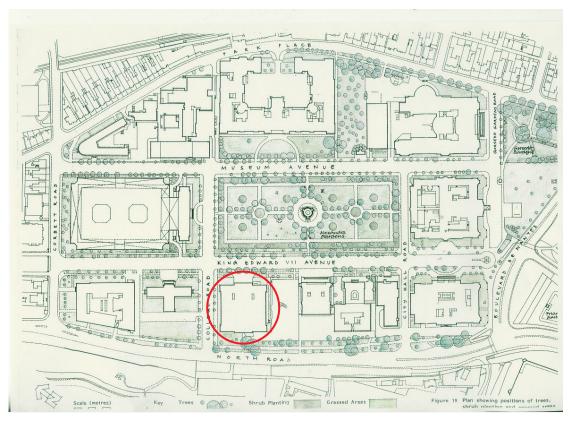


Figure 3.1 Cardiff Civic Centre by Jonathan Vining with a red circle highlighting the Bute Building.

# 3.2.3 Research participants

I facilitated the design exercise alongside Dr. Wayne Forster, who is a senior lecturer based at the school. Wayne took part in several of the students' feedback sessions. He was able to provide expert knowledge regarding the local architecture and draw connections between the students' architectural studies and the design exercise. There were nine first and second year students who participated. The students signed-up to the project based upon a project pitch that I made in February 2010. Designers Rachel Wingfield and Mathias Gmachl from the art and design studio Loop.pH took part in the final intervening stage of the project. Figure 3.2 presents a map of the research participants.

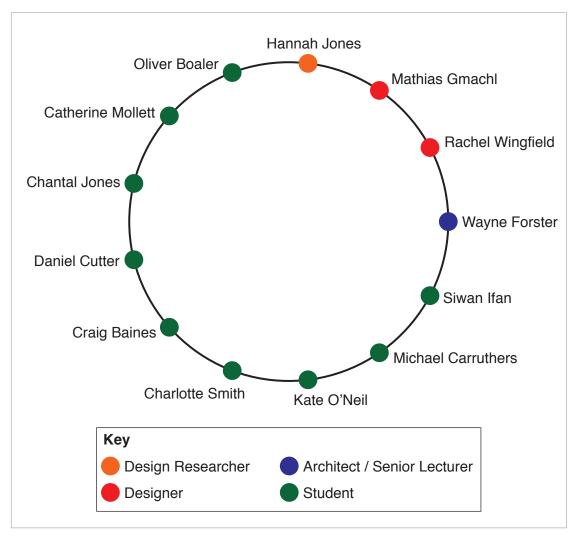


Figure 3.2 Map of the research participants

Loop.pH: design collaborations with a spatial laboratory

Rachel and Mathias are members of my design network with whom I collaborate on a range of research, consultancy and teaching projects. In the following paragraphs I provide a short descriptive account of Loop.pH's work to paint a clearer picture of their approach to designing urban interventions and to recognise their positive contribution to this collaboration.

Loop.pH is a creative studio based in North London, UK. Rachel Wingfield and Mathias Gmachl established the studio in 2003. The studio's work crosses many boundaries, including light-based installations, brand experiences and public engagement workshops and events (See <a href="www.loop.ph">www.loop.ph</a> for their project portfolio - last accessed 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2014). Loop's design research and practice is played out in experimental, interdisciplinary and collaborative 'design lab' environments (Binder, 2007) and through situated place-making with communities. The studio is driven by a

sustainability imperative. Their notion of sustainability is underpinned by principles and metaphors of ecological growth (partly inspired by Rachel's love of mushrooms). Loop's projects often include an element of 'Archilace' making, for and with clients and collaborators. Loop's Archilace making techniques produce light-weight structures, using geometries that (eco)mimic nature. They are usually woven from fibreglass rods or bamboo (See Figure 3.3).



Figure 3.3 Loop.pH constructing Archilace structures, 2013

Loop often stage workshops as part of their participatory design process. These workshops include fantastical futures activities, collective story-telling, mapping techniques and weaving and crafting experiences. Later on in the thesis, I will revisit the work of Loop.pH, drawing upon two particular examples of their collaborative, place-making with communities, including the project 'Garden City: What If?' (2013) and 'MetaboliCity' (2008-9), to inform my literature review on co-design and participatory design workshop approaches (See Chapter 4, page 140). I now move on to discuss the research approach and methods used for this project.

# 3.2.4 Research approach

This case study followed on from the explorations at the bus stop in New Cross and my first literature review, focused on perceiving and acting through awkward space. It continued to explore how and why we experience awkward space in the city.

#### 3.2.4.1 From observation to engagement

I engaged the students in observational studies into awkward space, in the same vein as my own bus stop explorations in the previous case study. In the first part of the exercise the students individually carried out explorations into space, which they personally experienced as awkward. They were then cast into two teams to carry out further observational studies. I then worked with the students to prompt a reimagining of their spaces. This then informed a collaborative design intervention. Moving from conducting my own observational inquiry in case study 1, to facilitating student-led inquiries and then finally engage with them through the design exercise required a development to my role as a researcher. Here, I drew upon experience in teaching gained from working as a lecturer in design and expertise in facilitating collaborative research processes gained from parallel research activities to my thesis research (See Chapter 1, page 20).

# 3.2.4.2 Exploring awkward space in the urban environment through a set of theoretical perspectives

Based upon concepts and theories explored in the first part of my literature review, I compiled a set of perspectives or lenses through which to survey and map awkward space within the urban environment. The perspectives were intended to encourage the students to explore the latent affordances, informal practices, social interactions and ecological layout of everyday locations that they experienced as awkward. The four theoretical perspectives are described below in Table 3.1 Four theoretical perspectives for exploring awkward space.

Theoretical perspective	Description
1. PHYSICAL/ AFFORDANCES	This theoretical perspective highlighted the ways in which we
'Perceiving and acting' through	perceive and respond to the physical properties of the
awkward space	environment. Drawing upon Gibson's notion of affordance, the
	students were asked to consider 'attributes of both the object/
	environment and actor' (Gaver, 1991), when exploring how people
	negotiate and manage awkwardness in an everyday place.
2. NAVIGATIONAL/ ROUTES	This theoretical perspective was derived from Ingold's
The awkwardness emerging in	understanding of how we travel through the environment. Ingold
between trails and routes	contrasts the trails made by the wayfarer with the routes followed
	by those in transit. Here, students were asked to focus upon
	impact of the 'tactical manoeuvring of inhabitants' and the planned
	routes through the campus on their experience of awkward space.
3. SOCIAL INTERACTION	This theoretical perspective was inspired by Sacks' idea that a
'Doing being ordinary' in awkward	sense of ordinariness in the everyday is something that we all have
social situations	to work at to achieve. This perspective encouraged students to
	explore the social encounters and multiple viewpoints of the users
	of places experienced as awkward.
4. ECOLOGICAL/ NATURAL	Tim Ingold draws upon Heidegger to communicate how things
Awkwardness amongst all things	'leak' into and influence other things around them. This theoretical
'in-formation'	perspective highlighted the dynamicity of our environment and our
	deep connection to the patterns of change that contribute to our
	spatial experiences, including, the changing times of day, different
	seasons and the weathering of the urban landscape.

Table 3.1 Four theoretical perspectives for exploring awkward space

The development of the theoretical perspectives also connect to the research questions presented in my key insights and findings table in my Chapter 2 conclusions (See page 90).

1. How might this inform an approach to design that is context-orientated and engaged in the local?

The four theoretical perspectives aimed to encourage the students to engage critically and holistically in observational studies into awkward space. I envisioned that the four perspectives would provide a conceptual framework for exploring, mapping, re-imagining and intervening within their everyday environment, in response to the ways in which they perceived and characterised awkward space.

2. How can design acknowledge the ecological-corporeal relationships that underpin the experience of awkward space?

The perspectives were intended to prompt an interdisciplinary engagement with the notion of space, informed by concepts from ecological psychology and social anthropology, thus, connecting up an understanding of what was going on in the immediate environment with a broader set of practices, issues and meanings.

3. How can design draw upon inhabitant knowledge acquired through spatial practices, such as wayfaring?

The design exercise provided an opportunity to test how the perspectives might work as applied in practice. For example, would the students find the different perspectives useful or appropriate in the development of site analysis tools and methods? How might they join the perspectives together to inform a design approach to collectively mapping the environment?

4. How can design activate the latent affordances within awkward space to catalyse informal practices?

I wanted to test how gaining an insight into the affordances on offer in the environment might directly inform the students' design of a temporary intervention within their awkward space that may in turn prompt novel patterns of behaviour or support existing informal practices in the environment.

#### 3.2.4.3 A mix of individual and team-based exercises

The students worked on individual and collaborative outcomes throughout the project. This was, in part, due to assessment purposes. College requirements stipulated that the students were individually assessed, alongside their collaborative grade. After the students' initial individual observational studies, I cast them into two teams based upon the different ways in which they approached the observational tasks. I wanted each of the teams to include participants that could address each of the four different theoretical perspectives. Over the course of the project the students worked individually, in teams and finally as a whole group.

#### 3.2.5 Research methods and tools

The following paragraphs introduce the methods and tools developed for the different stages of the design exercise.

### Awkward space explorer kits



Figure 3.4 Awkward space explorer kit

I asked the students to assemble what I define as an 'awkward space explorer kit' to aid their observational studies into awkward space (See Figure 3.4). An awkward space explorer kit is a resource kit that enables participants to get into a situation and respond directly to how they experience the environment. Loosely based upon a 'cultural probes' approach (Gaver et al., 1999), the kits are intended to elicit personal perspectives from research participants and to generate inspirational material to feed into a design process. They differ from cultural probes in that they are not previously compiled and then handed over to the students for their explorations. I asked the students to individually assemble their own explorer kits in advance of the project. These kits were to include practical and metaphorical tools (See Appendix B2, page 290, for task description). The purpose of this was to enable the students to create kits based upon the different ways in which they characterised and interpreted the notion of awkward space. Rather than handing over a set of procedures (as with Cultural Probes) I provided the students with a set of loose definitions of awkward space, as developed through my previous research, to seed their explorations (See Appendix B3, page 292). I wanted to prompt the architecture students to move beyond their usual rational methods of measurement, to draw upon their subjective experience of awkward space in the built environment. This was curiously interpreted by several of the students, whose kits included unusual 'tools' for gaging an awkward space, including a sleeping bag and a cigarette lighter. The term 'awkward space explorer kit' was understandable to this particular group of participants, who without exception turned up on day one with an example of an awkward space and a kit for surveying this space.

# Time-lapse photography

I continued with my use of time-lapse photography in this project, both as a tool for capturing the activities taking place within the students' sites and as a method for capturing the students' collaborative activities. One of the student teams used time-lapse photography to record the flows of pedestrians, cyclists and traffic moving in and around their chosen site. For our workshop day with Loop.pH, Rachel and Mathias brought along a 'Plantcam' so that we could record the entirety of the day. A Plantcam is a time-lapse camera built to capture plant growth over time. The camera takes a picture at slightly longer intervals than the camera that I used previously for the bus stop observations (between 30-seconds and once a day - we used it on the 30-seconds setting). The Plantcam sits on a tripod and is portable, so that we could carry it around as we visited the students' different sites. Footage from the Plantcam was immediately edited into a short time-lapse film at the end of the day and played back to the students. This provided an excellent pedagogic tool with which to prompt reflections on the day.

# A psychogeographic atlas

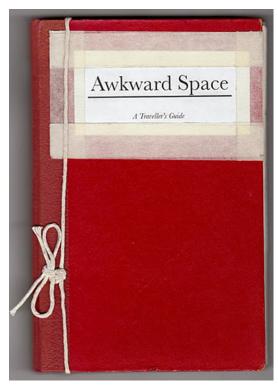


Figure 3.5 Psychogeographic atlas

Inspired by the autoethnographic approach that I experimented with in Case study 1, and research into the field of psychogeography (Sadler, 1998), I asked the students

to put together a 'psychogeographic atlas', a visual diary or process journal with which they could record their awkward spatial experiences, maps and intervention ideas over the course of the project (See Figure 3.5). Through the development of their atlases, the students were encouraged to visually represent not only the physical characteristics of awkward space but also the experiential qualities (See Appendix B4, page 293), for an example of a psychogeographic atlas produced by one of the students).

### Collaborative mapping



Figure 3.6 Collaborative mapping

In the second stage of the project, the students were asked to select an awkward space from their individual observational studies to collaboratively map as a team (See Figure 3.6). The theoretical perspectives informed this mapping approach. The students were given the opportunity to openly interpret these perspectives through their map-making, the outcomes of which, they presented in our sessions together (See project stages, page 111).

#### Prompt cards and potential mapping templates

I provided the students with a set of prompt cards and a potential mapping chart. The prompt cards were organised into four different categories of questions, which matched the theoretical perspectives (i.e. physical, navigational, social, ecological). The potential mapping chart enabled the students to explore the 'assets, capacities and opportunities' for their space. This tool was inspired by an 'appreciative inquiry' research approach (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2008), which aims to make the best of what exists within a given context to promote desirable futures. Both of these tools enabled the students to further probe their awkward spaces to feed into the reimagining stage of the design exercise.

# Re-imagining awkward space – a futures workshop



Figure 3.7 Re-imagining awkward space

I facilitated a future scenario workshop with the students, where the teams reimagined their locations in the year 2020 and 2060 (See Figure 3.7). From past experience of working with architecture students, I found that this method stretched the students' envisioning beyond the limitations of an existing site. In developing an approach to running a future scenario workshop I am indebted to Dr. Mathilda Tham, with whom I collaborated with on a future scenario workshop in the previous Vertical Studio project. I also drew upon experience from working on the MetaboliCity project and from a range of workshops that I have developed working in my role as a lecturer on MA Design Futures. I referred to 'The Transition Timeline' handbook (Chamberlin, 2009), and community design methods (Sanoff, 2000), for examples of scenario building for local urban environments.

# Method of intervening - a bamboo deployable structure



Figure 3.8 Bamboo geodesic dome build with Loop.pH

The students participated in a bamboo installation workshop, facilitated by Loop.pH, where they were trained in a simple technique for constructing a deployable structure (See Figure 3.8). We collectively built a geodesic dome together in the field outside the college and we all carried it to each of the students' sites to playfully integrate it within awkward space. After this session with Loop.pH, the students selected one site within which to make an intervention and spent a week collaboratively building an installation. The installation took the form of a set of bamboo arches, walls and seating areas to promote social interaction and strengthen ambiguous pathways through an awkward space. The intervention responded directly to their previous mapping and re-imagining exercises, which were guided by the theoretical perspectives offered to them, drawn from my Chapter 2 research. The students staged a social gathering within the space, handing out cakes and inviting people to play music, read books and spend time in the space. These events were loosely based on the theme of one of the group's future scenario, which was entitled 'A Gateway to Cardiff'. This scenario proposed a 'market-like' space for students to meet each other and access student services in a shared, open environment.

This method of intervention differs in terms of power-balance from the design gestures carried out in Chapter 2. The bamboo architectural structures are more imposing in the space, physically requiring the pedestrians moving through the environment following a particular pathway. The students also stopped people crossing the road and asked them to spend time in the space, discussing their work or occupying the seating spaces framed by their structures. This differs from my own design gesturing in Chapter 2, where I sought to minimise my presence in the space as much as I could and introduced markings into the environment, which the users didn't necessarily need to respond to. The students took a more assertive approach to changing the way the space was previously being used.

#### 3.2.6 Data collection and analysis methods

I specifically wanted to capture how observational studies into awkward space, alongside re-imagining exercises, might inform a design intervention. I documented the each stage of the process, alternatively using a digital video camera (Flipcam), a digital camera and my research journal. I filmed the students' feedback sessions, the future scenario workshop and our intervention workshop. I photographed the students' atlases and maps and their final intervention. I also asked the students to

fill in feedback sheets as part of the final project critique session. Whilst I put considerable effort into capturing these activities, some of the data was lost due to a faulty digital video camera. In retrospect, I realised that switching roles between being a teacher, researcher and documenter was very challenging and in part contributed to the loss of data.

The video documentation was later transcribed and closely studied to draw out themes and source factual, inspirational and reflective material to inform my interpretation of the events. The future scenario sessions were storyboarded to organise and give shape to the discussion recorded in the groups. The data ports gathered from the potential mapping exercise were later transcribed. We also used time-lapse recording on the project (See section 3.5 for a discussion on the use of time-lapse).

#### 3.2.7 Project overview and stages

Due to the pedagogic context of the design exercise, it required a fixed structure (See Table 3.2) and a set of clear learning outcomes that complimented the general learning outcomes of the Vertical Studio<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> The Vertical studio learning outcomes are to: 1. engage critically with an aspect of research in the field of architectural studies, and to understand this in relation to a wider context. 2. demonstrate an understanding of architecture as an integrated discipline that engages with a broad range of research approaches. 3. represent and communicate the results of their work in appropriate forms.

		Activities	Group mode	Data collection	Time
Week One	Surveying	Introductions sharing expectations	Individual	Journal notes	1hr 10mins
		Presentations of surveyed spaces + kits.	Individual	Photographs, film + journal notes	2.5hrs
		Teams form, awkward space presentation + site visits.	Teams	Journal notes + photographs	2hrs
Week Two	Mapping + re-imagining	Atlas + team maps presentations	Individual + teams	Film + photographs + examples of atlases	2hrs
		Presentation on urban interventions + potential mapping exercise	Teams	Mapping charts	1hr 40mins
		Future scenarios workshop	Teams	Film + photographs	1hr 30mins
Week Three	Intervening	Presentation + workshop with Loop.pH	Individual + teams	Film + photographs	2hrs
		Geodesic structure build	Whole group	Film + photographs	1hr
		3D sketching in spaces	Whole group	Film + photographs	2hrs
Week Four	Presentation	Project critiques	Individual	Film and photographs	3 hours
		Visiting the installation	Whole group	Photographs	20 minutes

Table 3.2 Project overview

The project was organised into four stages, including:

- Stage one surveying awkward space
- Stage two mapping awkward space
- Stage three re-imagining awkward space
- Stage four intervening within awkward space

These stages were conducted over the course of four weeks. I was present for one day a week. For the remainder of the time, the students worked individually on their psychogeographic atlas and together in their teams on the collaborative mapping and installation exercises.

### 3.3 Presentation of the project stages

In the following section, I present a brief overview of the activities and key insights to emerge from each stage of the project. I have written short summaries of the results of the exercise because the lessons I want to draw are methodological and related to the concepts used to explore awkward space, rather than about the student work itself.

#### 3.3.1 Stage one – Surveying awkward space

In the morning of the first day, the students presented their individual awkward space surveys and explorer kits, prepared in advance of the project (See Figure 3.9). Based upon the contents of the presentations and kits, I cast the students into two teams. In the afternoon session I gave a presentation, which included the findings from my first case study, definitions of awkward space, the four theoretical perspectives for exploring the urban environment and a set of considerations for carrying out their mapping activities. We then went out as a group to explore the college building and the surrounding Civic Centre area of Cardiff. Finally, each of the teams selected an awkward space to work with over the course of the project. The transcripts from this stage of the project and a breakdown of the students' spaces, kits and teams can be found in Appendix B5, page 295.

The majority of the awkward spatial experiences identified by the students took place along pathways through Cardiff Civic Centre and within the Bute building. These included a narrow corridor where intense project critiques would take place, a stairwell that brought staff and students a little bit too close for comfort, a ten second journey across strips of grass and parked cars to reach the entrance to the building, a journey out of an underpass and into a roundabout, and a set of ill-defined paths next to the Law building, at the edge of the Civic Centre.

When describing how awkward space made them feel, the word most frequently used by the students was 'uncomfortable'. This sense of discomfort was attributed to

the experience of disrupting a class or critique, encroaching upon someone else's private space, interacting with people in confined spaces and walking up a steep gradient. Other keywords used to describe awkward space were 'obstructive', a 'barrier or separation', and a 'horrible... dark alley' feeling.



Figure 3.9 Observational study – Entrance to Bute building

From my analysis of the transcripts of the audio recordings from the surveying session, I identified a set of themes from the students' presentations, kits and our group discussion (See Appendix B5, 295). These are organised in Table 3.3, in relation to the four theoretical perspectives that I used on the project

Theoretical perspective	Emergent themes from the student presentations		
Physical/ Affordances	The use of awkward-shaped interior spaces		
	The tactile qualities of routes and pathways		
	The power and authority of grand facades juxtaposed		
	with informal practices		
Navigational/ routes	Awkward circulation		
	The vertical flow of traffic		
	Planned and unplanned pathways		
Social interaction	A confused sense of ownership		
	The boundary between private and public space		
	Safety and security		
Ecological/ natural	Signs of wilderness within a designed natural landscape		
	Patterns of use over time		

Table 3.3 Themes to emerge out of student presentations and discussions in stage one

The students' presentations stimulated a broader discussion about the surveying and measuring of space. Cat described her process of surveying as 'getting to know the space' rather than obtaining objective measurements (Cat, Appendix B5, page 298). This entailed inhabiting the space and conversing with the people who used it everyday. Siwan, on the other hand, set out with a tape measure and tally system to collect the physical dimensions of 'the pit', a studio space inside the college, and to record how it was being used throughout the day. The three most popular tools in the students' explorer kits were a camera, a sketchbook and a tape measure, all to gather objective data. More unusual embodied or experiential tools for exploring the space included a sleeping bag, lighter and coffee cup, shoes, hands and feet and a friend.

In the first stage of the project, the surveys that stood out were Daniel's introspective inquiry into the awkward space he experienced as part of a 'corridor critique' within the school (page 308) and Cat's conversations with two homeless people inhabiting and contributing to her personal awkward space, played out in front of the courthouses (page 296). Both students developed interesting methods for surveying their spaces, including the use of personal narrative, conversations and portraits. Cat's toolkit included the most usual elements, including a sleeping bag, coffee cup and a lighter, intended to prompt conversations and experience inhabiting her space. The majority of the students chose pathways as awkward spatial experiences, which

tapped into the 'affordances', 'wayfinding' and 'routing' concepts explored in Chapter 2: Space where we Wait I Walk.

#### 3.3.2 Stage two – Mapping awkward space

Over the course of the first week, the student teams set out to identify and collaboratively mapped a space they found awkward within the civic centre (See Figure 3.10 - Figure 3.13). Team A chose one of the student's original awkward spaces next to the Law building, whilst Team B collectively selected the car park behind the Glamorgan building, which is situated next to the architecture school. The transcripts for this stage of the project can be found in Appendix B6, page 312.

Team A approached the task as a group and immersed themselves in the space. They spent time sitting together watching the pedestrians moving along pathways and observed their patterns of interaction, later revising the space to capturing the activities using a time-lapse camera. They became particularly interested in the relationship between the surface textures of the paths and the wayfaring tactics of pedestrians.

The team initially reflected upon how the four theoretical perspectives provided 'a sound way of encompassing most of the elements of the site' (Oliver, Appendix B6, page 315). However, they later noted that 'although we followed the four layers you gave us, we thought very much that the site dictates how it wants to be mapped'. They described how 'the movement of people and those things were the aspects that by watching it, screamed out this is how to map me'. They described their approach as 'a very site-specific way of mapping' (Oliver, Appendix B7, page 331). The students were satisfied that they had 'managed to get a good balance on the mapped layers' (Oliver, Appendix B7, page 330).

They reinterpreted the ecological/ natural perspective, as a layer that communicated the feel of the site, highlighting, for example, its 'dark nooks' (Charlotte, Appendix B6, page 315). Originally, Wayne asked them to reconsider if this was actually an ecological/ natural layer, thinking about the microclimate of the space. However, the group continued to stress this notion of 'atmosphere' or 'feeling'.



Figure 3.10 Team A site



Figure 3.11 Team A map



Figure 3.12 Team B site

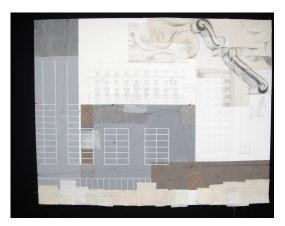


Figure 3.13 Team B map

The team designed and built a three-dimensional map with a wooden frame and four moveable, interactive layers, which communicated the teams' feelings and conceptualisation of awkward space in a coherent and succinct manner. (See Figure 3.11). The sliding layers made it possible to look at each of the four mapped perspectives separately or to examine how the different perspectives, such as affordances and wayfaring patterns, correlated with each other. The layers of the map included different textures, which made the map engaging and conveyed sensorial data. The team represented pedestrian and bicycle wayfaring movements with sewing machine-stitched trails. The factual data that they had recorded regarding the different levels of social interaction was represented by different sized dots, printed onto acetate sheets.

In contrast, Team B organised their task in relation to the four perspectives, setting out individually to explore different aspects of their site. Each of the students used the

their own individual explorer kits from week one. For example, Cat went out with an audio recorder and captured conversations with three different people using the space, including a stonemason from the workshops, a professor and an administrator. They described using the space for taking short breaks mainly because of its close convenience to the building. Team B's map worked as a vision but not in reality, in part because of the two-dimensional representation. Daniel later reflected on the challenges posed by their map, explaining how

'It was bit flat, just in a physical sense there was sort of one layer. It was a 2-D visual representation of a number of things all overlaid... Perhaps we chose too big a space too many things going on there to represent in that time scale... it worked as a concept not in reality...' (Daniel, evaluation conversation, Appendix B9, page 355).

Whilst Team A's map had an interactive element, Team B struggled to combine spatial and temporal aspects of the site in their map. Team B reflected that they would have benefited from a clearer framework to manage the task. Whilst all four members of the team brought distinctive approaches and individually created a lot of content, they struggled to bring it together as a whole. This might have been due in part to a lack of motivation or a lack of experience working collaboratively. It also appeared that whilst the students' four distinctly different ways of working gathered strong content, it also contributed to tensions or miscommunications in the group when settling upon the final presentation of the map.

#### 3.3.3 Stage three – Re-imagining awkward space

In the third stage of the project, the approach shifted from conducting observational studies into awkward space, to re-imagining these spaces and envisioning the opportunities they might afford for alternative practices within the urban environment. The storyboards and descriptions of the scenario work carried out by the student teams can be found in Appendix B8, page 333.

#### Potential mapping exercise

After presenting their collaborative maps to Wayne and I, the student teams were each given a potential mapping chart and a set of prompt cards. The cards were illustrated with questions arranged under each of the four perspectives. The questions included, for example, 'Are there any objects in the space?' (physical/affordances perspective) and 'is the space light and airy or dark?' (ecological/ natural

perspective). The students were asked to consider the possibilities, capabilities and assets of their sites. The students entered their descriptions onto post-it notes and populated each of the layers of the potential mapping chart. The questions and insights generated by Team A's potential mapping exercise are presented in Figure 3.14 and Table 3.4 as an example of the students' response to this task.

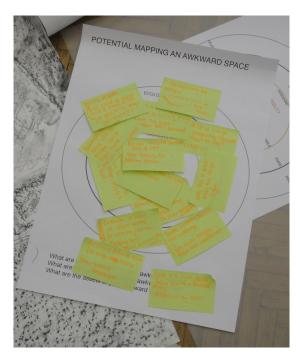


Figure 3.14 Team A's potential mapping chart

Potential mapping layer	Students' notes		
Physical	<ul> <li>Bench – would more people stop and sit? Some seating for resting places.</li> <li>Electrical and phone boxes, do people use them?</li> <li>Trees control movement.</li> <li>Curve of law building potential</li> </ul>		
Navigational	<ul> <li>Used as a route/ road. Use this as a positive thing.         Accessed by 360 degrees.</li> <li>People only stop at place near the traffic lights</li> <li>People running across the crossings – lots of car traffic bikes also considered</li> <li>Streamlining the paths, create a curve as route?</li> </ul>		
Social	<ul> <li>Possibility of becoming a social hub, to make people stop and meet there. Attracts people instead.</li> <li>Would be a hub for community of students, others as well?</li> </ul>		
Ecological	<ul> <li>Changes of level to allow people to lean on/ sit on.         Raising-up? Different level to road.         Patches of grass – no sense of ownership and small in size – get rid of?</li> <li>Change boundaries, more grass area, more private.</li> </ul>		

Table 3.4 Transcription of team A's potential mapping chart



Figure 3.15 Team A scenario work



Figure 3.16 Team A final scenario



Figure 3.17 Team B scenario work



Figure 3.18 Team B final scenario

#### Future scenario exercise

Here, I engaged with the students to re-imagine their awkward spaces. The potential mapping was followed by a future scenario workshop (See Figure 3.15 – Figure 3.18). Team A worked on a scenario for their awkward space set in the year 2060 and Team B worked on a scenario set in 2020. The future dates selected for the workshop were arbitrary, with the aim of the task being to stretch the students' imagination beyond the current context to free them up from the details within the site maps they created in stage two. The students worked with these maps as a basis for the exercise, using mixed media including Lego, Plasticine, felt and other materials with which to collage the future uses of their spaces.

The potential mapping exercise and future scenario workshop encouraged the students to think about the possibilities their sites afforded for alternative practices. The re-imagining stage of the process generally supported a more relational

approach to thinking about their awkward spaces. The students connected the local and global issues that concerned them to the dynamics existing within their sites. For example, in Team A's future scenario, they highlighted personal issues such as the safety of students using taxi's in the civic centre area to get home safely late at night. Both teams also highlighted issues at a college level, such as the need for more capacity to house extra student numbers and the organisation of student services. At a more global level, the students discussed issues such as sustainability, proposing recycling systems for their sites. They referred to inspirational design examples, such as Patrick Blanc's green wall on Jean Nouvel's 'Musee du Quai Branly' in Paris, to propose different ways of integrating green walls into their spaces. Both teams ended up creating future scenarios that provided communal spaces that facilitated dialogues with other students (See Figure 3.16 and Figure 3.18). Team B's 'Bridging the Gap' concept became a metaphor for a better communication between planners and architects, who currently occupy neighbouring buildings yet never interact. Team A's 'Gateway to Cardiff' became a metaphor for a vibrant and open space for students to mingle and access college services at the entrance to the campus. They observed how 'with the current buildings, it's all raised up on a plinth' proposing that 'the future is a gathering of University services in a market-like space' (Oliver, Appendix B8, page 335). It was exciting to finally observe the students becoming enthusiastic about their spaces and making a connection between their daily life and the project task. A sub-conversation went on throughout the workshop relating to the general election, which took place on the same day. I think that some of the ideas around democratising the college services were influenced by the students' first voting experience.

#### 3.3.4 Stage four – Intervening within awkward space

In the third week of the project, the sessions focused on the notion of intervening within awkward space (See Figure 3.19 – Figure 3.22). The students took part in a design workshop with designers Rachel Wingfield and Mathias Gmachl, who introduced a technique for constructing deployable bamboo structures. Next, we all worked together to carry out a series of '3D sketches' in the team's spaces. This involved carrying a bamboo geodesic dome, built in the park in front of the college, around the students' spaces and playfully integrating it into their sites. Finally, the students voted upon one space that they would make an intervention within. They

continued to work as a whole group over the course of the week to build a bamboo installation in Team A's original space at the edge of the campus.



Figure 3.19 Workshop with Loop.pH



Figure 3.20 Working with Bamboo



Figure 3.21 Building geodesic dome



Figure 3.22 3D sketches in space

#### 3.3.4.1 Outcomes from the design intervention

'It's an experiment really, whether it's a success or not, I'm not too sure'. (Siwan, Appendix B9, page 344)

The bamboo installation worked well at strengthening the pathways through the space to guide the wayfaring pedestrians. This demonstrated a design response to the physical and navigational layers explored in the collaborative mapping activities (See Figure 3.23). The students introduced seating and lighting to define the green areas and attract people to spend time in the space (See Figure 3.24). The use of the green areas for social activities also deterred the pedestrians from cutting across the

space. The natural material of the bamboo structure created a soft feeling, drawing attention to the trees in the space that were previously lost amongst the traffic. The students described their installation as 'playful', 'fun', 'explorative' and 'experimental' (See Figure 3.25).



Figure 3.23 Response to pathway



Figure 3.24 Making use of green space



Figure 3.25 Final celebration



Figure 3.26 Post-project installation

Installing the bamboo structures in the space worked to ease individual differences that had built up within the group due to the difficulties experienced on the collaborative mapping exercise. Working with the bamboo construction method literally provided the group with a framework to guide their own ad hoc explorations. The students reflected that the structure that emerged was an outcome of their informal, playful interaction with the material.

Part of the success of this temporary and speculative intervention was its use by the students and their colleagues, who gathered in and around the intervention over the course of the final week. People sat on cushions within the bamboo framework

reading books or playing the guitar. The students lured outsiders in with coffee and cake, asking them to spend time in the space. After the project ended, I received an email from the architecture school, informing me of the destiny of the bamboo installation.

'Not sure if you heard but the bamboo structures that were parked outside were able to sit there until this weekend, and only then were removed because of a planned Defence League demo. Security and estates etc... were all really positive about it and curious to know a bit more about it. I booked staff to remove it before the march at security's request and just as they went down to do the job, a fella came running out of Music dept and asked if he could have them for his allotment.... recycling, don't you just love it.' (Carole Creasey, Facilities Manager WSA, Appendix B9, page 349).

Whilst the students had stated their intention of continuing to maintain the structure over the summer break, it was not long before it slid into decline and into the pathways of the pedestrians negotiating the space (See Figure 3.26). This perhaps inadvertently created an even more awkward space for pedestrians. It was deemed as too awkward to remain in the space for the Defence League demonstration and the University asked for it to be removed. Ultimately, the structure was tactically reclaimed by another member of staff from the university for use on their allotment. In the brief lifespan of this temporary deployable structure, it went from making a space less awkward, to making a space more awkward, to making a space less awkward, each time for different users coming into the space with different needs. This highlights the issue that the multiple perspectives held by the public on awkward space need to be considered in deploying structures that intervene within the everyday activities taking place in a public space.

The trajectory of the process of this design exercise can be traced through the transformation of the area at the edge of the campus, alongside the Law Building into the 'Gateway to Cardiff'. This was achieved through the students' surveying, mapping, reimagining and intervening activities (See Figure 3.27).

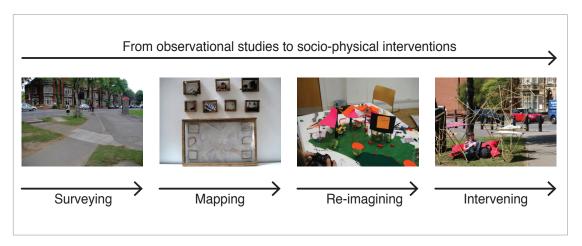


Figure 3.27 Project trajectory

#### 3.4 Research outcomes

#### 3.4.1 Approach to conducting observation studies into awkward space

Assembling an 'awkward space explorer kit' and working on the 'psychogeographic atlas' required the students to include themselves, in terms of their feelings and personal narratives, in the surveying of their chosen spaces. These, more subjective methods, encouraged the students to extend their usual objective approach to surveying a space. This meant that their understanding of awkward space moved beyond a set of physical constraints to developing an experiential understanding of the space and an insight into the patterns of behaviour of different users. This research outcome built upon my own experiments with writing short autoethnographic pieces of writing as part of my bus stop explorations in Chapter 2.

#### 3.4.2 Prompting insights into transforming an existing context

Following on from the notion that 'affordances indicate what behaviours are possible' within an everyday urban environment (Maier, Fadel and Battisto, 2009, 398), the students' exploration into the latent affordances within their awkward space (e.g. the green patches of grass and raised mounds along the walk ways) prompt design ideas for a new socio-ecological niche in the city, where students can sit down and speak to other students. Here we see how affordances can help designers not only to foresee failures within a design process so that mistakes can be learnt from (such as on the social housing projects discussed Chapter 2, page 66), but they can also indicate to designers how they might facilitate ongoing positive changes within an existing context.

#### 3.4.3 A relational and holistic method of site analysis

Oliver originally defined the site next to the Law Building as awkward in his individual observational study in the first stage of the process. He attributed the awkward qualities of the space to the irregular pathways through the site that crossed over each other. He was curious about the different surface textures of the pathways, highlighting how they led to random wayfaring patterns through the space (See Appendix B6, page, 306). In the second stage of the process, Oliver and the rest of Team A continued to explore this space. Using the theoretical perspectives, they mapped the affordances, wayfaring patterns and the levels of social interaction taking place between pedestrians and bicyclists moving across the area. They reinterpreted the ecological perspective as an 'atmospheric' or 'feeling' perspective. Their map was presented as a set of framed interactive layers, which made it possible to see how the different perspectives correlated. In the third stage of process, our re-imagining workshop, the students began to discuss the possibility of the space becoming a social hub. They transformed the atmospheric layer of their map from a 'shadow layer' indicating the dark nooks on the site, to a festive, marketlike or circus atmosphere. This later became a design driver for the whole group's intervention in stage four of the process. Charlotte from Team A revealed how the reimagining stage informed an approach to building an installation, explaining

'I found it interesting that through the Charette day (the re-imagining stage of the process), which was really useful, thinking with Lego and Plasticine, this fed in quite well to what we ended up designing. At this early stage we imagined it as a 'Gateway to Cardiff'. It's the beginning of all the University buildings when you walk in...' (Charlotte, Appendix B9, page 345).

The project culminated in a pop-up critique at the site of the group's final intervention. Team A described having the intention of building extra layers into their 3D map to compare the effect of the intervention with the information gathered through their observational studies. (Team A, Appendix B9, page 343). In retrospect, this would have made an interesting final stage to the project, introducing a fifth sliding layer to visualise how the intervention responded directly to the four theoretical perspectives. Figure 3.28 suggests how the four theoretical perspectives guided the students' analysis of their awkward space to inform an intervention within their site.

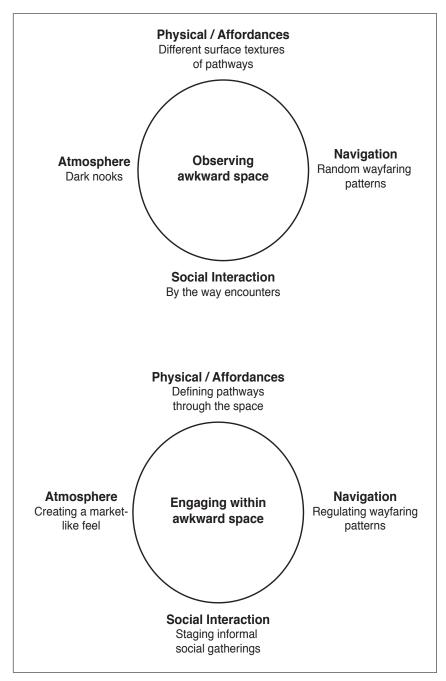


Figure 3.28 From observing to engaging with awkward space

## 3.5 Critical reflections on the research findings

The following paragraphs critically reflect upon the outcomes from this design exercise. These reflections include the application of the four theoretical perspectives to the students' design activities, engaging with the students as part of my research process, the tension between the project 'strategy' and the students' 'tactical' reappropriation of the exercises, the value of the re-imagining awkward space

workshop, the students' shared desire for more communal spaces, and working with awkward space as an open and evocative concept for design.

#### 3.5.1 Applying the theoretical perspectives in practice

The four theoretical perspectives, drawn from my first literature review, were intended to encourage the students to engage critically and holistically in observational studies into awkward space. The outcomes of the research process suggest that overall the theoretical perspectives had a positive impact upon the students' design process, providing an alternative, relational and holistic method of site analysis. The students' application of the four perspectives to the mapping exercise was partially successful. One team managed to build a coherent map with clearly defined layers, whilst the other team struggled to reconcile their different perspectives and represent this visually. An example of what was particularly unsuccessful about Team B's comapping lay in their approach to the task. Each student took a different theoretical perspective and visited the site independently to gather data relating to their mapping perspective. Whilst the group generated a lot of interesting content for their map, the amount of content and the different ways in which the student's had translated this made it more difficult to bring everything together as a whole. So Team B's map had a fragmented appearance, looking like a montage or assemblage of pieces of information and drawing styles. Team A's map in contrast, captured an overlay of wayfaring trails, levels of social interaction and floor surface type. This made it easy to holistically propose points of intervention within the site.

The prompt cards and potential mapping exercise provided a useful stepping stone between the observational studies and the re-imagining workshop, enabling the students to build upon the existing affordances and informal practices taking place within their spaces. Whilst the observation studies were carried out independently by the students on site, these methods for engaging with the students were conducted in a workshop setting in the studio. Over the course of the project the students carried out observational studies, where they went out into the environment independently or in their teams to survey their spaces; and facilitated workshops and activities that focused upon group engagement, such as the re-imagining workshop and bamboo geodesic dome building.

#### 3.5.2 Working with a dynamic group of students

I selected this case study based, in part, upon having access to working with a group of research participants who shared an existing everyday urban environment. The design exercise involved nine students of architecture. Over the course of the project, several aspects of the group dynamics hindered the collaborative aspects of the design exercise. These include interpersonal dynamics within the teams, a lack of collaborative experience and an individualistic design approach. The way in which I had organised or prescribed elements of the design exercise exasperated some of these issues. This included, for example, a disconnection between the individual and team-based exercises and assessment and a lack of facilitation around the mapping exercises. The bamboo workshop healed some of the tensions within the group, through a playful and exploratory activity.

The students were not really invested in the formal surroundings of the civic centre area and lacked knowledge about the place. Their examples of awkward space reflected the 'passing through' nature of their everyday experience, with the majority of the students selecting pathways and 'by-the-way' awkward encounters. These were comparable to my own choice of awkward space, the bus stop, in my own college surroundings of New Cross. On reflection, it would have been more effective to actively involve other people from this area, including, for example, members of staff from the university, or gardeners from the civic park. This might have created a more diverse breadth of inhabitant knowledge to inject into the students' design process. Considering a different trial group, such as a professional architecture group would further strengthen the development of the methods used in this case study.

#### 3.5.3 The tension between project strategies and tactics

Due to the institutional setting of the project there was a lack of flexibility to the overall project structure. The most effective insights came from the students when they tactically re-appropriated the mapping exercise to create they own site analysis model that spoke directly to the dynamics at play within their chosen space. In a sense, whilst Team B followed the project's strategy, Team A subverted the strategy to tactically carry out an intervention following their own rules. From this experience, I discovered that it is important to keep the process more open, to find a balance between the useful framing provided by awkward space and the four perspectives, so as to invite in the creativity or inventiveness of the participants. This contributes to my

own understanding of the power-relations existing within any research context but especially one where you are facilitating a situated, collaborative project. Previously, at the bus stop, I sought to minimise my impact upon the bus passengers and pedestrians activities, whilst attempting to see how I might extend my observations on the flow of interactions through this awkward space through carrying out my design gestures. However, in my role as a teacher it was my responsibility to be very present in the space with the students. This already set up a power-relationship, with me leading the activities and the students following my process. The project became more interesting when the students subverted the process and followed their own mapping instincts. Again, the students' intervention within the space also raised questions about power, with them both physically diverting people through the space and socially confronting people and asking them to behave in particular ways in the space. Here, they assumed a more traditional role of a designer/ architect prescribing how people use things and environments.

#### 3.5.4 The importance of spatial imagination

It was in the future scenario workshop that the students began to make a connection between the issues that faced them as student citizens and the dynamics of their awkward spaces. Their scenarios addressed concerns such as the safety of students getting into minicabs late at night and proposed a new vision for accessing student services. They discussed the fact that on their course they don't get involved in any real-life decision-making concerning the design of the city and that this is a missed opportunity. Other issues they touched upon included sharing resources and setting up mixed-use workshops with the stonemasons and carpenters working for the university, and initiating a waste management and recycling service.

#### 3.5.5 The shared desire for open, communal, dialogical space

Both teams developed proposals in the second stage of the project that were for small-scale architectural installations that facilitated some form of dialogical interaction. Team A, who produced the 'Gateway for Cardiff' concept, identified opportunities for social spaces through their potential mapping. Team B discussed the opportunity for planners and architects to meet and grow things together in the space between their buildings. They designed a café to 'bridge the gap' between these institutions. Both of these scenarios asserted a physical 'opening-up' of the structures that contained the students, including the services, the lessons, and the

divide between departments. Their shared awkwardness was connected to a sense of isolation from those around them. The group's construction of a socio-physical intervention capitalised upon the 'by-the-way' chance encounters through an awkward space to create a temporary communal space. From original interpretations of awkward space that referred to surface textures, circulation, wayfaring and routes, the student teams both ended up focusing on a lack of communication as being a key component of their awkward spaces. In finally re-defining awkward space, one of the students noted how

'I think its something that can be agreed upon. I think its something human as opposed to individual. It's corporeal, it's to do with human scale and things that are common.' (Daniel, Appendix B9, page 356).

#### 3.5.6 An extension to the use of time-lapse photography

We continued to use time-lapse photography in this case study to record the activities taking place within the students' awkward spaces. I extended the use of time-lapse to record some of the students' collaborative activities, such as the workshop and geodesic dome build with Loop.pH. The footage from this recording was played back to the students after the session to reveal what they had achieved throughout the day. This provided an excellent pedagogic tool for post-sense-making, retracing the steps through an open and emergent process.

#### 3.6 Conclusions and further recommendations

This case study set out to engage a group of participants in an exploration into awkward space within their everyday environment. The case aimed to further explore how and why we experience awkward space in the city. The case also intended to begin to explore how observational studies into awkward space might inform a design process. The study was framed as a design exercise involving a group of architecture students in the surveying, mapping and re-imagining of awkward space. This process fed into a temporary, speculative intervention, made within the students' everyday environment. The intervention took the form of a bamboo installation, which aimed to define the pathways through a 'leaky' space on the edge of the college campus. It achieved this through lining the pathways with triangular bamboo walls and opening up to patches of grass where people could stop and sit converse.

The future scenario workshop, which took place in the re-imagining stage of the process, prompted a more thoughtful engagement with space, highlighting the immediate issues and concerns of the students. These included, for example, getting home safely in taxi's from the civic area and the awkward lack of communication between the planning and architecture students occupying neighbouring buildings.

The institutional setting restricted the research process. I over prescribed the design exercise in formulating the project brief and made mistakes in balancing the students' individual and collaborative tasks. The students' small alterations to the mapping process were interesting and with more flexibility and better facilitation might have led towards more interesting outcomes. The students were not very familiar with the environment within which we worked and we not really invested in this context. They also lacked experience in collaborative work, which contributed to a break down in team dynamics, which I found difficult to manage. In general they demonstrated a more individualistic approach to design. Figure 3.29 maps the developments to my research approach. It maps my emerging practice in relation to Loop.pH's general research approach, which sits between short term and more sustainable interventions in the built environment and largely in the realm of participatory design.

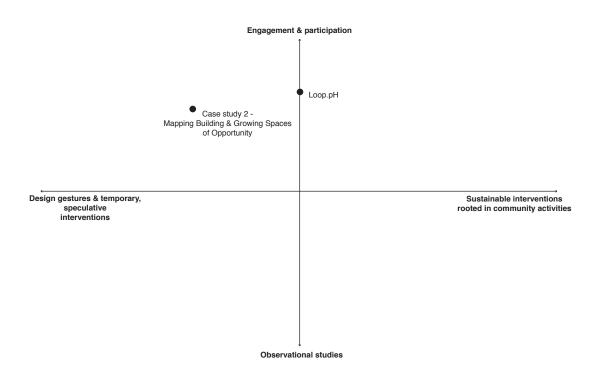


Figure 3.29 Matrix mapping developments to research approach from Chapter 2

Awkward space was perceived as an evocative concept for design, opening up discussions about the everyday environment and prompting subjective explorations into space. Table 3.5 outlines recommendations for further study based upon findings.

Discussion points	Limitations	Emergent	Recommendations
		questions	
- Applying the theoretical perspectives in practice Working with a dynamic group of students The tension between project strategies and tactics The importance of spatial imagination The shared desire for open, communal, dialogical space Awkward space as an open and evocative concept for designing.	- Lack of local knowledge, transient community, lack of investment in everyday context Overly prescribed process, institutional setting Thinking beyond the constraints of a plan, relational thinking, connecting up issues and ideas with their sites.	- What would it be like to work with a more invested group of local inhabitants, with more knowledge of the environment? - How could I create a process to inform more sustainable interventions within the environment? - How could awkward space be used to seed conversations about the everyday environment?	- Facilitate collective mapping process Assemble a design team to co-manage the documentation of the project Develop a workshop process more open and flexible, draw upon local tactics Draw upon issues and explore possibilities around awkward space.

Table 3.5 Project research findings and further recommendations

# 3.7 Reflections on the research process

My second case study employed concepts explored in Chapter 2. These were organised into a set of theoretical perspectives for carrying out explorations and interventions within awkward space. This informed an observational design exercise including 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year architecture students from the Welsh School of Architecture in Cardiff. A highlight from the process was the development of the autoethnographic approach used in case 1 to include the assembling of explorer kits that responded to the students' individual interpretations of awkward space in their college environment. The kits included tools for surveying space, from cameras and tape measures to measure the physical dimensions of awkward space locations, to a cigarette lighter and coffee cup to catalyse conversations with awkward space users. The diversity of the kits raised interesting questions about objective and subjective ways of gauging a

space. The discussion around the kits also seeded the next stage of the process, helping to cast teams that included students who might focus on different aspects of awkward space, including the physical navigational, social and ecological. The overall outcomes of this exercise were a series of individual and collaborative maps and a collaborative final intervention within awkward space in the form of a temporary bamboo installation entitled 'The Gateway to Cardiff'. This demonstrated how exploring different aspects of awkward space can sensitively inform socio-physical interventions within the environment. The study charted my progress from working individually to designing structured workshops. This in turn helped me to combine explorative observational studies into awkward space with a more participatory approach to understanding awkwardness with the students. In my next case study, my participatory approach moves even further into a co-design territory, engaging an invested group of participants in an exploration into and re-imagining of awkward space in their local neighbourhood. This informs and inspires the development of a more coherent strategy for their local activities.

# Chapter 4: Mapping Haberdasher: How can awkward space be used as a productive concept for co-designing everyday life in the city?



Figure 4.1 Mapping Haberdasher workshop

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter documents the findings from a collaborative design workshop (See Figure 4.1) that took place in March 2010. The workshop formed part of a one-year programme engaging with a local residents' group on the Haberdasher Estate in North London (2010-2011). This included preliminary meetings, the mapping workshop and a co-evaluation discussion. The workshop was a spirited and productive event, which contributed some of the most significant of my thesis research findings. It allowed me to test out how the concept of awkward space could be used to seed open and creative conversations with local residents about their everyday environment. It also enabled me to work towards supporting more sustainable urban interventions through my design research approach.

The chapter opens with a brief description of how this study fits within the broader

context of the thesis research. I then discuss the key research questions, aims and objectives that motivated the inquiry. Next, I give a short background account of the case study selection. I then present a short review of literature on co-design and participatory design, with a focus on workshops as a methodology. This leads into my workshop design, including a description of the key design tools and methods employed for the workshop. I then summarise key findings and finally conclude with immediate reflections on my research process. The chapter is followed by a literature review (Chapter 5), which situates and reflects upon the findings from the mapping workshop. This is then followed by a report documenting the findings from a coevaluation meeting held on the estate one year after the mapping workshop (Chapter 6).

#### 4.1.1 A brief summary of the thesis research up to this point

So far, my explorations into awkward space, as presented in Chapters 2 and 3, consisted of observational studies, design gestures and a temporary intervention within awkward space. These were carried out initially by myself at a local bus stop and subsequently by a group of architecture students on their college campus. Whilst the design gestures sought to invite a response from the bus stop users without being too disruptive, the students' bamboo intervention redirected pedestrians through the environment and took on a more confrontational nature. These two experiments were therefore very different in terms of the balance of power-relationships between the designers and the urban inhabitants.

My case study activities were interwoven and informed by literature on how we perceive, move and know through space. I began to develop an understanding of awkward space that was embedded within dynamic human practices, which are intimately connected to their environmental context. This understanding differs, for example, to one that might consider awkward space as being parts of cities that are isolated, static or void. In negotiating and managing awkward space within the environment, it was revealed that users generate tacit forms of knowledge through the formation of temporary communities and through re-orientation, way-finding and place-learning. At this stage of the thesis research I proposed to continue by developing a context-oriented approach to the research, working with a dynamic understanding of awkward space, finding ways to integrate practical inhabitant knowledge into my process, and activating latent affordances within awkward space.

Chapter 3 showed the success of using awkward space as an open and evocative concept for informing ways of conducting a site analysis and approaches to reimagining and intervening within the everyday environment. However, there were a number of weaknesses in the process that I sought to address through my ongoing collaborations with the residents of the Haberdasher Estate. These included writing an overly prescribed project structure, the limitations of working within a formal, institutional setting, the participants' lack of inhabitant knowledge and investment in the process in a longer-term sense and the strain of simultaneously teaching, facilitating and documenting a research process.

In the next stage of my thesis study, I progress from exploring to practicing awkward space in the city, and arrive at my third and final case study of the thesis, 'Mapping Haberdasher'. Here I move towards advocating a socially driven design approach that involves a group of residents, surveying, mapping and re-imagining the awkward space that emerges on their housing estate in North London<sup>35</sup>. In this stage of the research, I foreground the concept of awkward space. I take a more immersive, social approach to working with the concept, rather than logistical, and draw upon peoples' personal experience of their neighbourhood. This reflects a development in my role as a researcher, from awkwardly carrying out the tentative design gestures in case study 1, to facilitating a collaborative and engaging workshop. I draw upon my previous research findings alongside research into participatory design workshop methods for co-designing with communities to inform and inspire the development of tools and mapping techniques. These tools and techniques are employed to guide a creative conversation with the residents about their everyday environment, which is seeded by the concept of awkward space.

#### 4.1.2 Research questions, aims and objectives

I embarked upon the 'Mapping Haberdasher' case study with the primary aim of engaging a group of urban inhabitants<sup>36</sup> in a conversation about awkward space within their neighbourhood. I wanted to delve into the weird leftover nooks and crannies of the Haberdasher Estate and explore them together with the people who

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Considerations for working as a creative practitioner within a grounded community context are discussed further in Chapter 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Here, I refer to the residents of the Haberdasher estate as urban 'inhabitants' rather than 'locals' to acknowledge Ingold's dynamic notion of inhabiting place, see Chapter 2, page 86.

lived there in a creative and imaginative way. I was curious to investigate how design could facilitate and resource these creative and dialogical encounters and how they in turn might inform or motivate the residents' future estate activities. To guide the design of my research inquiry, I framed the question 'How can awkward space be used as a productive concept for co-designing everyday life in the city?'

The case study workshop set out to discover how different people characterise and interpret the concept of awkward space. The workshop activities focused upon exploring the relationship between the accounts we make about our everyday environment and our spatial experiences, questioning 'What kinds of conversations about everyday life on the estate evolve around making accounts of awkward space and what are the themes and issues to emerge through this discussion?' The study sought to understand how a collaborative design process can help to elicit inhabitant knowledge about awkward space and what tools, methods and approaches work successfully towards achieving this aim. Finally the study explored how this process might inform the residents' future design and decision-making regarding their everyday environment.

The workshop aims are thus highlighted below.

Case study workshop aims:

- To introduce the concept of awkward space to 'seed' situated and imaginative conversations about everyday life.
- To frame a space for a collaborative inquiry involving designers and residents.
- To test and adapt a range of research methods and design tools for accessing and sharing inhabitant knowledge and applying it to a co-design process.
- To develop a 'connected knowing' that combines the 'alongly integrated knowledge' (Ingold, 2011) acquired through residents' spatial tactics on the estate and other types of knowledge (e.g. the specialist knowledge of designers) that might inform the resident committee's future decision-making strategies.
- To reflect upon and evaluate the role of the different participants (including my own role) in this collaborative process.

Further to my research aims, I identified three key objectives.

Research objectives:

- To create a shared account of awkward space on the estate.
- To produce a collaborative map of the estate.
- To agree a co-evaluation framework for proposed future activities and interventions on the estate.

#### 4.1.3 Background story

I was first introduced to members of the Haberdasher estate residents' committee in July 2009. At the time, I was working on a design research project entitled 'MetaboliCity'. MetaboliCity was a one-year (2008-2009) urban agriculture project, co-ordinated by Rachel Wingfield and Mathias Gmachl from Loop.pH (introduced in Chapter 3, 99), sponsored by the Audi Design Foundation and hosted by Central Saint Martins School of Arts and Design. The project explored how design thinking and crafting could support amateur cultures of food production in the city (Jones and Wingfield, 2009, 2010). I was employed on the project as part of the core research and design team as a result of my research interest in awkward space and experience in collaborative design research. I discuss the co-design workshops we held a part of the MetaboliCity project further on page 146.

#### 4.1.4 The Haberdasher Estate context

The Haberdasher Estate was built in 1969 and is located within the London Borough of Hackney (See Figure 4.2). Hackney is one of the most economically challenged parts of London, although there are signs of improvement in the area (See <a href="http://www.londonspovertyprofile.org.uk/key-facts/overview-of-london-boroughs/">http://www.londonspovertyprofile.org.uk/key-facts/overview-of-london-boroughs/</a> - last accessed 16<sup>th</sup> April 2014). The estate is surrounded by many other council housing estates. In recent times, the demographics of the area have changed significantly. Many of the flats are now privately owned, with young professionals moving in to be close to the 'trendy' area of Hoxton, Old Street and the City. There are also several new student accommodation buildings and hotels located in close proximity to the estate (See John and Neil's reflections in Chapter 6, page 226).

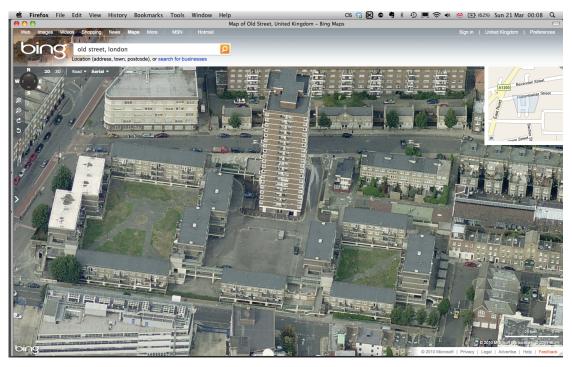


Figure 4.2 Satellite image of the Haberdasher Estate (centre) and surrounding context, from Bing.com

In 1999, the local council formed a Not for Profit company called 'Shoreditch Trust' to support bottom-up change agency, through the betterment of the local environment (http://www.shoreditchtrust.org.uk/ - last accessed 14<sup>th</sup> April 2014). One of the areas that Shoreditch Trust supports is local food growing and education around healthy eating. Several members of the Haberdasher residents' committee had set up a gardening group and were actively pursuing innovative ways to use the leftover space on their estate to plant trees and flowers, and to grow food. The Shoreditch Trust, introduced the MetaboliCity design team to the residents' committee on the Haberdasher Estate. The first time I visited the estate and met the residents was at a project workshop, which involved the residents weaving together plant growing structures that were going to be installed on the estate. I recorded informal interviews with several members of the residents' committee as the weaving activities took place. This meeting gave me the opportunity to listen to the residents' accounts of the history of the estate and to explore its corridors and leftover places (See Figure 4.3 – Figure 4.7).

When I met the residents in July 2009, they had been working towards greening spaces on the estate for around 5 years. They had recently transformed a parking area into a courtyard. All of their fund-raising activities were managed through the

Tenants Residents Association (TRA). This is a resident driven organisational body that is set up on all estates in London to gather tenants together to share information about their local neighbourhood, apply for funding for local activities and mediate with local councils. On the Haberdasher Estate, changes and new initiatives pursued by the TRA are communicated to other tenants via posters on notice boards around the estate.

#### 4.1.5 Identifying a research opportunity

The second time I met the residents was at the final MetaboliCity workshop, which was designed to bring together all the research participants to share project findings and to celebrate with a meal together, including food harvested from the sites, at the Waterhouse restaurant in Hackney. In the workshop, I facilitated the Haberdasher group, which included Neil and Madeline, two active members of the gardening group and residents on the estate. We evaluated their gardening activities and created wildly imaginative scenarios for the future. One of the outcomes identified from our conversations was the residents' need to create a more comprehensive strategy for the gardening activities on their estate, in preparation for the next grow season. After this workshop, I was invited to a Haberdasher residents' committee meeting. In this meeting I proposed a collaborative mapping session with the residents, which would form a part of my doctoral research. We identified a mutual benefit between the residents' desire to upscale and better understand their estate activities and an opportunity for me to work with a group of urban inhabitants, invested in and knowledgeable about their environment and entangled in different relationships with urban space.



Figure 4.3 Haberdasher Estate



Figure 4.6 Community grow bags



Figure 4.4 Community garden



Figure 4.5 Haberdasher estate map



Figure 4.7 Member of the gardening group

# 4.2 Co-design stemming from Participatory Design research

In this section, I present a short review of literature exploring the current field of codesign and Participatory Design (PD) research and practice. This review is in support of the development of my research design for working with the residents of the Haberdasher Estate. To this end, I focus upon research and projects contributing to the development of co-design and Participatory Design with, for and by communities, which use workshops as a methodology. I begin with a brief overview of the origins and evolution of Participatory Design, drawing out key principles and qualities of this approach. This is accompanied by several examples of co-design research projects, which make use of workshops. These represent a growing movement in this field. The projects reflect a movement towards Community-based Participatory design (CPD) (DiSalvo et. al, 2013) and Participatory Design that frames 'agonistic public spaces' (DiSalvo, 2010, Meissen, 2010, Björgvinsson, Ehn and Hillgren, 2012, Keshhavarz and Maze, 2013). These projects include the 'Neighbourhood Networks Project' (2007-10) led by Carl DiSalvo, Illah Nourbakhsh, Marti Louw, David Holstius, Dan Letson, Ayca Akin, Maryann Steiner, Julina Coupland, and Kevin Crowley (http://carldisalvo.com/posts/neighborhood-networks/ - last accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014); 'Garden City: What if?' (2013), and MetaboliCity' (2008-9), both facilitated by Loop.pH (www.loop.ph.com - last accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014); and 'Malmo Living Labs' (2007-present day), whose participating design researchers include Erling Björgvinsson, Pelle Ehn, and Per-Anders Hillgren (http://www.openlivinglabs.eu/node/130 - last accessed 2 April 2014). The projects represent examples of politically engaged design research, and design research for social innovation, taking place in the public realm with multiple 'publics'.

From my overview and examples, I draw together a set of considerations for conducting co-design workshops with communities. This informs the positioning of my own my own co-design practice, through which I am exploring the concept of awkward space in collaboration with urban inhabitants to question and improve the everyday environment and to empower their everyday spatial practices. This review is followed by the considerations and plans for my Haberdasher mapping workshop.

# 4.2.1 The origins and evolution of Participatory Design and Co-design methodologies

Participatory approaches to design are used on a range of projects, from software development to urban planning (Dalsgaard, 2012, 34). These methods and techniques can be traced back to the social, political and civil rights movements of the 1960's and 1970's (Robertson and Simonsen, 2012, 3). American architect and urbanist Henry Sanoff draws attention to the emergence of community involvement in

urban planning processes in the U.S and U.K at this time, where people from low income neighbourhoods were offered design and planning services that enabled them to 'define and implement their own planning goals' (Sanoff, 2008, 58). These collaborative activities promoted social interaction and increased a sense of community, which in turn led to people becoming more invested in local place-making (Sanoff, 2008, 61). In parallel to these aspiring democratic and socially empowering design processes in the urban realm, in the 1970's and 1980's in Scandinavia, design researchers, including Pelle Ehn, were pioneers of the workplace democracy movement. The projects associated with this movement involved designers collaborating with Trade Union members to improve equality in the workplace through joint decision-making regarding technological and organisational structures (Bjerknes, Ehn and Kyng, 1983). Ehn reflects back to the origins of this movement, recalling how

'Participatory Design started from the simple standpoint that those affected by design should have a say in the design process. This was a political conviction not expecting consensus, but also controversies and conflicts around an emerging design product.' (Ehn, 2008, 94)

In both these different design contexts, that of urban planning and the design of information technologies, there was an emphasis on democracy, supporting diverse, sometimes conflicting viewpoints, and developing methods for cross-disciplinary collaboration. Ehn describes how Participatory Design is underpinned by two key values, *democracy*, in terms of setting up the conditions for user engagement, and the making use of users' 'tacit knowledge' (Ehn, 2008, 94). Whilst designers drew upon tacit knowledge to inform the development of design solutions, there was also an emphasis on fostering a sense of community or union and political activity. Participatory Design is therefore an inherently ethical activity, recognising the responsibility design has to its community of users and their local context (Robertson and Simonsen, 2012, 6).

Participatory Design is encompassed within the more broadly defined term 'codesign', along with social design and user-centred design approaches. In an article exploring the landscape of co-creativity, Saunders and Stappers describe how 'we use co-design in a broader sense to refer to the creativity of designers and people not trained in design working together in the design development process' (Saunders

and Stappers, 2008, 6). Co-design has been a term more frequently used in human-centred or end-user centred design processes, where designers introduce various tools to engage users in the early stages of defining a design brief (Fuad-Luke, 2009, 147, Mattelmaki, Brandt and Vaajakalio, 2011, 79). These processes were originally used to enrich and give greater relevance to the development of products. Here the collaborative activity usually takes place at the 'fuzzy front end' of a design process, the findings from which are then developed by designers through a more traditional design process.

One of the key aspects of co-design and Participatory Design practice is the notion of mutual learning. Designers and non-designers engage in a win-win scenario, where the designers are able to draw upon the local or tacit forms of knowledge offered by the participants and the participants learn about design techniques, technologies and tools for creative expression (Robertson and Simonsen, 2012, 5). Collaborative and participatory approaches to design combine the skills and knowledge of nondesigners, experts in relevant fields, or members of local communities. Saunders and Stappers acknowledge that as the field of co-design continues to develop, the design process is becoming more open, with the non-design participants taking on more responsibility and becoming more actively involved in the creative process. This is evident in the emerging culture of metadesign, the collaborative design of design processes or processes of change. An early pioneer of the field of metadesign, computer scientist Gerhard Fischer, describes how in metadesign 'the process is left open so as to invite in the creativity of others' (Fischer, 2000). Design writer and educator Alistair Fuad Luke, describes how the emergent and adaptive nature of metadesign makes it 'particularly suited to dealing with complex problems and enabling knowledge sharing to encourage social creativity' (Fuad-Luke, 2009, 151). Here designers set up the conditions for non-design participants to generate their own design solutions.

The developments towards more open and participated design processes shift the emphasis of the role of the design researcher from that of a producer of design products, technological solutions, or systems, to a facilitator nurturing a collaborative process. Manzini identifies the designer's role in participatory approaches to social innovation as being threefold; firstly acting as a *trigger* for new ideas or motivating existing practices, secondly *facilitating* groups of participants engaged in

collaborative activities, and thirdly, becoming design activists, launching new initiatives (Manzini and Rizzo, 2012, 211). These roles may change or develop throughout different stages of a collaborative process. To this end 'designers must develop a particular sensitivity to their own bias and embrace a change of role from meta-participant (e.g. facilitator) to a participant' (Winschiers-Theophilus, Bidwell and Blake, 2012, 99). In this sense, co-design shakes up the existing relationship between producers and consumers. The designer is no longer present as the 'lone genius' and idea machine. Saunders and Stappers reflect on how 'co-designing threatens the existing power structures by requiring that control be relinquished' (Saunders and Stappers, 2008, 9). Here it is imperative that the design researcher becomes more responsive to the other participants needs, allowing them to take partial ownership over the direction of the process and outcomes. When Participatory Design moves into the public realm, design researchers must contend with a 'confrontation of power relations', facilitating 'new trajectories for action' (DiSalvo, 2010, 6). Here the design researcher's role becomes more apparently political in nature, negotiating how public space is 'constituted and organized' (Keshavarz and Maze, 2013, 1). Participatory Design processes enable issues to gain agency in the world, through facilitating the 'constitution of publics' (DiSalvo, 2009). Collaborations draw together or support existing communities in tackling common problems in their shared environment<sup>37</sup>.

In the previous paragraphs I have discussed how Participatory Design is democratic and political in nature, how it is underpinned by a process of mutual-learning amongst participants, how it requires designers move into new roles and territory as facilitators, triggers and activists and how this calls for us to be aware of power-relationships in these new participatory formations. In the next paragraphs I root some of these principles and qualities of co-design in several examples of co-design projects and platforms. Here I draw a particular focus on co-design workshop approaches, which inform and inspire my own 'Mapping Haberdasher' workshop approach.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> This idea connects to the notion of 'politically coherent communities', which describes the coming together of a social group around a particular issue. This is explored further in Chapter 5, section 5.4.2.

## 4.2.2 Participatory design workshop examples

Participatory design and co-design approaches often make use of workshops as key elements of their methodology. In these workshops, participants are engaged in a range of activities including, for example, mapping, future scenario work and developing personas (Robertson and Simonsen, 2012, 3); and evaluating prototypes in real-life situations (Bratteteig and Wagner, 2012, 107). Here participants are given the opportunity able to make use of design tools and techniques to 'express themselves creatively' (Saunders and Stappers, 2008, 15), to visualise or capture their tacit knowledge and to collectively feed back on design responses.

Neighbourhood Networks (2007-10), DiSalvo et al.

The Neighbourhood Networks project was a series of community-based participatory workshops that ran from 2007-2010 in Pittsburgh, PA. One of the lead researchers on the project was Carl DiSalvo, who is an Associate Professor at the Georgia Institute of Technology in the United States of America. DiSalvo's work focuses on public and participatory design, speculative design and social computing. The aim of the project was to engage neighbourhood residents in an exploration into the development and potential uses of sensing and robotic technologies in their neighbourhood. The role of the design researcher within these workshops was to enable the use of technology, structure concept development and facilitate prototyping activities (DiSalvo et al., 2012, 50). Another important aspect of researchers' participatory role was in 'facilitating and educating' the residents to make connections between the kinds of issues affecting them in their local environment and the 'capabilities of a set of given technologies' (DiSalvo et al., 2012, 50). Participants were engaged in activities such as exploring the neighbourhood and taking sensor readings, robot story-boarding, collaborative prototype building, and a public science fair. DiSalvo and fellow researchers describe one of the key outcomes of the neighbourhoods project as a 'politicised public argument... a kind of public rhetoric, about how the community wants to shape it's environment' (DiSalvo, et al., 2013, 200). This form of rhetoric gives 'material voice' to a marginalised community (DiSalvo, et al., 2013, 200). Here the main role of design is to 'enable participants to increase their visibility and the volume of their voices and to capture the imagination and attention of others in support of their agendas' (DiSalvo, et al., 2012, 60). This differs to early approaches to PD, where the emphasis was still on the development

of technological solutions and information systems. Here we see PD moving out of an institutional or organisational setting and into the public realm, in support of change agency at a local level. DiSalvo and his co-researchers define this approach as 'Community-based Participatory Design (CPD)' (DiSalvo, Clement and Pipek, 2013, 182).

Garden City: What If? (2013) and 'MetaboliCity' (2008-9), Loop.pH





Figure 4.8 Garden City: What If? Loop.pH

Figure 4.9 Human-scaled Archilace letters

'Garden City: What if?' was a 9-day collaborative place-making project conceived and facilitated by Rachel Wingfield and Mathias Gmachl of Loop.pH, for the Art-Ovrag Festival, held in Vyksa City, Russia in June 2013 (http://loop.ph/portfolio/garden-cityif/ - last accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014). The project team set out to work together with the town's residents to re-imagine and re-language an existing place in the city. The project began with a future-scenario mapping workshop, involving a small group of volunteering local residents who responded to the notion of a 'garden city' through creating stories and possible futures. Alongside the workshop, the design team also made use of the city's online social network of 30,000 residents to collectively vote on a new name for this location. The name the community chose was 'CYACTbE', which translates as 'happiness'. After the initial workshop, there was a three-day 'urban crafting' process using Loop's Archilace technique (previously discussed in Chapter 3, page 99) to create light-weight, human-scaled letters spelling 'CHACTLE" (See Figure 4.8 and Figure 4.9). These letters were installed on the top of a small utility building in the city. The building had grapevines trailing down the façade, which were carefully woven around the letters. It was envisioned that this would become a living structure and a positive community statement. Loop's collaborative placemaking project draws upon local knowledge and is rooted in local values, exploring

the relationship between language and place to create a sustainable intervention in the everyday environment.





Figure 4.10 Grow kit workshop

Figure 4.11 Knowledge ecology workshop

This second project by Loop.pH is MetaboliCity, mentioned previously as opening up a pathway for my working with the Haberdasher residents. This project took place over the period of a year and involved a number of small community groups in an experimental project on urban agriculture. The project's methodology included four key stages. First we carried out informal interviews or 'story-telling' sessions with each group of participants, discussing they involvement in food growing and the desirable futures for their environment, secondly we held grow-kit workshops on each of the sites, where participants were involved in constructing grow walls (See Figure 4.10). Thirdly, after the grow-kits had been installed, we revisited the sites to monitor and discuss how things were going and to make adjustments; and finally we held a 'knowledge ecology' workshop, bringing together all of the participants to share their findings from the year and plan for next steps (Figure 4.11) (Jones and Wingfield, 2009, 2010). The knowledge ecology workshop activities included potential mapping each of the sites, taking a walking tour of the sites as a whole group, developing playful, future scenarios, evaluating future possibilities, and celebrating with a harvest dinner, with food from the sites. Over the course of the project, we developed an understanding of the importance of local inhabitant knowledge. An example of this was when the grow wall installed on the Haberdasher Estate was vandalised and taken apart. One of the resident's suggested alternatively wrapping the Archilace wall around a lamppost in the centre of the courtyard. This lamppost was still growing courgettes when I revisited the estate 3 years later in 2011. The resident's knowledge provided invaluable insights into the affordances within the environment, i.e. the invariant properties within the existing environment available to action the

gardeners' needs. The intended outcome of the MetaboliCity project was a customizable urban grow kit, however the project succeeded in going beyond that to foster a vibrant community of amateur gardeners across different sites in North London.

## Malmö Living Labs (2007-present day)

Since 2007, Ehn and fellow researchers have shifted focus from workplace PD to articulating publics and forming 'public agonistic spaces' (Björgvinsson, Ehn and Hillgren, 2012). This has been accomplished through establishing the Malmö Living Labs platform (http://www.openlivinglabs.eu/node/130 - last accessed 2nd April 2014). The Malmö Living Labs seeks to regenerate communities in the city of Malmö in Sweden, through social innovation services supported by new technologies. The platform sets out to explore how innovative design practice can be used to open up a space for questions and possibilities, rather than producing market-orientated products. The Living Labs consist of 3 different nodes, the Neighbourhood, which focuses on the urban landscape, the Stage, which focuses on cultural co-production, and Fabriken, where people engage in prototyping and knowledge sharing. Björgvinsson et al. describe how the series of small-scale experiments, which include workshops as part of their methodology, held across the platform develop 'processes and strategies of aligning different contexts and their representatives', enabling multiple stakeholders to explore 'differences between current issues and how the future can unfold', which are 'made visible, performed and debated as a kind of "agonism" (Björgvinsson, Ehn and Hillgren, 2012, 127-128). Here the researchers draw upon the political theorist Chantal Mouffe's notion of 'agonistic contest' (Mouffe, 2000). This means that multiple voices of the community are embraced so that differing perspectives can confront each other. This is opposed to the idea of design by consensus or agreement (Björgvinsson, Ehn and Hillgren, 2012, 129).

These are just a few examples of the current types of community-orientated participatory design workshops and approaches in the field of design research. They are part of a new wave of projects and platforms that contribute to research into sustainability, politically-engaged design and social innovation<sup>38</sup>. Figure 4.12 draws

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Other notable examples for further reading are Imagination at Lancaster University, with projects including, for example, 'Co-designing Active Parks project – (<a href="http://imagination.lancs.ac.uk/activities/Active Parks">http://imagination.lancs.ac.uk/activities/Active Parks</a> - last accessed 2nd April 2014), and the DESIS network, with projects including, for example, 'Amplifying Creative

together some of the key qualities and principles mentioned throughout these examples that inform and inspire the development of my workshop design for my collaborations with the Haberdasher residents.

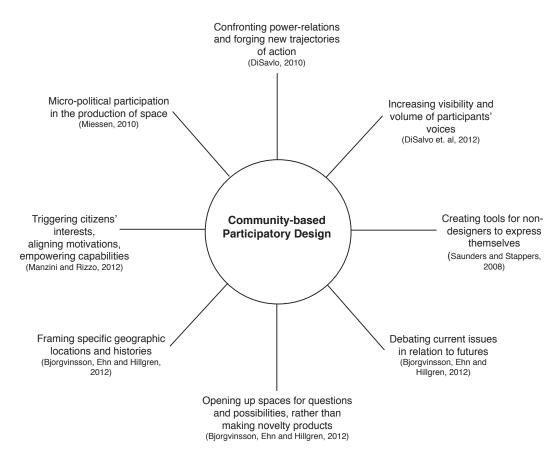


Figure 4.12 Community-driven participatory design considerations

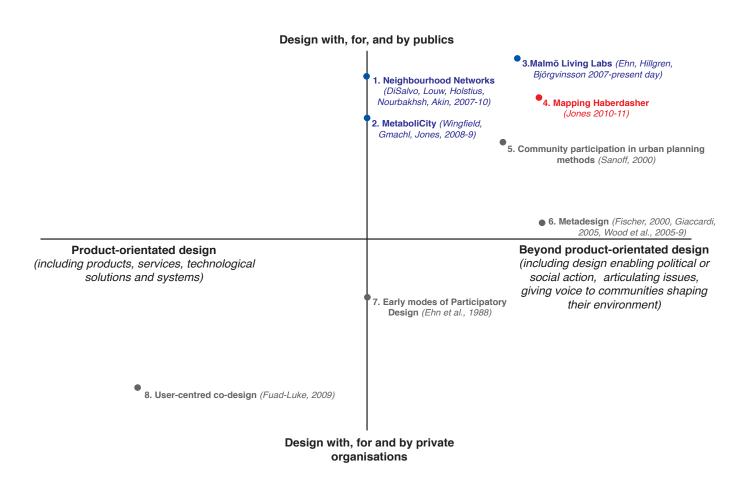
What can community-based participatory design mean for urban communities and their futures?

In the context of my work with the residents of the Haberdasher Estate, I align my practice with a community-driven approach to participatory design (as defined by DiSalvo et al. 2013). My co-design practice sets out to access, share and connect-up the tacit knowledge acquired by this group of urban inhabitants through their everyday spatial practices on the estate, so as to inform a strategy for their estate activities and future funding bids and decision-making. This relates to one of the aims of DiSalvo and researchers' Neighbourhood Networks project, which was to form a 'public rhetoric', which might 'enable participants to increase their visibility and the

Communities' (<a href="http://www.desis-network.org/content/parsons-desis-lab">http://www.desis-network.org/content/parsons-desis-lab</a> - last accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014).

volume of their voices and to capture the imagination and attention of others in support of their agendas.' (DiSalvo, et al., 2012, 60). My approach differs to the examples discussed, in that there is not a component of technology or crafting driving the process. In this sense, the open and emergent nature of my co-design process relates to a metadesign approach, whereby the conditions are set up for people to bring their creativity and issues to the table, so as to take ownership of this and develop it further. Therefore any design interventions or ideas to emerge from the process are carried forth by the community.

Exploring participatory and co-design workshop approaches and considerations has helped me move on from engaging with the students in my previous chapter, towards facilitating a more immersive collaborative experience with members of the Haberdasher community. In my previous case study, the use of the concept of awkward space was used to prompt an approach to exploring, mapping and intervening within an everyday place with users of that place. Moving on, in my third case study, I foreground the use of the concept of awkward space, to prompt conversations about the everyday environment that inspire and inform a group of local residents' estate activities. It is not necessarily the case that the design ideas explored through the workshop will ultimately become manifest in the environment. Carl DiSalvo describes how engaging publics and their issues in a participatory design process 'does not de facto imply that design be a component of addressing the issue...' (DiSalvo, 2009, 60). Rather, the emphasis here is on motivating and supporting the group's activities. I have created a matrix positioning my co-design workshop approach amongst other co-design approaches, projects and platforms discussed in this review (See Figure 4.13). My workshop is an example of participatory design, with, for and by the community and works towards 'beyondproduct' orientated outcomes, supporting the residents in developing a more coherent strategy for their estate activities. After discussing the Mapping Haberdasher workshop in the following chapter, I return to the notion of framing a public rhetoric as agency. In Chapter 5, I draw upon Grant Kester's critique of 'dialogical artistic practices', as an approach to framing everyday spatial tactics. This provides another vantage point from which to reflect upon my workshop approach and the constitution, purpose and positioning of my co-design practice.



#### Key

#### Participatory Design projects

- 1. Neighbourhood Networks Project (DiSalvo, Louw, Holstius, Nourbakhsh, Akin, 2007-10) Community-based Participatory Design research project, involving mulitple community workshops in Pittsburgh, PA, exploring the potential use of sensory and robotic technologies in the neighbourhood.
- 2. MetaboliCity (Wingfield, Gmachl, Jones, 2008-9) Co-imagining, co-crafting and co-weaving customizable growkits for different types of urban environments with a range of community stakeholders and participants in North London, UK.
- **3. Malmo Living Labs** (Ehn, Hillgren, Bjorgvinsson 2007-present day) A current Participatory Design platform which is dedicated to articulating publics and forming public agonstic spaces in Malmo, Sweden.

#### My Participatory Design workshops

**4. Mapping Haberdasher** (Jones 2010-11) - Co-design workshop and co-evaluaiton meeting with residents of the Haberdasher estate in North London, UK.

#### Types of Participatory Design

- 5. Community participation in urban planning methods (Sanoff, 2000) Originating from the social movement of the 1960's in the U.K and U.S, leading to the involvement of public in the shaping of their physical environment and co-creating a stronger sense of community. Methods include scenario workshops, observational walks and collective mapping.
- **6. Metadesign** (Fischer, 2000, Giaccardi, 2005, Wood et al., 2005-9) An open, emergent and adaptive co-design methodology originating from the field of HCI with the work of Fischer, inviting in the creativity of others. Developed towards framing the synergistic, socially responsive and sustainable designing-of-design tools and processes and processes of change.
- 7. Early modes of Participatory Design (Ehn et al., 1988) 1970's Scandanavian Participatory Design movement, orientated towards the democratisation of the workplace. Situated in relation to Trade Union struggles for more equal work environments. Introducing methods to engage workers from diverse backgrounds in the development of new technologies, such as scenarios, prototyping and mock-ups, engaging workers in the use of new technologies.
- 8. User-centred co-design (Fuad-Luke, 2009) In the context of services and products, consumers and end-users, Fuad-Luke traces the shift from the 1980's to current practices towards participatory and collaborative design, where customers evolve from consumers, to users, to participants, to adapters, and finally to co-creators.

Figure 4.13 Positioning my co-design workshop approach

# 4.3 Mapping Haberdasher – workshop plans and considerations

Before settling upon a collaborative design workshop for my research, I considered alternative approaches, such as attending the residents' committee meetings to elicit local knowledge about the estate and sending surveys to tenants on the estate to gather data. There were several qualities and characteristics that I wanted to pursue through a workshop format:

## An alternative space for discussion

I decided upon holding a collaborative design workshop as part of my research for several reasons. Firstly, I wanted to frame an open yet focused, 'possibility-seeking' space to discuss awkward space and to work towards developing a shared picture of the estate. This would provide a different type of discussion space to the residents' committee meetings, which had an established format and hierarchy and were largely focused on discussing problems on the estate.

## Bringing together different viewpoints

As one of the aims of the research was to create a comprehensive strategy of the residents' estate activities, it was deemed important to involve different participants. Sanoff highlights that workshops enable participants to 'achieve a high level of interaction' and to build 'group cohesion' (Sanoff, 2000, 80). An alternative approach to eliciting different viewpoints from the residents would have been to send around questionnaires engaging individual tenants. However, this approach would have lacked the collaborative exchange offered by a workshop format, to create a shared and comprehensive account.

## Creative and experimental activities

Having participated in the MetaboliCity weaving workshops on the estate, I had experienced how they had been successful in bringing people out of their individual apartments to work together in a public space. I wanted to engage the residents in a series of playful and exploratory exercises that would encourage them to think creatively about their future activities on the estate. However, in contrast to the MetaboliCity project, where the workshops were set up to introduce and reflect upon 'grow kits' that supported the residents' gardening activities, I wasn't introducing a

product, service or system. Instead, this workshop activities aimed to nurture an 'otherly space' for the residents to share and connect-up their inhabitant knowledge of the estate in order to work towards a more coherent strategy for future action.

## Building upon previous experience

Workshops are a format that I am experienced and confident in working with, having designed and facilitated collaborative and participatory processes with BA and MA design and architecture students, multi-disciplinary professional teams and community groups for almost ten years. Some of the residents and all of the design team had experienced participating in workshops beforehand. I felt confident that I could provide a safe space for the residents to discuss issues and explore future plans. In preparation for the workshop, I was able to discuss and test some of the design tools and approaches developed for the workshop with students from MA Design Futures and several of my design colleagues. This enabled me to foresee issues relating to the documentation of the workshop and to consider appropriate materials for our mapping session.

## 4.3.1 Collaborative mapping

A collaborative workshop usually engages participants through the building or creation of something by the group (Sanoff, 2000). In the case of this workshop, I wanted the group to collectively develop a map of the estate. The map would take the form of a repository for the group's characterisations of awkward space; and for sharing, connecting and mobilising their stories and inhabitant knowledge. It would also act as an external communication tool that the residents could use afterwards to engage other tenants in estate activities and for future funding applications. The map would therefore be a listening device as well as a proposition for future action.

The development of my mapping approach was inspired by the organisation Common Ground, whose work focuses upon 'linking nature and culture' and championing community involvement in the shaping of places (http://www.commonground.org.uk/). One of the activities that they have pioneered is the creation of 'parish maps' (King and Clifford, 1988, 1996). Parish maps are locally produced maps that integrate 'the material, physical, architectural and also the very sensuous... the metaphorical, the stories' shared by a community (Clifford and King, 1996, 62). Common Ground champion unofficial, inhabitant, mapping processes that

enliven places considered problematic or negative by those who experience them on a daily life basis. Through this process residents become local experts, 'sharing quiet knowledge, mapping to inform, inspire and embolden' (Clifford and King, 1996, 4). I wanted the collaborative mapping to access, share and connect the inhabitant knowledge acquired through the residents' spatial practices on the estate.

## 4.3.2 Planned research methods and design tools

## Walking tours

One of the key elements of the workshop is a 'walking tour' around the estate, led by the local experts. Walking tours are described by Sanoff as an awareness method that is 'used to facilitate users' awareness to environmental situations, particularly where people have adapted to intolerable conditions' (Sanoff, 2000, 68). The walk aims to enable the residents to 'rediscover a familiar situation', and the designers to 'become acquainted with a new situation' (Sanoff, 2000, 68). The designers documented the walking tours using photography and digital film.

#### Awkward space explorer kit

In the design exercise involving the architecture students (See Chapter 3), I asked them to devise *individual* awkward space explorer kits based upon their personal characterisations and interpretations of awkward space. This embodied an autoethnographic approach to their observational studies. In preparation for the mapping workshop with the residents, I assembled an awkward space explorer kit that could be used *collaboratively* by a group of explorers to document awkward space. The kit was developed to capture and generate workshop data, to feed directly into the mapping process and to serve as documentation of the overall workshop.

The awkward space explorer kit included a torch, a set of prompt cards, an aerial photograph of the estate, a camera, and an arrow for pointing to the places where people experience awkward space. The kits were to be employed on the walking tour of the estate, to elicit local knowledge and provoke inspirational responses from the residents (See Chapter 3, page 104) for a discussion on 'Awkward Space Explorer Kits' as 'Cultural Probes'). The material generated by the explorer kits fed directly into the collaborative mapping and re-imagining process with the community.

## Mapping technique

In preparation for the workshop I hand traced a map of the estate, using a screen shot of a satellite map of the estate as a template. I purposefully created a very naïve and stripped back line drawing, to encourage the residents to feed as much information into the map themselves as possible, from the street and roads, to the nameless areas where they carried out their gardening activities. I basically wanted everyone to get stuck into the mapping without worrying about creating a pretty picture at the end of it. I scanned my base map drawing into the computer and printed two A0, table top-sized maps. I wanted this exercise to be messy, energetic, and fun for everyone to take part in. A computer and portable printer were used to download and produce photographs to feed into the map.

## Time-lapse photography

I also made use of time-lapse photography for a third time in this case study. Here, I used it to capture the collaborative activities, as in case study 2. I suspended a camera from above the table in the residents' committee room to record our mapping session. This was intended to document this collective, shared 'knowledge space' (Turnbull, 2000) in action. I wanted to be able to reveal the rhythm or pattern of this open and adaptive process (the humour, the pauses, the transitions in activities) to the participants, after the workshop had taken place, to reinforce a sense of collective identity. Table 4.1 maps the key research questions, considerations and tools and methods for this case study.

Research questions	Research considerations	Research methods & tools	
<ul> <li>How can awkward space be used as a productive concept for co-designing everyday life in the city?</li> <li>What kinds of conversations about everyday life on the estate evolve around making accounts of awkward space and what are the themes and issues to emerge through this discussion?</li> <li>How can a collaborative design process help to elicit</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Framing a focused 'possibility seeking space'</li> <li>Engaging in a mutual-learning opportunity for designers and a local group</li> <li>Situated and explorative approach</li> <li>Encouraging a playful and emergent inquiry</li> <li>Drawing upon individual spatial practices and stories</li> <li>Accessing, sharing and connecting-up inhabitant knowledge</li> <li>Awareness of the power-balance within the group,</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Sending out posters and an overview of the day in preparation of the event</li> <li>Meeting the residents beforehand</li> <li>Walking tour, using the meeting room central to estate</li> <li>Bringing along technology and materials for capturing the tour, mapping and collage</li> <li>Awkward space explorer kit (arrow, torch, prompt cards, camera)</li> <li>Mapping and sharing accounts of awkward space</li> </ul>	

inhabitant knowledge about awkward space and what tools, methods and approaches work successfully towards achieving this aim? paying special attention to the relationships and roles of the designers (including myself) and residents throughout the process

- Evaluation continuums
- Time-lapse recording of the mapping

Table 4.1 Research considerations, methods and tools

## 4.4 Introducing the participants

We enlisted seven residents from the estate who volunteered to take part. These residents invited other residents on the estate to drop into the workshop. As a result we had several extra residents join the workshop at later points in the day. There were also five designers participating in the process. The designers included four associates of the MetaboliCity project, including Mathias Gmachl and myself. I also invited one designer who could primarily provide technical assistance. Table 4.2 provides a series of participant profiles.

There were four men and eight women taking part in the event. The age ranges varied from 29 to 70+. The design team were all in their 30's. All of the participants from the estate were English and white. The design team included one Korean, one Austrian, one Japanese, one German and one Welsh person. Four of the designers had worked with two or more of the residents in previous research workshops on the MetaboliCity project. Only two of the designers had previously visited the estate. Three of the residents had not worked with the design team before or been a part of the MetaboliCity project. The residents were mainly made up of members of the Tenants' Residents' Committee. The group were not representative of the Haberdasher residents in general (they were mainly older residents, there were fewer single occupants and fewer full-time workers). However they did seem to represent residents who take an active interest and pursue activities within the estate.



Hannah Workshop designer and facilitator. Welsh, aged 32. Member of the MetaboliCity project.



Jan
Resident and member of
the residents' committee
and gardening groups.
Main contact. English,
aged 50+. Involved in
MetaboliCity project. Been
involved in various
external projects exploring
issues on the estate.



Eileen Resident. English, aged 70+. Hasn't worked with designers before.



**Hyaesook**Designer.
Korean, aged 36.
Worked with the
MetaboliCity project.



Mark
Designer/ technologist.
German, aged 32.
Hasn't met residents
before.



John
Resident and Chair of residents' committee.
English, aged 70+.
Involved in MetaboliCity project. One of the first residents to move into the estate.



**Ayako**Designer.
Japanese, aged 35
Member of MetaboliCity
project.



Vivenne Resident. English, aged 70+. Hasn't worked with designers before.



Neil
Resident
English, aged 29.
Member of gardening
group and involved in the
MetaboliCity project.
Organises the estate
summer barbeques.



Maureen
Resident, gardener and treasurer for the residents' committee.
English, aged 65.
Involved in the
MetaboliCity project.
Retired teacher and a local amateur historian.



Mathias
Designer/ artist.
Austrian, aged 34.
Has worked closely with residents on MetaboliCity project.



Mary
Resident and residents'
committee member
English, aged 48.
Hasn't worked with
designers before.

Table 4.2 Participant profiles

## 4.5 Setting up the workshop

After proposing to the residents at the residents' committee meeting to run a workshop on the estate, I set about planning the event. I corresponded via email with two residents, Jan and Neil, to organise the workshop. Jan and Neil were the 'gatekeepers'<sup>39</sup> for this project, they provided me with a plan of the estate and advised upon a recruiting strategy, suggesting that I design a poster calling for volunteers for the workshop<sup>40</sup>. This was pinned up on various notice boards around the estate. They also canvassed for volunteers at their committee meeting. They offered the use of their meeting room situated in a central location on the estate, on the ground floor of Charles Gardner Court, as a base for our workshop. This provided us with an accessible location for residents to attend, which made it possible to integrate site explorations into the workshop. This also made it possible for the residents to refer directly to the spaces they nominated as awkward, and for the designers to become immersed and familiar within this local 'meshwork'.

In advance of the workshop, I sent the participants a workshop outline and an agenda for the day. The workshop outline included a task for the residents to carry out in preparation for the workshop. This task was to identify a space that they experienced as awkward on the estate. I also promised the residents the map<sup>41</sup> that we created in the workshop and a copy of my final report. (See Appendix C1, page 358, for Haberdasher workshop preparation documents).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> A gatekeeper/s is a research term referring to a person/ or people who enable access to a research context (Silverman, 2000: 198). Jan and Neil were imperative to the success of our collaboration, getting the other residents involved, obtaining the keys to access restricted spaces on the estate, and even inviting me into their homes to get a good view of the estate from above. The case study wouldn't have been possible without their support.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> In designing a poster for the workshop, I was immediately presented with the challenge of using an inclusive and inviting language that would capture the attention of the tenants on the estate. This use of language was significantly different to the language used in the project brief that I had written for the architecture students, which used more complex and academic terminology to frame their observational study.

terminology to frame their observational study.

41 The map was a key outcome and 'data carrier' from the workshop but the handing over of the map to the community was an important gesture. Whilst this deprived me of the map itself, I made sure that the map was thoroughly documented at the end of the workshop process. To thank the residents for their generosity, I also provided lunch and tea and coffee throughout the day. This contributed to the convivial spirit of the day. It was over sandwiches and boiling the kettle that some of the most interesting insights emerged.

#### Ethical considerations

I made it clear that the workshop was a part of my doctoral research and would be documented with photography, film and audio recordings. The workshop participants were subsequently asked to complete an ethics form to approve the use of material from the workshop. All of the residents were happy and willing to complete the form, allowing their identities to be included in the report and the workshop documentation to be used in forums outside of the thesis (e.g. on the Internet). An outline of my ethics form used for working with the Haberdasher residents can be found in Appendix C1 – Haberdasher workshop . As discussed in the section on co-design and participatory design approaches, participatory design is an inherently ethical approach to design. In my role as a design researcher it was my responsibility to be as clear as possible about my agenda for working with the residents and to ensure that this was a mutually-beneficial process for all the participants involved. I made the information gathered from the workshop available to the residents immediately after the workshop. On later revisiting Haberdasher, I brought along a draft of my case study report to share with the residents.

## 4.6 Changes to the plan

In my original workshop plan, I imagined that there would be four groups of three residents, each working with two designers, to explore and map different areas of the estate. I printed two maps, one for mapping awkward space and the other for reimagining space. On the day of the event, with twelve participants and a big table, it was immediately apparent that working in one group would be more effective, both practically and in a collaborative sense. The residents also decided it would be a better idea to work with only one map, building up layers from the real to the imagined.

## 4.7 Data collection, organisation and analysis

The workshop sessions that took place around the map were audio recorded, time-lapse photographed and photographed using a digital camera. Using an audio recorder made it possible for me to focus on facilitation and to become immersed in the process. A camera with a time-lapse function was suspended from the ceiling directly over the mapping table to capture the duration of the mapping, re-imagining and evaluation sessions. Several members of the design team photographed these sessions. Members of the design team also photographed the walking tour,

documenting the residents' awkward space locations. I also made a digital film with a Flipcam of the group walk that I took part in (Please see DVD Film 04). Data carriers included the map itself and the evaluation continuums. The map was photographed at the end of the session before handing it to the residents. All of the photographs and audio recordings from the day were compiled onto my computer immediately after the workshop. I edited together a short time-lapse film of the process and emailed this to the participants afterwards (Please see DVD Film 05).

I later transcribed the audio recordings from the mapping, re-imagining and evaluating stages of the workshop (Please see Appendix C2, page 367). I also transcribed the evaluation continuums (See page, 179). A report of the workshop was later presented to the residents so that they could respond to my interpretation of the events (See Chapter 6, page 220).

## 4.8 Outlining the workshop process

## 4.8.1 A descriptive overview of each workshop session

The workshop took place on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2010. It began at 10am and ran until 4pm with a lunch break in the middle of the day.

## 4.8.1.1 Session one: Introduction - What is Awkward Space?

In the first session, the design team, a couple of residents and myself, began by setting up the residents' meeting room for the workshop. Whilst we prepared the resources and equipment, the rest of the group turned up. All of the participants were seated around a table and introduced themselves and their awkward spaces in turn. The design participants, including myself, listened to the residents' individual accounts of awkward spaces on the estate, encouraging people to use the map to locate their spaces. After this discussion, I described the workshop process. I then presented everybody with the awkward space explorer kits. The participants organised themselves into two teams and prepared to go out on an exploration of the estate.

I described the process to the participants, from going out and photographing spaces on the estate, to printing off images and using them as materials to map with. I also introduced a set of prompt cards as a way to ask questions about the different qualities of awkward space. I described how we would then re-imagine spaces as positive opportunities, emphasising that we would start off by wildly imagining what could be and then coming back to practicalities and how this process could be made useful (See Figure 4.14 - Figure 4.17).



Figure 4.14 Materials to collage and prompt cards



Figure 4.15 Explorer kit torch



Figure 4.16 Explorer kit arrow



Figure 4.17 Immediate and accessible tools

## 4.8.1.2 Session two: Walk and Talk – Exploring Haberdasher

The walk began with a dramatic tour of the underground pram sheds with Neil leading the way using a leaf burner to illuminate the space. (See Figure 4.18 – Figure 4.24 and the Haberdasher walk film on the DVD). The teams used their awkward space explorer kit to capture their awkward spatial encounters. Each team was comprised of designers and residents and explored a different part of the estate (North and South), to cover more territory in the time allocated.

## 4.8.1.3 Session three: Co-mapping Awkward Space

This session began with people filtering back from the exploration around the estate and having a cup of tea. John, the chair of the residents' committee, joined the workshop. We started back by looking through the photographs taken on the walk on the computer. We used this process to reflect upon which spaces we visited and to introduce the extra spaces that we had collected along the way. We did this as one whole group. Each team nominated a narrator to talk through the photographs in turn, revealing where they had been on the estate to the other team. We collectively decided to print off one image of each site. Neil suggested we name the awkward spaces that we had identified and label them on the map with post-it notes. The participants also decided to write in road names and the names of the blocks on the map to aid orientation (Please See Figure 4.25 – Figure 4.31).



Figure 4.18 Walking tour of the estate



Figure 4.19 Haberdasher dungeons



Figure 4.21 Jan pointing to an awkward space



Figure 4.23 Eileen pointing to an awkward space



Figure 4.20 Disused balcony



Figure 4.22 The pram sheds



Figure 4.24 Location of imagined sports ground



Figure 4.25 Identifying awkward hot spots



Figure 4.26 Re-imagining session



Figure 4.27 Discussing the walk



Figure 4.28 Building up layers of information



Figure 4.29 Using materials to collage



Figure 4.30 Evaluation continuums



Figure 4.31 Our collaborative map of the Haberdasher Estate

## 4.8.1.4 Session four: Re-imagining Awkward Space

The participants began the process of reimagining the spaces on the site by building a community centre out of Lego and creating Astro Turf for the sports ground out of green felt. The group continued to work on the transformation of the map, discussing each space. Halfway through the session we evaluated how far we had got to with our mapping of the re-imagined spaces, counting the box garden, the mushroom sheds, the tomato green house, the trees and the community hall.

## 4.8.1.5 Session five: Evaluation - Re-connecting Haberdasher

Finally, I introduced a method for evaluating the spaces that we had been exploring. This enabled us to work backwards from the imaginative visions to a series of practical steps towards achieving some of the projects suggested throughout the day. I co-designed this evaluative method with Rachel Wingfield for use in our final MetaboliCity workshop. For this workshop, I adapted the tool to include an impossible to possible continuum and a budget continuum. We collectively agreed on a time scale for the projects, from something you could achieve in 3 minutes to 3 weeks, to 3 months and to 3 years. We created budget scale from £2 (for a packet of seeds) to £5400 (to green the estate), to £50,000 for a community hall. Finally, we created a scale of achievability from impossible, to awkward, to achievable, to easy. Table 4.3 outlines the workshop process.

1



Introductions: The group introduce themselves in turn and the residents make accounts of their individual awkward spaces. The non-residents gain an insight into the history and geography of the estate and I frame the agenda for the day. The participants use the map of the estate as a prompt, to identify spaces.

2



Walking tour: The participants explore the estate in two groups, led by residents. They visit the 'awkward space' sites that have been identified in stage one and collect new examples. This session enables the non-residents to become familiarised with the place. The groups use their awkward space explorer kits in this session to gather information.



Co-mapping: The group reflect upon the walk and generate data, in the form of photographs, to work into the map to start to develop a shared vision of the estate. This session also enables the participants to start to develop a shared account of awkward space and the environment. The participants use a photo-printer to rapidly produce images from their walk.



Re-imagining: The residents re-imagine the spaces identified on the estate as positive opportunities. Alongside the designers, they collage materials to develop their re-imagined spaces. The participants use the same map throughout the process, adding different layers of information, from the basic naming of streets, to the naming of awkward spaces and the re-imagined landscape.



**Evaluation:** In the final session the whole group co-evaluate each of the spaces in turn, approximating how much they would cost, how possible they are to achieve and how much time it would take to make it happen. This session is intended to support the residents in creating a plan of action for their future activities on the estate.

Table 4.3 Outlining the workshop process

## 4.9 Workshop findings

5

In this section, I highlight the key findings to emerge from the 'Mapping Haberdasher' workshop. The research findings have been organised into four themes. I have drawn these themes together after reading through the workshop transcripts and considering the different elements that impacted upon the workshop findings. The themes include:

- Workshop Facilitation
- Workshop process
- Workshop participants
- Workshop context

## 4.9.1 Facilitation

'I did a lot of 'playing by ear' today, letting things evolve quite freely with gentle facilitation. I had to be alert to changes to the plan and sensitive to new directions suggested by the participants.' (Journal excerpt, 21st March, 2010)

## 4.9.1.1 Establishing a common ground

Whilst I had met several of the residents before, I was still coming into the estate as an outsider and a relative stranger. The residents, in contrast, formed a close knit local group who had know each other for a long time, with some of them being family. Some of the designers in the group were unknown to the residents. Mathias had the strongest connection to the group. Jan and I discovered at one moment in the workshop whilst boiling the kettle, that I lived in the same street as her friend. Even though I had previously mentioned that I had lived on a nearby estate to Haberdasher when I first moved to London, it was this common connection that seemed to help place where I was from. After this I felt less self-conscious about my outsidership.

## 4.9.1.2 Encouraging a collective steering of the process

At the beginning of the workshop I presented the day's agenda in an informal way, highlighting at this early stage that at any point we might collectively change the plan. The participants made several important decisions regarding the workshop's structure. Firstly, the residents suggested getting into two teams to explore the estate and decided amongst themselves which parts of the estate each team would focus on. In this session, the residents took the role of expert tour guides and the designers equipped themselves with cameras to capture the process. Later on in the workshop, the participants selected their preferred materials with which to collage their spaces into the map. This helped to manage personalities in the group, with one resident handing Lego to another early on in the workshop to get them thinking in terms of possibilities so as to by-pass their cynicism.

At the start of the re-imagining session, Eileen left to have lunch and a new resident joined the group, who had been recommended by the other residents to participate in the workshop. This meant that we needed to recap on what we had been doing for the benefit of our new participant. At different points throughout the day different members of the group described what we were doing to the new people who joined

us in this way. This created a kind of rolling narrative. It enabled the group collectively steer the workshop and develop a shared understanding of what we were doing. It also promoted a sense of ownership over the direction of the process.

#### 4.9.1.3 The use of accessible and immediate tools

I brought along a computer and portable printer, which meant that we could immediately print off photographs from our walking tour to inform the mapping session. The residents responded very positively to being able to immediately look through and print out the photographs taken on the walk. Maureen exclaimed 'this is marvellous, instant, instant!' (Please See Appendix C2, page 392). Rapidly producing material to feed into the map, helped to maintain narrative threads throughout the workshop stages<sup>42</sup>.

After the walk around the estate, Eileen was named 'the pointing lady' and 'the arrow lady' because she was in the photographs for her team pointing the arrow at awkward space. This became a humorous reference point throughout the workshop, before and after Eileen left. The way in which the arrow was used in the photographs was a detail that emerged on the day. The designers in both groups photographed the residents pointing to spaces. These photographs integrated not only the awkward space into the map but the residents themselves and this created a really powerful layer of information in the map. The participants continued to use the arrows when sitting around the table to point to things within their map as it evolved. It became a tool that bridged the experiences referenced around the estate and spaces that emerged within the map.

In the co-mapping session, Neil pre-empted the next 're-imagining' stage of the workshop by building a community hall out of Lego. This revealed that there was an early enthusiasm to make stuff. The materials were laid out around the table so that people had easy access to them and could start to play with them when they were ready. This created a softer transition from the co-mapping to re-imagining stages, so it was less intimidating to 'get creative' with the map.

online document capturing the mapping process.

4

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> After the workshop, I discussed with one of the design team the potential for integrating digital technology into the mapping process. This would enable the participants to record the walking tour and digitally tag the awkward spaces. This could then be uploaded to a dynamic

## 4.9.2 Process

## 4.9.2.1 Engagement with the concept of awkward space

Before the workshop, I sent the residents an overview of the workshop, which included a request to think of an example of a space they personally found awkward on the estate and to bring this example with them. I indicated in the overview of the workshop that awkward space might be associated with areas of the estate that are neglected, uncomfortable or unsafe (See Appendix C1, page 363). In the introductory session, Jan immediately interpreted awkward space as being 'not very nice spaces... spaces that are a bit dark' and nominated the pram sheds on the estate. The pram sheds are described as being 'like a bomb site inside... with no lighting' (See Appendix C2, page 375). They are full of rubbish and it is suspected that foxes live in them. There is also evidence of someone sleeping in them. As the discussion about the pram sheds developed, people started to use the map of the estate on the table to refer to the spaces they had identified. They began writing and drawing into the map, highlighting the location of the spaces with red dot stickers (This process can be followed on the time-lapse recording, please see DVD Film 05). Maureen identified a space in which she envisioned a sports ground for the children on the estate, already starting to think of ideas for transforming awkward space or thinking about space on the estate in terms of what kind of opportunities it might afford. The pram sheds and Maureen's strip of vacant land were two of nine areas on the estate highlighted by the residents as being awkward (See Figure 4.22 and Figure 4.24).

#### 4.9.2.2 Emergent roles in the teams

On the walking tour, one of the designers in each group took the role of photographer and one of the residents took the role of arrow pointer, to be photographed in the space. These roles emerged on the day.

With a group of designers helping to document and input into the workshop process, I was able to focus on listening to the group and adjust elements of the process as we went along. I felt far more confident in my role as a facilitator in this context than, for example, in the workshop sessions in Case study 2. In that situation, the need to document and reflect on things as we went along compromised my attentiveness to the students' needs and my own immersion in the process.

In the evaluation session, Mathias helped connect up some of the residents' reimagined spaces to existing examples of socially driven initiatives on other estates. For example, he described how the residents on another local estate successfully took over the management of their green spaces. Here Mathias was able to use the trust gained from working with the residents on the MetaboliCity project to engage the residents in discussing new ways forward for the gardening group and residents' committee.

## 4.9.2.3 Transcending the residents' expectations

I had brought along to the workshop an aerial photograph of the estate, which had been taken before the current gardening activities had begun. This became a valuable resource for the gardening group who had no documentation of the site before their intervention. Small gestures such as this helped the group to recognise the value in the mapping exercise. Maureen explained to another participant 'Well when you send off for a grant, if you can send something like this it's something to help them make their minds up with.' (See Appendix C2, page 422). Neil added, 'I think this has gone better than we thought' (See Appendix C2, page 428). The residents kept the map that we produced together which indicated its value to them as a potential resource.

## 4.9.2.4 Absorbed in the process

When the residents and designers had integrated the photographs and the descriptions of each of the nine awkward spaces into the estate map, I paused the activities to move onto the next stage of the workshop. I started to talk about using broccoli and Lego to collage the re-imagined spatial opportunities into the map. As I was saying the word 'broccoli' I realised that this might sound crazy to the residents and they might not go for it at all. However, this fleeting moment of uncertainty passed and they enthusiastically began making Plasticine trees and carrot fish. As the workshop facilitator, I found this a significant moment in the process, realising that the participants were completely absorbed in the task at hand.

## 4.9.3 Participant issues and strengths

## 4.9.3.1 Opportunistic and inventive thinking

After Maureen presented her idea, to transform a strip of land at the back of the estate into a short tennis court, Neil suggested using the fencing from a 'plant room'

situated across the road. This plant room was due to be closed down by the council. The residents' thought of ways in which they could use the surplus gardening materials left in the space on the estate (See Appendix C2, page 383). This revealed an opportunistic and inventive thinking from the residents and a clear engagement with the environment in and around the estate that was connected to the knowledge that they had acquired through their gardening activities<sup>43</sup>. It is important to acknowledge that Neil was particularly inventive in his suggestions for the reimagined awkward spaces and how these could become a reality. Neil was the youngest resident to participate in the workshop (aged 29) and had grown-up on the estate. His knowledge and enthusiasm formed a vital contribution to the workshop.

## 4.9.3.2 Scepticism around architectural consultations

When I arrived at the meeting room earlier in the morning I had bumped into John<sup>44</sup>, the chair of the residents committee, outside on the estate. On asking him if he would be taking part in the workshop, he commented that 'this sort of thing never leads anywhere'. Before the workshop process had started, the residents brought up a previous architectural consultation process that they had been involved with called 'The Estates Plus Project'. From Jan and Maureen's accounts this was not a positive experience

'Jan: Oh yeah, before we did the garden... they (the architects) invited everybody to come along and they showed what they were going to do and asked people what they would like...

Maureen: One of them was saying of course this would be, talking about our lovely garden, this would be a perfect place to dump building materials, and we all went "yeah (everyone starts laughing and chattiness occurs) a classic place to dump building materials, well up yours..." (See Appendix C2, page 371)

Mathias, continued to question Maureen and Jan about this experience and it transpired that they had been offered money by developers in exchange for more housing being built on the estate. Due to the credit-crunch, the plans for this new

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> I return to this point in Chapter 5 when discussing de Certeau's notion of spatial tactics (see page 191).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> I had met and interviewed John previously as part of the MetaboliCity project.

development on the estate had fallen through. This was the moment that the residents set up the gardening group, to make use of left over space on the estate. This experience, as well as several other similar consultation processes had left them sceptical about 'designers' coming in and making proposals and promises about the estate.

## 4.9.3.3 A lack of community spirit?

As the mapping process drew to a close there was a cynical conversation about the lack of 'community spirit on the estate' (See Appendix C2, page 441). However, this was followed by an account of how John was helping another tenant on the estate with their lawn mowing and household jobs; and another conversation about how Jan was looking out for flats for a friend. This seemed in direct contrast to the previous conversation. There was also an ongoing conversation about the setting up of a community hall on the estate, which initially received negative feedback in the group, again due to the lack of community involvement by the other tenants on the estate. This signified another kind of insider-outsidership that existed within the boundaries of the estate itself<sup>45</sup>.

## 4.9.4 Workshop context

#### 4.9.4.1 From the real to the imagined and back again

Throughout the process of identifying spaces on the estate, the residents used the workshop conversation to share information about current issues on the estate with other residents (e.g. highlighting hot spots where drug dealing on the estate took place and lamenting over the long overdue painting of the estate). The members of the gardening group also reflected upon their activities on the estate whilst they surveyed the spaces on the map (as discussed in the outline of the workshop process). The situated nature of the workshop supported the integration of these ordinary conversations. Throughout the workshop there was a continuous oscillation between re-imagining awkward spaces and focusing on present day issues and activities. These shifting viewpoints created a rich and multi-layered discussion.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> These issues are explored further in Chapter 6, page 227.

## 4.9.4.2 New perspectives on the everyday environment

The walking tour of the estate highlighted a few small pieces of maintenance that could be dealt with immediately by the residents to improve the overall perception of the estate. These included, for example, putting a lock on the gate to pram sheds and clearing out the rubbish. The tour also drew out individual misconceptions and conflicting opinions about the estate. For example, Jan realised that she had confused the location of a particular balcony on the estate only after physically tracking it down. The combination of a collective exploration of the estate and a collective re-imagining of the estate led in different ways to a revitalised awareness of the everyday environment. Ayako, one of the design team, noted after the workshop how:

'The walk was very good for everyone! We found things even residents didn't notice/know. It also reminded residents the memory/history of the space. It's a great reflection tool! In addition, it was very helpful for me to know about the estate itself and to get a feeling of each space too. I think every space has quite a different quality...' (Ayako, workshop reflections emailed after the event)

This indicates how the walking tour was useful for the different participants. For the estate insiders, it provided a way to look closely at the everyday environment and for the estate outsiders it enabled them to become familiar with the context.

## 4.9.5 Summary of findings

In this section, I have reflected upon some of the key findings from the workshop process. These relate to four key themes, including workshop facilitation, workshop process, participant strengths and issues, and workshop context (See Figure 4.32). The residents were asked to nominate awkward spaces on the estate. Through the discussion generated from the interpretations of this concept, they highlighted a series of local issues and a collection of creative re-imaginings. The residents described awkward space as 'dark', 'grotty', spaces full of rubbish. Their interpretations of awkward space were more emotive and connected to personal experiences than the logistical definitions that emerged from my bus stop exploration in case study 1 and the majority of the students' spaces on their campus in case study 2. This might have been down to the residents' familiarity with their neighbourhood and the proximity of these spaces to their homes. It may also have been connected to a more immersive co-design process. The residents drew the

designers' attention to existing affordances, for benefit or ill, in the environment, through their identification of awkward space. These insights prompted suggestions for interventions or changes to be made to improve the existing environment. They also opened up conversations about the previous condition of the estate and how the shifts in demographics and the management of the estate had resulted in changes, such as the neglect and vandalism of the pram sheds<sup>46</sup>. The mapping around a table provided an intimate and focused space in which to discuss everyday life on the estate, and repository for shared inhabitant knowledge, shifting between layers of real and imaginary information. In the next section, I present the key outputs from the workshop and some immediate reflections on the process.

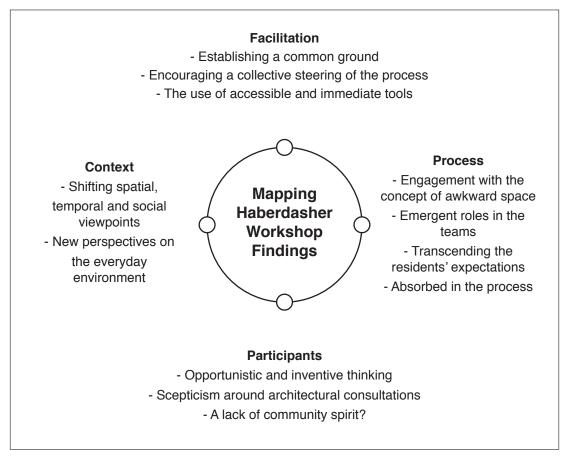


Figure 4.32 Workshop findings

## 4.10 Workshop outcomes

The following section presents the key outcomes from the workshop. These include:

- A multi-layered tactile map
- Nine re-imagined awkward spaces

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> These observations relate to my discussion of affordances, design and architecture in Chapter 2, and the observations on the Pruitt-Igoe estate, section 2.8.1.6.

A set of evaluation continuums

## 4.10.1 A multi-layered tactile map

As described in my workshop findings, the collaborative map that we created contained complex layers of meaning. The map template that I produced for the workshop was an A0 print of a naïve, hand-drawn tracing of an aerial photograph of the estate taken from <a href="http://www.bing.com">http://www.bing.com</a>. The participants started to work with the map in the first session, using red dot stickers to highlight awkward hot spots. In the next stage, the map was annotated with street names and the names of apartment blocks. We then integrated photographic portraits of the residents taken with their awkward spaces with the arrow. We used post-it notes to add names for the awkward spaces. We then re-imagined the spaces using a playful range of materials to collage. The map contained a dynamic combination of geographical and sensory information as well as personal narratives and creative future visions. The process of mapping itself is captured in the time-lapse sequence.

## 4.10.2 Nine re-imagined awkward spaces

Table 4.4 describes each of the nine re-imagined awkward spaces.

# Awkward space

# Re-imagined space



Patches of green space: The residents identified a number of green spaces (including flower beds, patches of grass and trees and bushes) in and around the estate that were maintained by the local council that would benefit from more love and care.



Self-managing green space: The residents and Mathias discussed the possibility of the TRA taking over the management of the green space on the estate. This would mean that the council would re-allocate part of their budget for the estate's maintenance to the committee, who would employ tenants to replace contracted workers.





**Dis-used balcony space:** One of the residents identified a balcony that attracted teenagers, who climbed up a wall to hangout in the space. This was a negative affordance of the building. It was dangerous and created rubbish.

**Tomato greenhouse:** The residents wanted to transform this space into a tomato greenhouse that would act as a hub for their gardening activities. They had thought of this idea before and had spoken to Mathias about designing the greenhouse.





The tower (Charles Gardner Court): The residents' described the fantastic views from the top of the tower and the generous size of the flats. They also complained about the maintenance of the lifts inside the tower block, which other tenants' failed to report on occasion.

Wind turbine for tower: The wind turbine and solar panels were imagined to sit on the top of the tower block. Neil commented that the local Waterhouse restaurant had received a grant from Hackney Council for solar panels and speculated about how green technology might be integrated into the estate.



4



Strange cage-like spaces: These strange spaces appeared on a couple of locations on the estate. They were full of rubbish and random objects. Nobody had a clue how the junk found its way into the locked-up spaces.

Art displays: These were placed in the lockedup enclaves around the estate. One idea was to create a jungle installation in one of these empty spaces. The residents were also interested in bringing in graffiti artists to create artistic murals.





Empty clearing on the corner of the estate: Maureen described this awkward early on in the process. She had been thinking about this empty space with a high wall at the back, which was at a distance to the flats. **Sports ground:** Maureen imagined a short tennis court to provide much needed play space for children on the estate. Neil added that they could use surplus fencing for the sports ground from a nearby plant room that was due to be closed down by the council.



6

7



**Space close to drug-dealings:** Jan highlighted a large plot of land at the back of the estate next to a staircase where she had witnessed drug-dealing.

Community centre: Jan suggested this empty space could provide a site for a community centre. This was a contentious idea that people discussed throughout the workshop. In the final evaluation discussion, the community centre provided a hub and a revenue stream to support other activities on the estate.

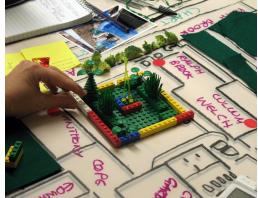




**Peripheral/ edge spaces:** The residents described how spaces on the periphery of the estate had become run down.

**Trees and shrubs:** These were placed along the periphery of the estate and on particular corners that were in need of enlivening.

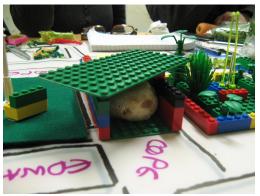




**Courtyard:** This space had seen some improvement with the introduction of planters but still remained a bit empty and exposed.

**The garden box:** This was added to the courtyard on the estate, creating an attractive, more intimate or contained area to sit and contemplate.





**Pramsheds:** Neil identified the pramsheds as being an awkward space in the first stage of the workshop. He later took everyone on a tour of these spaces, which were awkward due to rubbish, flooding, evidence of people sleeping in them, foxes, vandalism and general neglect.

Mushroom farm: The idea to transforming the pram sheds into a mushroom farm came directly from the final workshop of the MetaboliCity project. This was dismissed as impossible, due to the build up of gases under the estate from the mushrooms growing. At the end of the workshop this idea was developed further, with the idea of a waste management system for the estate occupying the site.

Table 4.4 Nine re-imagined awkward spaces

## 4.10.3 Evaluation continuums: Time, budget and possibility

Time/ Activities	3 days	in between	3 weeks	3 months	1 year	3 years
	Plant beans and marigolds	Painting of the estate	Grow bags	Festivals, competitions and events 'Hackney in Bloom'	Estate composting	Community hall
		Public liability insurance	Graffiti displays/ art spaces	Recycling tyre planters	Sports ground	Lottery grants
				Barbeque and social event	Green house	
					Managed green space	
					Tower wind turbine/ solar	

Table 4.5. Time continuum

Budget/ Activities	£2		£5400	£25000	£50000+
	Graffiti displays (Rich Mix)	Good soil (£40)	Sports ground	Tower wind turbine + solar	Community hall
	Public liability insurance	Grow bags	Estate composting (£8k)		
	Tyre tubes	Barbeque			
		Greenhouse £2k+			
		Garden and self-managed green space			

Table 4.6. Budget continuum

Possibility/ Activities	Easy	Achievable	Awkward	Impossible
	Public liability insurance	Sports ground	Community hall	Mushroom farm
	Barbeque	Mayor + business partner for Shoreditch	Tower wind turbine solar	
	Greenhouse	Self-managed green space		
	Recycle tyre planters	Business in the community time bank St.Lukes		
	Grow bags	Estate composting		
	Haberdasher lottery fund	Graffiti displays		

Table 4.7. Possibility continuum

It was at this evaluative stage of the workshop the residents' 'tacit knowledge' (Polanyi, 1966) of the estate was made explicit through our action planning discussion. Throughout the process, the participants engaged in creative conversations that have the potential to transform spaces on the estate. One example of this was the suggestion to use an empty area at the back of the estate to build a community hall. At the start of the evaluation discussion the community centre was placed at the point of impossible on the continuum but as the conversation progressed it moved further and further towards achievable. We went through each of the spaces and marked them on these three continuums (See Table 4.5 – Table 4.7). We predicted that there would be most action on the estate in 1 year's time. Whilst evaluating each of the spaces, more ideas came about (e.g. planting in recycled tyres) and these were factored into the continuum. It was valuable to see that there were very immediate things that could be achieved straight after the workshop.

Out of this exercise emerged a collaboratively generated, comprehensive, futurefocused strategy to be used by the residents for developing future projects on the estate. The residents' were encouraged by Mathias to be more ambitious about the scale of their activities on the estate, considering taking over the management of green spaces on the estate and how this could link up to a time-sharing initiative on the estate, which might also include organisations who have corporate social responsibility initiatives. We also discussed how the imaginary community centre could provide a physical space, a hub for their activities. (See Appendix C2, page 104). As identified in the evaluation exercise, the most productive time for the estate activities would be in one-year's time and we agreed to arrange a co-evaluation meeting at that point to assess the workshop's impact and to feedback on the process.

### 4.11 Workshop reflections

'The time-lapse recording worked really well at showing the map's evolution but also people's body language and the rhythm of the workshop. The residents will like this feedback I think.' (excerpt taken from journal, 21st March 2010)

### 4.11.1 Space, time and numbers

Being situated on the estate and using the residents' meeting room was useful. The room was big enough to work comfortably with twelve people. It was closed off from the estate so as to provide a focused space for the residents to leave behind their daily life. On the other hand it was situated in the centre of the estate to provide easy access for the walking tour. This enabled impromptu activities to take place, such as Neil's 'Haberdasher Dungeons' tour (See DVD film 04). The twelve participants were able to sit comfortably around the map. Also, from a facilitation point of view, this was an optimum number of people to keep engaged in the process<sup>47</sup>. People stuck with the process until 4pm when there was a natural lull in the group's energy. There was an excellent spirit of collaboration and engagement throughout the day.

The residents from the housing estate were all long-time residents on the estate, with the shortest residency being 29 years. It would be interesting in the future to open the workshop up to involve more tenants from the estate. For example, including young professionals who have moved into the estate recently, might create a different set of issues and a richer picture of spatial practices and desirable futures for the estate. Because the residents are also active in food growing and gardening it meant that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Co-operative inquiry and action research approaches advise between 6-12 people for co-operative processes (Heron and Reason, 2006), based upon space and facilitation factors.

they were a good selection of people to work with because they had acquired a practical knowledge of the space on the estate.

### 4.11.2 The use of design tools

The workshop tools can be adapted to meet the needs of different constituencies of participants working within different contexts, in this sense they are 'partial tools'<sup>48</sup>. This is exemplified, by the differing uses of the awkward space explorer kits in case study 2 and 3 to aid individual and collective observational studies. Also, whereas in case study 2 the prompt cards were used by the students to probe the potential assets of their awkward spaces, we didn't end up using them to reflect upon our exploration of the Haberdasher estate. In my journal notes written after the event I recorded that

'I didn't use the question prompt cards, mainly because it felt like it might have slowed down or contrived the process or got people to regurgitate information. Although designing them was helpful to look out for things on the day.' (excerpt taken from journal notes, 21st March 2010)

### 4.11.3 Designers as active listeners

The walking tour session and the following session where we selected photographs to print out from the tour provided an opportunity to explore and reflect upon awkward space. The photographs of the residents with the arrows, pointing to awkward space, became mini-portraits that populated the map. The design team were engaged as 'active listeners' as the residents recounted their experiences and stories. The rapid production of portraits on the estate and their immediate integration into our map created a vital connection between the estate as it existed on that Sunday, for this particular group of people and the re-imagined estate that was created on the same day, represented in the map. Working with a small team of designers and delegating responsibilities across the team was a really effective way of making sure that this process ran smoothly and that the residents had enough support in capturing their insights and reflections. Some of the residents already knew the designers involved in the workshop and felt comfortable working together and asking them when necessary to take a photograph or find them some resources. In this sense, the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> The notion of 'partial design tools' was introduced by John Backwell as part of the 'Benchmarking Synergy-levels within Metadesign' research project, 2008.

residents were foregrounded in the process, with the designers available on the periphery for support and guidance.

### 4.11.4 Facilitating a co-design process

In an article entitled 'Design Participation Tactics: The challenges and new roles for designers in the co-design process', Lee highlights criticisms of the practice of participation by architects and other professions in housing development for its 'tokenistic community involvement' (Lee, 2008, 32). In the introduction to my workshop, the residents on the Haberdasher Estate related a story about an experience that they had working within a participatory process with architects on 'The Estates Plus Project'. This process had left the residents feeling disappointed, as the plans unfortunately didn't lead to the improvements proposed by the authorities on the estate. Facilitating an open design process where the residents became the experts regarding their local environment and where designers were present to listen and support this process shifted the power balance experienced in the previous example. Our process fed into a collaboratively produced map and set of evaluation continuums, owned by the residents, which become resources to inform their future design and decision-making processes regarding their estate activities.

Because of my professional background, experience and network, I was able to gain access to working with the Haberdasher residents. Due to my previous collaboration with some of the residents I was trusted and respected as a credible facilitator of this process. I brought to this study an optimistic approach to design, which is embodied within the workshop's possibility-seeking nature. Figure 4.33 maps the skills, knowledge, values, opportunities and qualities that I bring to this research. This might be useful in informing similar workshops with different facilitators.

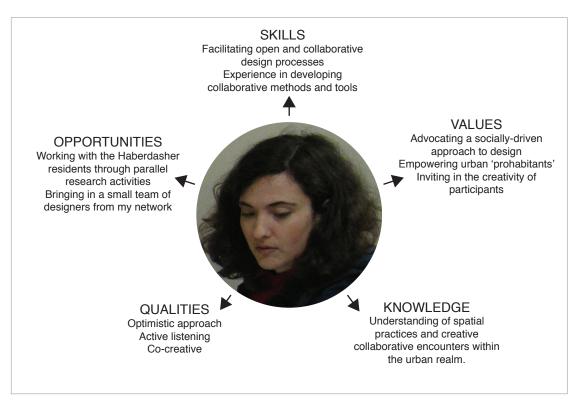


Figure 4.33 Facilitating a co-design process

### 4.12 Conclusions

This chapter compiles and reflects upon the findings from my case study 3 workshop entitled 'Mapping Haberdasher'. The case study set out to explore the question 'How can awkward space be used as a productive concept for co-designing everyday life in the city?' The workshop brought together a group of residents and designers to explore, map and re-imagine awkward space on a housing estate in North London. The workshop supported and motivated the residents in developing a more coherent future strategy for self-managing a range of activities on the estate.

The case study built upon the findings from my previous case studies. If awkward space is embedded in human practices, intimately connected to their environment (See Chapter 2 conclusions, page 90), then my workshops offer a process for repurposing abandoned or disenfranchised places, through sharing inhabitant accounts of awkward space to motivate the grounded, informal practices that emerge from them. In my role as a design researcher, I was aware of the sensitivity of power-relationships when entering into the public realm. I had gained this awareness through making my own tentative design gestures in the bus stop environment and from witnessing the students' heavier interventionalist approach in case study 3.

Through early discussions with the residents it became apparent that they had worked with designers before who had imposed plans for changes to the estate that hadn't worked out. Gaining the confidence of some of the more cynical residents came through negotiating the direction of the workshop with them and allowing them to make decisions about our actions on the day. This required me relinquishing some of my control over the process in order to empower the other participants.

The workshop framed a focused and energetic day of activities. After establishing a common ground with the residents, achieved by collectively exploring the estate, we embarked on a workshop process that encouraged the participants to take some ownership over its direction. An accessible and immediate way of visualising the residents' everyday environment engaged the participants in sharing issues and imagining possibilities for the estate. The residents were very responsive to the concept of awkward space, which was demonstrated by the nine awkward hot spots they highlighted on the estate. These spaces ranged from the dark and neglected pram sheds, to empty lots and fenced off enclaves. The characterisations and interpretations of awkward space differed in this case study, including more personal and emotive definitions rather than the previous more logistical notions of awkward space. This might have been due to a familiarity of context and proximity to home, as well as the immersive nature of the workshop. The re-imagined spaces included a tomato green house, community centre, a wind turbine, a sports ground and range of gardening ideas. On the day, some of the ideas raised by the residents had been discussed in previous committee meetings or through the MetaboliCity project. The map succeeded in bringing these individual initiatives together to create a more joined-up and co-creative approach to creating a vision for the estate.

As the process unfolded through the day, different members of the group stepped into different roles<sup>49</sup>. The residents became local experts on the walking tour, relating stories and experiences and giving a historical account of the estate to the designers. The designers shifted between listeners, facilitators and resourcers within the codesign process. At times, Mathias and myself stepped forward to connect-up the residents' ideas to existing projects or designs. Overall, the residents were absorbed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> This relates to my previous discussion on the design researcher's role in participatory design approaches, see section 4.2.

in the workshop process and found the mapping valuable, recognising how it might inform the writing of funding applications for their estate activities.

The workshop revealed that the residents had an opportunistic and inventive approach to the use of space on the estate. This had been developed and evidenced through their gardening activities. They were deeply invested in the environment on the estate and shared inhabitant knowledge of its history, nooks and crannies. Two interesting issues raised through our discussions were the scepticism around working with architectural consultation processes and the challenge of getting other tenants involved in the estate activities.

Finally, the continuous shifting viewpoints, between the real and the imagined and between the map and the estate itself created a rich conversation and a new, shared perception of the estate. The residents' ideas were coaxed through a continuum from awkward to possible. This set up an effective framework to inform future design and decision-making on the estate. In Chapter 6, I return to this framework to assess the impact of the workshop on the estate's activities. Before this, the next chapter presents the findings from my second focused and selective literature review, which explores how dialogical or collaborative creative practices can frame the everyday spatial tactics of the common populous to mobilise community action. This exploration picks up on the notion of supporting and mobilising a 'public rhetoric', discussed in my review of co-design and participatory design workshop approaches. It provides a critical framework to situate and reflect upon the collaborative design practice that I have begun to develop through this research and to analyse the workshop findings in greater depth.

# Chapter 5: Literature review two: Framing and mobilising everyday practices with dialogical creative encounters

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the second literature review of the thesis. The first literature review (See Chapter 2) explored the nature of awkward space, engaging with theories and concepts from ecological psychology and social anthropology. The findings suggested how awkward space is embodied within dynamic human practices, intimately connected to their environment. This review also relates to the findings from my discussion on collaborative and participatory design workshop approaches in Chapter 4, supporting me to continue to pursue a notion of co-design where the outcome, rather than being product-based, is a form of public rhetoric or a 'conversation piece'. Towards this aim, the review focuses upon practicing awkward space, drawing upon theories, concepts and practical examples from Michel de Certeau's 'The Practice of Everyday Life' (1984) and Grant H. Kester's 'Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art' (2004). In the third section of the review, I interweave the findings from the 'Mapping Haberdasher' workshop (Chapter 4) in order to situate and critically reflect upon my own collaborative design practice. I explore the implications of working with dialogical artistic practices to frame 'otherly spaces' and to mobilise the everyday inventive tactics of urban inhabitants.

### 5.2 A Review of 'The Practice of Everyday Life' by Michel de Certeau

#### 5.2.1 Introduction

The following review opens with a short introduction to Michel de Certeau himself and the field of study in which he operated, or perhaps more accurately the fields of study that he operated across. I then discuss the purpose that de Certeau identified for his study and the structure and aims of the investigation. I explore selected key issues and concepts associated with this text that later help to clarify and position my own research inquiry into awkward spatial practices and the everyday. De Certeau is deemed particularly relevant for this study as his notion of 'spatial tactics' bridges my

early explorations into negotiating awkward space, with my current inquiry into the accessing and sharing the knowledge acquired through these 'awkward spatial practices'.

### 5.2.2 Background and the context of the book

Michel de Certeau was born in 1925 in Chambery, France. He has been described as a post-structural cultural theorist, a historiographer, an ethnologist and an eclectic, anti-disciplinary, pluralist thinker. He was ordained in 1956 as a Jesuit and soon afterwards became a religious scholar, receiving his Doctorate in mysticism in 1960 from the Sorbonne in Paris (Crang, 2000, 138, and Buchanan, 2000, 1). He also had a keen interest in psychoanalysis and was a contemporary of Lacan<sup>50</sup>. The 1968 student riots in Paris made a significant impact on de Certeau and influenced the direction of his writings on the city. Whilst 'The Practice of Everyday Life' is de Certeau's best-known work, he has published widely (though not always translated into English) on topics such as mysticism, history and heterology, a term he coined to describe 'the science of otherness' (Crang 2000, 139, Buchanan, 2000, 68). He died in 1986, before it is said he was able to produce what would have been a third book to complete 'The Practice of Everyday Life' series<sup>51</sup> (Buchanan, 2000, 90).

### 5.2.3 Purpose, concerns and investigative approach

The subject of de Certeau's investigation is the 'enunciation' of everyday practices invented and carried out by the ordinary man operating within a consumer society. De Certeau invents and carries out his own investigation that aims to create the space and language to 'give voice' to such activities within society that don't already have their own discourse. The critic Buchanan highlights de Certeau's resistance to using a scientific approach, stating his opinion that 'Life is not a laboratory experiment, therefore our means of analysing it should not turn it into one.' (Buchanan, 2000, 88). De Certeau is curious about how the act of 'giving voice' to these practices can somehow elude scientific or institutional formalisation, so as to enable them to maintain their 'otherly' nature. He believes that the statistical representation of the user's everyday practices acquired through administrative

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Lacan was a French psychoanalyst whose work on the unconscious and identity inspired

the post-structuralist thinkers of the time, including Michel de Certeau. <sup>51</sup> The Practice of Everyday Life Volume two: Living and Cooking (1990, 1998) continues to explore the cultural practices of city dwellers in their everyday neighbourhoods.

means fails to capture their 'artisan like inventiveness' (de Certeau, 1984, xviii). This is because these fragmentary forms of analysis cannot create a comprehensive picture of social relations. An example of this in the UK would be the Census, where quantitative data relating to the population and its characteristics is gathered together to provide a picture of society and to inform public funding (http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/index.html). I agree with de Certeau that the 'administrative' nature of the Census information is fragmentary and less nuanced than the qualitative collective accounts made by the residents' in my workshop<sup>52</sup>.

De Certeau takes the reader on a tour through a variety of everyday practices, to momentarily capture and reveal their value. He perceives their value as providing a counter-balance to the dominant technocratic social structures that organise society, critiqued in the work of, for example, Foucault. De Certeau presents us with a politics of the everyday 'focused towards the micro ways in which people subvert the dominant order.' (Papastergiadis, 2010, 25). Indeed, de Certeau's contribution to the larger discourse on the everyday<sup>53</sup> is his concern 'not with the intended effects of a social system, but the uses made of it by the people who are operating within it' (Papastergiadis, 2010, 25). De Certeau compares and contrasts the work of Foucault and Bourdieu, two theorisers of the everyday, to show how they engage with this concept differently. He focuses on Foucault's identification of procedures in a technocratic society and Bourdieu's strategies, which are exercised in the habitus. He describes how Foucault is concerned with theorising the effects of the practices, whereas Bourdieu is concerned with their 'genesis' (de Certeau, 1984, 58). De Certeau's approach is different again focusing upon the consumer's ongoing appropriation of the representations they are fed by the system to meet their own

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> I use Census data in Chapter 6 to cross-reference the residents' perceptions of the changing demographics in their neighbourhood with the 2011 government statistics. The residents' perceptions matched the Census data. Whilst the Census provides a top-down, large-scale and fragmented gathering of population data, my approach offers a bottom-up, small-scale and comprehensive picture of social relations within a neighbourhood. This can be used by the residents themselves in applying for funding from organisations, or by local authorities for a more coherent approach to the allocation of public spending.

Other theorisers of the everyday include: Lefebvre's 'Critique of the Everyday', Baudelaire's concern with the 'representation' of the everyday, Blanchot's 'straitjacketed citizen' of the everyday, the Situationist's 'revolution' of the everyday, Freud's 'Psychopathology of Everyday Life', to name a few. These examples are summarised in a chapter entitled 'A Brief History of the Everyday' in 'Spatial Aesthetics: Art, Place and the Everyday' by Nikos Papastergiadis.

needs. A practical example of this might be a cyclist's use of the railings along a walkway, which represent a boundary between public and private space, to chain up a bicycle<sup>54</sup>.

De Certeau's investigation is arranged to achieve three inter-relating aims. Firstly, he seeks to find a way to present and articulate the material he collects, thus, creating a space for a discussion to become possible about everyday practices. Secondly, he sets out to describe a limited number of everyday practices (e.g. walking, reading, speaking); and thirdly, he attempts to extend the analysis of these everyday operations to scientific fields governed by another logic, namely futurology and politics (de Certeau, 1984, xvii). Here de Certeau explores the relationship between real and imagined space and the political role of the individual within an increasingly fragmented society. De Certeau outlines two main differing types of investigative approaches that organise his study. One approach is descriptive in nature, sketching out a collection of different everyday practices. The second approach is to engage with scientific literature (anthropology, sociology, and history) as well as studies into language (socio-linguistics and ethnomethodology) to furnish his hypotheses (de Certeau, 1984, xv).

### 5.2.4 The issues

In this study, de Certeau endeavours to articulate 'living and "mythical" (de Certeau, 1984, 203) practices of the everyday, thus bringing them to the fore and creating a counter-balance to the dominant power relations that organise modern society. Throughout the essay de Certeau refers to the common man as both a 'rebellious user' and a consumer. De Certeau distinguishes between producers and consumers. Producers are, for example, governments, scientific institutions, educational bodies, the media and urban developers. These are the domineering organisations in a hegemonic society who create order and who create representations that are offered to society for consumption. Consumers are the common women and men who live within this system by consensus but choose to appropriate the representations they are fed by the system in relation to their own desires, interests and needs.

Consumers in this way 'poach' (de Certeau, 1984, 31) off the property of others. De Certeau describes this as being a poietic act, a bringing forth or creative emergence.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> More examples of such daily appropriations of institutional or organisational systems by ordinary men and woman are discussed in the book 'Thoughtless Acts?: Observations on Intuitive Design' by interaction designer, Jane Fulton Suri and IDEO (Fulton Suri and IDEO, 2005).

In the French title of the book 'L 'invention du quotidien' invention is a key word and this is lost in the English translation. This is unfortunate because de Certeau himself wanted to stress the importance of the creativity of everyday practices (Buchanan, 2000, 8).

### 5.2.5 Key Concepts

### 5.2.5.1 Strategies and Tactics

Michel de Certeau's best-known concepts discussed in 'The Practice of Everyday Life' are the contradictory notions of strategy and tactics. A strategy is proposed as being

'the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated.' (de Certeau, 1984: 36)

### Therefore a strategy

'assumes a place that can be circumscribed as proper (propre) and thus serve as the basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it (competitors, adversaries, "clienteles", "targets" or "objects" of research). Political, economic, and scientific rationale has been constructed on this strategic model.' (de Certeau 1984, xix)

So, the key characteristics of strategies are that they are bound to place and power and that they form reinforcing external relationships from this place. Strategies are usually long-term plans that are put in place over time (Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 2004). For example, a business might develop a '5-year plan', a government might produce a political 'policy' and an educational organisation might define a 'curriculum'. Design is traditionally described as being strategic in nature, in the sense of being the art of planning the purpose of something (Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 2004).

Tactics, on the other hand, are carried out in the space of the 'other', which is to say that they do not occupy their own 'proper' space. Whereas 'strategies are able to produce, tabulate, and impose these (proper) spaces', de Certeau proposes that 'tactics can only use, manipulate, and divert' them (de Certeau, 1984, 37). Tactics are political u-turns and covert military operations. Tactics enable the weak to make use of the strong (de Certeau, 1984, 37). Here the individual tries to 'outwit the

system' by 'pulling tricks', rediscovering the 'art of hunters and rural folk' (de Certeau, 1984, xxiv). So key characteristics of tactics are that they do not have a place and that they re-appropriate or adapt possibilities from within the system. Whilst design has strategic qualities, it can also be opportunistic, spontaneous and responsive to changing conditions. Participatory design researcher Carl DiSalvo proposes that 'Design tactics are designerly means directed towards the construction of publics' (DiSalvo, 2009, 52), thus 'giving voice' to de Certeau's ordinary men and women.

Strategies organise Foucault's 'grid of discipline', whilst tactics introduce a 'Brownian motion' (de Certeau, 1984, xx) into the space of strategy. This creates the potential for surprise, opportunities, movement and unpredictable changes to occur. Through these tactics, consumers compose a network of 'antidiscipline' (de Certeau, 1984, xv). De Certeau focuses on the notion of 'diversion tactics'. Diversion tactics signify how we *spend* our own time on other practices (de Certeau, 1984, 25-26). For example, in working hours we sometimes satisfy our own needs underneath the gaze of the establishment. Internet surfing, Facebooking, online shopping, PhotoShopping birthday cards, coffee and cigarette breaks are all examples of activities that we might carry out in the office when we should be doing something productive for our employers. These acts create a sense of solidarity amongst the community of employees. They are not, however, acts of revolution or an attempt to change the balance of the existing status quo.

The 'tactics' employed by the consumer are compared with the 'strategies' laid down by the producer. Strategies account for laws, policies, rules and regulations and social standards; tactics include cooking, moving around, talking and perhaps even online social networking. The space of tactics is a space of 'plurality and creativity' (de Certeau, 1984, 30). Consumers are 'rebellious users' who act on opportunities that arise in the moment. Everyday practices are therefore spatial practices, not bound to a place; they are dynamic, opportunistic and transformative. De Certeau proclaims 'space is practiced place' (de Certeau, 1984, 117), confirming that the practice of the everyday is a practice of space. In the context of my thesis investigation, I am exploring spatial tactics and strategies played out within the urban realm. The 'rebellious users' or 'consumers' defined by de Certeau are the urban inhabitants or residents with whom I collaborate. In the case of the Haberdasher estate, an example of a strategy might be Hackney council deciding to block off a pathway with a wall, to re-pave the pathway's surface. A spatial tactic might be an

OAP climbing over the wall because it's the quickest route through their estate (See the Revisiting Haberdasher conversation for more information on this example, section 6.6)

### 5.2.5.2 Walking and narratives

De Certeau introduces the idea that 'stories' provide containers for the 'narrativity' of everyday practices and that in this sense they have a theoretical relevance for everyday life (de Certeau, 1984, 70). He writes about how everyday practices generate a kind of 'primitive knowledge' embodied in tact, taste, ways of walking, talking etc... (de Certeau, 1984, 72). This is akin to the inhabitant 'alongly integrated' knowledge described by Ingold (See Chapter 2), which reveals intimate details about how human practices are affected by their environment and vice versa. Stories, de Certeau asserts, are 'treatments of space' (de Certeau, 1984, 122), which have the potential to 'contain' this inhabitant knowledge.

De Certeau identifies both physical spatial practices, such as walking in the city and mental spatial practices, such as reading or writing. De Certeau describes how 'stories "go on procession" ahead of social practices in order to open a field for them.' (de Certeau, 1984, 127). Stories can 'actualize possibilities' (de Certeau, 1984, 98) in space. This means that stories about spatial practices can keep those practices alive, just as walking, as a spatial practice brings forth the city. A lack of stories can have the opposite effect that results in spaces becoming forgotten and abandoned, just as the walker 'condemns certain places to inertia or disappearance' (de Certeau, 1984, 99). If awkward space is embedded in human practices, intimately connected to their environment (See Chapter 2 conclusions, page 90), then my workshops offer a process for repurposing abandoned or disenfranchised places, through sharing inhabitant accounts of awkward space to motivate the grounded, informal practices that emerge from them.

In the chapter 'Walking in the City', de Certeau poetically describes how the walker moves through the city and how the city is woven together through their movements<sup>55</sup>. He breaks away from the conceptual plans for an urban system to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> These woven together movements are comparable to the 'entangled pathways' described by Ingold in Chapter 2, which generate 'alongly integrated knowledge' of the lived world (Ingold, 2011).

grasp this other spatiality. Leaving behind the 'totalization produced by the eye' and theoretical urban models for city planning, he searches for the invisible 'strangeness' that permeates the everyday. De Certeau observes how the walker produces space according to an unconscious internal logic at play, through, for example, wandering off route. He alludes to a kind of 'silent knowledge' embedded in the intimate exchanges between spatial tacticians, whereby 'Only hints of what is known but unrevealed are passed on "just between you and me." (de Certeau, 1984, 108).

De Certeau notes how '(Consumers) trace "indeterminate trajectories" that are apparently meaningless, since there do not cohere with the constructed, written, and prefabricated space through which they move.' (de Certeau, 1984, 34). These can be captured in an itinerary but are more difficult to represent in the fixed form of a map. The articulation of everyday practices requires an understanding of the elusive 'otherly' nature of these ways of operating and 'making do' by the ordinary man. These consumer's everyday practices 'organize both spaces and languages' (de Certeau, 1984, 48). Later on in this chapter, I reflect upon how the 'Mapping Haberdasher' workshop successfully used a dynamic map as a repository for the inhabitant knowledge generated through everyday practices on the Haberdasher estate.

### 5.2.6 Conclusions

In the introduction to this book, de Certeau announces his aim, which is to make a 'discussion possible' about the 'ways of operating' that are carried out by consumers in everyday life, by developing 'inquiries and hypotheses' and indicating 'pathways for further research' (de Certeau, 1984, xi). I think the searching quality of the work and its 'suggestive spirit' (Buchanan, 2000, 91) is intended to capture the imagination of the 'inventive tactician'. This is perhaps one of the reasons why 'The Practice of Everyday life' appeals to the designer's possibility-seeking nature. I believe that de Certeau appears to be an artful practitioner, poacher and tactician. To borrow Kant's description of the tightrope dancer used by de Certeau to illustrate the know-how of the everyday practitioner, his text maintains the 'illusion of balance' by making continuous 'step by step adjustments' (de Certeau, 1984, 73). This works well at creating a resistance to definition in scientific or institutional terms but at the same time the writing remains at an abstract level.

De Certeau's writing has been described as an "untiring textural, cultural and interlocutory 'travel'", achieved by an author who possesses an "interior distancing or 'quiet' born of a life long immersion in the demanding texts of Christian mystics" (Ahearne, 1995, 2). When I imagine de Certeau at work on this book that aims to 'enunciate' everyday practices, I imagine him in isolation, in a monastic environment far removed from his society of 'inventive' individuals. In the next part of this review, I will propose that to 'give voice' to these practices requires a conversation to take place with these 'ordinary people' and a collective exploration into the spatial tactics they practice in everyday life. This review is relevant to the thesis as it provides an alternative perspective to the approaches explored in my review on co-design and participatory design processes to staging collaborative workshops with the aim of giving voice and visibility to publics or communities (See page 149). This helps me to position my own co-design practice as temporarily framing 'otherly spaces' to explore, map and connect-up knowledge acquired from practicing awkward space.

# 5.3 A Review of 'Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art' by Grant H. Kester

### 5.3.1 Introduction

The second part of this literature review begins with a brief summary of Kester's narrative through the development of twentieth century avant-garde art towards what he terms as 'dialogical art practice'. I then discuss the notion of dialogical art practice, highlighting key qualities and characteristics that can be applied to the development of my own collaborative design practice, which is outlined in section 5.4.

### 5.3.2 Situating dialogical art practice

Grant Kester is an American Professor of Art History in the Visual Arts Department at the University of California, San Diego. He has authored several books critiquing 'relational' or 'dialogical' art practices. In the introduction to his book 'Conversations Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art' he highlights the importance of artworks which stimulate 'the facilitation of dialogue among diverse communities' (Kester, 2004, 1)<sup>56</sup>. It is important to note that Kester wrote the book in the aftermath

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> It is important to acknowledge that collaborative, relational and dialogical art has a rich history pre-dating Kester's exploration, which is documented in, for example, Nicolas Bourriaud 'Relational Aesthetics' (Bourriaud, 1998), Claire Bishop 'Participation' (Bishop, 2006) and 'Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991-2011' (Thompson, 2012). The

of the catastrophic events that took place on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, anticipating the effects that the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre would have on intercultural communications and the dominant market economy, where a large part of our exchanges with other nations take place. Within the context of inter-cultural communications, Kester proposes that there are a growing number of artistic practices that are forming in response to a range of issues facing society and the environment, both at a local and global scale. These practices have in common their capacity to create or provide spaces for conversations about these issues to happen. Kester defines these practices as 'dialogical art practices', a term that encompasses a collection of community-orientated, collaborative, interactive, performative and participatory art projects.

Works that falls under the umbrella of 'dialogical artistic practices' include, for example, the artist and architect Marjetica Potrc's participatory design projects that set out to develop community-led sustainable solutions to issues such as water and energy usage (<a href="http://www.potrc.org/">http://www.potrc.org/</a> - last accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> Aprl 2014). The Harrisons are another example of a collaborative art team that work with an interdisciplinary range of specialists on eco-art projects, responding to issues such as urban renewal and agriculture. Their work includes mapping and engaging in discussions with local communities and often informs the development of government policy (<a href="http://theharrisonstudio.net/">http://theharrisonstudio.net/</a> - last accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014). The artist Steve Willat's work has also been described as a dialogical practice, interacting with members of society to openly explore how we build and create everyday life (<a href="http://stephenwillats.com/context/">http://stephenwillats.com/context/</a> - last accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014).

These projects are not examples of conventional art practice and some people would not even acknowledge them as works of art. Kester therefore embarks on an investigation that's seeks to position dialogical art within the history of twentieth century art and the belief systems that can be traced throughout its critique. Here, he reflects upon the traditional role of the artist and the viewer and their relationship to the work of art and its surrounding economic, social and environmental contexts. For example, Kester explores the emergence of kitsch art and the dawning of an

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intention of focusing in on Kester's overview of this field and its approaches is to draw a succinct and meaningful connection between framing dialogical art works and spatial practices, which I can use to situate and mobilise my own co-design approach.

economic market-driven era of artistic production in the twentieth century. These events challenged the traditional views of the work of art. Kester describes how the critic Greenberg and members of the New York School in the 1950's (including the artists Rothko and Pollock) feared that artworks (e.g. the kitsch work of Jeff Koons) would lose their aesthetic power if they became too accessible to the viewer (Kester, 2004, 42). Kester identifies a set of power relationships at play in traditional art practice, where the artist is perceived as being 'epistemologically' and 'morally' advanced in relation to the viewer who is regarded as the 'ungifted majority' (Kester, 2004, 42). Kester explores the idea that the artist and their work are somehow operating at a higher level of consciousness than the 'ordinary man'. The viewer must even train in some cases to receive the work and to be able to appreciate its worth. Dialogical art challenges these conceptions of the artist, artwork, and viewer.

The Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin, from whom Kester adapted the term 'dialogical art practice', envisioned the work of art as 'a kind of conversation – a locus of different meanings, interpretations, and points of view' (Kester, 2004, 10). Kester traces dialogical art practice back to earlier forms of interactive, theatrical and performative artistic practices including 'dadist or futurist performance, situationist derive, fluxus works, conceptual art, happenings, feminist performance, and a wide range of activist and interactive art practices' (Kester, 2004, 51). It is within these alternative art spaces that we first encounter the viewer as collaborator or participant, where their experience of the work becomes a part of the work of art itself. The artist is also called to re-evaluate their own creative role, producing work outside of a gallery, becoming a "context provider" rather than "content provider" (Dunn cited in Kester, 2004, 1).

### 5.3.3 Creative spaces for open conversations

In various ways, the projects that Kester draws upon throughout the book provide an opportunity for different members of society (e.g. the local politician, the council house resident, the school kid) to step outside of their usual roles or social situations, to engage in 'conversations' that might not be possible to stage in their daily or working lives (e.g. in the council house or in a school)<sup>57</sup>. These are spaces for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Kester later draws upon Jean Luc Nancy's notion of 'being-outside-self' to further explore this phenomenon. (Kester, 2004, 155) Being-outside-self describes the moment when you converse with someone else and the communication that results transcends your role or

'transdisciplinary deviations' (Kester, 2004, 51) that include a multitude of stakeholders, who might usually be impossible to bring together in the same place, who have a shared interest in a particular social dilemma. In this sense, these dialogical art projects serve as artfully constructed, temporal utopias, spaces where an open discourse may become possible. Kester also acknowledges that exchange and open free utopian space doesn't always work out and that we need remain critical of these projects to avoid "dialogical determinism" (Kester, 2004, 182). Dialogical determinism is the belief that all social issues experienced by a community can be solved through talking things through together.

The book offers a way to understand dialogue as an aesthetic experience so as 'to comprehend the creative dimension of communal and collective processes' (Kester, 2004, 89). Kester aims to develop an empathetic and creative model for discursive interaction, challenging what he observes as an 'anti-discursivity in modern art', with 'open-ended dialogical interaction that is itself the "work" of art' (Kester, 2004, 87). He compares the disruptive aesthetic experience of an avant-garde artwork to the Post-structural theorist Lyotard's notion of discursive interaction as an "agonistic contest" (Lyotard cited in Kester, 2004, 87)<sup>58</sup>. In Lytoard's work "to speak is to fight". This form of dialogue can be witnessed in parliamentary slanging matches or Jeremy Paxman<sup>59</sup> interviews. In developing his concept of dialogical aesthetics, Kester also critiques the work of Habermas, Bakhtin and Levinas, challenging their differing theories relating to the 'speech act' and 'intersubjective ethics' in an attempt to create an alternative 'emancipatory model of dialogical interaction' (Kester, 2004, 89).

identity, rather than represents or reinforces your role or identity. In the case of my workshop through creating an open platform for exchange, participants are encouraged not to enforce their roles or identities such as 'designer' to allow for a collaborative outcome to emerge.

58 Political theorist Chantal Mouffe writes about art activism and 'agonistic space'. She argues that antagonism is a vital part of democracy within a pluralistic society. This requires acknowledging the potential irresolvability of different people's perspectives and ideas. Here the role of art is to 'occupy public space to disrupt the smooth image that corporate capitalism is trying to spread' and to 'contribute to the construction of new subjectivities' (Mouffe, 2007). Using the concept of awkward space to seed dialogical interactions in the 'Mapping Haberdasher' workshop drew out individual differences in opinion on a range of social issues. I understand awkwardness as a common human quality that embodies friction and unease whilst also evoking empathy within a group, thus allowing for the 'negotiation of incommensurability' (Dilnot, 2005) to take place within the design process.

59 Jeremy Paxman is a political journalist who is well known for his confrontational and

Jeremy Paxman is a political journalist who is well known for his confrontational and argumentative interviewing style.

### 5.3.4 Dialogical interaction and knowledge production

Kester proposes that discursive interaction can be based upon shared empathy and 'reciprocal openness' (Kester, 2004, 95) rather than being a communicative experience where people argue their different points of view, as theorised in Habermas's 'public sphere'. Here, Kester highlights 'the ways in which aesthetic experience can challenge conventional perspectives... and systems of knowledge.' (Kester, 2004, 3). To support his proposition Kester references feminist theories of knowledge, introducing the notion of a 'contextually grounded' and 'connected knowledge' (Belenky, 1986) that is developed through collective interaction, without following any abstract rules or external logic. Kester describes this as being a

"procedural" knowledge in which the dialogical participant... attempts to understand the social context from which his or her interlocutors are speaking... This understanding is facilitated by the empathetic insight made available through a process of active listening.' (Kester, 2004, 158)

In this production of knowledge, within a social context, listening itself is considered as a creative act and an imperative part of dialogical interactions. Dialogical aesthetics, therefore, perhaps appeals to the listener within us rather than the viewer. Other key characteristics of this process are 'a more open-ended pedagogical interaction' (Kester, 2004, 26) and a 'more convivial relationship' with the dialogical participants (Kester, 2004, 27). Kester's summary of the work of the artist and philosopher Adrian Piper also informs this empathetic approach to dialogue. Piper's work focuses on understanding cultural differences and advocates 'embracing difference' as a way of extending our understanding, rather than perceiving it as a 'destabilizing threat'. Piper has coined the term 'modal imagination' to describe our ability to 'to envision what is possible in addition to what is actual' (Piper, 1991, 726). This requires us to

"extend our conception of reality – and, in particular, of human beings – beyond our immediate experience of the indexical present... This leap is a necessary condition for experiencing compassion for others." (Piper cited in Kester, 2004, 77)

Kester describes an intriguing process of self-transformation that is experienced when engaging with the other, that is followed by a re-coherence of the self. This, he

describes is a cyclical, reflexive, on-going process that takes place when we learn something new from a collective experience.

### 5.3.5 The relationship between the artist and the community

Dialogical art starts with a conversation with the community. Kester discusses the artist's role and the ethical implications of working within 'politically coherent communities'. These are communities that evolve around the shared decision to tackle particular social issues. Kester states that

'It is impossible to overestimate the significance of community as an organizing principle for resistance and political identity in the struggle against the increasingly sophisticated synchrony of global capital...' (Kester, 2004, 130).

In various cases of dialogical art practice, the artist takes on the role of a 'listener', a 'facilitator' or an 'enabler' (Kester, 2004, 71), or 'social service provider' (Kester, 2004, 138). To understand the role of the artist within a socially driven creative process, Kester analyses Bourdieu's notion of the 'delegate' who chooses or is chosen to speak on behalf of or representing (politically) the community. The artist builds a rapport with the community through the process of collaboration itself. Also, Kester notes that often the artist has some kind of personal empathetic insight into the political motivations of the community that qualifies them to take up an 'enunciative position' (Kester, 2004, 48) and "mobilize the group" (Bourdieu cited in Kester, 2004, 148). There can be an issue if the delegate becomes self-important in their role, using it as a vehicle to voice their own opinions. Bourdieu himself writes that the delegate becomes "a sign in place of the totality of the group" (Bourdieu cited in Kester, 2004, 147).

There are tensions that can exist between the artist and the community due to differing social, cultural and economic positions. Kester notes how

'Community art projects are often centered on an exchange between an artist (who is viewed as creatively, intellectually, financially, and institutionally empowered) and a given subject who is defined a priori as in need of empowerment or access to creative/ expressive skills.' (Kester, 2004, 137)

Kester also reflects upon the dialogue that forms between the outsider/ interpreter and the insider/ local agent.

'These exchanges would combine the theorist's command of "methodological and conceptual tools" with the subject's own complex self-understanding to challenge both the "hidden symbolic assumptions" that define the subjects context and the limitations of abstract theorization. The result would be a "dialogical cross-reconstruction" or "reciprocal elucidation" of a given social context.' (Kester, 2004, 95)

Here the everyday practices of the local participant, meet the theories and concepts of the creative practitioner and a negotiation must take place between these viewpoints in order to generate a collective vision or consensus of opinion. This is perhaps where Nancy's concept of 'being-outside-self', the transcending of your usual social position becomes useful. This effect is engineered by projects that create alternative spaces for participants to converse, enabling all of the participants to shift viewpoints in order to configure a shared understanding of the context. For example, Kester explores the work of artist group Wochenklauser, whose boat project provided an alternative space for conversations to take place between politicians and prostitutes about safety on the streets of Amsterdam.

### 5.3.6 The outcomes of dialogical art practices

Dialogical art practices play out in a range of different physical and metaphorical spaces. On rooftops, in a boat, or within the imaginary spaces of a map or an installation, the location of the 'work of art' may be concrete and tangible (e.g. a sculpture which is the outcome of a collaborative process), or elusive and intangible (e.g. a new form of 'connected-knowledge'). Kester concludes that

'These self-reflexive (albeit time—consuming) forms of interaction are intended, not to result in universally binding decisions, but simply to create a provisional understanding (the necessary precondition for decision making)... Further, the very act of participating in these exchanges makes us better able to engage in discursive encounters and decision-making processes in the future.' (Kester, 2004, 110)

Kester's 'conversation pieces' are form giving in a different sense to the crafting of a beautiful object or painting. These projects provisionally bind together a dynamic 'local consensual knowledge' (Kester, 2004, 112), which in turn acts as a placeholder for participants and collaborators to see things from the perspectives of the other, to transform and re-cohere, and perhaps through this creative process, collectively make an impact on the reality of their everyday lives.

### 5.3.7 Conclusions

Kester's 'conversation pieces' represent new forms of 'dialogical art practice' that have the capacity to open up 'elsewhere spaces' for local and global discussions about everyday social issues. Here the creative practitioner moves into a new role as a 'context provider' and the viewer becomes a collaborator or a participant in the artwork. The artist therefore requires new skills in facilitation and new forms of sensitivity towards working with politically coherent communities. 'Conversation pieces' set up 'open platforms' or 'temporary utopias' for interdisciplinary engagement. Here, people experience 'self-transformation' and 're-coherence' through the ongoing shifts between spatial, temporal and social viewpoints. The dialogical encounter itself can empower people through an aesthetic experience. The outcomes from these encounters include, for example, a provisional understanding shared by local agents to inform the creation of a collective impact within their social context. In the final part of this literature review, I synthesis the findings from my explorations into the work of de Certeau and Kester with the outcomes and insights gained from my co-design and participatory design explorations (Figure 4.12 and Figure 4.13), and the 'Mapping Haberdasher' workshop considerations (See Figure 4.33), to further situate and reflect upon my emerging collaborative design practice.

## 5.4 A cross-analysis of the two texts – situating and reflecting upon my practice

### 5.4.1 Introduction

Michel de Certeau's 'The Practice of Everyday Life' and Grant Kester's 'Conversation Pieces' both set out to explore the social relationships that are played out within a Western hegemonic, capitalist system. Both authors refer to the World Trade Centre in Manhattan, New York as a spectacular symbol of the dominant market economy. De Certeau looks down from the ultimate panoptical viewpoint of the early 1980's, to observe 'the ordinary practitioners of the city' down below (de Certeau, 1984, 93). Kester, writing 20 years later, reflects upon the collapse of the twin towers after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the anticipated effects that this tragic event will have on the intercultural dialogues that underpin our market economy (Kester, 2004, 1). Each author responds differently to the social conditions they identify themselves within. It

is through understanding these differences in approach that I situate and reflect upon my own thesis research project, 'Practicing Awkward Space in the City'.

### 5.4.2 Empowering ordinary men and women in everyday life

De Certeau carries out a post-structuralist investigation that aims to articulate the 'everyday practices' of the 'ordinary man'. He believes these practices create a vital counter-balance to the 'strategies' laid down by the 'mechanics of production' (de Certeau, 1984, xvii). In relationship to this Kester, focuses upon an emerging field of socially driven artistic practices that have in common the ability to emancipate us from what he defines as a 'pseudocommunity of consumers' (Kester, 2004, 29). It is through 'the creative orchestration of collaborative encounters and conversations, well beyond the institutional confines of the gallery or museum' (Kester, 2004, 1) that Kester enters into de Certeau's spaces of the everyday. Whereas de Certeau presents us with a top-down, abstract and objective study of the ordinary man, Kester is concerned with bottom-up, contextually grounded and inter-subjective artworks that engage diverse communities of ordinary men and women. My own research study charts a journey, from initially taking an investigative approach akin to de Certeau, tracking the movements of the 'wandersmann' through a local bus stop and college campus in a series of observational studies (Chapters 2 and 3); to my final case study, facilitating Kester's 'collaborative encounters', which engage a small team of designers and a small group of residents from a housing estate in North London (Chapters 4 and 6). I therefore progress from conducting an abstract, distanced and individual research study to one that is contextually grounded, collaborative and intersubjective.

De Certeau defines everyday practices as the 'tactics' employed by the common man who seeks to subvert the representations produced by the dominant cultural economy to satisfy their own needs or desires. De Certeau describes tactics as 'the ways in which the weak make use of the strong' (de Certeau, 1984, xix). Kester uses the term 'dialogical practices' to refer to interactive, collaborative, participatory artworks. The 'participant' in Kester's artworks, replaces the traditional notion of a 'viewer' who was previously perceived by the art establishment as one of the 'ungifted majority' (Kester, 2004, 42). In the projects that Kester describes, artists seek to create non-hierarchical and open platforms for exchange between consumers (i.e. the weak) and producers (i.e. the strong) in society. Massey describes how de

Certeau's thesis 'is framed by a contrast between strategies and tactics' and how 'this immediately introduces a dichotomy.... between structure and agency'. For Massey, this creates a problematic divide, with the 'conception of power in society as monolithic order on the one hand and the tactics of the weak on the other.' Massey asserts that de Certeau overestimates 'the coherence of the "powerful" and discounts 'the potential power of "the weak", thus making it difficult to discuss the notion of "the weak" in "power" (Massey, 2005, 45). In my research workshop, the residents were able to devise a coherent plan of action for their future activities, thus empowering their collective work on the estate. This works to overcome the problematic divide between strategy and tactics identified by Massey.

The 'Mapping Haberdasher' workshop included designers and local residents. At different points in the process, different people take the lead, becoming 'local experts' or 'design delegates', thus allowing for a creative inter-play between strategies and tactics. One of the ways in which this was made possible was to encourage a 'collective steering of the process' and to 'honour a process of autonomous decision-making and self-reflection' (Kester, 2004, 91). This softens the barrier between 'producers' and 'consumers' allowing the roles become interchangeable and for new roles to emerge.

The Futurist Alvin Toffler coined the term 'prosumer' (Toffler, 1970) to describe the productive capabilities of consumers. Prosumers have largely been discussed in relation to the development of digital technology and web-based cultures. However, the term is now used within social activism movements to describe temporary projects such as DIY and grow your own food (Groiss cited in Haydn and Temel, 2006, 14). I define the Haberdasher residents as urban 'prohabitants', both expert in their local knowledge of their urban neighbourhood and productive through their grounded spatial practices. Taking out the 'consumer' part of this neologism also stresses that these practices are non-consumer practices, suggesting an alternative to the current economic paradigm and supporting a social solidarity outside of the dominant Neoliberal system. A broader implication of my research is the establishment of prohabitant platforms facilitated by design.

De Certeau clearly states that the aim of his investigation is to highlight the significance of 'everyday practices' or the 'ways of operating', which constitute social

relations, of which individuals are considered purely as the 'vehicles' or 'authors' (de Certeau, 1984, xi). As a result, de Certeau erases the presence of the human subject, who is recognised only by the traces they leave behind from their interweaving pathways. Kester challenges De Certeau's poststructuralist approach, stating that

'we need a more nuanced account of communicative experience: one capable of differentiating between an abstract, objectifying mode of discourse that is insensitive to the specific identities of speaking subjects... and a dialogical exchange based on reciprocal openness.' (Kester, 2004, 90).

De Certeau explores the practices of the ordinary man at an abstract, theoretical level, never managing to leave the vantage point of the twin towers and reach the common ground. His 'wandersmann' therefore remains a ghostlike character. Who are these walkers, speakers, readers and believers? What does this conversation that constitutes our local habitats (de Certeau, 1984, xxii) sound like? In comparison, Kester's conversation pieces are community specific. Kester argues that we need to 'recognize complex specificity of human subjects' (Kester, 2004, 74). In our mapping Haberdasher workshop, through discussing awkward space, the participants are invited to interpret and characterise their own personal awkward spatial experiences. These personal insights seed a 'community specific' conversation about the everyday urban habitat. In this case, dialogical practices give voice to everyday practices so as to stockpile and reflect upon everyday tactics.

In defining 'dialogical artistic practice', Kester criticises the writer Bakhtin and the philosopher Levinas for their abstraction of the 'other' in their work. Kester highlights the importance of an ethics of inter-subjectivity, examining the role, the required skills and responsibilities of the artist who engages in collaborative work. Whilst de Certeau's ordinary men and women 'make do' in their 'weak' position as 'tacticians' and 'consumers', Kester's 'ungifted majority' become engaged in 'dialogical creative practices' that enable them to recognise themselves both individually as empathetic human beings and collectively as a 'politically coherent community' (Kester, 2004, 150). Thus, they are able to mobilise themselves towards achieving a positive transformation in their everyday lives.

The evolution from carrying out observational studies to developing a collaborative design approach has required that I work in different ways in my role as a design

researcher. Kester's writing has helped me to reflect upon this experience, particularly with regards to understanding the transformation of my role from being a visual observer of the behaviour at the bus stop, to becoming an 'active listener' whilst facilitating workshops. Other key roles emerged throughout the workshop process. For example, Mathias, who had worked closely with the residents' committee on the MetaboliCity project became what Bourdieu defines as a 'delegate' for the community. This is someone who can "mobilize the group" and who are familiar with the goals of the community (Bourdieu cited in Kester, 2004, 149). Each of the residents became an 'expert of his/ her experience' (Sanders and Stappers, 2008, 12). The other designers in the group played vital roles in providing technical and design assistance and contributing to the dialogue. Working with a design team, rather than going into a community as an individual designer distributed the responsibilities. Working with a small team of designers also diffused the focus on me as a lone researcher leading a process with the residents and the powerimbalance that might come with that. The designers were not intimidating or controlling in their presence in the workshop. The residents had met some of the designers before and were comfortable using them as guides or for support. The designers were there to enable rather than to impose something, which meant that there was an open dialogue between residents and designers. It was also important that some of the designers had been involved in a previous project on the estate, where the outcomes were well received by the residents. This created an unspoken trust between the designers and residents and meant that we were able to get quite far in the workshop in a short amount of time<sup>60</sup>.

### 5.4.3 Temporarily framing a space of 'tactics'

De Certeau identifies two spaces in popular culture, the 'polemological space' where the common populous remain downtrodden and deceived and the 'utopian space', which is a space of possibilities, traditionally affirmed by religious stories (de Certeau, 1984, 17). This utopian space is 'impregnable' because it exists nowhere. It is prized open by the people to hold their stories and to practice their dreams. These spaces of possibility are 'poached' from the territory of the 'other' (de Certeau, 1984, 17).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> The one-day workshop was able to become pivotal within the longer engagement within the community because it was held at a salient point of time. This was identified through my ongoing communications with the residents after the previous project that I had worked with them on. In the future it might be necessary to work with several 'seeding grounds' with an understanding of when to make an intervention within existing cycles of activities.

They are imaginary escape routes. The poachers have no place of their own and so their everyday practices are 'spatial practices' which are opportunistic in nature. De Certeau describes how the tacticians themselves are blind to their inventive ways because they have no perspective on their collective behaviour. Kester's artists become guardians of the possible, creating spaces for open conversations to take place that address social issues. These spaces are also 'other' spaces, temporary 'micro-utopias' (Wood, 2007), or perhaps 'heterotopias' which provide a momentary framing for these tactics to become recognised by those participating. Within these artistic scenarios, social norms are collapsed. Kester describes an example of the work of the artist group WochenKlausur who conducted a series of conversations on a boat with prostitutes and politicians about safety on the streets (Kester, 2004, 2). In this 'other space' these unusual collaborators discuss issues outside of an institutional place where political rhetoric would usually govern the discussion. In my workshop process, new possibilities emerge from artfully constructing a shared platform for a 'collective rethinking of the spaces of everyday life' (Kester, 2004, 98).

De Certeau describes in his work how a space of tactics 'has at its disposal no base where it can capitalize on its advantages, prepare its expansions, and secure independence with respect to circumstances.' (de Certeau, 1984, xix). However, what Kester demonstrates in his collection of projects is the ability for dialogical artistic practices to create a space for people to transcend their social roles and the rhetoric that goes alongside them and through a space of inventive tactics and empathetic insight, enable a new social perspectives to emerge. Kester's artists are therefore able to defy De Certeau's theory that tactics cannot take ground to enable and facilitate what De Certeau himself describes as a much needed 'therapeutics for deteriorating social relations' (de Certeau, 1984, xxiv). One of the potential threats to the process of joining-up spatial tactics is that the resulting strategy becomes oppressive and hinders the residents' informal practices. The urban planner Leonie Sandercock describes how in reality strategic and tactical approaches are never

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Foucault makes a distinction between 'utopia' and 'heterotopia' in his essay 'Of Other Spaces' (Foucault,1986). He defines utopias as 'perfect' yet 'unreal' or 'placeless' sites. Heterotopias, he argues, are 'real', 'enacted utopias', they are 'both mythic and real'. They might be rooted in reality but somehow remain 'outside of all places' (e.g. the honeymoon, or a cemetery). They belong to a whole community but are 'otherly' in their nature. (Foucault, 1986, 24). The Haberdasher workshop space was 'heterotopic' in the sense that it was situated in an everyday context, yet it opened up a space to imagine fantastical possibilities 'other' to that context.

really that black and white and that there are 'transformative and oppressive possibilities' in both the actions of communities and local authorities (Sandercock, 2003).

In an article exploring the notion of 'the void' in the city, Sebregondi focuses upon the evacuated Heygate Estate in Elephant and Castle, London. The author envisions this urban void not as empty of human activities but rather having a kind of freedom from any ownership or rule - isolated from the neo-liberal city status. The author observes how it is in such spaces alternative practices and opportunities for human expression emerge to 'reactivate the space of the city as an open field of possibles' (Sebregondi, 2012, 343). Through engaging with de Certeau's writing about spatial tactics, I have been able to identify examples from my second case study of the 'innumerable and infinitesimal transformations' (de Certeau, 1984, xiv) that take place on the Haberdasher housing estate through the residents' spatial tactics. For example, whilst identifying awkward spaces on the site and discussing how they might become transformed into opportunities, one of the participants was quick to identify how the fencing around a nearby council owned plant room, which was due to be demolished, might be appropriated to provide shelter for an imaginary short-tennis court (See Chapter 4, page 170). Our discussion about these ad hoc opportunities for future actions on the estate provided the residents with the space to reflect upon the small improvements that they make within their everyday activities on the estate, to create starting points for future changes to be made on the estate<sup>62</sup>. The mapping process enables the participants to begin to join-up these small interventions to consider future strategies, such as taking over the management of the green spaces on the estate. I position my co-design practice to mediate in between a strategic place and space of tactics. In terms of my role as a design researcher, I enjoy collaborating with members of urban communities to provide a creative means of articulating and visualising inhabitant knowledge, so that it can be used as a resource for empowering these communities to bring about the meaningful changes they want to see happen within their everyday environment. Mediating between everyday tactics and strategies often means bringing together the right people in the same space.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Hakim Bey defines these moments as 'Temporary Autonomous Zones (TAZ)', stating 'The TAZ is like an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerrilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, *before* the State can crush it' (<a href="http://hermetic.com/bey/taz3.html#labelPirateUtopias">http://hermetic.com/bey/taz3.html#labelPirateUtopias</a>).

This might include city planning authorities, council members, residents and business owners. In the case of the Haberdasher workshop, it meant transforming the residents' insights into their everyday environment into a vision and a plan of action that could be communicated to external funding bodies and other stakeholders involved in 'strategising' the urban realm.

Kester's example of Wochenklausur's project on the boat creates a discreet "frame" which sets the participants apart from 'daily conversation' (Kester, 2004, 111)<sup>63</sup>. The participants in the Haberdasher mapping workshop integrate their daily concerns and issues they face into the discussion. This creates a rich texture, where people at one point are talking about an imagined tomato greenhouse and at another point a recent arrest made on the estate for drug dealing. In this sense, the dialogue is not only a product of 'self transformation' as in Kester's example (that comes about through the transcending of social roles). This situated discussion forms a collective realisation of the transformative potential of their inventive tactics. The 'framing' in this case, provided by the workshop's flexible structure, provides the residents with the opportunity to reflect upon their activities on the estate and explore how to develop them further through conversations about real and imagined space.

### 5.4.4 Creative conversations that shape space

Both De Certeau and Kester draw a connection between discursive acts and spatial practices and the declarative and procedural forms of knowledge they produce. De Certeau states that 'walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language' (de Certeau, 1984, 97). His wandersmann chooses which spaces to 'condemn to disappearance' (de Certeau, 1984, 99) through his practice, thus rendering them unspoken and unknown. De Certeau also proposes that place becomes habitable through conversation (de Certeau, 1984, pxxii and p106). He describes how local stories or other forms of discourse, like tools, carry the imprints of their uses over time (de Certeau, 1984, 21). They become a 'container of a *narrativity* for everyday practices' (de Certeau, 1984, 70). These stories are the only ways in which the procedural knowledge acquired through practice (i.e. that which

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Architectural theorist Petrescu refers to these activities as 'discrete spatial interventions' that 'open up unexpected possibilities of thinking and acting in the public realm' (Petrescu, 2006).

can only be shown), finds its way into a kind of declarative knowledge (i.e. that which can be said).

In a sense, Kester's dialogical artworks also become 'a container of a narrativity for everyday practices'. Kester himself describes these artworks as temporarily framing spaces for conversations about places. They enable the generation of 'a local consensual knowledge that is only provisionally binding and that is grounded... at the level of collective interaction' (Kester, 2004, 112). These creative, microcosmic events are therefore able to draw valuable insights from what de Certeau defines as the 'silent knowledge' that is passed "just between you and me" (de Certeau, 1984, 108)<sup>64</sup>. In de Certeau's work, everyday practices cannot be stockpiled and the practitioners are blind to their actions and so 'know-how takes on the appearance of an "intuitive" or "reflex" ability, which is almost invisible and whose status remains unrecognized' (de Certeau, 1984, 69). Whilst in Kester's work the know-how 'grounded in collective interaction' is 'contextually grounded' and 'connected' and is acquired through 'empathetic identification' and 'recognition of the social context' (Kester, 2004, 113). De Certeau's know-how acquired through everyday practice remains imbedded and unrecognised beyond the event whilst Kester's know-how is somehow channelled through a process of creative collaboration so that it might exist beyond its context to inform future decision-making. Thus, dialogical practices become the means by which de Certeau's know-how can emerge explicitly.

The benefits of 'dialogical artistic practice' are that it potentially helps the participants involved in the process become 'better able to engage in discursive encounters and decision-making processes in the future' (Kester, 2004, 110). The provisional shared understanding acquired by the participants may or may not find its way into other forms of declarative knowledge at a later stage – thus moving from the sphere of tactics into the realm of a local strategy. These processes hold promise for the mobilisation of the 'ordinary men and women' in society but must be kept under scrutiny in light of current political motivation towards localisation<sup>65</sup>. How can Kester's

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> This is perhaps comparable to the unspoken, 'public knowledge' generated by Gibson's community of users (Chapter 2, page 56), which I applied to an understanding of how the bus passengers at the bus stop formed a group awareness of when the bus was arriving.
<sup>65</sup> Whilst writing this thesis, the Conservative Party have come into power in the UK (2010), launching an initiative called the Big Society (http://www.thebigsociety.co.uk/). The big question is whether the Big Society is an 'attempt to fill a vacuum left by the withdrawal of

'politically coherent communities' remain autonomous? How can we avoid 'dialogical determinism' (Kester, 2004, 182) in the development of community engagement initiatives?<sup>66</sup> How can we resist the filling in and building up of "spaces in-between," and the 'political freezing of the place' (de Certeau, 2004, 128) where these dialogues might occur?<sup>67</sup>

The residents initiate the workshop process by sharing their 'treatments of awkward space'. These stories 'open up the field' for new spatial practices to emerge on the estate. Here, awkward space acts as a boundary concept, which is 'a loosely defined concept, which has a strong cohesive power' (Lowy, 1992 cited in Allen, 2009, 355). Engaging in a conversation that evolves around the participants' identification and description of the awkward space that they experience in their everyday life begins to generate a shared narrative of the estate and the residents' spatial practices<sup>68</sup>. As described in my workshop report in Chapter 4, this narrative oscillates between the real and the imagined. At one moment the residents are discussing current issues with the estate, and at another moment they are creating shrubs and trees out of broccoli to line the street. In this sense, the conversation becomes a 'creative conversation'.

Working towards a 'connected knowing' amongst the team of residents and designers requires 'empathetic insight' and 'recognition of the social context'.

Connecting up to my previous research into the field of co-design, the authors Sanders and Stappers reflect upon the production of shared knowledge, stating that

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universal provision, or genuine effort to energise community-led volunteering and enterprises' (http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2013/mar/05/end-david-camerons-big-society). <sup>66</sup> Urban action researcher Larsen has coined the term 'vague space' to refer to spaces in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Urban action researcher Larsen has coined the term 'vague space' to refer to spaces in the city that attract informal practices, which resist becoming formalised. He describes how 'new forms of dialogical processes and political agendas have evolved from these incubating cracks, eventually challenging the rigidity and antagonism of formal urban policy processes' (Larsen, 2010, 7).

<sup>(</sup>Larsen, 2010, 7).

67 Petrescu, for example, states that 'The question poised of all strategic policies, is how to address this rebellious user, how not to discipline or erase him or her, how not to exclude informal dynamics, but how to integrate them with their own role?' (Petrescu, 2006, 85). This asks the question how can the Haberdasher residents' activities become acknowledged by, for example, Hackney council or other outside agencies, as contributing something positive to the development of the public realm, without becoming formalised or exploited? Whilst this is a salient question for further research, it lies beyond the scope of this particular project.

68 In 'Awkwardness: An Essay', awkwardness is described as a 'social phenomenon' and so an analysis of awkwardness should focus upon the social situation in which awkwardness makes itself felt, rather than the awkward individuals (Kotsko, 2010, 7). In my study into awkward space, I also approach awkwardness as a common, human quality, which can seed empathetic dialogue amongst the resident participants about their everyday environment.

'In co-design... the roles get mixed up: the person who will eventually be served through the design process is given the position of 'expert of his/ her experience', and plays a large role in knowledge development, idea generation and concept development.' (Sanders and Stappers, 2008, 12)

As I discussed earlier, my emerging co-design practice is not a 'design development process' that includes users of a final product. It is a design facilitated and resourced, creative collaborative inquiry into everyday life on the estate, which supports 'the democratic involvement of people in addressing social changes' (Szebeko and Tan, 2010, 582). Here, my role as a designer in is to enable other actors to 'develop and build upon their own capacity and resilience, and draw upon their own assets' (Thorpe and Gamman, 2011, 221). Within this process residents are asked to reflect upon their spatial tactics and work towards co-creating, with the guidance of designers, a meta-vision for their future activities on the estate. This produces what Kester defines as 'new forms of subjectivity' (Kester, 2004, 122), as the residents begin to reflect upon and realise their creative potential. From this point of view, my co-design workshop methodology connects current principles and characteristics of community-based participatory design (DiSalvo, et al., 2013), with an approach to temporarily framing 'otherly spaces', which is informed by the field of dialogical art.

### 5.4.5 Mapping and sharing inhabitant knowledge

The residents took away from the process a dynamic, collaborative map of the estate and an evaluation framework. It is their decision how they use the 'provisionally binding' 'consensual knowledge' embedded within these documents for future funding bids and applications. The map included images of the residents pointing to awkward space, situating them inside the vision of the estate and allowing them to see themselves from outside of the map (See Chapter 4, page 163). This reflexive technique shares some qualities with the montages that the artist Steve Willats produces with residents on housing estates. In his work, the residents are mapped into images of their estate alongside their personal interiors. Willats' identifies that this technique can help the residents to 'distance themselves from immersion in the life-world of the estate and to reflect back critically on the network of visible and invisible forces that pattern that world.' (Willats cited in Kester, 2004, 93).

It is important to also reflect upon the knowledge gained by the designers involved in this process too. This collaborative encounter can inform their future practice through further developing concepts, tools, resources and facilitation skills for co-designing in an urban context. Here, Kester's proposal that 'dialogical aesthetics' enables 'a more open-ended pedagogical interaction' (Kester, 2004, 26) can be understood in the context of co-design and the generation of co-design tools and processes. Figure 5.1 presents a workshop template derived from the outcomes of my Haberdasher workshop experience. The template aims to provide other design facilitators with a set of considerations for running a similar workshop. The qualities and characteristics in this workshop template can be cross-referenced with the diagram mapping a community-based participatory design approach in Chapter 4 to trace the development of my methods (See page 149).

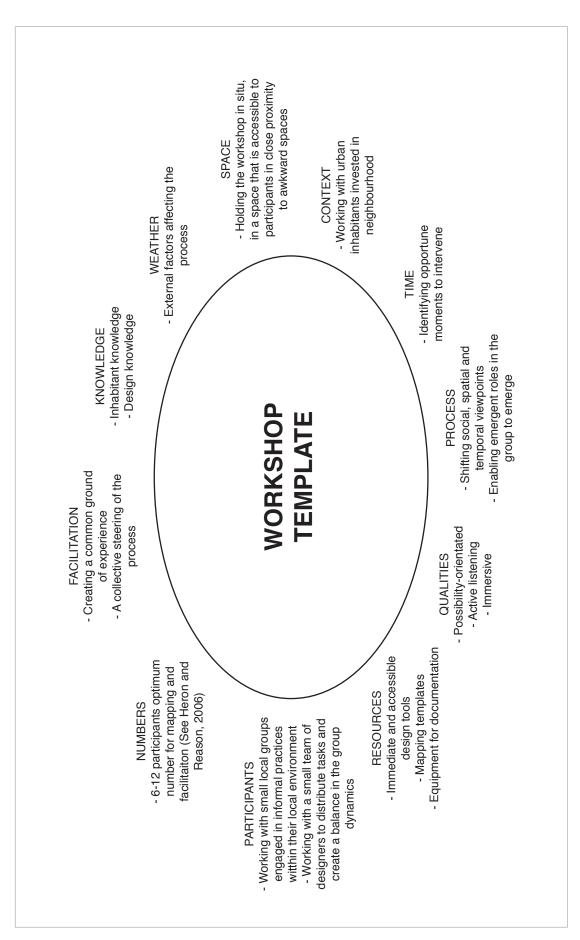


Figure 5.1 Workshop template

### 5.4.6 Conclusions

The first literature review drew upon concepts and theories from ecological psychology and social anthropology to furnish an understanding of how and why we experience awkward space in the city (Chapter 3, page 52). The review revealed that awkward space was embedded within human practices intimately connected to their environmental context. This second literature review suggests how dialogical practices can frame these awkward spatial experiences to stockpile and reflect upon the inhabitant knowledge imbedded within a local community. Understanding de Certeau's and Kester's different investigative approaches has helped me to reflect upon and frame my own research journey, from observing the 'wandersmann' at the bus stop to engaging 'inventive tacticians' in a creative collaborative design inquiry. Through conducting a cross analysis of 'The Practice of Everyday Life' and 'Conversation Pieces' I have identified four key themes. These are 'empowering ordinary men and women in everyday life', 'temporarily framing a space of tactics', 'creative conversations that shape space' and 'mapping and sharing inhabitant knowledge'. These themes have helped me to begin to organise a critical framework for the findings and reflections from my case studies and to situate my own practice (See Figure 5.1). Table 5.1 presents the themes, sub-themes and key concepts to have emerged from my cross-analysis to inform my approach to practicing awkward space in the city. In the next chapter, I report on my second visit to Haberdasher, one-year after the mapping workshop took place. I returned to meet the residents to co-evaluate the workshop process, assess the impact of the workshop, to discuss the role of design in supporting their activities and to speak to them about their future plans.

PRACTICING AWKWARD SPACE APPROACH AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Empowering ordinary women and men in everyday life	<ul> <li>Developing a contextually grounded, collaborative and inter-subjective practice.</li> <li>Setting up an open 'prohabitant' platform – beyond a producer/ consumer dichotomy.</li> <li>Recognising the complex specificity of individuals.</li> <li>Allowing for emerging roles in a group to support autonomous decision-making and reflection.</li> </ul>
Temporarily framing a space of tactics	<ul> <li>Framing temporary utopias and spaces of possibility.</li> <li>Setting up situated and transformative process, leading to new social perspectives.</li> <li>Joining the dots and relating spatial practices to a bigger picture.</li> <li>Positioning my co-design practice in between strategy and tactics.</li> </ul>
Creative conversations that shape space	<ul> <li>Working with stories as know-how containers.</li> <li>Stockpiling, visualising, and valuing 'invisible' inhabitant knowledge.</li> <li>Mobilising the knowledge that is acquired through spatial practices.</li> <li>Collectively rehearsing future decision-making.</li> </ul>
Mapping and sharing inhabitant knowledge	<ul> <li>A repository for a provisionally binding, collective understanding.</li> <li>Supporting a highly reflexive process (shifting spatial, temporal and social viewpoints).</li> <li>Engaging in an open-ended pedagogical interaction (designers and residents learning together).</li> </ul>

Table 5.1 Practicing awkward space approach and recommendations

# **Chapter 6: Revisiting Haberdasher**

### 6.1 Introduction

After carrying out the 'Mapping Haberdasher' workshop in March 2010 and critically reflecting upon the findings through my second literature review, I set about organising a one-year-on co-evaluation meeting with the Haberdasher residents. The primary aim of this meeting was to gain feedback on the workshop process and experience and to gauge the workshop's impact, if any, upon the residents' estate activities. The meeting would also provide an opportunity to talk through elements of my workshop report with the residents and to hand over to them a copy of this document, along with extra workshop footage. It took me longer than I anticipated to re-establish contact with the residents and I found it really challenging chasing people down<sup>69</sup>. It later transpired that several members of the group had experienced a difficult year since we had carried out the workshop due to personal reasons<sup>70</sup>. I finally spoke to Jan on the telephone and she mentioned that she didn't think the other residents would have much to tell me. Through Jan, I managed to get in touch with Neil and we arranged to meet each other on a Sunday afternoon<sup>71</sup>.

The following sections outline how I planned for revisiting the Haberdasher residents and my aims and approach to this final stage of my research investigation.

# 6.2 Research approach

#### 6.2.1 Aims and approach

This meeting was an opportunity to temporarily 'reframe' a space of tactics and continue the conversation with the residents through a second cycle of reflection. The meeting also provided an opportunity to discover the residents' perspective on design and working with designers, which enabled me to gain some reflexive data to inform the development of my own practice. Finally, it brought the residents together to discuss their plans for the future.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> It was challenging because one-year had passed and I personally felt awkward reestablishing a connection with the group. Had I left it too long? Would they remember the workshop? Had it been at all significant?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> These were the primary external factors to impact upon the research process.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> We finally managed to meet up on Sunday 27th November 2011, approx. a year and a half after the workshop event.

In terms of my research process, I set out to facilitate an 'interactive, situational and generative' approach to data collection (Mason, 2002, 225). I continued to work within a 'shared knowledge space' with the residents, which allowed us to continue discussing issues and concerns regarding the estate together. So this meeting was not only about eliciting data about the workshop but it was also a follow-up stage in our collaborative process.

## 6.2.2 Different types of evaluation methods

I considered alternative evaluative methods to elicit feedback on the workshop, including, for example, sending out a survey to the residents. Denscombe however describes how data relating to 'emotions and experiences' or 'sensitive issues' is usually 'difficult to obtain in a questionnaire' (Denscombe, 1998). This is due to questionnaires being limited to a fixed and orderly structure. I therefore decided that carrying out a face-to-face meeting would be more a appropriate method of gathering responses from the residents about their awkward spatial practices and to continue to work with a collaborative approach to knowledge production.

### 6.2.3 Framing questions to guide the discussion

Towards this end, I prepared a set of 'open-ended' questions to guide the co-evaluation conversation with the residents. This is a technique used in qualitative interviewing, which provides a 'flexibility to follow up on interesting issues that emerge, and to let the interviewee provide more detail, or a wider perspective on issues raised by the researcher' (Denscombe,1998). I began by asking the residents to cast their mind back to the workshop, asking them to reflect on their experience and to define key moments. I then selected appropriate questions to build upon their responses, so as to guide our conversation. The questions were intended to prompt the residents to 'recount or narrate relevant situations' (Mason, 2002, 228), which is an approach intended to 'privilege the accounts of social actors' (Mason, 2002, 225). I designed the sequence of questions to begin with recollections of the workshop and to end on a motivational note, discussing future plans. In the middle I probed the residents about more sensitive issues about the everyday life on the estate and working with designers.

### Categories for questions

## Warming up

 Talking through key parts of the workshop report. Jogging each other's memories about the workshop.

#### Workshop feedback

 Exemplar questions - What do you remember most about the workshop? What did you take forward after the workshop? Was the workshop useful? Why?

#### The role of design in the community

• Exemplar questions - How would you define design? How have you experienced working with designers? What are the benefits and the challenges?

#### Future plans and activities

Exemplar question - What will you do next?

Table 6.1 Categories of questions

## 6.2.4 Co-evaluating with a small group

In Laurel's book 'Design Methods' she outlines the benefits of interviewing pairs and small groups of research participants. She describes how conducting interviews with a small group can put at ease 'participants who are uncomfortable in participating in research'. The residents seemed more confident taking part in this group conversation than when I previously interviewed them one-on-one as part of the MetaboliCity project<sup>72</sup>. Other benefits of group interviews are that they often allow for 'animated, insightful and candid' conversations, with a 'depth and breadth' of viewpoints (Laurel, 2003). In the meeting, one of the residents admitted that they didn't remember much about the workshop and immediately other residents commented that they were also unsure about how much they would be able to recall. Equally, when one person remembered a key part of the mapping exercise, other

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> I had interviewed both John and Neil as part of the MetaboliCity project in 2009. This previous experience meant that they were more confident in an interview/ co-evaluation setting than perhaps, for example, Eileen who hadn't been interviewed before. Jan. Mary and Maureen were also members of the Tenants Residents Association (TRA), which also meant that they were familiar with public forums and answering questions. These factors influenced the residents' ability to be able to actively engage in the co-evaluation meeting. Their common commitment to issues such as estate gardening and maintenance also influenced their willingness to continue to engage with my process. At this stage in the research they were familiar with me and became comfortable discussing their activities soon after the conversation began.

participants would come back into the conversation adding different perspectives. The group dynamic enabled this honest and upfront feedback. Group interviews are also 'time effective' (Laurel, 2003), which was an important factor in my research at this stage, as organising one meeting with everyone had been challenging time-wise.

### 6.2.5 My role as a researcher

My role as a designer/ researcher in this meeting was more of a 'moderator' than 'question master'. I encouraged the residents to lead the discussion to allow for interesting issues and insights to emerge. This was a continuation of my role as a facilitator, again using a gentle prompting to guide the conversation. I was able to secure this second meeting with the residents due to the trust built up through my previous interactions with the group. It would have been difficult, if not impossible, to send in someone else to meet with the residents. However, this did mean that my role as the researcher influenced the responses from the residents. In an attempt to address the 'interviewer-effect' (Denscombe, 1998, 116), where participants tailor responses to please the researcher, I avoided asking questions that required the residents to directly confirm the success or failure of my methods and approaches. In some cases, I used the hand-over documentation from the workshop as a prop to divert the attention from myself. Referring to the material that we had experienced and generated together worked as an indirect way of eliciting the feedback on the process. Giving the residents the opportunity to read through the workshop report also enabled them to feedback on the material and comment upon its reliability. Therefore as a researcher, I kept the participants close, involving them in different stages of the research process, which is key to a qualitative and interpretative research approach. Even though my role had an influence on the residents' feedback we were still able to broach sensitive issues.

## 6.2.6 Reframing a space of tactics

Presenting the workshop documentation at the start of the meeting helped the residents to jog their memories about the day. The documentation included a draft copy of my workshop report, along with a DVD including the time-lapse recording of the mapping session, a film of the estate tour, and photographs of the process. Initiating our conversation by revisiting the evaluation continuums in the report provided a motivational start to the meeting. This process enabled the group to find our way back into the space that we had shared as part of the workshop,

rediscovering strands of conversations and ideas from the day and getting used to each other's voices again. The meeting provided an opportunity for, what action researchers Heron and Reason would describe as, a second cycle of reflection<sup>73</sup> with this group of, what I have defined as, 'urban prohabitants'. The co-evaluative nature of the session continued the 'co-productive' vein of the study (Mason, 2002, 227) working with the residents.

#### 6.2.7 Data collection and analysis

The co-evaluation meeting was audio recorded and later transcribed (See Appendix D2). However, due to not wanting to encroach on peoples' privacy and to enable a less formal dialogue, I refrained from recording my visit to Mary and Neil's flat and my walk around the estate with Neil. I captured my reflections upon these events afterwards in my research journal. Whilst walking around the estate with Neil, I photographed the tomato green house and the estate's green space.

The report draws upon the transcripts and journal notes made before and after the meeting. I organised my analysis of the data in relation to what was interesting and noticeable in the transcripts (Rapley, 2007), earmarking themes and concepts that had emerged in previous parts of my research investigation. The themes relate to the setting and context, the perspectives held by the participants, reflections on the workshop process, the participants' ways of thinking about design, and the participants' plans for the future. I give a chronological account of the meeting as a way of presenting the findings, whilst telling the story. This is an interpretive approach to data analysis, that requires careful reading and cross-analysis. The coevaluation meeting data was combined with the data acquired from the workshop and the findings from the second part of my literature review.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Co-operative inquiry creates an 'intentional interplay between reflection and making sense on the one hand, and experience and action on the other.' (Heron and Reason, 2006, 144). Co-researchers are taken through several cycles of action and reflection to 'inform' and 'transform' social practices. In my workshop, we underwent two cycles of reflection through the evaluation exercises nested within the process. This is not therefore a co-operative inquiry but is rather inspired by the general principles of co-operative inquiry.

# 6.3 Setting the scene

On the day of the co-evaluation meeting I took the bus to the Haberdasher estate. In a nervous panic I got off the bus at the wrong stop and I remember having to run to the estate to make it on time. The estate is like a rabbit warren and I criss-crossed the stairwells and footways to get to the community meeting room. I expected to find Neil sitting inside but when I opened the door, nearly all the residents from our workshop were sat around the table. This is where we had mapped the estate over a year ago. Neil had managed to round everybody up<sup>74</sup>. This was a significant moment in my research and I felt honoured and relieved that people had made the effort to come after a relatively long period of time since our workshop<sup>75</sup>.

We immediately decamped to Maureen's house to warm up because the meeting room was still without heating. This immediately created a more intimate space for our conversations. I had previously attended a couple of residents' committee meetings at Maureen's house and so it felt quite familiar. I set up a camera to make an audio recording of the meeting. I had prepared a copy of my workshop report and a DVD with footage and photographs from the workshop and had these to hand to prompt our discussion. We kicked off with tea and biscuits.

In preparation for the meeting, I had put together a set of questions to loosely guide our conversations (See Appendix D1, page 468). The overall meeting lasted for just over an hour. We spent time looking at sections of the workshop report and the footage from the workshop. I asked the residents to highlight memorable aspects of the workshop and to consider its possible benefits. After having reflected upon the role of my design practice, mediating between 'strategy' and 'tactics' in Chapter 5, I wanted to discuss with the residents how they had experienced working with different types of designers and their relationship to design in everyday life and how this might be improved. We concluded our discussion with the residents' plans for future estate

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Six out of the original seven participants from the workshop joined the co-evaluation meeting, including Neil, Mary, Maureen, Jan, John and Eileen.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> As it had been difficult to re-establish contact with the group, I had become worried that the residents had not really valued the workshop. I later realised that the lack of contact had been due to personal issues facing several members of the group and their own perception that they had not really achieved much in the time since the workshop. Also because they are not an organisation or formal body it was more difficult to co-ordinated people. I think some of the residents were also concerned that due to the amount of time that had passed, they may have forgotten what happened in the workshop.

activities. After the meeting came to an end, Mary and Neil offered to show me their flat and its views from the top of the tower block. I then spent an hour with Neil walking around the estate and visiting the community garden spaces, including their newly constructed tomato greenhouse.

# 6.4 Revisiting the workshop outcomes

In the first part of our meeting, we discussed the evaluation framework that we had collectively charted at the end of our workshop (See Chapter 4, pages 179 - 180). The evaluation framework continuums are re-presented below, with the tasks subsequently achieved highlighted in red (See Table 6.2 – Table 6.4).

Time/ Activities	3 days	In- between	3 weeks	3 months	1 year	3 years
	Plant beans and marigolds	Painting of the estate	Grow bags	Festivals, competitions and events 'Hackney in Bloom'	Estate composting	Community hall
		Public liability insurance	Graffiti displays/ art spaces	Recycling tyre planters	Sports ground	Lottery grants
				Barbeque and social event	Green house	
					Managed green space	
					Tower wind turbine/ solar	

KEY: Text highlighted in red = tasks achieved

Table 6.2 Time continuum

Budget/ Activities	£2		£5400	£25000	£50000+
	Graffiti displays (Rich Mix)	Good soil (£40)	Sports ground	Tower wind turbine + solar	Community hall
	Public liability insurance	Grow bags	Estate composting (£8k)		
	Tyre tubes	Barbeque			
		Greenhouse £2k+			
		Garden and self- managed			

green space		

KEY: Text highlighted in red = tasks achieved

Table 6.3 Budget continuum

Possibility/ Activities	Easy	Achievable	Awkward	Impossible
	Public liability insurance	Sports ground	Community hall	Mushroom farm
	Barbeque	Mayor + business partner for Shoreditch	Tower wind turbine solar	
	Greenhouse	Self-managed green space		
	Recycle tyre planters	Business in the community time bank St.Lukes		
	Grow bags	Estate composting		
	Haberdasher lottery fund	Graffiti displays		

KEY: Text highlighted in red = tasks achieved

Table 6.4 Possibility continuum

## 6.4.1 Unexpected achievements

Talking through the evaluation framework in my report enabled the residents to collectively take stock and reflect upon their activities over the year. The tasks completed sit in the 'easy' and 'achievable' columns and roughly lie in the one-year period since the workshop. The green house and the estate composting are the two most costly and significant achievements. In recent weeks, the residents had also successfully managed to get the estate repainted for the first time since 1969.

Several members of the group hadn't had time to work on the estate gardening over the year because of personal issues. As a result, they had felt as though they hadn't achieved much. In going over the evaluation framework, the group realised that they had actually got more done than they had expected, declaring 'Really, if we hadn't had a look at that we probably would have thought that we hadn't done much this year, and we have' (Jan, Appendix D2, page 486). This activity created a positive momentum to the start of our meeting. As we continued to discuss the continuums

and the activities on the estate, several key issues emerged, which I present thematically in the following sections.

## 6.4.2 Time, responsibility and expectations

The community hall, which sits in the 'awkward' column in the possibility continuum, continued to be a contentious point of discussion<sup>76</sup>. The majority of this small group of residents are all active members of the Tenants Resident Association (TRA) representing the tenants of the Haberdasher Estate. They described how other estates around Haberdasher have community halls that are run by TRA's and that the sense that they had got from meeting with them was that it was a big responsibility. They felt that it would be too time consuming to run a community hall at Haberdasher. They also commented that there was already a low attendance at committee meetings and a lack of community involvement shown by the tenants on the estate. Mary added

'...as I told someone the other day, if we had a community hall on the estate I wouldn't be doing what I am doing because it takes too much time and I've got enough to do.' (Mary, Appendix D2, page 475).

The residents also voiced concern for the way people are treated who get involved in managing the community halls, describing how some innocent people have been accused by other tenants of not handling money properly etc... The members of the group concluded that community halls are often run off good will and that the people involved should be given a contract and paid by the council.

We revisited the idea of taking the gardening in-house, which was placed in the 'achievable' column of the possibility continuum. The residents now felt that the Estate Services, who manage the green spaces on the estate, had improved. The gardeners were coming more often and even tending to the residents' own community garden. They had also reduced the costs of the service for the leaseholders. This, in combination with the lack of time people had managed to commit to the gardening over the year, had created less of an incentive for taking on the gardening.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> See Chapter 4, page 172 for previous discussions relating to the community hall.

The wind turbines and solar panels, which are placed in the awkward column, were quickly dismissed in our conversation, even though it was previously acknowledged that the Waterhouse restaurant had successfully installed solar panels, paid for by Hackney Council.

We discussed the estate composting, which at the time of this meeting was just about to be implemented. This initiative had come about after an event at the Waterhouse Restaurant in Shoreditch<sup>77</sup>, where Neil and Jan had met with a resident from another estate in the area who was running a composting service. The residents were waiting for the right bins to arrive to start the composting scheme.

At several points in our conversation, there were comments from the group about how it is people who don't work full-time who have the time to commit to community-led activities. This suggested a tension around the commitment of time to initiatives such as the estate's composting scheme.

## 6.4.3 Changing landscape and demographics

The residents spent time discussing the changes taking place in and around the estate. Jan observed that there were less children and old people on the estate, suggesting that people were subletting flats to young professionals in their 30's and 40's<sup>78</sup>. She described how 'I just keep seeing all these strangers... I keep seeing loads of people from you know, not from years ago' (Jan, Appendix D2, page 475). Eileen observed how the one-bed flats in particular were being filled with single men. The group commented upon how the new occupants on the estate don't get involved in the community. They reflected upon how this was lucky in a way because they don't get any trouble from them. They all felt that it was people from outside the estate coming in that created problems. In the time since the workshop, the area around the estate had been significantly altered, with a large Premier Inn City hotel

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> This was a Hackney gardening event that took place in June 2010 at the Waterhouse restaurant in Hackney. Jamie Eagles from the Shoreditch Trust set up the event. It was here that I first met up with the Neil and Jan after the mapping workshop and showed them the time-lapse footage from the day. Along with Rachel and Mathias from Loop.pH, I took part in an informal meeting with the Jan and Neil and a resident from another estate, to discuss schemes for estate composting.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> These perceptions correlate with the 2011 Census data regarding the Haberdasher Estate neighbourhood, included in Chapter 4. Data reveals that only 16% of the population in this neighbourhood in Hackney are 0-15, 8% are over 65, whilst 45% sit in the 25-44 age range.

and more student accommodation being built in close proximity to the estate. These activities had created some disruptions on the estate.

#### 6.4.4 The relationship between inside and outside

Through our discussion, there emerged a picture of an inside-outside relationship between this group of residents and the other tenants on the estate, and between the estate and the surrounding area. It is important to reiterate that this group of residents are not representative of the different people living on the estate. They are a community group that has formed around their activities on the estate, including the TRA and the gardening work. They are also largely an older group of residents who have known each other's families for a long time. From our discussion, there is an evident lack of dialogue between residents' committee and the majority of tenants. The group continually referred to a culture of complaining that was prevalent on the estate. Complaints from the tenants included a lack of play space for children and a lack of gardening taking place. These comments had been made by tenants at TRA meetings and overheard by people on the estate. The group acknowledge through this discussion that they are a community amongst themselves. To gain a broader understanding of the estate's issues would require enlisting a larger group of residents. Whilst this was not practically possible within this study, it could be an area for further research.

Jan discussed how the council were hoping to gate the estate and introduce an entry-phone system intended to deter people walking and kids riding their bikes through the estate. She described how the workman from the surrounding developments, sit and have their lunch on the estate and leave their rubbish. The group were all in favour of gating the estate. Maureen pointed out that other estates around Haberdasher have become gated in recent times and the police have commented that this is likely to make the Haberdasher Estate more vulnerable to crime. Neil and Mary described how it is the stairwells and the space around the garages that attract drug dealers and sinister activities. Maureen confirmed this, exclaiming 'It's the awkward spaces that we all walked around' (Maureen, Appendix D2, page 479). John added 'I don't know why they don't brick them all up' (John, Appendix D2, page 479). The discussion about gating the estate highlights the groups' concerns with security and the increasing problems they have with people outside coming in.

## 6.4.5 Summary

The residents reacted positively to the evaluation framework in the workshop report. We all looked over these together and the group were genuinely surprised and proud of what they had achieved over the course of the year. Revisiting the continuums also brought up a number of issues. These included the challenges of running community halls and the security on the estate. The group identified a number of ongoing changes to have taken place, including a shift in demographics, with less children and old people within the estate and the increasing intrusion of outsiders, effected by the changes to the landscape around the estate. There was a contradiction between on the one hand, the groups' criticism of the other tenants' lack of investment in their neighbourhood and on the other hand how the relatively little 'grief' from other people made life easier for the members of the TRA. Towards the end of the discussion, awkward space became synonymous with gating the community. This highlighted that without the methods used in the mapping workshop for exploring the possibilities associated with awkward space, the residents 'condemned these spaces to disappearance'.

# 6.5 Feedback on the workshop process

The workshop took place almost 18 months after our mapping workshop. At the time of the mapping workshop we had intended to carry out a feedback session one year on from the workshop. The delay was in part connected to personal setbacks that had affected a few of the residents involved in the workshop. I asked the residents to think back to the workshop and to identify key moments that they could remember. I then asked them to reflect upon what they felt was successful about the workshop process. John commented on the mapping process itself, recalling in particular, the 3-dimensional method of mapping, with the Lego, vegetables and other materials to collage (See Appendix D2, page 480). In general, everyone mentioned the mapping and the walk around the estate as being memorable parts of the workshop.

Maureen's comments provided the most useful insights into the impact of the overall workshop process. She described, with the rest of the group's agreement, how

'I thought the thing that was amazing really was you know, I used to walk my dog around the estate regularly and I'd seen all these grotty spaces time and time and time again... often thought to myself "God awful thing that is, awful space". I tell you what was good about doing that was, for me personally, it certainly made me look at the place and think "well yes we could do something with that" because never up until that point... it did sort of stimulate your brain a little bit, so you think well yes there is a possibility of doing... I mean I think sometimes, well I did think we were in the realms of fantasy, but I did think it was good from that point of view. I think as a group we don't get the pressure to think artistically, we're all very pragmatic people aren't we...' (Maureen, Appendix D2, page 480).

Maureen interpreted awkward space in this recollection of our workshop as 'grotty space' and 'awful space'. These definitions echo Jan's original description of awkward space on the estate, as the 'dark... bombsite' spaces, full of rubbish, foxes and evidence of suspected homeless people (Chapter 4, 160). These definitions of awkward space differ from the logistical awkward space experienced in my own negotiations of the flow of interactions at the bus stop on my way to work, and the students' flow-based experience of awkward space at the edge of their campus. The awkward spaces identified by the residents on the Haberdasher Estate are closer in proximity to their homes and this can be felt through their personal accounts. Most of the residents awkward spaces feel more like awkward places, parts of the neighbourhood that are easily distinguishable and named, such as the pram sheds.

Maureen's workshop reflections evidence a shift from thinking negatively about the 'grotty spaces' on the estate to considering the 'possibility of doing' something with these spaces. They also highlight the value of thinking 'artistically' as opposed to a usual pragmatic approach to problem solving on the estate. This is a significant outcome from the co-evaluation meeting, as it suggests that the workshop process succeeded in its aims to introduce the concept of awkward space to seed situated and imaginative conversations about life on the estate and to facilitate and enable the re-imagining these spaces as opportunities.

Maureen reflected further that 'It needs somebody from outside to come in and sort of say, "well what do you think of that?" you know because we don't' (Maureen, Appendix D2, page 481). This highlights the value of someone from outside coming in to prompt the residents' own investigations. It also provides some feedback upon my own role in this 'co-design' process, with part of my 'co-designing' role being to prompt people to question their local environment. Finally, Maureen observed that

'The other thing was, particularly amongst the arguments that we had amongst ourselves, that although all of us have walked around time and time again, half of the time we couldn't remember which was where anyway' (Maureen, Appendix D2, page 481).

This comment reveals how the workshop process created a situated platform for people to look carefully at their estate and discuss the things they observed together. They were able to listen to each other's different viewpoints about the estate so as to begin to develop a connected-knowing. The group established a shared picture of the estate that was represented in their collaborative map. This relates back to Kester's notion of hierarchy, discussed in Chapter 5, Page 197.

Reflecting upon the workshop also prompted people to share stories from the past. As we all watched the video of Neil, taking us on a tour of the 'Haberdasher dungeons', a conversation unfolded about what the pram sheds were like before people started breaking in and stealing stuff. Maureen reminded the group that this was when they had an estate caretaker. The group fondly remembered Vic the caretaker, who built a sand pit. Tapping into awkward space brought forth stories, revealing an intimate connection between space and memory.

The group agreed that the main impact of the workshop was that it 'opened your eyes and made you look at things in a different way' (Jan and Maureen, Appendix D2, page 486). This was made even more effective by looking back at the workshop's evaluative framework, which helped to reveal what had been accomplished over the year. The one achievement that they were aware of was the construction of the greenhouse. Neil described how it took a while to find someone to build it and that people haven't been able to do much with it so far. Apparently, some of the tenants had complained that it hadn't been available to use. After the workshop, I visited the greenhouse with Neil and we discussed how he had designed it and sourced the materials. I will come back to this later in the chapter.

In recalling their experience of the workshop process and reflecting upon its impact, Maureen described recognising the 'possibility of doing' something with the spaces she experienced as awkward. This signified a shift in perspective from focusing on grotty and awful. A creative and often 'fantastical' thinking process was identified as

aiding an exploration the opportunities around awkward space. It was also highlighted as important that an outsider facilitated this process, to prompt the residents to question their everyday environment. Importantly, the workshop provided a situated framework to bring the group together to settle arguments amongst themselves regarding the estate and to work towards a connected-knowing. The balcony was the one space on the map that successfully went through a transformation to become a tomato greenhouse (See Figure 6.1 - Figure 6.6).



Figure 6.1 The disused balcony space

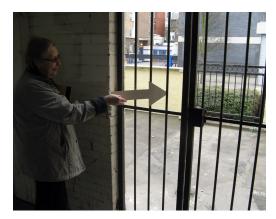


Figure 6.2 Eileen points out the balcony



Figure 6.3 Re-imagined as greenhouse in map



Figure 6.4 Neil and Mathias discuss plans



Figure 6.5 Neil's tomato greenhouse



Figure 6.6 The tenants' grow trays

# 6.6 The relationship between design and the community

From my discussions with the group, it became evident that the relationship between design and community could at times be empowering, through facilitating engaging and educational experiences; and at other times could create an imbalance in power relations that could lead to disappointment, frustration and scepticism. The residents had experienced being a part of a top-down design consultation process as well as

participating in a bottom-up approach to designing with communities. Both 'strategic' and 'tactical' approaches had raised issues relating to power and what happens after the designers leave the scene, in terms of maintenance of interventions and promises to be fulfilled. This is one of the key challenges of positioning design as a mediator between strategies and tactics and setting up practice in the public realm, raising practical issues such as how do you manage resources, such as time, energy and money?

We discussed the group's feelings about design and working with different types of designers. As discussed earlier in Chapter 4 (See page 171), the group had previously been involved in architectural consultations that had left them feeling sceptical, frustrated and disempowered about the purpose of such processes due to nothing coming out of them. Another current issue that they had with architects in particular was the disruption to the views from their tower block by the new buildings going up around the estate.

Maureen commented that architects 'don't think about the way ordinary people live' (Maureen, Appendix D2, page 487). This point instigated a conversation about the design of the flats and houses on the estate. Maureen described how they are built to Parker Morris standards<sup>79</sup>. Originally they were built privately, for the Worshipful Company of Haberdasher but during the housing slump in the 1970's the local authorities took them over. Maureen described that this is why the properties have large rooms. Maureen described how Parker Morris was for 'ordinary people like us', nominating him as a champion of the everyday.

We continued to discuss the collaboration on the MetaboliCity project, which the group initially responded to very positively, describing it as 'terrific' and 'simple and effective' (Neil, Appendix D2, page 489). Maureen related to the group how she had been trying to get in touch with the project's design team to develop grow structures for a friend's school. She hadn't been able to get in touch with them and this had left

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Parker Morris produced a report called 'Homes for Today and Tomorrow' (1961). The report contained a set of standards based upon allocating space for each person's needs in the home. The mandatory nature of the standards was ended by the Conservative government in 1980, as a result of a rise in housing costs and spending (http://homesdesign.wordpress.com/2010/12/18/homes-for-today-and-tomorrow-more-on-the-parker-morris-standards/).

her feeling disappointed. We discussed the challenges for designers working on social projects that they find interesting and the tension between keeping these things going and making a living. Maureen sympathised with this, describing the painful process of writing applications to fund their activities on the estate.

The issues relating to time, responsibility and expectations that arose in the first stage of the meeting re-emerged at this point. The conversation triggered an embittered discussion about a lack of enthusiasm from other tenants in the gardening activities on the estate. Jan mentioned that if, for example, Neil wasn't there to set things up nobody else would take on the responsibility. This led into a broader discussion about a lack of responsibility the tenants take with regards to repairs and damages on the estate. Jan commented that

'Even though we're friends and we're on a committee, we just have that community a lot of people haven't got, that's why its so hard to get people interested in the gardening' (Jan, Appendix D2, page 492).

Maureen added that it's not only Haberdasher that experiences these problems, that it's endemic in society. I raised a question about the government's localisation agenda and Maureen described how, at a recent TRA meeting another of the estate's representatives exclaimed 'Who does David Cameron think is going to run all these voluntary things? Look around us we're all old' (Maureen, Appendix D2, page 493). The group are clearly invested in improving the conditions on the estate but face challenges when it comes to getting other tenants involved in these activities.

The residents have had mixed experiences working with designers. Participating in architectural consultations in the past has obviously left them cynical about such processes. Collaborating with the MetaboliCity project was positive by comparison but there were some issues around the communications between the residents and the designers after the project came to an end. The group sympathised with the difficulty in negotiating time and commitment to community initiatives and vented a frustration with a lack of involvement from the other tenants.

# 6.7 How could design become more beneficial?

We moved on to discuss how the design of the estate might be improved and how design might help to tackle some of the issues around a lack of community investment and responsibility. Mary suggested that there should be more consultation involving people in the area. Later on in the discussion the group described a recent incident where a communal path that was used by everyone on the estate was suddenly blocked off without any consultation. Maureen recounted how

'One of the approaches we took, our estate worked with them (the council), was to find out what was there before, we went to the archives, where that path was, it was all streets. Our argument was it was a public right of way ... All the OAPs with their sticks were climbing over the wall, it was so funny' (Maureen, Appendix D2, page 496).

Activities such as this evidence a willingness from the group to engage in *sensitive* community consultation processes with designers and the council.

The group also proposed that it would be useful to visit other estates for inspiration. They discussed how people from other estates have had meetings where they have shown films of the Haberdasher community gardens. From this they have received positive comments on their gardening activities, which created a sense of pride. This led to a discussion about feeling awkward about bringing friends to the estate in the past. Jan described how

'What annoys me is that whenever you see on a sitcom a council tower block, there's graffiti, the lifts aren't working the flats are awful...when I used to work, everyone thought I lived in a place like that. (Jan, Appendix D2, page 494)

The residents described how people are pleasantly surprised when they visit their flats. We discussed celebrating the positive things on the estate and communicating this to others on the estate and beyond. Maureen suggested that they could do this using their bi-annual newsletter. She described how 'everybody who gets it (the newsletter) say same old stuff, same old moan. They say all we do is moan' (Maureen, Appendix D2, page 498). The group collectively decided at this point to compile a 'before and after' set of photographs to illustrate the positive changes made to the estate in recent times. This signified a change to a more positive outlook for the TRA newsletter.

In discussing improvements to the design of the estate and how design could help to improve the lack of community investment and responsibility on the estate, the residents made several suggestions. These included consultations with people in the area, visiting other estates for inspiration and celebrating and communicating the positives on their estate to the other tenants and estates. These activities contributed to creating confidence and a sense of pride amongst the residents in the group. They also suggest opportunities for further research, for example, organising a multiple-estate mapping workshop.

## 6.8 Future plans and activities

The group decided to make the newsletter a new-year project. Jan mentioned that the group were also working on a Haberdasher family tree. Neil had acquired some wood to construct wooden boxes for people to grow plants in. Neil and Jan were going to organise a weekend of weeding and box building. At the end of the discussion Maureen exclaimed 'its not fair to say people aren't interested (in the gardening)'. The group again acknowledge that they have known each other a long time and that they need to make the 'weeding weekend' a communal event to engage others on the estate.

After the co-evaluation meeting, Neil and Mary invited me to visit their flat at the top of the tower block. Neil and I then walked around the estate to visit the various grow sites and the new tomato greenhouse. After initially commissioning Loop.pH to design and build a greenhouse on the estate, Neil had decided to carry out this task himself<sup>80</sup>. The workshop provided Neil with the opportunity to discuss the installation of the greenhouse on the balcony with Mathias and to share this idea with the rest of the group, keeping up the momentum and strengthening the plans. We discussed the construction of the greenhouse. Neil had used recycled scaffolding wood for the tables and corrugated plastic for the panels (because Perspex had gone up in price after the riots that summer). There were twenty grow trays made available for residents on the estate. Neil described how the greenhouse was temporarily attached

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> As part of the MetaboliCity project we discussed the designer's 'desire for controlling certain aspects of the process' and feeling a 'resistance to hand over' creatively rewarding parts of the design process to the other non-design participants (Jones and Wingfield, 2009, 49). On later discussing Neil's construction of the tomato greenhouse with Mathias, he said that he was happy that Neil had gone on to build this himself, without the use of designers, as he felt it represented a positive outcome of our design encounters on the estate.

the balcony to get around planning restrictions. We discussed the possibility of holding future workshops and courses with designers and residents and using the greenhouse as a locally embedded educational space.

# 6.9 Summary of findings

The 'co-evaluating Haberdasher' meeting set out to build upon the outcomes from our 'Mapping Haberdasher' workshop held one year earlier. I revisited the estate at this point in time after we had collectively estimated that it would be a peak period for the residents' estate activities. It turned out that the group had experienced some personal set backs, which had impacted upon their ability to spend time on their gardening and TRA work. Whilst the residents were initially despondent about their progress over the course of the year, after reading over the report from the workshop and listing their achievements against our original evaluation continuums they became more motivated. This suggested that the meeting was successful in reengaging the residents with their estate work after a period of inactivity.

The tomato greenhouse and the estate composting were the two most significant achievements made by the residents. These were both ideas that were discussed in depth by the residents and designers on the day of the workshop but that had been seeded before the workshop itself. This revealed that whilst the workshop may not have been entirely responsible for seeding socio-physical interventions made by the residents within their environment, it did help to motivate and strengthen their fledgling plans.

Several issues mentioned at the workshop re-emerged throughout our conversations. These included the time, responsibility and expectations associated with community-led activities, the changing landscape and demographics on the estate, and the insider-outsider relationships between the group and the other tenants and the estate and the surrounding area. This demonstrated that the meeting provided a forum for residents to discuss issues that were important to them and that they felt able to share these issues with an outsider that they trusted.

At one point, when discussing the gating of the estate becoming, John exclaimed that all the awkward spaces on the estate should be 'bricked up' due to them becoming a safety and security risk. I found this comment quite jarring after spending time with

the residents using awkward space as a productive concept to explore possibilities on the estate. It highlighted however that without the framing of the workshop the conversation about the estate veered more towards constraints and barriers<sup>81</sup>.

The residents confirmed several ways in which the workshop made a positive impact for them, including:

- opening up 'new way of looking at things' on the estate.
- enabling them to recognise the 'possibility of doing' something with awkward space.
- introducing a creative thinking process that differed to their usual pragmatic approach.
- providing an outsider perspective to guestion the everyday environment.
- bringing the group together to share different viewpoints.

In addition to discussing the workshop process, I also asked the residents about their relationship to design. Here they reiterated their scepticism about working with architectural consultations mentioned previously in the mapping workshop. They also talked about their positive experience working with the MetaboliCity project but the disappointment felt when this partnership didn't continue. The residents highlighted the following ways in which design could support the self-organisation of informal practices on the estate. They identified a role for design that is:

- *Inclusive* engaging residents in consultations regarding the environment.
- Creative supporting imaginative thinking.
- *Inspirational* sharing examples with neighbouring estates.
- Informative providing advice and good examples of practice.
- Optimistic celebrating and communicating small victories on the estate.
- Empowering championing the everyday.

These qualities and characteristics map onto and further contribute the community-based participatory approaches discussed in Chapter 4.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> Perhaps this exemplifies how discussing things collectively isn't always constructive, illustrating the need to be critically aware of what Kester's defines as 'dialogical determinism' within collaborative design processes.

Finally we discussed the residents' future plans, which included putting together an edition of their bi-annual newsletter to celebrate the achievements on the estate and organising a weeding weekend. I offered Maureen my assistance on putting together a newsletter based upon our workshop process and the achievements they had made over the course of the year. My offer was politely turned down. Maureen, Jan and Neil were happy to focus on the newsletter as a New Year project. The extended advocacy of my collaborative design encounter with the residents was their commitment to sharing the positive accomplishments made on the estate through communicating with the other tenants as well as tenants on the other estates. This initiative emerged from identifying a possibility of doing something with awkward space, which evolved out of our creative conversations about everyday life on the estate. The short-term and one off intervention that I designed with and for the residents was both honest and effective in addressing their need for a more coherent strategy for their estate activities.

# 6.10 Critical reflections on research findings

This section connects the findings from the co-evaluation meeting with previous findings from the thesis research, to propose how design can mediate between strategies and tactics to activate affordances latent within awkward space and to support and motivate informal practices carried out by urban inhabitants.

## 6.10.1 The tension between strategies and tactics

My practice, as it has developed through the thesis research, negotiates or mediates a space between strategies and tactics. This has been demonstrated through conducting informal design gestures, catalysing a temporary speculative intervention and facilitating collaborative encounters within the urban environment. These research activities have enabled me to both explore how and why we experience awkward space in the city and to understand how this concept can be used productively within design. The process that results from my research aims to motivate and support the local activities of urban 'prohabitants' and to engage designers in a context-sensitive, open pedagogic exchange about the urban realm. It achieves this through framing workshops that elicit inhabitant knowledge and apply this to a collaborative design process. These workshops aim to create a comprehensive picture of an everyday place that integrates new possibilities for

alternative practices identified by the participants, such as, a short tennis court, or a set of art displays.

Revisiting Haberdasher to discuss the residents' activities after the workshop event enabled me to discover how the workshop had been useful for the residents and provided indicators as to how design could become more beneficial in the context of supporting community-led design and decision-making processes, such as those carried out on the Haberdasher Estate. I also had the opportunity to visit the tomato greenhouse, built by Neil, which served as an example of one of the nine awkward spaces to go through a process of transformation, supported by the workshop.

The workshop process included sharing accounts of spatial tactics carried out on the estate. Michael and Still observe how for de Certeau, the spatial tactician produces behaviours that 'obey their own logic' (Michael and Still, 1992, 880), whilst Gibson's theory of affordance recognises the mutual-relationship between the spatial tactician and their environment, which includes the influence of other people and things. This insight creates a bridge between the ideas explored within the first and second literature reviews in my thesis research. Michael and Still observe how de Certeau's spatial tactics are 'grounded in the affordances that are intrinsic to the relation of organism and environment' (Michael and Still, 1992, 880). Through engaging in playful and imaginative conversations about the everyday, which access, share and connect-up the practical knowledge acquired through these spatial tactics, the residents make use of the affordances latent within awkward space to extend 'organism-environment relations beyond power-knowledge' (Michael and Still, 1992, 882). This is demonstrated, for example, through the construction of the tomato greenhouse, which Neil designed and built to fit the disused balcony space. The balcony floor supported the weight of the greenhouse and the balcony aspect (facing the sun) afforded the growth of tomatoes. As discussed in Chapter 2, according to Maier, Fadel and Battisto, these are classified as artifact-artifact affordances (Maier, Fadel and Battisto, 2009, 397). This temporary structure was installed so as to avoid planning restrictions. It made it possible to bring the tomato plants out of the private space of Jan's home and into the public space on the estate. This in turn created the opportunity to engage more tenants in the gardening group's food growing activities. The structure also deterred teenagers from climbing up onto the balcony to hang out

(a negative affordance of the balcony wall), which was highlighted as a dangerous pursuit and left the balcony full of rubbish.

Michael and Still highlight that affordances are *resources* rather than *sources* of resistance and propose that in order to enable social change, play might be an important component, where 'sequences of behaviour are disrupted, repeated, exaggerated and reassembled' (Michael and Still, 1992, 882). The residents described how my workshop process provided a creative, sometimes fantastical approach to exploring their everyday environment, which enabled them to see things in a different way. These temporary shifts in spatial, temporal and social viewpoints opened up for new possibilities to emerge on the estate and ultimately supported the use of latent affordances in the environment to form an alternative space for informal, non-consumer practices to emerge at a local level.

In the context of engaging urban residents in participatory processes through artistic practices, Massey refers to the Latin American notion of 'protagonistic democracy' (Massey, 2012, 63) where participants are not only asked to 'participate' but are given the space and empowerment to 'initiate' change. This Massey argues, gives people the opportunity to 'transform cartographies of power' (Massey, 2012, 63). My design process begins to work towards providing local groups with the space and tools to develop more coherent action plans. It could be imagined that in a longer-term project, with a larger group of participants, the activities taking place within the group might create more significant shifts in the power-balance between top-down strategies and local tactics. Here, an example of a top-down strategy might be the management of green spaces on a social housing estate and an example of local tactics might be amateur gardening taking place in peripheral and leftover spaces on an estate. A shift in the power-balance might find the residents on the estate with an interest in gardening taking over some of that responsibility and being valued for that by the system.

The co-evaluation meeting triggered another provocative discussion about establishing a community hall on the estate. The residents were reluctant to do this as they associated it with added responsibility, extra time commitments and dealing with the expectations of the other tenants. The residents seem comfortable operating within their 'space of tactics' and there is a sense that a community hall would give

them less autonomy and therefore less control over their activities. In de Certeau's approach to investigating everyday practices he describes trying to 'elude institutional formalisation', to give voice to spatial tactics without categorising them and fixing them into place. In a sense, the residents of Haberdasher are also 'eluding institutional formalisation'. They are opportunistic in their approach to self-managing their activities on the estate, avoiding too much responsibility. In the final stage of our co-evaluation meeting, they effectively move on from my process as soon as they feel that they have reached the next stage of their plan<sup>82</sup>.

Design temporarily framing and reframing a space of tactics might therefore be more about nurturing and tending existing activities within a given context, rather than going in and implanting new ideas. Tonkinwise uses the metaphors of 'cultivation' or 'shepherding' to describing the ongoing role of design (Tonkinwise, 2003). In terms of the development of my practice, this might require working with multiple seeding grounds, such as Haberdasher. One could imagine working with a patchwork of estates, identifying opportune moments to conduct interventions and carrying out several cycles of stockpiling, reflection and 'meshworking' spatial practices.

### 6.11 Conclusion

The co-evaluation meeting was both an 'information gathering exercise' (Mason, 2002, 226) in terms of eliciting feedback on the workshop, and a continuation of my collaboration with the residents with the Haberdasher estate. It formed a second cycle of reflection on their informal spatial practices on the estate to feed into my case study findings. After considering different methods of evaluating the workshop, I decided to facilitate a second meeting with the residents on the estate, designing a set of open-ended questions relating to the workshop experience, tools and approaches, the residents' perception of design and community; and their future plans. We referred to the workshop documentation to jog our memories of the workshop and to check through my account of the events on the day. We used the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> In the case of a longer-term study, a more carefully planned exit strategy would be necessary. However, in the case of this short-term encounter with the Haberdasher residents, the co-evaluation meeting provided a good opportunity to hand over the workshop documentation and move on.

evaluation continuums as a checklist to reflect on what had been achieved in the one-year since the workshop. The meeting was a motivational experience, which produced relevant insights. However, it could have been more critical in terms of the feedback on my process, this was hindered in part due to the 'interviewer effect'.

In the next chapter, which is the concluding chapter of the thesis, I synthesis the findings from my thesis research, outline the knowledge contribution and make recommendations for further research.

# **Chapter 7: Conclusions**

## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions from of my thesis research project 'Practicing Awkward Space in the City'. Here I discuss the new knowledge acquired through my explorations into awkward space and the development of my co-design practice around the use of this concept. The chapter begins by synthesising the findings presented in the previous chapters. It goes on to discuss the how my thinking has developed through the inquiry how the project contribution new knowledge to design research, practice and pedagogy. Finally, the chapter concludes with reflections on the research process and offers some recommendations for further study.

# 7.2 Synthesis of findings

This thesis research proposes that the unique concept of awkward space can be used to seed dialogical creative practices that frame a common ground of experience, capture local narratives and inform and mobilise design interventions and the decision making processes of small groups of people invested in the betterment of their local environment. The following paragraphs retrace the steps through the thesis, highlighting key insights and findings.

### 7.2.1 Summary of thesis part one: exploring awkward space

My research began with an observational study into the interactions taking place at a local bus stop in New Cross South London. This was a space that I personally defined as being awkward. The bus stop provided a real-life microcosm in the city to begin to observe awkward spatial inter-relationships taking place between people, things and their environment. Early observations of the bus stop, gathered through my own auto-ethnographic accounts, indicated that the bus passengers and pedestrians experienced awkward space at the bus stop in different ways. Whilst pedestrians struggled to negotiate their way along the footpath, the bus passengers, sought the comfort of the bus shelter, only to sacrifice their view of the oncoming buses. I defined this as a 'by-the-way' (Jacobs, 1992) type of awkwardness.

Consultations with TfL revealed that the restricted footpath and the density of bus stop users were key contributors to the awkwardness of this particular bus stop

space. In general bus stops were observed as awkward due to a conflict between bus passengers and pedestrians negotiating the footway and the interchanging roles of pedestrians and bus passengers as they move through the space. My own observations of the bus stop, recorded using time-lapse photography, highlighted several critical incidents that revealed awkward hot spots around the bus shelter edge and the bus stop pole and flag, where bus passengers would lean whilst waiting for the bus, thus restricting the footway through the space.

In response to these observations, I carried out a quick, informal design gesture at the bus stop aimed at disrupting the flow of interactions through the space to observe the resulting behaviour. I laid down hazard tape at the awkward hot spots observed in my critical incidents. This action temporarily deterred the bus passengers from waiting in these areas, which resulted in the easing of the pedestrian flow through the bus stop. The contextual, ad hoc and informal qualities of the design gesture created an opportunity for an unexpected exchange with a bus passenger, which provided a more personal perspective on how the bus stop became awkward. This grounded feedback was noted as a valuable outcome of this informal method. This was the first time I also became more reflexive about my role as a researcher, sensing my own presence in the space and working with design gestures to invite rather than impose new behaviours at the bus stop.

After observing how the bus stop became awkward, next, I conducted my first focused and selective literature review to further my observations and analysis of the activities taking place at the bus stop and to propose why the bus stop became awkward. The first section of the literature review centred-around James Jerome Gibson's 'ecological approach' to perception and his concept of 'affordance' and the second section built upon this focusing upon Tim Ingold's understanding of dynamic human practices.

The literature revealed that Gibson's systems thinking inspired, relational and context-orientated model for understanding perception, collapses the dichotomy between sensing and conceptualising, recognising our mutual relationship with the world around us. From engaging with Gibson's work, I proposed that experiencing awkward space signifies a de-coupling between perception and action and a momentary loss of meaning regarding our use of the environment to satisfy our

practical needs. This prompts the use of alternative affordances in the environment. Occluding surfaces, edges and objects within the bus stop environment were identified as key contributors to the experience of awkward space. Focusing upon the cycles of perception and action of the bus passengers and pedestrians revealed a new perspective on how they negotiated and managed awkwardness in different ways.

The second section of the review explored the social anthropologist Tim Ingold's research into dynamic human practices, focusing in particular on travelling through the environment. Ingold grounds Gibson's abstract and long-term viewpoint of the environment in the traces and routes of people as they follow entangled pathways through the environment. Applying this to the bus stop provided me with a way of analysing the waiting and walking patterns of the bus passengers and pedestrians. Through engaging with Ingold, the bus stop was identified as a transport node, a strategy for channelling bus passengers across the urban landscape. This becomes entangled with the wayfaring patterns of the pedestrians who tactically manoeuvre through this zone. These observations led me to suggest that awkward space emerges as a friction between differing journey qualities through the environment, creating an interruption along the pathways of a meshwork. I proposed that if 'space is practiced place' (de Certeau, 1984, 117), awkward space is enmeshed within the ongoing practice of places and things that can become difficult to negotiate or manage. These early interpretations of the concept of awkward space were largely logistical in nature, focusing on flows of interactions and how people respond to physical properties of the environment through negotiating awkward space.

In conclusion, the literature had revealed that awkward space is embodied within dynamic, ecological-corporeal relationships. Further insights from the literature suggested that when we experience awkward space in the urban environment, affordances become resources for spatial negotiations, the collective practice of 'doing being ordinary' (Sacks, 1980), and a 'resistance to power-knowledge structures' (Michael and Still, 1992). Through experiencing awkward space users generate tacit forms of knowledge (Polanyi, 1966). Specifically in the case of the bus stop, I propose that the temporary community of bus passengers share 'public knowledge' (Gibson, 1979), whilst the wayfaring pedestrians generate an 'alongly integrated' knowledge (Ingold, 2011) of their urban habitat.

Considerations for furthering my research approach at this stage included:

- Developing a context-orientated approach Working with a 'common ground
  of experience' that provides designers with a way into a context and an ability
  to begin to build a shared language with a local community.
- Working with dynamic understanding of space Working with an understanding of space as a 'dynamic, relational, multiplicity' (Massey, 2000), grounded within human practices, rather than an abstract, static and isolated phenomena.
- Integrating local practical knowledge Eliciting the local, 'alongly integrated',
   'inhabitant' know-how acquired by people experiencing awkward space in
   their urban environment to feed into a design process.
- Activating latent affordances within awkward space Exploring affordances in
  the environment, which have the potential to reveal unconsidered possibilities
  for action and informal practices that are alternative to the strategies laid
  down by planners, councils and urban designers.

#### 7.2.2 A design exercise – case study 2

The design exercise in case study 2, Chapter 3 involved students of architecture. The study drew upon the findings from Chapter 2 to devise an approach to surveying, mapping and re-imagining awkward space so as to inform a small-scale architectural intervention in the students' everyday environment. The outcomes of this exercise were a set of individual and collaborative maps and an intervention in the form of a bamboo installation. Findings from the study suggested that whilst the design exercise encouraged the students to engage holistically with their observed sites, there were limitations to the project structure and context. The study revealed the importance of spatial imagination in prompting the students engage as active citizens in the development of future scenarios concerning their college environment. The students created a vibrant and responsive temporary installation, informed by their observational and imaginative studies and successful in healing tensions that had emerged in the group. An understanding of awkward space emerged as a human-

scaled, corporeal and common concept for conducting a site analysis. The students' definitions of awkward space were also mainly logistical and impersonal, relating to how we move along pathways and routes through the built environment.

Recommendations for the next part of the study included:

- Introducing awkward space to seed conversations about the everyday.
- Working with a group of invested urban inhabitants.
- Introducing a flexible, open and adaptive process.
- Encouraging the collective steering of all participants.
- Exploring a more sustainable approach to creating socio-physical interventions in the urban environment.

## 7.2.3 Summary of thesis part two: practicing awkward space

So far the research had developed a range of perspectives on how and why we experience awkward space in the city and how these observations might inform temporary and speculative socio-physical interventions within the environment. The practice-orientated research that followed shifted from exploring the nature of awkward space, to foregrounding the use of the concept of awkward space to seed creative conversations about the everyday environment. The question 'How can awkward space become a productive concept for co-designing everyday life?' guided this second part of the thesis. With a stronger emphasis on co-design and participatory design approaches, informed by a short review of literature on this topic, a third and final case study was conducted, involving a group of residents from a housing estate in North London and a small team of designers. Taking place over the course of a year, central tenets of this case study included a mapping workshop and a co-evaluation discussion. This was followed up with a second focused and selective literature review exploring everyday practices and dialogical artworks.

The 'Mapping Haberdasher' workshop (Chapter 4) was a productive, engaged and spirited event that contributed some of the most important findings to my thesis research. It was organised in the aftermath of a previous research project that I worked on entitled 'MetaboliCity', which explored how design can support amateur cultures of food production in the city (Jones and Wingfield, 2009, 2010). I identified an opportunity to work with the residents on the Haberdasher Estate after they expressed a desire to create a more comprehensive strategy for their activities on the

estate. The workshop, which was situated, context-orientated and collaborative in its approach, included a small team of designers working alongside a group of local residents and took place in the residents' committee meeting room on the estate.

The workshop was successful in temporarily framing a space to stockpile and reflect upon the residents' estate activities by 'giving voice' to these everyday practices. The workshop discussion oscillated between individually identifying issues associated with awkward space and collectively defining a re-imagined realm of possibilities on the estate. The workshop process included five key stages, which led the participants from exploring and re-imagining awkward space on the estate, to evaluating the possibilities for future actions on the estate. The workshop mixed approaches and tools used in the previous research studies, with design and community design methods and was centred-around a collaborative mapping exercise. The workshop methods and approaches map onto current research into 'community-based participatory design' (DiSalvo et al, 2013).

The tangible outcomes of the workshop included a collaborative map of the estate with nine re-imagined awkward spaces and a set of evaluative continuums, which informed the residents' plans for the future. The re-imagined spaces included a tomato greenhouse on a derelict balcony, a composting scheme in the pram sheds, a series of art displays in disused pockets of space around the periphery of the estate and a resident community hall at the back of the estate. The evaluation continuums joined-up these various inventive ideas to create a shared vision document. An intangible outcome was a 'connected knowledge' generated through the workshop activities. The residents' definitions of awkward space were more personal than the previous logistical explorations carried out in case study 1 and 2. This may have been due to their familiarity of the neighbourhood and the proximity of these spaces to their homes. It was also concluded that this reflected the more immersive nature of this collaboration.

Here my role as a researcher evolved from feeling awkward, tentatively carrying out design gestures at the bus stop, to feeling less awkward, facilitating and participating in an engaging, collaborative exploration into awkward space. The workshop provided a number of important insights into this development of my practice, capturing inter-subjective accounts. This required sensitivity on my behalf in order to

create a safe space for differing viewpoints to be heard. In terms of maintaining a healthy power-balance within this group I also kept the workshop fairly open, so that the residents could take ownership over the direction and next steps. The designers in the workshop also took a peripheral position, coming in to provide guidance and support when the residents need it.

A second focused and selective literature review focused upon the 'The Practice of Everyday Life' by Michael de Certeau (1984) and 'Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art' by Grant Kester (2004). The review crossanalysed these works to suggest how dialogical artistic practices might frame the everyday tactics of urban inhabitants, so as to empower and mobilise local action. De Certeau's inquiry into the practice of everyday life counterbalances the strategic place of an institution or organisation, with the 'otherly space' of the spontaneous tactics of 'rebellious users'. De Certeau defines space as 'practiced place' (de Certeau, 1984), dynamic, opportunistic and transformative in nature. Thus, in the context of the findings from the first part of the thesis, practicing awkward space, describes negotiating and managing the dynamic inter-relationships between people, things and the environment. In de Certeau's terms awkward space might be 'condemned to inertia' by the inhabitants of a place that no longer practice certain areas, such as the pram sheds in Case study 3. The practical knowledge acquired by spatial practitioners, such as the 'alongly integrated' knowledge and the public knowledge described in Chapter 2, is stored in stories, or what de Certeau describes as 'treatments of space'. This implies that collectively discussing and re-imagining awkward space can lead to actualising possibilities in space through activating latent affordances in the environment. These activities are supported by my workshop process.

The literature also highlighted the need to be critically aware of dialogical determinism and the political freezing of place through overwhelming tactics with strategy. This has also been highlighted in the work of (Sandercock, 2003 and Petrescu, 2006). Themes to emerge from the second literature review, which inform an approach to my practice included:

- Empowering ordinary women and men in everyday life
- Temporarily framing a space of tactics

- Facilitating creative conversations that shape space
- Mapping and sharing inhabitant knowledge

These informed a self-reflective map which highlighted the skills, qualities and knowledge that I bring to the role of facilitator (See Figure 4.33) and a prospective workshop template for practicing awkward space (See Figure 5.1), which indicates the qualities and conditions to consider in the case of replicating the workshop within a different facilitator, group of participants and context.

This review built upon the discussion in my short literature review on co-design and participatory design workshops. Here, new forms of community-based participatory approaches were seen to move into the public realm and beyond a product-orientated process to support the visualisation and articulation of a 'public rhetoric', communicating how communities want to shape their environment (DiSalvo et al., 2012, 2013, Bjorgvinsson, Ehn and Hillgren, 2012). The findings from the second literature review contributed new insights to furnish my co-design practice. The thesis thus contributes new insights to the field of co-design and community-based participatory design acquired both through my practice and my theoretical explorations into dialogical practices framing everyday spaces. My co-design practice sets out to frame 'otherly spaces', where members of the community can stockpile and reflect upon their spatial tactics.

A subsequent co-evaluation meeting was set up approximately a year after the workshop (Chapter 6). This provided an opportunity to share the documentation of the workshop with the residents, to seek their validation of my interpretation of the workshop events and to acquire feedback on the workshop process and impact. Through collectively consulting the evaluative continuums produced at the end of the workshop, the residents discovered that they had achieved more than they had anticipated. Key outcomes had been an estate composting scheme and the tomato green house. Whilst these outcomes are not direct products of the workshop process, the process was recognised as motivating and strengthening existing plans and seeding new ideas. The residents concluded that the workshop enabled them to recognise the 'possibility of doing' something with the awkward space on the estate, they highlighted the value of having an outsider perspective, and the usefulness in providing space for arguments and alternative viewpoints to be voiced. The

possibility-focused dialogue of the workshop extended further through the residents' ideas for their bi-annual newsletter, which aimed to celebrate their small victories on the estate.

Critical reflections on the findings from the co-evaluation meeting indicated how the residents' activities after the workshop, such as the construction of the tomato greenhouse, utilised affordances as 'resources for resistance to power-knowledge structures' (Michael and Still, 1992). The residents' conversation suggests that are comfortable working within their space of tactics. They were resistant to establishing a community hall on the estate due to the increased responsibility, time commitments and the expectations of other tenants. My workshop process enabled them to engage playfully and imaginatively in developing their own comprehensive strategy for their future activities on the estate and thus positions my practice in a space between strategy and tactics for local groups who want to remain autonomous in their activities.

Figure 7.1 presents the development of my concept of awkward space through the research stages described in this section. The diagram also highlights the interrelationship between my case studies and the literature reviews. The literature reviews are compiled to inform and mobilise my practice. Concepts and theories are woven through the findings from my practice to inform, situate and reflect upon sociophysical interventions with urban inhabitants in the city.

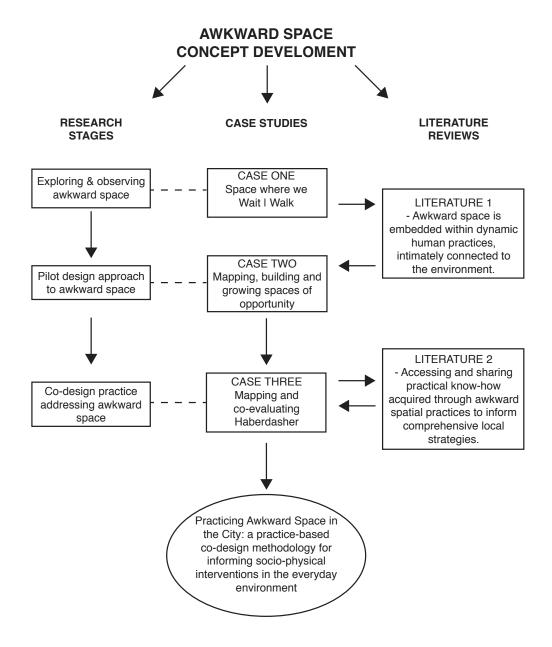


Figure 7.1 Awkward space concept development diagram

### 7.3 New Knowledge generated through my research

My research has demonstrated that conceptualising space as awkward is a useful way of framing observational studies and seeding conversations about the everyday to inform both temporary and more sustainable design interventions and ideas. The following paragraphs discuss my thesis research contributions.

#### Evolving the concept of awkward space

Throughout my thesis research I've evolved an understanding of the concept of awkward space as grounded, common, human-scaled and practiced. This has

developed on from my earlier rather abstract definition of awkward space in cities as spaces, which are unresolved and ambiguous remnants of previous flows. The novel approach of combining ideas and theories from ecological psychology, social anthropology, the practice of everyday life and dialogical artistic practice has generated a new framework for understanding how and why we experience awkward space in the city. This in turn has informed the development of my practice, from conducting observational studies at a distance from the users of places that become awkward to negotiate or manage; to engaging local inhabitants in creative conversations about the awkwardness that they experience living within their everyday surroundings. Awkward space explored and used in this way is a unique, generative concept for designing with people to effect positive change at a local level. As the thesis research unfolds, the definition of awkward space evolves from early logistical notions of negotiating pathways and routes through the environment, to more personal, lived expressions of awkward space from the residents of the Haberdasher Estate. Figure 7.2 charts this development of my understanding and use of the concept of awkward space throughout the thesis, using the river that charts the thesis structure (See Figure 1.4, page 29) to illustrate how the generative concept of awkward space continues to grow and change as my research develops.

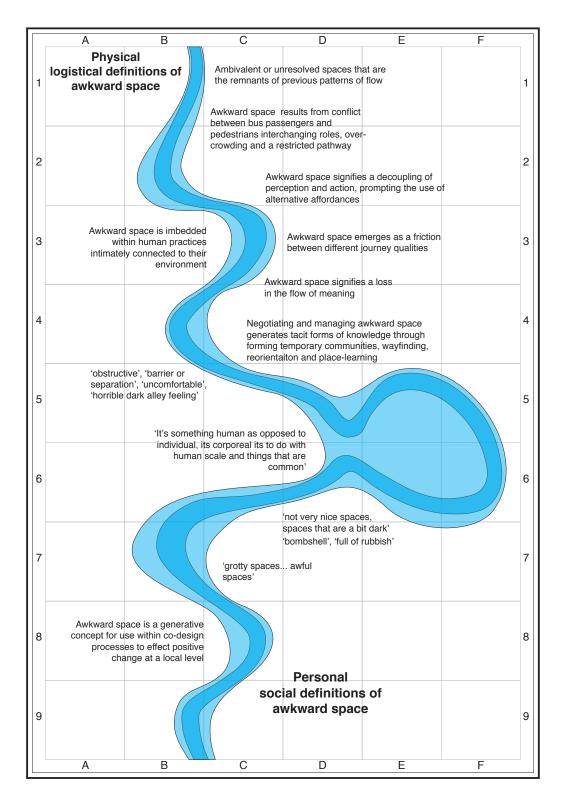


Figure 7.2 Awkward river

A new co-design approach for motivating social activation

I situate the knowledge contribution made by this thesis in the field of design research, with a particular focus on collaborative design research. Through the co-

design encounters I designed in my third case study, I worked in response to the residents' natural timeline rather than executing a fixed design plan. This open and adaptive approach is more akin to permaculture methods used in farming, where the conditions are set up for things to grow in the wild with minimum intervention. The approach benefitted a group of neighbours, with unpredictable lives, contributing time when they could towards the betterment of their estate. This was exemplified when I returned to Haberdasher and discovered that several of the residents had suffered unexpected personal set backs since our mapping workshop. Our second meeting was therefore successful in picking things back up and motivating the residents to continue with their activities together. Therefore temporary framing and reframing these 'otherly spaces' allowed the residents to engage freely with the process, respecting their carefully maintained autonomy.

Towards this purpose, the research offers a new practice-orientated methodology for carrying out collaborative design inquires with small groups of people engaged in local activities within their urban environment. This is considered as particularly relevant to emerging practices of community-based participatory design, politically engaged design and social innovation. The biggest highlight of the project came when I revisited the Haberdasher Estate one year after our mapping workshop and discovered the tomato greenhouse installed on the balcony. When I arrived on the estate the greenhouse was locked-up but through the corrugated plastic walls I could faintly make out a wall of tomato plants and a stack of grow-trays. The greenhouse was one of nine awkward spaces identified, mapped and re-imagined by the residents in our 'Mapping Haberdasher' workshop. On later visiting the greenhouse with Neil, we discussed how he had designed the structure. He showed me the recycled materials he had acquired for making tables and his solution for the guttering. He also recounted his plans for getting some of the other tenants involved in tomato growing. What struck me on going back to Haberdasher was how the workshop had provided support and motivation for the residents' existing activities. In this sense it contributed to a self-sustaining culture on the estate. The Australian design philosopher Tony Fry defines this role for design as working with 'what already is' and 'turning it towards the future with sustaining ability' (Fry, 2011).

Tools for engaging with spatial practices and inhabitant knowledge

Towards this aim, the mapping techniques and evaluation continuums I introduced became useful methods for co-designing a more coherent picture of the residents' estate activities, so as to inform next steps of their work together. The tools and approaches used to carry out my situated, collaborative design inquiries were particularly important for accessing and sharing the inhabitant knowledge generated through awkward spatial practices. It is imagined that, beyond the scope of this study, other design practitioners can use the tools and approaches to facilitate social interventions with groups of urban inhabitants.

A process for informing socio-physical interventions in the city

At the opposite end of the spectrum to Neil's sustainable greenhouse intervention, the research also provides an alternative method of site analysis to inform temporary and speculative design interventions within the urban environment. This combines stages of surveying, mapping, reimagining and intervening within awkward space. This approach has subsequently been appropriated for a design project entitled 'Metadesigning Spaces of Engagement and Exchange', where I collaborated with MA design students and members of the local community in Veitvet, Oslo, to survey, map and re-imagine the future of a rundown shopping centre at the centre of the community (Jones and Lundebye, 2012).

Figure 7.3 maps my journey through the research, from conducting observational studies and temporary interventions, to facilitating collaborative encounters which seed more sustainable interventions rooted within community-driven activities. My case studies are highlighted in red, with an arrow indicating the direction of the development of my practice towards facilitating participatory processes that engage urban inhabitants in developing more sustainable interventions within the everyday environment. I have also populated the map with several design or design-related projects, highlighted in blue, so as to begin locate and orientate my practice within an emerging territory.

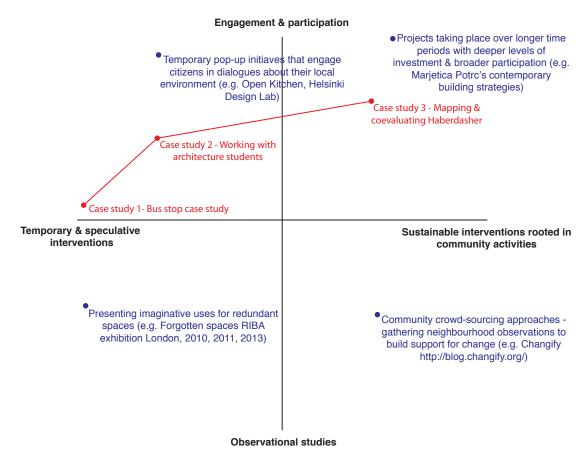


Figure 7.3 Charting the direction of the development of my practice

# 7.4 A co-design methodology bound together by the concept of awkward space

After setting out at the start of my thesis research at the bus stop in New Cross, I have developed a deeper understanding of my practice and how this can be positioned to both inform urban interventions and mobilise local groups in their activities regarding the urban realm. Figure 7.4 draws together the themes and concepts, methods and tools, values, and approaches that inform my methodology for working with the concept of awkward space. The elements of my methodology are mapped onto a matrix, with one axis moving from physical to social definitions of awkward space; and the second axis moving from exploring and observing to participation and engagement. The wayfaring line through the matrix traces the shape of the methodology, reflecting how the researcher, as wayfarer, feels her way to her destination, attuning her process, and making continuous adjustments to her path in response to the terrain explored. This diagram is accompanied by some final reflections on the methodological developments.

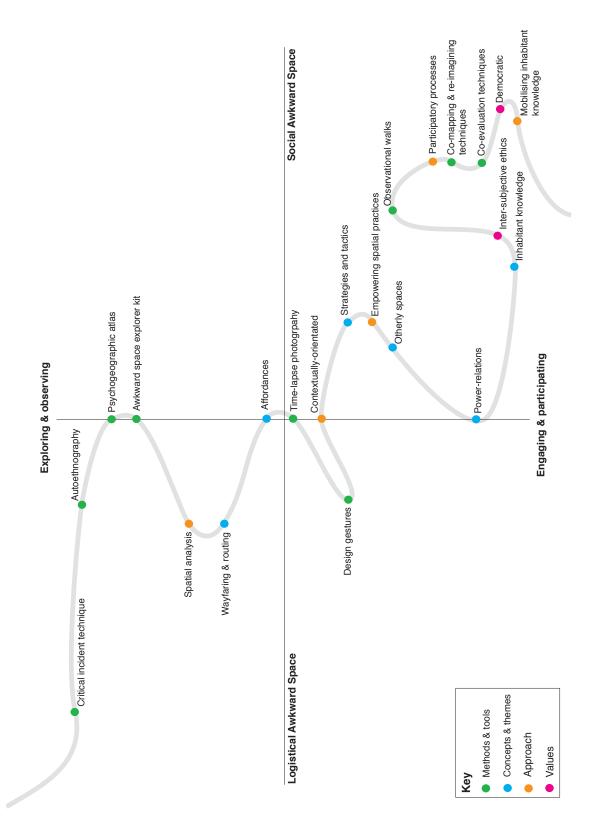


Figure 7.4 Methodology diagram

#### The use of time-lapse photography

I used time-lapse photography throughout my case study investigations for several key purposes. Firstly, at the bus stop I recorded the flow of interactions between bus passengers and pedestrians. From the footage captured, I drew out a series of critical incidents that helped my to sketch out early observations. Secondly, working with the students we also recorded flows of interactions within their awkward spaces. I also used time-lapse photography as a pedagogic tool, to record the students' collaborative activities and to prompt a collective retracing of the steps through their design process. Finally, with Haberdasher residents we used time-lapse photography to capture our collaborative mapping process, to reinforce a sense of collective identity and later to prompt recollections of our workshop. The use of time-lapse photography throughout my study therefore extends into an active 'knowledge space' capturing not only spatial inter-relationships in motion but also the process of accessing, sharing and reflecting upon the knowledge acquired through practice.

#### Negotiating power-relationships through practice

A key theme to have emerged through my research is that of power. Throughout my thesis case studies I have worked in various urban contexts, with a range of urban stakeholders and with different approaches to acting, as a design researcher, within these scenarios. I have reflected upon the different power-relationships that relate to these different experiences. In my first case study, I developed the notion of a 'design gesture', an intervention to be made within the environment that invites participation rather than imposing behavioural change. This early experiment reflected my own unease entering this public, awkward space and dealing with people's response to my being there. However, the light touch of the design gesture was effective in generating further insights into the flow of interactions between people. In my second case study, working with the architecture students, I offered them a theoretical framework for mapping space. It was the team of students who subverted the framework and carried out their own approach who produced the more interesting outcomes. Here, I recognised that I had produced an overly prescribed method and that allowing the students to take control freed up their creative interpretation of the task. However, the students' own bamboo intervention in the environment had a heavier impact than my own design gesture, literally, stopping people in their tracks and re-routing them. This power-imbalance in some cases heightened the

awkwardness of the space. In my third case study, I endeavoured to keep the mapping workshop as open as possible, so that the residents could lead in aspects of the process. This contributed to a more evenly spread sense of power through the group, imperative for a successful dialogical encounter. Framing an 'otherly space' empowered the resident's estate activities, overcoming the problematic divide between 'strategies' and 'tactics' as highlighted by Doreen Massey (Massey, 2005, 45). Managing different personalities and agendas in a group is never smooth but the workshop tools and activities engaged even the more sceptical of participants, keeping the mood optimistic and allowing for possibility-seeking. What my experiences of working within these different power scenarios offers is an indication to fellow design researchers of how they might negotiate different power-relationships at different times. For example, when it might be useful in a design process to use a design gesture rather than a full-blown intervention.

#### 7.5 Recommendations: Looking into the future

In the future, through working within different urban contexts and with different communities or publics the concept of awkward space can continue to be co-evolved, to highlight a range of issues and possibilities relating to the changes people want to see in their everyday places. After I completed my thesis case studies, I had the opportunity to work with MA Design students at Goldsmiths, University of London to explore awkward space on their campus; MA Design students at KHiO, Oslo National Academy of the Arts and members of the community in the suburb of Veitvet in Oslo to explore and re-imagine the purpose of an old shopping centre at the heart of their community; and students from the Welsh School of Architecture and members of the community in the town of Llandeilo in Wales to map and re-imagine spaces, including a derelict market hall, in their town centre. Through each of these collaborations I continued to be inspired by people's interpretations of the concept of awkward space, each time discovering new places in all their awkward glory through the eyes and voices of their inhabitants.

The success of my workshop acitivities with the Haberdasher residents suggests that it would be worth applying a similar process to a larger study. This study might include a broader range of stakeholders from both within a neighbourhood and outside of a neighbourhood, including for example, planners, architects, council members and local business. The study might include working with a range of

different locations and participants within a larger area, perhaps working with several seeding grounds. To move forward with such a study might mean partnering with an organisation such as Shoreditch Trust, who can help to identify active and interested community groups.

Whilst the issues raised in the workshops in this thesis have been of an urban nature, after working with members of the community in the town of Llandeilo, I discovered that the process worked equally well to brooch issues and concerns within more rural communities in the UK. Here, issues such as poor transport links, unemployment, an aging population, and a lack of amenities for young people need urgent possibility-seeking. It follows that it might also be interesting to develop a comparative study of urban and rural awkward space. This might help to identify links and networks that can support rural and urban exchanges in resources and experiences.

Whilst my research is rooted within the field of design, I envision that my methodology can feed into 'community planning events' (Wates, 2008) or contribute to emerging fields of 'tactical urbanism' (Lydon, 2012), urban acupuncture (Lerner, 2007 and Casagrande, 2010) or 'acupunctural planning' (Manzini and Rizzo, 2011). Here the workshops can contribute to the identification of 'pressure points' in the urban environment where design can intervene, to attune 'positive ripple effects' throughout the community. The workshops could also form the part of a larger initiative such as 'Design of the Time: DOTT07' (2005-2008), which was a programme of sustainable regional and local design projects co-funded by the Design Council of England and the development agency One North East. This initiative sought to join-up design projects and education initiatives aimed at exploring life in a sustainable world, tackling themes such as food, energy and health (http://www.core77.com/blog/business/dott 07 a large scale uk design project to explore sustainability 6048.asp - last accessed 2nd April 2014).

The thesis research contributes reflections on carrying out collaborative design exercises with students. These can inform future design projects with an emphasis on developing open, situated and shared learning experiences with local groups and other community stakeholders, which are responsive to the urban environment. This research would focus upon how to prepare students for working with a range of different community stakeholders, through, for example, experience working within

urban contexts, facilitation and the use of co-design tools and approaches. These activities might feed into research conducted, for example, by networks such as DESIS (Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability) (<a href="http://www.desis-network.org/">http://www.desis-network.org/</a> - last accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014) or form the basis for design projects. An inspirational example of an existing pedagogic exercise that connects design students to live contexts can be found in the 'Design for the Living World' class on participatory practice led by the artist and architect Marjectica Potrc at the University of Fine Arts, Hamburg (<a href="http://designforthelivingworld.com/">http://designforthelivingworld.com/</a> - last accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014). Here, designers work with a range of different local communities to develop skills and to share knowledge directly in relationship with these local contexts. Projects include 'Exploring the Commons' in Hackney, London, where students explore issues such as food production and shelter in relationship to common spaces in the local environment, towards proposing more sustainable ways of living.

The success of the immediate and accessible design tools in the workshop could be developed further through integrating the use of democratic technologies and social media into the process, to create online vision documents that might be accessible to a wider community, beyond the workshops. We recently tested this with some success in the project with the residents from Llandeilo (<a href="www.mapping-llandeilo.org">www.mapping-llandeilo.org</a>). One of the participants of this project, a local planner, suggested how this process might also inform strategies for implementing small pockets of local government spending towards projects deemed relevant by the community.

In the 7 years since I began my thesis study, there has been a substantial global interest in the temporary use of residual spaces within cities. Recent books including 'Insurgent Space: Guerrilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities' (Hou, 2010), 'The Temporary City' (Bishop, 2012), and 'Urban Catalyst: The Power of Temporary Use' (Oswalt, P., Overmeyer, K., and Misselwitz, P., 2013), showcase examples of projects that are concerned with 'meanwhile' enterprises and activities that temporarily make use of residual space within the city. Subsequent comparative research using the findings from this research could be carried out in this area.

These are some of the imagined futures for awkward space. They require working in a flexible and adaptive way as a design researcher, moving across educational and public sector work, zooming in and out from an grounded to a meta-level of

engagement. At a time when cities are becoming increasingly populated, expensive, polluted and intense, awkward space is a resource in abundance. From the spaces that we identify as awkward, we can learn much about how communities relate and respond to the changes taking place within their environment. Awkward space is a generative concept to be used in keeping with the co-design methodology that has been developed around it, with sensitivity and optimism, towards the creation of meaningful and sustainable neighbourhoods, towns and cities.

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# Practicing Awkward Space in the City: Appendices

### Appendix A1 – Correspondence with TfL

Top Flat 20/6/07 26 Jerningham Road SELF SNX. ZYNOT NANNAH **Transport for London** I attack a plan of New Coors Road as requested, RUS PRIDRITY TEAM betwee It James' and ble crossing to Now X Gate station, Grahan Bermik including the westbound bus stop by St. James. 020 7027 9455 Transport for London The plan is 1:500 scale until the Footway Windsor House by the bus stop scaling at Just over 4m wide 42-50 Victoria Street London SW1H 0TL and the his stor area on the road at 3m x 39m. Phone 020 7343 5000 www.tfl.gov.uk MAYOR OF LONDON From the west end of the bus step t the cossing is appoximately 60m P. T.O.

From money (I commerced my career working for lewishern Borough and now based in the prefabs on the east side of se James, now part of Goldsniths) the Goldsniths when the harmour than it is now, so crowding (conflict at the bus stor may have been worse (though there are more Justs and more passeyers moreadays).

We'd be interested in the Findings of your research, executing my colleague Austria Ryrne is our R&D section. He may have information on similar studies to your and you may will to contact him.

Question by rine @ tfl. gov. who I'm at graham. beswick @tfl. gov. who.

Good lucke. Graham Bernde.

# Appendix A2 – Overview of observational study Introduction

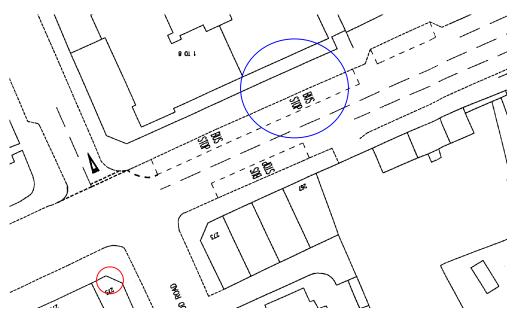


Figure A1. A plan of the bus stop and the immediate New Cross area with bus stop highlighted in blue and café highlighted in red. Plan provided by Transport for London.

At the beginning of my empirical research at the bus stop, I spent three days observing the space from a café situated on the other side of the road. My intention was to record the pedestrian and bus passenger activity for three one-hour periods using a template that I designed to gather data. I observed the bus stop between 12.30pm and 1.30pm, which I had previously determined from my everyday experience of the bus stop as being peak time. This is when bus passenger and pedestrian flows are busiest. I discovered at this early stage in the investigation that it was very difficult to record the activity at the bus stop. Due to the movement of the people, the traffic that partially obscured my view, and the frequent number of buses it became impossible to get everything down on paper simultaneously and accurately.

My first conclusion was that I was trying to record too much information about a context that was changing fairly rapidly. I broke down my readings into five-minute intervals and I decided to focus on specific activities or elements of the environment for each interval. These were

- Number of in-coming buses and number of people
- Waiting patterns in the space
- Pedestrian flow patterns
- Invoicing objects in the space
- Focusing on one individual and writing a short narrative of their behaviour
- Obstructive elements
- Elements in surrounding context that might impact on space

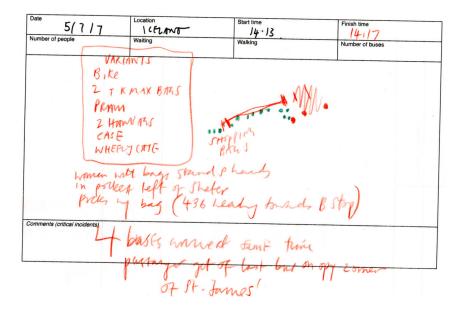


Figure A2. An example of one of the templates designed to log the activities taking place at the bus stop

#### Identifying critical incidents

After struggling to eloquently record the activities in the space, due to the limitations of my template and the changeability of the environment, I decided to abandon my template and create a loose 'set of procedures' for collecting and interpreting data concerning the activities at the bus stop. I discovered a method entitled 'The Critical Incident Technique' which was developed for the aviation industry and written about by John. C. Flanagan in 1954 for the 'Psychological Bulletin'. Flanagan describes how

'The critical incident technique consists of a set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behaviour in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems...' (Flanagan, 1954, p1)

The Critical Incident Technique is used when the incidents that take place in a situation are fairly clear in their intent or purpose to the observer. (Flanagan, 1954) As an approach to data collection and analysis, it is largely inductive and based on subjective observations. It is most appropriate for drawing out early observations about a situation. The solution-seeking nature of this approach fits in well with this piece of design research. Flanagan states that

'It should be emphasized that the critical incident technique does not consist of a rigid set of rules governing such data collection. Rather is should be thought of as a flexible set of principles which must be modified and adapted to meet the specific situation at hand.' (Flanagan, 1954)

This technique enables me as a design researcher, to work in an open and flexible way with the 'situation at hand'. The technique is broken down into five stages:

- 1. Determination of the general aim of the activity
- 2. Development of plans and specifications for collecting factual incidents regarding the activity
- 3. Collection of the data. The incident may be reported in an interview or written up by the observer him or herself.
- 4. Analysis of the data. The purpose of this analysis is to summarize and describe the data in an efficient manner so that it can be effectively used for various practical purposes.
- 5. Interpretation and reporting of the statement of requirements of the activity (triangulation/ evaluation of four previous points). (Flanagan, 1954)

I have loosely used these five stages to organise and present my observational study. I wanted to create an immediate reading of the environment that acted almost like a sketch of the activities taking place. Flanagan describes how critical incident technique only requires 'simple judgments' of the observer. At this stage, identifying

how the bus stop becomes awkward rests upon a set of simple judgments made by myself as the design researcher.

#### Stage one - Determination of the general aim of the activity

In this study of the bus stop as an awkward space, the aim was to identify *how* the bus stop environment becomes more or less awkward for the bus passengers and pedestrians. I identified four key research questions to guide my investigation:

- How do the bus passengers waiting at the bus stop relate to the pedestrians moving through the bus stop environment?
- How do the bus passengers and pedestrians relate to objects in the bus stop environment?
- How do objects that are brought into the space by bus passengers and pedestrians impact on the environment?
- How do the bus passengers and pedestrians themselves impact on the bus stop environment?

# Stage two – Development of plans and specifications for collecting factual incidents regarding the activity

To gather the data required to begin answering my questions, I decided to photograph the space using a time-lapse camera. John Fruin, an expert in pedestrian flow, in a paper entitled 'Designing for Pedestrians: A Level-of-Service Concept' states that

'Time-lapse photography studies make it possible to establish the relationship between volume, speed, and human convenience at different pedestrian concentrations.' (Fruin, 1970, p1)

Time-lapse photography is a time-efficient way of recording both the flows of activities within a space and capturing individual stills of the space for closer inspection and presentation. At this stage in the investigation, it was felt that using video film would produce too much data to effectively manage in a short amount of time. The bus stop was photographed using a digital camera on a tripod connected to lap top computer running time-lapse photography software. The camera is set up to take one photograph every five seconds. Five-second intervals produce a sequence

of photographs that adequately capture the movement of the pedestrians and the bus passengers in the space. The photographs were taken every 5 seconds from 12pm.

The area around the bus stop was surveyed to find the best possible location to situate the camera. Ideally, the bus stop should be filmed from three aspects, the Deptford Town Hall clock tower, the scaffolding across the road and the ground on the left of the bus stop. This would give a panoramic view of the activity at the bus stop. However, for pragmatic reasons I could only arrange to film from the last of these locations. The spot from which I filmed captured enough activity for this scale of investigation. I was generally obscured from the attention of people around the bus stop, placed around a corner with space to hide the computer.

#### Stage three - Collection of the data.

There are 159 photographs. To analysis of the activity at the bus stop for the duration of this period the sequence of photographs were divided up into every 12 photographs or at sixty-second intervals. To interpret the data collected from photographing the space I wrote a loose narrative structure to identify the relationships between the people waiting, people walking, objects in the space and objects that are brought into the space from outside. From this narrative I selected four critical incidents where the configuration of the variables identified made the space more awkward for the pedestrians and bus passengers to attain their programmed objective i.e. waiting or walking. Each critical incident is accompanied by a 'simple judgment' describing how the incident may become awkward.

# Appendix A3 – Design gesture 2, supporting materials

#### Introduction

'...intertwining paths give their shape to spaces. They weave places together. In that respect, pedestrian movements form one of these "real systems whose existence in fact makes up the city."' (de Certeau, c1984, p97)



Figure A3. Design gesture 2

With this design intervention I aimed to create a wayfaring solution for the pedestrians moving through the bus stop space and an occlusion-based solution for the bus passengers waiting at the bus stop. To achieve this I designed a red vinyl tape strip that meandered through the bus stop environment along the pedestrian's pathway and three blue vinyl arcs that were placed at either corner of the bus shelter and next to the bus stop pole and flag which had previously been identified as key places where bus passengers wait. These vinyl shapes had an adhesive backing, which made it possible to temporarily stick them to the floor for the purpose of the gesture. I wanted to observe how this would affect the bus passengers and pedestrian interactions through the bus stop.

#### **Carrying out the intervention**

I carried out the design intervention at 7am on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 2008. The vinyl shapes were stuck down at around 6.45am when there were very little people around in the area. A fellow researcher from the department, Dr. Mathilda Tham, helped me apply the vinyl and record the activities in the space. I felt that it was important to

have someone with me primarily because I was using valuable technology in the space and needed someone to keep a lookout. I recorded the activities in the space using a small digital 'Flip' camera, which is a very discrete camera that looks like a mobile phone. I made a series of 8 short films in the space. The digital video 'Flip' camera is a new piece of technology that came out after my previous empirical studies. It produces low resolution, easy to manage footage and is discrete to use in a public space.

#### Observations taken from the intervention at the bus stop

At 7am in the morning, the bus stop was not very populated. A small amount of people were using the bus stop at this time, there were a maximum of six waiting bus passengers in the space and around the same number of pedestrians moving through the space. This did not represent the levels of awkwardness that are experienced at peak travel times at this bus stop.

Both the pedestrians and the bus passengers at the bus stop acknowledged the vinyl shapes. The red trail that was applied to guide the pedestrians through the environment has a similar effect as the yellow line on the underground. Bus passengers stood behind it and then crossed it when they needed to board the bus. This was an unintentional but interesting finding. The red trail also traced a curving motion through the space, it seemed as though people liked to follow the curves and in some cases the wayfinding line created a confidence of way. The red trail parted the space, creating a through way that was acknowledged by the bus passengers, this was observed when a bicycle was wheeled through the space.

The blue cusps did not have as significant an effect on the behaviour of the people in the space. They did create a slight curving motion from pedestrians who moved through the entrance of pathway one. They also provided a line for bus passengers to stand up against whilst waiting for the bus.

The vinyl tape did not stick to the ground very well due to the dirt and damp. If this design gesture would be carried out again, the space would benefit from being cleaned first.

It could be concluded that the curving nature of the markings made with the tape at the bus stop created a response from both the bus passengers and the pedestrians. Pedestrians were drawn along the safest path. The curves created a subtle choreography in the movements of the bus passengers and pedestrians negotiating the footway. To understand the potential of intervening with the markings further, it would be necessary to conduct the experiment at a busier time.

#### **Observations from films**

Film 1 – First film of the morning, only the red line is laid down. Two pedestrians walk along pathway one. One pedestrian walks towards college the other from the direction of college. The first crosses over the line disregarding it, the second traces the curve but avoids touching the plastic. The plastic doesn't stick very well to the surface of the pavement due to dirt and damp. The far end of the bus stop is wet due to the slant of ground and poor drainage. People tread the water through the space as the bus stop became busier.

**Film 2** - Only the red line is laid down. A bus passenger (male) stands next to the line in front of the bus shelter facing the direction of the oncoming buses. As a pedestrian (female) approaches the space walking along the other side of the line, the bus passenger also moves along the line in the opposite direction.

**Film 3** - The red line and blue cusps are both stuck down in the space. A bus passenger (man) with a bag stands in front of the bus stop pole and flag on the inside of the red line. A bus passenger stands in front of the bus shelter on the inside of the blue cusp that is stuck down on the edge space. The bus passenger moves backwards into the bus shelter.

**Film 4** – Two bus passengers stand in the bus shelter, at the front. A pedestrian on a bicycle enters the space. Immediately one of the bus passengers moves away from the direction of the bicycle. The bicycle swerves along the curve of the red line. The bicycle has to stop and the pedestrian puts their foot on the ground. A small collection of bus passengers (6) are huddled together, five of them poised behind the red line (bicycle is on the other side of the red line obstructed by one bus passenger). A bus pulls into the space. Another pedestrian walks around the group of bus

passengers moving into and through the shelter space. The bus passengers stand poised at the red line. The bicycle waits to move through the space.

Film 5 – A pedestrian walks into the space and moves along the red line, taking care not to tread on the line. A bus passenger stands in front of the bus stop pole and flag and moves along the blue cusp a little whilst the pedestrian moves past but then stands still at the edge of the blue cusp. Another pedestrian moves along the blue cusp at the edge of the bus shelter before confidently following the red line out of the space. There are now several bus passengers in the space. One at the bus stop pole and flag, the rest at the front of the bus shelter. One of the passengers in the shelter moves along the inside of the blue cusp at the edge of the shelter tracing its curve and standing on the outside of the shelter. Several passengers stand up to the red line, one stands in front of the red line. A bus arrives and passengers move forward over the line onto the bus. They tread on the red line. A pedestrian moves through the space along the red line, stepping on it a little bit but with care.

Film 6 – A bus passenger stands on the outside edge of the bus shelter, away from the blue cusp. Another passenger stands in front of the bus shelter, inside the red line. A bus pulls up and several other bus passengers are drawn out of the bus shelter towards the bus, a couple of them standing up to the red line and a couple over the red line and near the pavement edge. One stands along the blue cusp at the bus stop pole and flag. One bus passenger steps over the red line making sure they don't touch the line. Four bus passengers form a queue to board the bus at the front. One passenger hangs back behind the red line. Eventually they step over the line and one more passenger follows them. A passenger comes into the space and curves along the inside of the blue cusp on the edge of the bus shelter. Another passenger moves into the space curving along the red line and then moving to curve along the blue cusp and into the space. Another passenger curves right along the red line (in a determined fashion) and gets on the bus at the front. Two pedestrians follow each other out of the space curving along the red line one leaning to the left and the second leaning to the right.

**Film 7** – A pedestrian wheeling their bicycle enters the bus stop space along the red line. The pedestrian wheels the bicycle on the line and then moves off the line but follows the curve. The passenger who is on the shelter side of the red line, about to

board the bus, allows the bike along the red line and then move onto the back of the bus. The line can be seen in this case to create a pause in the movement of the passenger and a steady course for the pedestrian.

Film 8 – Six passengers stand in an uneven line at the front of the bus shelter. One stands inside the blue cusp on the shelter's edge. A bus pulls up to the space and the passengers cross over the red line. This is an interesting phenomena, the red line seems to signify a transition from being in the shelter to anticipating the bus boarding. People cross the line quite determined, sometimes making big steps so as not to touch the line. Pedestrian can then follow the line behind the passengers. Like walking along a narrow path on a cliff, they draw from the surface of the passengers to balance their curving through the space; at the same time they curve their shoulders inwards to avoid confrontation.

## **Appendix B1 – Vertical Studio project brief**

#### AWKWARD SPACE

Mapping, Building and Growing Spaces of Opportunity

Project leader: Hannah Jones, design researcher and lecturer, MA Design Futures Department of Design, Goldsmiths, University of London Project team: Dr. Wayne Forster, DRU, Welsh School of Architecture, Cardiff Rachel Wingfield, Loop.pH, London

#### Project timeline

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2010 – Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2010 Project teaching days – Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April, Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> May, Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> May, and Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2010 Project Critique session – Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2010

#### Project brief

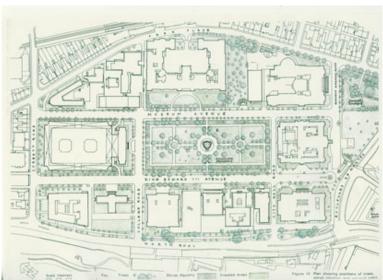


Figure 1. A map of Cardiff Civic Centre, our project context. Jonathan Vining.

Keywords: awkward space, design tools and processes, analytical and imaginative collaborative mapping, small-scale architectural interventions

#### Context

The challenges facing future cities require that architects work more inventively and opportunistically with existing built environments and their 'awkward space'. This project aims at exploring this proposition through retrofitting awkward spaces with small-scale architectural interventions. The project will focus upon the everyday environment surrounding the architecture school (See Figure 1). This design process is guided by methods derived from a PhD research project entitled 'Practicing Awkward Space in the City' by Hannah Jones. It is also inspired by a recent project entitled

'MetaboliCity' (<a href="www.metabolicity.com">www.metabolicity.com</a>) that took place in London in 2009, where designers worked towards developing a product-service-system focused on supporting amateur food-growing activities in the city.

No matter how carefully we plan, design and live-out our cities we are eventually left with awkward spaces. These spaces are often the by-product of design and function or the remnants of previous patterns of flow through the built environment. On the surface these awkward spaces may appear disagreeable or undesirable. This project sets out to explore, map and intervene in awkward spaces to reveal new opportunities for design.

Aims and Objectives
The project has four key aims:

- $1.\,To$  utilise and evolve design tools and processes for exploring, mapping and intervening within awkward space
- 2. To situate and explore architecture and design within a broader context
- 3. To co-design an installation within an awkward space
- $4.\, To \ optimis\ e \ creative \ synergies in the team's \ collaborative \ work$

To satisfy the aims of this project, the students will be introduced to key concepts from ecological psychology, social anthropology, critical theory and collaborative artistic practice. They will utilize tools and processes that are derived from design, design research and community participation; as well as exploring different mediums for reading, visualising and mapping space and envisioning and crafting flexible and adaptive, temporary installations (See Figure 2). The students will work individually and in teams. The workshops will be co-facilitated by a team made up of a design researcher, an architect, and two designers.



Figure 2. An image taken from an awkward space mapping session at the Haberdasher Estate, London, March 2010.

Project Deliverables

- 1. Throughout the project students will be working in two teams. Each team will need to present their mapping and intervention concepts collaboratively. The mapping needs to
- be of gallery standard.

  2. Students will be asked to individually design and submit a portfolio in an InDesign format that presents their documentation of awkward spaces, ideas for interventions, reflections on the collaborative experience and other supportive material generated throughout the project.

# Learning Outcomes:

- You will acquire skills in mapping and envisioning contexts and scenarios You will acquire skills in collaborative design practice
- You will work across disciplines
- You will utilize and adapt design tools and processes
- You will gain experience in organising and conducting both individual and team presentations
- This is an opportunity to reflect on your current individual practice and gain feedback from your contemporaries
- You will gain a basic knowledge about awkward space, design research methods and urban interventions

# Appendix B2 – Awkward space explorer kit task

# AWKWARD SPACE

Mapping, Building and Growing Spaces of Opportunity

# TASK ONE

IDENTIFYING AN AWKWARD SPACE AND ASSEMBLING AN EXPLORERS KIT

To be prepared for 9am Wednesday 28th April 2010

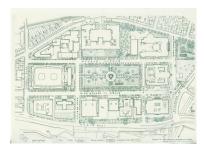




Figure 1. Civic Centre (our context) and Figure 2. A hypothetical explorer's kit

# 1. Description of task

- Identify a space that you find awkward in your everyday environment at the Welsh School of Architecture.
- We will be basing our explorations around the Bute Building and its immediate context, the Civic Centre.
- You should document your space through photographs, drawings or written descriptions.
- You can refer to the criteria on this worksheet (please see section 3) to help guide your definition of awkward space. You are also encouraged to expand the criteria.
- Assemble your awkward space explorer's kit.
- This can be made up of both practical and metaphorical tools for exploration.
- You should aim to have around 5 or 6 tools in your kit.
- You can use physical objects or images and drawings that represent a
  possible tool to present your kit.
- These tools should exemplify your approach to investigating the built environment.
- Think about how you will explore, identify, navigate and measure awkward space with your explorer's kit.
- You can draw on your previous project work or inspirational examples from architecture, art, design, map-making to support you approach.
- You will each have 10 minutes to present your space and your explorer kit.
- Please put together your presentation in PowerPoint or Keynote.

# 2. Purpose of the task This is an opportunity for you to introduce yourself and your design approach to the group and the project leaders. From these presentations we will start a discussion on mapping awkward spaces on the site. We will also select two teams that will work together throughout the project based on the approaches put forward in your explorer kits. The presentations will be documented through photography and film. The documentation that you put together for this task will go towards your individual project portfolio

# Appendix B3 – Awkward space definitions

The awkward space definitions offered to the students were taken from an article presenting the findings from my Masters research entitled 'Exploring the Creative Possibilities of Awkward Space in the City' (Jones, 2007) and Chapter 2 of this thesis research.

# **Awkward space definitions**

- 1. Awkward space emerges amidst pedestrian flows in the city (See Chapter 2).
- 2. Awkward space is transitional in nature. It may be neglected and disused at one point and celebrated and useful at another (Jones, 2007).
- 3. Awkward space exists in between or on the boundaries of that which is owned or occupied in the built environment (Jones, 2007).
- 4. Awkward space can host temporary events and artistic interventions, or can be used by informal urban actors and non-institutional bodies (Jones, 2007).
- 5. Awkward space constitutes a non-hierarchical, alternative or non-consumer territory of public space (Jones, 2007).
- 6. Awkward space can be attractive or repellent, contemplative or sinister and can evoke a sense of the uncanny (Jones, 2007).

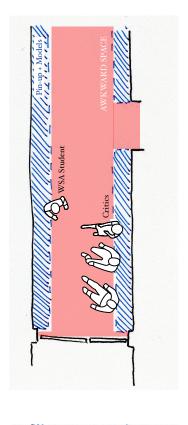
# Appendix B4 - Psychogeographic atlas example

# Excerpts from Daniel Cutter's 'Awkward Space: A Traveller's Guide'

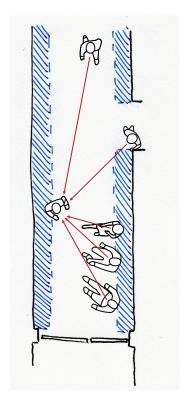
AN ANALYSIS OF AWKWARD SPACE FOR DIFFERENT USERS This enty analysis of my chosen space was based upon the awkwardness for each person participating in the corridor crit scenario.

The critics are forced to sit away from the wall, closer to the student, uncomfortably concious of fragile models behind them.

AWKWARDNESS FOR CRITICS

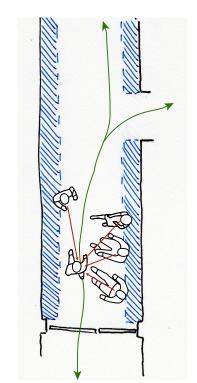


AWKWARDNESS FOR ARCHITECTURE STUDENT
All focus is clearly directed toward a single individual in
a way they are vividly concious of.

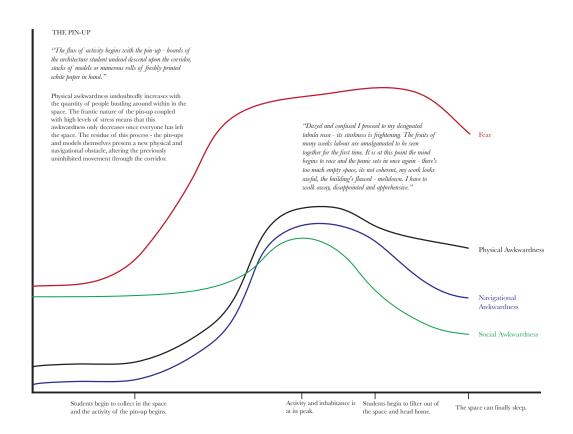


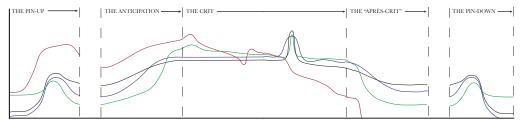
Too close for comfort?

| Model | William | Space | William | William



AWKWARDNESS FOR PASSER-BY
To navigate past the crit any person must
cut right through the 'no-man's land'
causing all focus to switch towards them.





Fear Social Awkwardness Navigational Awkwardness Physical Awkwardness Appendix B5 – Transcripts from case study 2

Transcript 1: Stage one - Surveying awkward space

10am, Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2010

Length of session recorded: 1:02:11

Setting the scene:

This transcript includes extracts of the first day of presentations by the architecture students. Here, the students were asked to prepare a 10minute presentation outlining their own definition of awkward space, describing an awkward space that they have chosen on the site and an awkward space explorer kit that they have put together to survey this space. Wayne Forster and myself, input into the discussion in the form of feedback on the students' presentations. Not all of the students' presentations were recorded on the FlipCam. Short descriptions of the presentations from the students that were not filmed are included at the end of the transcript. I recorded this data in my research journal.

Participants:

Hannah

Wayne

Cat

Siwan

Craig

Chantal

Michael

Oliver

Charlotte

Kate

**Daniel** 

Information of codification:

Key themes that emerge out of the surveying awkward space session, as drawn out through my readings are:

**Ownership** 

How awkward space makes you feel

Architectural or urban design features

Public and private space

Safety and security

Temporal aspect of awkward space

Measuring awkward space

Movement and circulation (traffic, people)

Different human and non human actors

Functions of space

Sensing space

Routes/thoroughfares

Natural features

Quotes for narrative – these quotes will appear in the body of the case study text as key insights and examples from the process.

# Recording:

# Cat:

What really drew me was the idea of ownership, and in these spaces, what made it awkward for me was not knowing who owned what part of land and having this awkward in between space where you couldn't work out who's owning what and you didn't feel quite right. This led me to my awkward space, which is the area just in front of the courthouses. I was thinking about the type of people that use it and how it's divided into these sort of areas. You've got the area behind the columns and the area in front of the steps and then you've got the pavement. I was thinking about who those spaces belong to and how at different times of day it becomes awkward for different people. If you're a passer-by you might feel a bit awkward if there are homeless people in there (the students presentation slide highlights the homeless people, court attendees and workers and passers by).

# Cat:

I decided not to really measure, because for me the awkwardness wasn't about the sides or the edge of the space, it was more to do with how the different users of the space affected the space for different people. Through talking to different people who

were using it I found that there was quite a big separation between the daytime and the nighttime. So, from about 9am in the morning until 6pm in the evening the space is quite clearly for the court, you see people spilling out of the court and so if you're a passer by you get the sense that the space feels a part of the court. For the homeless people they leave at 9am each day, they feel that it wasn't their space anymore, it wasn't their home and so it became awkward for them. And then I looked at how it became at night. It was interesting because as soon as it stopped its role as the court, it became their home (homeless people) and they were saying that they'd been there for two years and they come every day and for them it was their home and it was their space. But at the same time they said that no other homeless people came there and I found that quite strange.

Wayne:

How many are there?

# Cat:

It's two guys. And so by them being there, it creates this awkward space for other people and even though its one of the safest spaces (its next to police station) other people won't come there because there's this sense of ownership. And for people that walk past at night there's this sense that because its such a private space because they are there, you don't really know if you should be there, even the pavement starts to feel like it's a part of their home.

# Wayne:

What do you think the boundary of the space is, I know you haven't measured it but expect you wouldn't have to?

# Cat:

I think there were three separate spaces, there was the area just behind the columns, which was definitely their home, then there was the area on the steps, and then you've got the pavement and the sense that I got was that as soon as you went on those steps you were encroaching on their space.

Wayne:

The pavement is at times challenging, especially when the press are out there. There are days when the detritus of society spills out of there, maybe in jubilation because they haven't been sent down, they've just got a community order or something and there's that moment when people from Welsh government are mingled with these other kinds of sections of society... there's an interesting moment there.

Cat:

I found that interesting because there are two different sections of society.

Cat:

Well my toolkit was about getting to know the space and getting to know the people, so didn't want to do a tape measure or anything... I thought about how with a sleeping bag you could really experience the space and a coffee or a lighter... most people who stand on the steps are smokers... for me it was about starting up conversations with people and learning about the space through people who actually experience it day to day and so perhaps a coffee or a lighter would be the initiation of that.

Wayne:

'In one way, the work that you're about to do, you could call it survey work, I studied as a surveyor before I became an architect, and if as a youngster someone had said the tools that you are going to use to survey are a lighter, a cup of coffee and a sleeping bag, I'd have been slightly amused and bemused.'

Cat:

This is more about the experience...

Wayne:

Its absolutely valid, but I want you all to think a little bit about what you mean by surveying and by measurement and how you call these things.

(I photograph the work)

(In between presentations, Wayne asks the students to collect examples of maps – he describes observational mapping, abstracting shapes and form.

Hannah asks the students to think about the multiplicity of the spaces, questioning if awkward space is transitional, non-institutional... how can you articulate this in a 2D representation?

Wayne reflects upon putting yourself in the shoes of the person who designed the courthouse steps – how they wouldn't have thought about the space being appropriated by two homeless people for two years? What we think we are designing and whom we are designing for may be different to who uses it and how it is used in the end.)

# Siwan:

My awkward space is actually in the building, its of a different scale. For my awkward space I chose the pit. These plans (on slides) show where it is located in the corner of the building. The plan on the right shows some objective measurements taken from the space, the dimensions of the walls and the stairs for example. This is a panoramic view looking west into the space and a panoramic view looking east. Measuring the dimensions of the space, it's quite awkward physically but also in terms of the subjective experience of the space it becomes awkward. One use of the space is for circulation because it is the main axis through the building so people are moving through the building all the time. It's a thoroughfare to move from east to west through the building. This is a noisy activity, with door swings and people moving up and down the stairs and talking. The stairs coming down into the middle of the space is actually quite awkward because it makes quite an awkward shape in the room for activities to take place. So objectively, the stairs are awkward in terms of their dimensions because their 1.6m above the floor level so you have to duck to go under them and so that space is not really used at all. It's mainly used as storage. Another use for the space is it is a destination because there are four offices located around the space and so you have staff arriving and leaving. This is noisy and it adds to the circulation. It can also cause an awkward situation when you're trying to work, having a crit or something, you don't want to obstruct the doorways. The space is also used for crits, using the wall space to pin up work. This is a formal activity that usually needs a quiet environment. The chairs and tables also cause obstructions in the space. This is a picture of the windows, they provide light but they don't provide a view. I applied your definitions to the space, the best ones were

Awkward space evokes a sense of the uncanny – It can often feel uncomfortable when there is a crit or an event taking place in the space and you don't really want to move through the space and disrupt what's going on but you have to because it's a way of getting through the building.

Awkward space might be neglected an disused at one point in time and celebrated and used at another point – Sometimes is very busy and there's crits going on and there's so much life in there and on other days its completely empty and feels really disused.

Awkward space can be highly adaptable – A range of activities can take place there even if its not the ideal space for these activities.

Awkward space can host temporary events or become useful for non-institutional bodies – (no explanation).

And so here is my explorer's tool kit. Firstly, a camera to take photos also for film, to record the uses of the space and the patterns of movement and how it changes when different people occupy the space. A tape measure for objective measurements, dimensions of space, plans and sections. A tally system where you would observe how people use the space and when people use the space. A sound recorder is useful to record noise levels of different activities, doors swinging, movement on the stairs and discussions. And lastly a sketch book and pen to record all the experiential and objective qualities in the space.

# Wayne:

The one thing you haven't mentioned is that four people live there and they're very different from one another. They also have some view on what that place is about. (Wayne carries on describing the staff's differences). There are times when that space isn't used at all, You're only there for 30 weeks of the year. There is what you know and what you don't know about the place that you need to think about that.

(Hannah mentions the work of William Lim 'spaces of indeterminacy', how these spaces can enhance creativity. Different outcome or dynamic than this space.)

# Wayne:

Think about destinations around there, think about where people are going.

# Hannah:

Circulation is really interesting.

# Wayne:

What are your favourite graphical descriptions of space and place?

# Student\_02 Siwan:

I think the Mappa Mundi is interesting, which is about representing the experience rather than being precise geometrically.

(Hannah mentions the mapping programmes on BBC. Discussion about maps and mapping.)

# Craig:

My awkward space is an awkward route. It's the 10second journey from the end of the civic park to the entrance to the Bute Building.

(The slides show the route across the road to the Bute Building, and highlights how this crosses over patches of grass then road to get there, through a 'sequence of spaces'. These are graphically colour-coded in strips).

# Craig:

The route is cutting through a strong vertical axis of flow through the city. You've got pedestrians, then you've got nothing and then you've got this horizontal parking of cars and then you've got this really strong vertical flow of traffic. Then at the end you've got movement everywhere, people moving through the entrance, talking and people leaving the building'. (The slides highlight the types of movement patterns within each strip).

And then looking at the types of awkward spaces, the strip of grass that separates the park and the parked cars is kind of a barrier, it's almost like its wrong to walk from

the park over that space but then the green space that's between the building and the entrance area here looks more like a place. So the idea is that awkward space is a barrier or a separation.' (The slides identify the space as a space in between and ask the question is it attractive or repellent and whether it's a destination space/place?).

'I looked at the voids that you walk through, so you walk through the green space which has a few trees, then you have to go through these parked cars and then you, then you're on this busy road and then you're going through parked cars again and then you go into this narrow entrance. You're kind of aware of these changes as you move through these voids. As you walk through the parked cars, you're more aware of your immediate surroundings. And then as you come out of that you're onto a busy road and you're awareness changes. (The slides identify a transition between different volumes effecting awareness of your surroundings.)

The other thing is looking at the tactile qualities of the route. I stared looking at the concrete and then moving onto the grass and then to the stone on the entrance and how this affects your perception of the space.

An awkward space can be a space in between, is against traditional flows of the city, as a barrier or place, can be used or unused depending on time, is adapted by people, objects or activities, can occur throughout the city. (Uses the strip of grass as an example of appropriation by people for smoking)

Awkward space explorer's kit includes a sketchbook, a camera with a video recorder as well and a voice recorder.

(Wayne asks the student to take their shoes off and add them to the kit. One of the things you are sensitive to is what's under your feet. Its surface and texture of surface as well as 'the haptic' rather than the visual, touch, smell, the human bodies measurement as an instrument. Don't forget that bit, you as an instrument of measurement.)

# Hannah:

Have you read any of J J Gibson's writing?

# Craig:

I have read the opening.

# Hannah:

This idea of surfaces and Tim Ingold's work on way finding is interesting. Everyday that journey might be different he writes about pathways of observation, there might be something about navigation and wayfinding in terms of a narrative aspect, part of the kit recording immediate reactions to changes in the environment.

# Wayne:

This is something to look into during the week. The park was laid out by engineers about 100 years ago, not by a designer or somebody who would have anything related to a design profession. It was done very, very rationally, with two avenues running north south, subsidiary avenues running east west, which capture a garden in the centre.... (Wayne describes the history of the planning of the site).

So in one way there's the way you sense it intuitively and then there's a kind of structure which is a dimensional and a kind of rational, engineering approach to the world which makes you experience it in the way that you do. I mean things have changed, motor cars dominate this precinct since it was conceived in 1900 which sets out coverts about what can happen here, what's possible in terms of surfaces etc... and so this 10 minutes experience you got was laid down for you over 100 years ago where the thresholds are, where the bell curves are, where the trees are, nobody could have imagined the amount of traffic you would have to negotiate to get from second three to second seven, who'd have thought that people would be smoking outside the building all the time. So the whole experience in one way is different to how it was conceived. And so a little bit of research into this would be good.

# Chantal:

I decided to look at the space between the pit and the stairwell. Mainly looking at how people interact and pass each other going up and down these stairs. (Wayne asks the student about where they obtained their map of the space. She replies that it is online, for disabled users to find out about access. Wayne comments on the fact that

the school doesn't use the room numbers, you can't find places on the map that we know as different).

So the stairs are used to move between the pit and the west corridor (slides identify the space as transitional, for a quick way through) and what I was looking at is these disused spaces as you come into contact with other people, the objective measurements aren't big enough for people to pass comfortably, so someone has to wait and someone else will pass. It creates these awkward moments when you don't know who's going to go and you sort of have to interact with people as you use the stairs.

# Wayne:

'If you're lucky you get into an awkward dance'

# Chantal:

Yes, and you get this range of movements, how to avoid people, and who goes first (Nice illustrations, diagrams with different wayfaring paths). So that was what I was really interested in, looking at the circulation in these spaces. I tried to photograph people coming into contact with them. You get awkward movements when you come through the doors if only one door is open. If you carrying things it creates these awkward moments when you have to move them to get them through these spaces. If you come in and there's no one there its also quite uncanny, its quite eerie, it goes up quite high and I never use it.

(List some of the definitions, uncanny, transitional, neglected and used at different times, disowned, highly adaptive)

Explorer's kit includes camera, tape measure, tracing paper for writing down different circulations observed,

# Wayne:

You know those tracking diagrams that you did, is there another tool not in the kit that could help you to illustrate movement, the contortions that the body has to go into to get through the space. Something more intimate...

# Hannah:

There's quite a performative aspect to it' (describes John's experiment of walking towards someone with your eyes closed and also the ideas of attraction when negotiating a footway). 'You could think about staging happenings.

Wayne:

'Would this include the corridor?' (Asks for more detail about the boundaries of the space)

# Hannah:

You could think about introducing music to change the rhythm through the space'.

# Michael:

Right my awkward space is this little path that goes along side the university building It between these two main roads and so its completely separate from the flow of the city which is Park Place and Museum Avenue (Diagram shows park in between roads). It's a mish mash of plants and different tarmac. It feels like it should be more highlighted but it not. It's where plants drop leaves so it is masked and hidden. Its part of this crumbly, botched up, red brick path. It's normally wet and dodgy under foot. It's next to a park with a grass area.

Wayne:

Do you know how frequently it's used?'

# Michael:

It is used, you see people going along it, more people go along it than through the building. I've have experienced avoiding it at one in the morning when I'm going home from the studio even though it's probably the quickest way home when the main building's shut. It's just this horrible, it shouldn't feel like a dark alley but it feels like it because its next to this large open space with trees and its not unpleasant during the day but you wouldn't hang around there.

# Wayne:

I think there may have been one or two incidents actually.

# Michael:

It's one of these few places where this path is up against the building. Most of the civic centre is this area of grass.

# Wayne:

(Reflects back upon Craig's axial, sequential approach to exploring a route to the building entrance)

'The route that you've picked up on its very much an unplanned route across a planned landscape.'

# Michael:

It feels like you could almost have a barbeque and still be outside the park.

I've got a camera, I've got a protractor with a piece of string around it, I've got a bit of charcoal and paper to get this mish mash of surfaces, and then a toilet roll on string, to restrict what you're looking at to focus on a small aspect of the space and block out everything else and just think, is it that bit that is making it awkward... Or is it everything else around it that is making it awkward. Just homing in on aspects of it.

# Wayne:

This is like a boy's own navigation kit. From Lisbon to the New World. You could look into designing and making instruments for navigation. (Recommends the book Latitude).

# Hannah:

It's interesting where you've draw upon the natural world creeping into the pathway.' (touches upon the different mapping levels for awkwardness – awkwardness over time and space, immediate awkwardness and awkwardness that takes time to build up, how do you capture things that are occurring really slowly).

# Oliver:

The awkward space I've chosen is in front of the law building, by this curved bit.

Basically, as you can see from this photo, there are a lot of paths that cross over each other, they're all made out of different materials and for some reason no one

sticks to the paths, they choose to walk across the grass. I stood and took photos constantly for half and hour and you can gage that people, as well as walking from across these different angles walk across the grass and it's not just the space that's awkward its how people use it and the fact that no one's managed to get the paths right, it has this sort of interaction with people walking across the different paths, the grass itself and the verges which is what I found quite interesting.

# Wayne:

Is it the only part of this civic precinct where that galvanized chain is used as a boundary edge? The corner that you have chosen is the corner that is the least defined. You are now passing from residential Cardiff into a civic area. (goes on to discuss the civic centre) It's sort of leaky.

Oliver:

Yeah the paths are irregular and still people move through.

Wayne:

It's the one place that doesn't have a significant entrance.

Oliver:

Yeah, its got the curve and you might expect a grand entrance to that but there's just a fire escape.

Wayne:

The Law School is disappointing in the context of the other buildings around there.

# Oliver:

My tool kit, I've gone for a more abstract toolkit using hands and feet which is about how each individual experiences walking around feeling with you hands, different extures a camera for time-lapse, a Dictaphone listen to how people walk across different paths and a friend to help you see from other perspectives. You could measure with your feet, hands, using the body as a measuring tool, corporeal measurement.

(Wayne talks about the history of measurement. Introduction to metric...)

Hannah:

We used to measure things against our body... external standards... Bohm.

Relationship between measure and become alienated, rationally order landscape.

Wayne:

...appropriating codified systems... the notion of abstracted space dimension is a real problem, people can't imagine over 15m but corporeal measurement is different. Landscape measure in relation to management of live-stock.

Coffee break...

End of video 01.

Presentations noted in research journal:

# Charlotte:

Identifies the area near the opening up of the underpass. Describes how this forms a loop for the traffic. There is a memorial sculpture in the space. The gradient of the road surface is uncomfortable. Charlotte drew upon the work of the situationists when thinking of her awkward explorers kit. She used the 'derive' as a tool for gathering impressions of the site. Her kit included a tape measure, 2 other people, a sketchbook and some string to chart the wanderings. We discussed Francis Alys.

# Kate:

Looking at the entrance to the Bute building, the area around the columns.

Describes the aesthetics of the façade, its grand and decorative. This contrasts with the modern glass blocks also in the space. People use the area as seating, this interrupts the grandeur. Other keywords include trespassing and the boundary of the building; capitalist system, formal architecture, the intentions of these buildings, power and authority. The Doric classical columns, nuances of this order, shadow and form, dimensions, form, scale and beauty.

Daniel:

Spent some time unpacking the term awkward space, with dictionary definitions. He also compared the notion of awkward space to junkspace (Rem Koolhaas)

His awkward space was the corridor crit. He described how the dimensions of the building create an awkward social space. Physical discomfort. Pins and needles. Psychic energy. His kit included another person, camera, tape measure, sketchbook and pen, maps, different types of information. He talked about objective and subjective measure, physical v's emotional, qualitative not quantitative. Species of awkwardness.

# Data processed from the transcripts of stage one

Name of					
student	Awkward space	Content of kit	Keywords	Themes	Sub-categories
			Ownership, belonging,		Ownership,
			different people, day-time		public and
			and night-time, safe space,		private space,
			public and private, home,		different user
	Area in front of	Sleeping bag, cup	different sections of society,		groups, temporal
Cat	the courthouses	of coffee, lighter	starting up conversations	Social	aspect of space
			Objective measurements,		
		Camera, Video	thoroughfare, stairwell,		
		camera, tape	obstruction, windows light		
		measure, tally	but no view, circulation,		Circulation,
		system, sound	noisy activities, storage,		patterns of use,
	The Pit (Inside	recorder, sketch	patterns of movement,	Physical/	obstruction,
Siwan	the building)	book	disruption, patterns of use	social	thoroughfares
			Routes, axis of flow, parking		
			of cars, barrier or		
	10 second		separation, moving through		
	journey from the	Sketchbook,	voids, walking, tactile		
	civic park to the	camera with video,	qualities, strip of grass,		Flow, walking,
	entrance of the	voice recorder,	perception of space, busy	Navigation/	tactile qualities,
Craig	Bute Building	shoes	road, flow of traffic	ecological	voids, barriers
			Interaction on the stairwell,		
			awkward moments between		
	Stairwell		people, uncomfortable		Spatial
	between pit and	Camera, tape	passing people, weird social		proximity,
	west corridor,	measure, tracing	space, objective	Navigation/	awkward
Chantal	But Building	paper	measurements	social	moments

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Junkspace is the residue mankind leaves on the planet'.

		Camera, protractor			Security,
	Pathway down	with piece of	Mishmash of lines and		wildness, tactile
	the side of main	string, charcoal	tarmac, dodgy underfoot,		qualities,
	university	and paper, toilet	taken over by nature, usage	Ecological/	temporal aspect
Michael	building	roll on string	at night, hiding spots.	physical	of space
		Hands and feet,			
		time-lapse			
		camera,			
	At the end of the	Dictaphone, a	Desire lines, corporeal	Physical/	
Oliver	Law building	friend	measurement, leaky space,	navigation	
			Traffic loop, memorial		
			sculpture, uncomfortable		
		Ball of string, two	gradient, multiple routes,		
		other people, tape	Situationists, experiencing		
	Space near to	measure,	city, derive, walking as a	Navigational/	
Charlotte	the underpass	sketchbook	measure,	physical	Flow, walking
			Aesthetics of façade,		
			seating, trespassing,		
			boundaries, grandeur,		
			formal intentions of this		
			building, power and		
			authority, the Doric column		
			classical, shadow and form,		
	Entrance to the		capitalist system, decorative		
	But Building		qualities, juxtaposition of		
	around the	Sketchbook and	glass blocks with stone		Power and
Kate	columns	pencil,	work, feeling of occasion	Physical	authority
		A friend, camera,			
		tape measure,	Geometry of corridor,		Psychic
	The corridor	sketch book and	physical discomfort, pins	Social/	experience of
Daniel	critique	pen, maps	and needles, psychic energy	physical	space, narrative

Appendix B6 – Transcripts from case study 2

Transcript 2 - Stage two - Mapping awkward space

10am, Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2010

Length of session recorded: 1:17:08

Setting the scene:

This transcript captures the data from the morning session from week two of the

project. This session includes two presentations from the students on their collective

mapping processes. The students are in two teams, 'Team A' and 'Team B'. The

extract includes feedback from myself and Wayne Forster.

Information of codification:

This transcript has not been thematically analysed.

Quotes for narrative - these quotes will appear in the body of the case study text as

key insights and examples from the process.

Team A present their collaborative map:

Oliver:

Okay, we have decided to go with outside the law building. Initially we wanted to do

some one-to-one mapping. So we thought that some rubbings would be really good.

So we went down there and rolled them out and it gives a great sample of all the

different textures and patterns on the ground.

Wayne:

Why is that a critical drawing to make?

Oliver:

Because it effects how people walk and at this scale you can really relate to it, it's the

same scale as you are.

Charlotte:

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This brings us to how we're actually going to map it. We are going to put this into our map, which is a 1:30 scale map. It's going to be this size (refers to a map on the wall), which is a series of layers. (The students locate the rubbings of the pathways on their map). So we're building this map up through layers. Each of the four sub-sets will be mapped on transparent acetate.

Wayne:

Won't work graphically on acetate.

Oliver:

So the first layer (from a working drawing) shows where we sat and drew out different people's routes for 2 hours and it created this nice flow pattern going through the space.

Charlotte:

So the bottom layer is the textural layer.

Wayne:

Lets have a look at all four layers. How long did you spend on the rubbing?

Oliver:

About and hour but since then we've gone back and mapped subsets of people, so we've mapped students in red, cyclists...

Wayne: Right so there's one about movement, one about groups, one about textures...

Charlotte:

They all relate to the layers, the first one is the physical which is the textures which will be built up in relief, the second one is the navigational, which is the lines of movement and then you've got the social layer, which is a layer of dots of different sizes and these dots, the bigger they are, the longer the interactions...

Oliver:

And they'll follow the same colours as the circulation map. So they'll be a small dot for when you're walking towards each other and there's no conversation but you move out of each other's way.
Wayne: Why is texture important?
Oliver: The textures underfoot affect the way we move through the space.
Wayne: There's more than that. If I was blind I might think the tactile nature of what's under my feet might guide me. The word texture isn't accurate enough.
Oliver:  It's not just the textures, it's showing the different pathways through the site
Craig: 'It's the routes isn't it
Oliver: It's surfaces The drawings are a visual way of interpreting texture.
Wayne: Why is the visual important, what else is there about the visual in this place.
Charlotte: We are gong to use this natural layer
Michael: Intensities of nature within the site. So trees are an intense noticeable thing. There are these islands of grass here (points to map). There are places where, even thought there are all these paths, people cut across the grass.

Wayne:

The natural layer is across the whole geography of the site, whether you're on tarmac or grass. Because there's an ecology within the tarmac. Things grow out of the cracks. You can map the natural layer but it would be the whole thing. If you map the ground layer there's colour, geometry, texture is one of them...

(There's a discussion about layering up the map and the weakness of layering acetate. Ollie suggests highlighting different parts of the map with some overlap. Wayne asks the students to think very carefully about the dimensions of mapping.)

Michael: 'We could take plaster castings of the surfaces?

# Wayne:

What if it was more like a brail map? You need to be more precise about the words you use and how you interpret and map. What other observations did you make? There's the Hannah Jones methodology of mapping but you've spent some time over there. Spot anything? See anything that would actually reveal another dimension to this mapping that needs to be added or subtracted? Is the method adequate?

# Oliver:

It's a sound way of encompassing most of the elements of the site. Most things you think about fit into one of the four categories.

# Charlotte:

Actually we were considering another category, so you get more of a feeling of what the site feels like, we were going to have a shadow layer on the relief to get a sense of what its like to be in the dark nook...

# Wayne:

Would that come under natural? Climate and micro-climate... There's one obvious one, what about the motorcar? What have you done to map the impact of the motorcar on that? It's the dominant factor... the barrier to everything are the lights and the traffic. I'm not saying we can mend it because we're not highway engineers but surely that's part of it?

# Charlotte:

Maybe we could bring that into the social layer.

# Oliver:

When we looked at the interaction between people, a lot of the places it occurs is at the two sets of traffic lights, so here and here (points to map).

# Wayne:

The bit I'm interested in is that you've got a real interest in the social dimension of this, you've taken time and trouble to find out what people are doing, but doesn't this link absolutely to what the traffic is doing? The overlay might help that in some ways.

(Discussion about the precision of maps, Ordinance Survey maps)

# Wayne:

You're bound to have a precision which is not about dimension but the interaction between these layers.

# Hannah:

In my research I've looked at how the awkwardness can spiral into a negative experience or be curbed towards a positive experience. At the level of affordances, J.J. Gibson talks about benefit or injury. So at the curb on you map, Gibson would define this as a brink, as with the edge of a cliff. You could be pushed out onto the road. At the level of wayfinding, you could find yourself in a situation where you become disorientated or where through re-attuning your movement can lead to a relearning of the environment. And then socially a space can reject you or become inviting and ecologically it can create continuity or rupture.

# Wayne:

Do you think you've got your boundaries right? Is the scope right.

(Look at the maps on the wall, what factors to include?)

# Oliver:

There's a general mass of students coming from this way, from Cathays or the library, from the Woodville and all that.

Wayne:

Do you think you need a map that shows the wider context?

Oliver:

Maybe its staying at this scale and having things that come off it and show sections showing where people are coming from.

Cat:

At the 1:30 scale you're going to need to be really careful about capturing people's movements. At the scale you're going to want to know if people are stepping off the path...

Oliver:

Yeah, and that's what we want to show in relation to the awkwardness.

# Wayne:

The nature of your bounded element between the layers needs to be drawn with some precision. The engagement between people, where they're tottering on the edge... now that's quite a challenge.

Wayne:

You need to better articulate the ground level, and what you mean by climate, use more precision, do you need a one hour time slot?

Oliver:

Perhaps for an hour but at three different times of the day.

(Discussion about how to identify and categorise different social groups using the space)

Oliver:

We had students, old aged pensioners, working professionals and bikes.

Wayne:

So one category is about age, one about occupation and one about mode of transport.

# Oliver:

We had other categories, such as children, but those people never came through.

# Wayne:

Isn't the absence of certain people as interesting as the presence of them. This is a completely children free zone. Unless they're on the way to the park I can't see a reason why they would be there. The fact that you've observed that there are no children there seems to be a critical issue.

# Hannah:

Think about the where design works and doesn't work in the space. So along the pathway you've talked about the affordances of different textured surfaces. There are bits that you can see are man made and bits that have broken down through a natural process.

# Wayne:

Well some of them, I can tell are about DDA, the knobbily paving sets there. That's the landscape of compliance. Someone has said we need to comply with DDA regulations, when it comes to the edge of the footpath we're going to have to knobbily pave it.

# Hannah:

When we think about interventions, you could think about how you might rethink the pathway, so from exploring each of these levels, you can think about what to attune or work with in the environment to improve the experience.

# Wayne:

Coming back to climate, when we recently had windy days, do you know what direction it was coming from?

# Oliver:

From North East.

# Wayne:

What this micro-climate does at the bull nose of that building might be interesting. There are element of the natural that are missing.

# Hannah:

If we choose this space you could think about what could we introduce into this space...

# Wayne:

Layered maps is interesting, someone else needs to be able to read it if you're not there.

(Discussion about creating a slotted map)

# Hannah:

You need to be able to look at how awkwardness builds up in the area and be able to show the correlation of things that have led to that emerging.

# Wayne:

You want to be able to remove layers to focus on key correlations.

(Discuss a wooden frame, draws moving out... cabinet of curiosities)

# Team B, presenting co-map:

# Daniel:

Our map is of the back of the Glamorgan building, which shows primarily... the thing that probably interested us most was the grandeur of the back of the building and how that's sort of forgot, it's sort of the junk space behind the building now. It's the service area and the car park. It's some what ignored now. We proceeded to investigate it and initially we decided who would take what responsibility in the group, in terms of the lenses that Hannah has researched. We based that on what we were interested in and what we felt we were successful with in our individual investigations into awkward space. So Cat took the social side because of the interesting stuff she

did in the space in front of the law courts. Craig took up navigation because in his individual investigation he was looking at that route from the front of the Bute Building. Siwan took the natural side because she mentioned early on about being interested in the balcony on the façade and particularly how it's use or potential use changed throughout the day depending on shadows and even how it would change on a sunny day compared to a rainy day. And then I took physical because I was interested in how the elevation and how the physical presence of that building effects the awkward space which is in plan. And that informed my intention of showing the relationship between plan and elevation trying the get to a very precise level of investigation. And that was inspired by the Caruso Saint John drawing for the public square in Calamare. They were trying to get really precise, getting down to that one-to-one scale and trying to represent it.

Wayne:

Do you think you've done that?

Daniel:

Not yet, there's more to do. It interesting trying to get the details because you notice things that you don't while you're already there.

Wayne:

What are the bits that you haven't got?

Daniel:

I've started with the larger scale, but you could get the bits where the concrete cracks and bulges and where you get weeds poking their way through. The tree stumps that are starting to tear up the tarmac.

Oliver:

Are there temporary details you could map like probably when people drive to work they probably park their car in the same place?

Wayne:

I do if it's vacant because my car like that Chestnut tree, they are friends they are. I think the type of drawing is alright but I wouldn't do it on a computer because your

head isn't switch on. It might be geometrically and dimensionally correct but there are too many features missing off it.

Cat:

This is the base mapping and then we are going to work at a larger scale and draw over it so we won't have just CAD, we'll have some hand drawings and the grey areas will be more textured.

Daniel:

The idea is to use it as a tool.

Wayne:

You need to be careful of the flatness of it because if you think about opportunities and affordances a lot of them are on the Southern-side of the Bute Building, which is where the bikes are, there's window sills and ledges and so be careful. Its an interesting drawing and a classical way of representing a place but it leaves out many things if you're not careful.

Daniel:

Yeah, but I didn't intend the drawing to do everything, it a way of showing one objective layer, because you can show too much, sometimes you have to distill the information to make it clear.

Hannah:

The collective inter-relationships or layering up will inform what you need to take away and intensify the drawings.

Daniel:

I mean this is my drafted first look at it really and then on top of that you have the work everyone else has been doing.

Hannah:

So what's the next layer?

Craig:

Well, I looked at navigation. I looked at the building and what was behind it before. It was grass and you entered the building... your stagecoach would get taken to the back. So, you have two axis but now because the car park has been put there, the axis has gone and you're looking at this strong axis of movement.

Wayne:

What about the main one, which is the one running alongside the Bute?

(Discussion about the routes people take to get to the Bute building)

Craig:

I was looking at the front and back of the building and this ordered front, and because of the introduction of the car park, this kind of chaotic movement at the back.

Wayne:

On the one hand the graphics are crude, I think its graphically interesting because it doesn't look like an architectural drawing it looks like a piece of circuit board. Its an interesting way of denoting what you are after but I think you need to be careful of showing what your are observing, like should this be heavy lines or dotted lines...

Craig:

I enjoy working with block diagrams.

Wayne:

Its technically interesting but I would look more into how people depict and map movement. For example the London underground map, which simplifies the complexity. You're not thinking about your awkward space in the broader context of the civic centre and the routes that exist.

Craig:

Do you think I should be zooming out?

Wayne:

Well lots of people park in the car park and go up to Column Road or the College of Music and Drama. They don't just stay in the car park or either go to the Glamorgan

Building or the Bute Building. It's more complicated than that. Just look at the axial routes through the civic centre.

Hannah:

(Recommends a book on early drawings of pedestrian flow on the underground – proceedings from a conference on experiential architecture).

Wayne:

Your map needs a common orientation so that it becomes legible.

Hannah:

It would be good to have a gage for where the awkwardness begins and ends within the boundaries of the map.

Wayne:

I've been watching this mapping programme (Beautiful Maps, BBC) and it was the French who developed surveying and the 32 symbols that went on every map, if it was a marsh or trees or whatever it was. So you need to devise a graphic language that is common, so when you see it you think, oh that's a barrier, this is vegetation or whatever it is. This is route, this is interrupted route, well used route... you need a key or a grammar.

Daniel:

We became interested in symbols, if you look at this drawing here (shows old map), the more time you spend with it the more jumps out.

Cat:

We were interested in creating a map that was quite ornate because the space seems historically rich. We wanted to use ornate graphic which as you look closer and closer reveal a sort of diagram.

Wayne:

What's the most remarkable part of the territory you've got hold of?

Cat:

Well the Glamorgan building is considered architecturally as one of the most significant buildings in the area and then you've got this back service entrance.

Wayne:

So you think it's the power of the architecture?

Cat:

Yeah.

Siwan:

I just got really into the small space out the back where there is this overhang and their clearly trying to make it habitable and there are benches there but it doesn't really work.

Wayne:

So you think it's the bracketed balcony that you think is remarkable?

Siwan:

Yes, well the way it doesn't work because of climate.

Craig:

For me its how you have this one building stuck to the next and this juxtaposition between statues, glass windows.

Daniel:

Probably the richness of the façade and the juxtaposition with the service area.

Wayne:

I think they're all valid observations but the one thing that is remarkable is the sculpture, which is not at surface level. The photograph that you have there (with statue next to window), I've always wanted to have that room as a staff room because outside it there's a cherub astride a rampant ram. Imagine that at 10am when you go in and think the world is grey and ordinary.' (Continues to discuss the sculpture and other sculptures on site). 'Think about contributory things towards awkward space. Its not just about movement and surface.

#### Siwan:

I was given the natural layer and concentrated on one space which was the space under the balcony on the back façade. They have put benches there and what I did was I used photography as my main tool and I stood there from 10am and took photos and revisited the site throughout the day to capture how as the sun moved the shadows changed and I tried to observe how by, I think this was 6pm, someone would actually inhabit the space...

### Wayne:

Think about it another way now, how the building was built for a local authority, where the territory was coal bearing valleys 20 miles to the North and its occupied by councillors who come down from those black dark valleys. Have you been in the building?

### Siwan:

No I haven't

### Wayne:

Aruughhh... well as you go in you walk around two curved corridors and that holds the council chamber. The jewel of the whole thing is a rather grand chamber. But behind it is the banqueting hall, which is in that space, over the estates workshops and the university uses for exactly that now. And what time do you think the sun hits the balcony... when the councilors meet. From an architectural point of view, if we were thinking about what space would be really good to make, you'd be thinking now lets let people out onto a balcony. Now whether the prospect from that balcony is to a rather tawdry car park now if you think of what might have been when the architect had that visualization you might think there was a lawn down there that people where promenading in, it would have been completely different wouldn't it as a moment.

### Siwan:

I think the windows looking out onto the space just have filing cabinets stacked up against them, it doesn't seem to be any interaction between the outside space and the inside room. I used sketch up, importing a Goggle Earth model and then did the same kind of shadow analysis in that space. There are plant pots there, the plants

have just died and so it is obviously an abandoned space. People in the car park chose to sit in the sun rather than on the benches there, they prefer to sit on the wall where the sun is and under the tree.

### Wayne:

Do you know what those spaces were used for originally, those windows where called Lunette windows, half-moon. Do you know what was behind there functionally? Well there's a question mark hanging over what that was meant to be isn't there? It should be well documented. Has anyone heard of the Pevsner guidebooks? There are a whole series of books on the counties of England and Wales. If you look up the one on Glamorgan and for that building it will describe it to you, whether there is a plan in there or not I don't know.

(Goes on the comment on Google/ Sketch-up drawing and someone in the university doing something similar with the building. It might be an interesting resource.)

#### Cat:

So, at the social level we started looking at the history and I didn't find much online so I will go to the records office tomorrow. I was looking into the architectural history and the richness of it. And then what I wanted to do was almost a case study of the people that would have used it when it was built and a case study of the people that use it now and draw a comparison. So what I have is the case studies of the three key user types now. These were lecturers in the university, younger professionals. The younger professionals were coming out and smoking on the benches and I asked them why they choose to go there. Mostly it came down to close proximity and convenience. There were lots of people who said they would prefer to go to Cathays Park. And so this was a space that you would only use if you had three minutes. Then I looked at the wider space and there were professors in the Uni who would park their car and for them it was a service-based space. They said they would never socialise in this space and that all that socialising went on inside the building in academic situations.

### Wayne:

Someone made a decision to move the estates workshops under there. So you've got this weird sort of collision, a bit like you're earlier observations on the Law Courts,

you've got electrician vans pitching up delivering stuff and people dropping new PVC windows off. And people trying to use it as a social space, which it isn't at the moment. But I don't know what it would have been when it was built. All these buildings are competition winners.

Cat:

The third group of people are the workers who use it so this area is now carpentry and workshops and there's also people who are doing some stone masonry work. They also preferred using Cathays Park unless it was a quick lunch break. So it's a temporary space that people don't want to stay in for very long. The only interaction between these different groups was between the workmen and the people who were smoking. But this is very fleeting.

Wayne:

Who are your portraits?

Cat:

These were the two stonemasons that I spoke to. They were just temporary workers. And this was a professor in planning.

Wayne:

Coming back to your toolkits, you were armed with unusual objects. Now you've draw somebody quite carefully. But you haven't used any of that. I wondered how you've captured anything.

Cat:

Yes I've got recorded words and we thought we'd surround the images with the text to create this ornate feel. In older maps I looked at they had scenes around the map so we're going to try and do a similar thing. So you've got the scientific side and the social.

Wayne:

How many people did you speak to?

Cat:

The stonemasons, smokers and professor, I took notes.

### Wayne:

You can do more of that. When social scientists collect data about people and they're trying to draw conclusions, they can do this in two ways. One is statistical or empirical, when they collect big samples, what's the average height of nine years olds kind of question. The other is a qualitative approach and at the moment the information that you have is anecdotal cause you've only spoken to one or two, so you probably need to speak to a few more. If you record the data in a more methodical way you might be able to identify key words. So it may not be so much about the literal translation of what they're saying like "I prefer the gardens to here" but if you look for key words that maybe, sunny in the afternoon, if they're repeated you might be able to get the sound bite out of it. (Goes on to discuss the General election sound bites).

I think you're on to something as a group in the sense that what happens in the buildings in the park is they are front elevation buildings. Everybody thinks that they front the gardens. But with that building the key spaces are west facing and you think that they're underexploited... The banquet hall is over looking three green skips. If you go there at the right moment the weird juxtaposition would become clear. You've got hold of these incongruous juxtapositions. Two stone mason and a white van and the banqueting moment. The affordance of the stone brackets. The sheer generosity of that whole architecture could never be matched and you could be quite clever about how you observe that.

### Siwan:

Now we need to think about how we're going to merge these different things together.

### Wayne:

The two groups are interesting. The group that presented this morning had an overall more coherent approach to what they were doing, yours is more fragmentary. They needed to add a bit of content. What you need to do is edit the content. Theirs is corporate if they get the layers right. Yours is a charm bracelet, so how are you going to think of kebabing this?

### Daniel:

We're inspired by Caruso's drawing, the kind of patchwork, and I think it would be interesting to replicate that patchwork effect.

### Wayne:

From Cat's lyrical drawings to the CAD drawing of the left, you need to think about how this works as a piece.

(Give advice on how to graphically bring the map together, episodic scenes that need to be bound into a single story. Suggests looking at Caruso St John's scheme/ book for Grange town and book about arcades in Cardiff. Cartographies of Time).

You've got both time and space in your map. Two of you are spatial and two of you are time and place and people and place. Put this together.

Han and Wayne discuss work in progress atlases. Next we move onto workshop stuff.

Appendix B7 – Transcripts from case study 2

Transcript 3 - Stage three - Intervening in awkward space

10am, Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2010

Length of session recorded: 00:10:50

Setting the scene:

This transcript captures 'Team A' presenting their map to Rachel and Mathias. This is

only a short extract from the overall presentation.

Oliver describes their chosen awkward space, talking about the door at the back of

the Law Building. Describes the pathways and the people cutting across the grass.

He describes how the paths have been designed at different times and create a

range of different textured surfaces.

Their map is 1:100 scale and is built from a series of layers that represent the

different conceptual lenses. The map has a wooden frame, with the layers slotting in

like a series of draws. This enables the viewer to freely move the layers.

Recording:

Charlotte:

The first layer includes the surface textures, it's the physical layer. The second layer

maps the routes. Different people are highlighted in different colours. This was sewn

and photo-shopped into the map to give a feel of the flow. And on top of that you

have these circles, which show the levels of interaction, so the length of time people

interacted correlates to the size of circle, with larger circles representing more time.

The top layer is trying to communicate the atmosphere of the space and that's

looking above the overcast nature of the site, this is the natural layer and what it feels

to inhabit the site

Oliver:

What we wanted to do was to be able to single out layers. On this layer we have

plaster casts of different textures on the site. The next layer is basically the routes of

different people that they take. We made a key, five different types of people,

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students, adults, children, cyclists and the elderly. Throughout all the time we didn't have anyone retired or any children in the site. Being in a student centre, there are lots of student but also working professionals. Cyclists, because there are traffic lights there they move along there. Its interesting the way all the groups of people use the space, people walk off the grass, although there is a flow to the paths its not the only way people walk. We mapped the site at three points in the day on site. Three different types of contact non-verbal contact, small contact, people who had conversations (happened at crossing most). We sat and watched people there. In the end we managed to get a good balance on the mapped layers.

Hannah:

How did you approach the task?

Charlotte:

We worked as a team.

Oliver:

Although we followed the four layers you gave us, we thought very much that the site dictates how it wants to be mapped. In this case, the movement of people and those things were the aspects that by watching it screamed out this is how to map me. It's a very site specific way of mapping.

### Rachel:

Its great to see these social networks mapped against the physical hand drawing. I'd like to see a bit more about detail about when these events occurred. I wonder how you can pull useful information from this.

### Oliver:

We spent quite a lot of time there because it not such a regular occurrence that people interact that much. So we've had a good look at how the space is used, I think that would be the average for most days, I don't think it would vary very much.

Hannah:

It might be good to film the space with time lapse.

I have got video of this...

### Hannah:

Articulate how the physical textures of the surfaces have a knock on effect on the social interactions more clearly in the map.

### Appendix B8 – Storyboards of scenario work

Stage three: Re-imagining awkward space

2pm, Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2010

Length of session recorded: 1:00:00

### Setting the scene:

This transcript includes extracts from the conversations of student teams A and B whilst undergoing a collaborative re-imagining of awkward space. Whilst in my previous transcripts I have captured the conversation in a verbatim fashion, here, I have listened through the FlipCam audio footage and pulled out key pieces of data. Where relevant, I have captured individual student's comments. The reason for approaching this differently is because this was a workshop session and the conversation was looser and accompanied a making process. This is represented here as a storyboard, a series of annotated images documenting the workshop process and discussion. This is followed by a piece of scenario writing, describing their final awkward space re-imaginings.

### **Storyboard 1: Team A's future scenario**







Image 2. Creating a social area



Image 3. Pedestrian walkways



Image 4. A market feel



Image 5. Utilising the building's curve



Image 6. Gateway to Cardiff concept

### Team A – description of the process

### Image 1. Pedestrianising the space

The team begins the session with a discussion about pedestrianised access routes through their space. They describe creating a one-way street for transport so that the buildings won't be confined. They revisit the notion of pedestrianising the space three more times in the discussion.

### Image 2. Creating a social hub

The team moves on to discuss a city campus, a social area, with lessons that spill out onto the streets. Coffee shops move in and the space becomes a gateway to the University. The entrance is reaching into space, through sequences of spaces. Presuming the Law Building is still there a sequence of curves gently funnels people through the space. They imagine putting big posters up on the curves.

The entrance to the campus creates a circus atmosphere, indoor-outdoor feel, with big suspended routes. Talking about Eden Project as an inspirational example.

### Image 3. Pedestrian walkways that repel water

Charlotte describes an exhibition that she has been to see, which included technology for repelling rainwater to create pedestrian pathways using static electricity. Cardiff is a very rainy city.

### Image 4. A market feel

'Let's go for a market feel, like with different things. With the current buildings, it's all raised up on a plinth. I think the future is a gathering of University services in a market-like space.' (Oliver)

The students discuss identifying different types of permanent and temporary 'pods' for the site. This includes a taxi service, a security pod that ensures students get safely into taxis, an ice cream stand, a take away, information stalls, study boxes and prototype market stalls. How do they connect up to the landscape? They think about the material capabilities of the intervention, creating interconnectivity. There discuss the need for different paving slabs, all on one level, a uniform environment, with different textures to symbolize what's what. They imagine a whole WIFI zone like in Barcelona.

### Image 5. Utilising the curve of the Law Building

The students are looking for something to symbolise a gateway. They discuss

identifying surrounding green spaces. Oliver suggests installing a big screen on the

curve of the Law building. This is followed by a comment about empower

communities. Oliver makes a crude representation of the Law Building with a huge

screen.

'I'm thinking eco wall – green with grass' (Oliver)

'Why is that eco? You need to water grass.' (Michael)

'You could put a tank on the roof and collect rain and slowly leak it out. Law emerges

out of nature, integrating law and horticulture.' (Oliver)

There is a further discussion about the architect Jean Nouvel's green wall in Paris.

The team adds blue dots to the map for nighttime lighting, and benches. They

highlight a need to think realistically about access.

Image 6. Gateway to Cardiff

We want a metaphorical gateway, or a big steel gate. Along the main street, the

University owns all the buildings. The street has lots of students, thus becoming

pedestrians and becoming a hub of Cardiff University. Creating an inner city campus.

Create a market environment with jazzy covered walkways.

Awkward space reimagining 1 – Team A

Name of scenario: Gateway to Cardiff 2020

**Description:** 

In 2020, the awkward space in front of the Law Building has been pedestrianised and

become a social hub and the north-side gateway to Cardiff University. The market

becomes a metaphor for an imagined future campus and University organisation,

which is no longer on a plinth but integrated into the city fabric.

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### Storyboard 2: Team B's future scenario

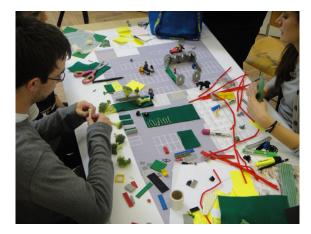


Image 1. Mocking up green spaces



Image 2. Creating a private destination



Image 3. Opening up the space



Image 4. Architects and planners mix



Image 5. Introducing a café



Image 6. Bridging the gap concept

### Team B – description of the process

### Image 1. Mocking up green spaces

The team starts by discussing park and ride and walking to the site. They are mocking up a green space and some paths. They begin with greening and making trees and thinking about the wall and the existing site, how to bring trees into the space.

### Image 2. Creating a private destination

Is this space something you travel through or is it a destination? The students discuss how the less we use cars in the future the more it can become a destination. They highlight a need for the space to feel private compared to the park. They imagine a private destination, private in the sense that it feels secluded. One of the students suggests looking at it in a completely different way - it's not private at all, and to open up the space. They imagine it as a comfortable everyday entrance. If there aren't as many cars in the car park, the architecture school can be extended into the site. The school currently lacks capacity and needs to extend out -

### Image 3. Opening up the space and future services

it needs more space.

'Maybe this wall doesn't come out because it separates it if anything. It's like that ownership of space thing, this belongs to Bute and that belongs to Glamorgan. If you put a garden here or a green space...' (Siwan)

'But there's something nice about the way that wall works because it separates but not too much, it's not too harsh... the partitioning could be beneficial in a way.' (Daniel)

(The students are thinking quite carefully about the layout of the physical space, moving around the wall to see what happens when you open up and contain different sections of the car park. Thinking about the position of bins and the movement of traffic. They seem to be working more from the details on the plan than the other team. The group discusses recycling in the future – scaling up recycling – making it more normal to recycle.).

The students are thinking about services in the passageway, in 10 years time legislation about buildings and services might change with buildings required to become more passive with less services. So there is a possibility that the services there might not be there.

When I spoke to them its carpenters and workmen doing any restoration on the university buildings. Like making signs, general repairs and maintenance and storage. It's almost like a yard now.' (Cat)

The students propose that perhaps the services could be moved because this is such a historic building and this space is useless. Maybe it can become a space for enjoyment? With the banquets coming out to here (referring to map). There's a big workshop. Handy to have on the ground floor.

'Maybe this becomes shared workshops and when you're in architecture you can make big models here.' (Craig)

### Image 4. Architects and planners planting together

'Maybe this becomes a space for where the architecture and planning students get together and share a space.' (Cat).

'Yeah, because I don't know anyone. We're right next to each other but we don't meet.' (Siwan)

### Image 5. Introducing a café

This proposed café would be on the same axis as the union and the main building. Maybe the students work in the garden and this feeds into the café, creating a cycle. There could be a green shelter over entrance and a bridge, extending the space out from the Bute building and creating extra capacity. It's a café where food gets produced in the allotments and served here. Cooperative workshops – workshops for workers and students.

### Image 6. Bridging the gap

Entrance on the back of the Glamorgan building has a human scale, which is built for everyday use. It's comfortable, contemplative and not quite so public and grand as the front. The students imagine mixed-use workshops for planners, architects and maintenance. This extends out into growing food in allotments and using the produce in a café. This sees the whole car park regenerated. The students' propose that tending to the food is a stress relief for the architects. Daniel questions 'When do we

have time?' Students can mingle from planning and architecture and the site

becomes a metaphor for creating connectivity between the two.

Awkward space reimagining 2

Name of scenario: Bridging the Gap 2020

**Description:** 

'We were thinking that there would be a huge move towards sustainability. We'll have

far less cars and the cars we have will apparently hover - with microwaves. We have

a Café, which will be a hub for the university. There is a public side and a way of

planners and architects bonding together. This is a service garden that is mixed-use

for students and workers. Sustainability afternoons replace sports afternoons on

Wednesdays with mixed courses.' (Siwan)

This scenario questions how architects will be working in the next ten years and as a

result what will future students study? The students imagine that out of the current

economic recession will emerge fledgling low-scale businesses, sustainable

cooperatives. Artists in workshops will become a micro-economy in itself.

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### **Appendix B9 – Evaluative material**

### **Examples of scribe templates**

The students were asked to write-up the feedback on the individual and group outcomes for each other. This provides some evaluative feedback on the project.

				Welsh Schoo 2010	of Architecture Vertical Studio
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### review scribe sheet: 2010 Vertical Studio

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student's name:  CATHEKING MOLLETT reviewers: Hannah Jones, Sam Clark
scribe's name: vertical studio unit name: AWEWARD Space.
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two seperate time periods used differently (9-6) used by
media, people tunnelled through feel like they are encroaching
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sense of who owns It but different times of one day.
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GROUP A - COLLABORATIVE MAPPING REVIEW FOODBACK

Layer 1 - Cashing Compsical)

Layer 2 - mapping (nangational)

Layer 3 - social layer

Insertion of bunding extra layers comparing the effect of the instantion.

Do convergancing tame place an vouley at all or past in the space? Was everyone wallung an their own?

Layer 4 -> façades of the bundings around the site.

3D effect on the map.

now down where people take the 'short cut'

Transcripts from project critiques

Week four - 10am, 19th May 2010

Length of session recorded: 00:49:00

Setting the scene:

The final project critiques were carried out by Colin Rose, Wayne Forster and myself.

The student's spoke first individually about their process and work. The group then

presented a slide show of their collective intervention. Wayne, Colin and I then visited

their intervention outside the Law Building.

I only have audio recordings of the first half of the student's final individual critiques

due to data loss. This occurred due to a faulty camera and was only detected after

the day was over. I have drawn key extracts of conversations and quotes from the

audio footage.

Siwan:

Siwan describes the initial process of selecting and surveying a space she felt was

awkward and then working collaboratively. Colin asks how they were put into teams

and Siwan explains that Hannah cast them based upon their interests highlighted

through their explorer kits and initial space surveys. Siwan explains that they created

an intervention (Colin had seen this over the course of the week). Siwan comments

that 'it's an experiment really, whether it's a success or not, I'm not too sure'.

'The atlas was a diary focusing upon my chosen awkward space, it was also useful in

terms of keeping a learning journal, a photo collection over the course of the project.'

Daniel:

'The document that I produced (Atlas) and the investigations I did were quite

introspective in a way. I was interested in my own personal experience... I produced

a traveller's guide, which is quite informal. It gives away personal information and

includes bits of narrative about my space. I began by creating a definition of awkward

space.'

Charlotte:

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'This is my psychogeographic map of the area around the Bute Building. It is all the ways I walk to get to the Bute. I then highlighted awkward spaces. Its taken from a Google map.'

'We had to put together a awkward space explorer's kit and I wanted to get different people to create their own maps, so you have different people's perception of awkward space.'

Charlotte describes her space near the under-pass, it functions as a round about.

Charlotte was inspired by psychogeography, drifts and derives. She traced string to highlight pathways. She reflects that you could also use chalk and follow paths.

Why is it awkward? Its not used, not cleared up, there are cigarette butts and rubbish.

Colin:

'Awkwardness in detail, tactile, or macro?'

Charlotte:

'I looked at 'remnants'

'How we ended up on our main project, I found it interesting that through the Charette day (the re-imagining awkward space exercises), which was really useful, thinking with Lego and Plasticine. This fed in quite well to what we ended up designing. At this early stage we imagined it as a 'Gateway to Cardiff'.'

(Colin gives feedback.)

String was a way of focusing on the site.

Quite free to walk the routes are quite undefined.

Discussion about Charlotte's use of string to chart her awkward routes, string becoming a meshwork, multiplying upwards, physical and string doesn't explain why you decided to cross the road.

Use the string as a prop, draw up from your psyche.

Point between awkward.

Charlotte's critique focuses upon the use of the derive, and her critical engagement with the tool.

By the way glances

Uncomfortable gradient, of the road...

Oliver brings to attention that some people focused more on the individual work and some people of the group work.

Installation – 'we've got a lovely video'.

### Chantal:

Describes her own individual process. She focused upon movement between the stairwell and the pit. How you need to twist and turn as you go through the space. This creates awkward moments. She was drawn to what areas are not really functional in the space. Its more awkward when staff and students are interacting, you become more aware of yourself.

Inspired by Andy Warhol drawings of footprints.

Ownership of space by staff on the corridor, most regular users. Visitors don't know about space, its not signposted.

Chantal presents development pictures for collective mapping, rubbings, plaster casts, textures, and Lego.

### Colin's reflections:

Interesting spot, weird space, space of the person.

More awkward if carrying stuff.

Door snap shot explores repetitively and effectively through plans

Landing, door, spaces next to door,

What next?

Introducing music in the space, sensors, filmic encounters, door redesign.

### Michael:

Heat vents, bicycles,

Psychology, huge ventilation boxes should be roof, disguised with pieces of grass, Cathays Park built up over time, areas that have been left over...

Michael's explorer's kit includes:

A camera

A toilet roll on a piece of string so that you can focus in one small aspect of the site, and block out rest and think is this part it more or less awkward.

A tape measure

Graphite and paper to take floor rubbings.

A compass

Description of space:

Understated – you wouldn't know its there.

'one of the few places in the civic area where there is a path right up against a building.'

Odd nooks that jute out – someone could be there waiting.

Wouldn't use it at night, sinister feel.

Botch job of bricks and nature breaking up and disintegrating.

Rubbing records visual representation of various surfaces.

'We took plaster casts to get touch and feel, hard to define what various surfaces are.

You get the crack but won't be able to distinguish what it is.'

Interested in the ways this site is used by people coming from different places, and then dissipating off.

'I stood there and spoke to people, its not used very frequently, different users destinations... shortcut... '

Ordinary but ignored.

Something so Informal right against the wall.

When its sunny it's not unpleasant, you never see much going on.

Get a night picture using night vision camera.

Kate:

Kate focused on the space behind the columns at the front of the building. Its quite spacious, has a feeling of occasion and yet this feeling is broken up by people sitting around the columns.

### Carole Creasey's email

Re: Vertical Studio - Awkward Space leftover materials

Tue, 8 Jun 2010 at 14:20

From	Carole Creasey
То	Hannah Jones
CC	Wayne Forster

#### Dear hannah

Hope all is well with you. Your bamboo and paper were stored in one of the two containers we have parked outside in the carpark. When you need access just give me a shout, or i can let Phil have the key over the weekend if it helps and you can help yourself. Nice and easy for parking.

Not sure if you heard but the bamboo structures that were parked outside were able to sit there until this weekend, and only then were removed because of a planned Defence League demo. Security and estates etc were all really positive about it and curious to know a bit more about it. I booked staff to remove it before march at security's request and just as they went down to do the job, a fella came running out of Music dept and asked if he could have them for his allotment.... recycling, don't you just love it.

Very best and drop me an email if you need anything.

С

Carole Creasey Facilities Manager (temp) Monday to Thursday 8.30 - 12.30 Wednesday 8.30 - 5.30 Tel. 029 20 875956

From: Hannah Jones <welshhan@yahoo.co.uk>

To: CreasyC@cardiff.ac.uk

Cc: Wayne Forster < Forster W@cardiff.ac.uk>

Date: 02/06/2010 11:05

Subject: Vertical Studio - Awkward Space leftover materials

### Dear Carole

I hope that all is going well in the lead up to the degree show. I just wanted to ask you a quick favour. At the end of the Vertical Studio, the awkward space students had some materials left over. I saw that they had left the materials on the landing. The materials were a bundle of 10m Bamboo sticks and a white roll of Tyvek paper fabric.

I was wondering, if the students have finished with the materials and don't want to use them, if they could be stored somewhere safe until I can arrange for them to be collected when I am back in Cardiff in a few weeks?

Thanks very much

Best wishes

Hannah

### **Evaluation Interview with Daniel Cutter**

Evaluation questions – In conversation with Daniel Cutter – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013

Casting your mind back to the 'Awkward Space' Vertical Studio in 2010...

- 1. The project
- a.) What do you remember most about the project? Key moments...
- b.) Which of the following project elements did you feel most engaged in, why?
  - Individual awkward space surveys and awkward explorer kits
  - Collaborative mapping using four different theoretical perspectives/ lenses
  - · Re-imagining awkward space Future scenarios
  - · Making an intervention proposal
  - Bamboo workshop
  - Final group intervention
  - Psychogeographic atlas

Daniel: 'The bamboo workshop was the one thing that did come back immediately, just because it was fun and it was a chance to explore and play with this material that I hadn't really ever done before. Its something you almost feel you should be doing in architectural practice. Having that engagement with materials not to any particular aim or goal just to explore. Then I think also the travellers guide thing because that again was something quite out of the norm in terms of what we usually do in University. And the fact it became a very personal investigation of a space and a time that I know. It was not necessarily easy at first because it took that engagement on a personal level that you usually miss out at an architect. I think it's encouraged to be driven more by context, on external issues rather than any personal desire or thoughts.'

Hannah talks about subjective and objective ways of measuring with the kits...

Daniel: 'I think particularly the environment we've been in you've been encouraged to be very objective, so yeah, it was an interesting way of looking more at process. Subjective measurements were initially uncomfortable for us.'

Hannah sums up what has been said so far.

c.) What did you learn from the project, what did you take away?

Daniel: 'I think as with the metadesign project, it's the idea that design process is something to be analysed and something as important as the end result. And again, the way we work is often very end result orientated and all that matters at the end of the day is what you have up on the wall, what drawings you put up. So to actually go an analyse a creative process a design process is quite interesting I think.'

5.15

'Also the idea of collaborative working because that's one of the only... we had a few snippets of working throughout Uni but never with the kind of freedom that we had in that Vertical Studio project. So learning how to behave in a team, learning about the way different people work. Learning how to manage and make the best of everyone's abilities.'

Hannah: 'I remember in the metadesign project the dynamics were good but in the awkward space project they were a bit more volatile.'

'Yeah, thinking back I made a note about that actually, the metadesign was particularly fruitful, the groups how they happened, so for example, Lizzie who I worked with, we're really good friends now and that came out of that project. Whereas in the second year, I don't know why, perhaps personalities, or perhaps the framework was slightly different. There wasn't such a clear idea about the end result. There wasn't the same kind of framework as the metadesign project. So you start to get disagreements, also I felt that in the awkward space project you get some people who aren't putting in as much work, it makes it quite difficult, because if you're putting in effort...'

Hannah: 'It breeds discontent in the group'

Daniel: "Yeah, to a degree. Its funny how it works. With the metadesign, with activities like the cards, and mapping game, producing those gave us a framework to

work within so there wasn't as much room for disagreement, or having different ideas. I think also with the map that we produced, I think because it could have been anything, different people worked in different ways, like just in terms of presentation, people wanted to do different things, a few people had fairly strong ideas about what they wanted to do and how they wanted to work so bringing that together was tricky.'

Hannah: 'Yeah, I was looking back at the maps, your team had four people and the other team had five people... they generated something joined up with less content. Relays interpretation of maps...

'Tricky to bring everyone's different ideas from angles, that's a fair challenge.'

d.) What was the most challenging element of the project?

So, one element was bring together the different angles, were there any other challenges?

Daniel: 'I suppose yeah again the very personal aspect of the travelers guide I think that became... that was actually quite challenging, to shift from what I usually do to introspection. I mean about the crit space, it's quite an uncomfortable moment in time and so to go back to it and break it down, like revisiting it you begin to actually... you understand it better. Usually it's just a flurry and you're really tired, so yeah it was challenging to focus so much on yourself.'

Hannah: 'Did it impact later crits, this is the fear building in...'

Laughter

Daniel: 'I suppose I understood it, I can see it on the graphs that I made, waiting for the fear line to drop back down.

e.) What would you change about the project?

12.28

Daniel: 'The only thought I had was there was this slight disconnection between the collaborative working and individual working. They were very separate, I don't know whether that was intentional. It's more of an observation really, like whether we should have all been working on the same space and done the individual travellers guide on that same space. And then brought it all together. That might be more difficult again. Because we were working on individual things everyone can put the amount of work they want in and look at it in a particular way unhindered by other people. You're not having to do a piece of work you haven't chosen.'

Hannah reflects upon the group dynamic.

Daniel: 'Vertical studio there isn't as much pressure but at the same time you want to produce something decent and so you work on the individual piece.'

Hannah discusses assessment.

Daniel: 'Design its hard to see how you mark it A B C D... it encourages the idea that it is just the final product that matters. If you are marked as a team there's much more impact, you can explore and frees from confines from I need to have an A...'

2. As part of your awkward space 'Traveller's Guide' you generated a personal narrative around your experience of awkward space, using this as a kind of tool for place analysis. Have you continued to develop this approach in your subsequent project work? If so, how?

I don't think being that personal, its not something welcomed in architecture, but the idea of the narrative that's quite key really, that's the way I describe projects, in terms of your journey through that building through different times of the day. In a third year project, I was designing this cemetery, in Treaest, and that was very much about the ceremony, about the journey. The ways you move through these spaces, the experiential aspects of that. And that becomes a bit more subjective, the narrative was key and that drove the ordering of space and final design in a big way. And again in terms of collaborative working and teamwork experience, particularly how it draws focus to how you work in that team, even just in work you gain knowledge and

wisdom as to how you should deal with people what kind of work you do how much you put in that whole management of task and managing people in different roles.

Hannah: Journal based support with reflections, on a personal level...

Daniel reflects upon his process... explaining things to people out of the loop completely that's the real challenge and where you get the most benefit.

3. The awkward space project combined individual and collaborative approaches to surveying and mapping awkward space. Could you say a little bit about your experience of working as part of a team?

We talked about combination of individual and collaborative approaches, how was it working in your team...

'It was a weird one actually, I think maybe the motivation wasn't there in the same way as with the metadesign project.'

Hannah: 'Do you think it had something to do with working in a team of four, groups of four tend to neutralize each other whereas groups of five are more auspicious...'

Daniel: 'There certainly is a group dynamics, three is a good number to get things done and seven is too many to make decisions. Yeah, I can certainly how that might have something to do with it. I also think its the balance between individual and collaborative work, maybe even the fact it was second year, maybe we were less keen that first year, we were exhausted as well, it feels like you want to kick back. I don't know because Craig is one of my best friends and Siwan is someone I get along with very well and Cat was someone really motivated in the group. I don't know I think there was a lot of uncertainty about that final collaborative mapping and I think that in a group, if there is something you can't decide its very easy for everyone to step away from it and disengage and wait for someone else to make the movements. So maybe going from three to four people is where you get enough anonymity from the team to step back a bit.'

Hannah describes the distinctive ways in which people gathered data.

'How do you think the map came together in the end?'

Daniel: 'Um I think there was a vision, I think we were happier with it as a vision rather than how it actually came out.'

Hannah: Talks about the back of the building

Daniel: 'I think maybe it's the fact that its one of those things you see as an idea and yet actually it doesn't materialise how you want it. Maybe also it was a bit flat, just in a physical sense there was sort of one layer it was a 2D visual representation on a number of things all overlaid. The other group had more of an interactive element to it, it was more dimensional, with texture and other elements that made it more engaging.'

Perhaps we chose too big a space too many things going on there to represent in that time scale... it worked as a concept not in reality, with the time frame and cost.'

4. How well do you think the surveying, mapping and re-imagining exercises worked in preparation for making an intervention within the environment? What were the challenges here?

Hannah talks through what they did as a prompt...

Daniel: 'I think this was one of the questions I found hardest to bring back because I think the importance of that was in the conversation and the temporary exercises we were doing rather than what came out at the end. I think that this shows the importance of that collaborative working and just the talking and that design process maybe the fact that wasn't documented by us. It's probably the first bit you forget but I mean clearly it was productive. Clearly it was the mapping and the surveying that led into... the fact got some way to understand it and its possibilities suggests that the surveying mapping was productive.

Hannah: 'What was the experience of the intervention like at the end?'

Daniel: 'I just remember it being very playful and I think that's worth something, because it was doing things you wouldn't think of doing partly because of the group dynamic. It was more just lets do something to see what happens and there's definitely some value in doing things for the sake of it. Yeah and it was definitely... that would only have happened in that group. Also we were given the framework with that material... here are the building blocks. Given the set material and building blocks and the location to make it work... yeah there was a framework to produce something, to work within... yeah it was good fun and explorative and I definitely think there could be more of that in our architecture course to get to grips with materials and see what you can do. Otherwise you end up referring to books on how you could do things in an interesting, beautiful poetic way, replicating mashing things together because you don't know in a hands-on sense how to put things together. It relies upon imagery.

Hannah: Part of what I've been writing about is working with different kinds of knowledge, integrating inhabitant knowledge, everyday practical ways, through making, specialist knowledge, draw in all of these different knowledge forms to enrich the design process.

Daniel reflects on being a part of a particular culture in the school.

'Maybe its good to have that kind of messy experience, bringing together different ways of interpreting the maps'

'yeah I think the inputs of external people from architecture is quite beneficial to unsettle you a bit.'

5. What would be your definition of awkward space today?

'I think I wrote uncomfortable abnormal space, left behind or in between as residue and I think that still stand. They're often born where you get two pieces of conscious design but they don't quite meet up of even overlap there's that inconsistency between the two. And I don't think it has to be just at a building scale you could just put up a fence with regard to one thing but not the whole. Obviously we experience things as the whole picture, you never see a building or spaces as just the plan that

that still stands and I think the key thing is that it evokes an emotional uncomfortability, or it doesn't feel right, it's very a subjective thing, its quite... I think its something that can be agreed upon I think its something human as opposed to individual, it's corporeal, it's to do with human scale and things that are common.'

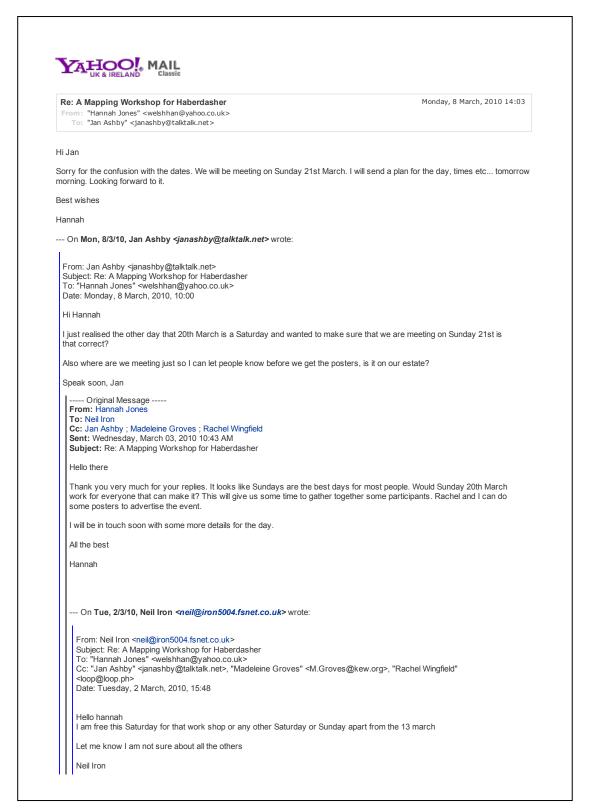
'Its orchestration really, we were told early on that the architect's role is a conductor having to manage, seeing as broad a view as possible and knitting things together.'

less harmonious

'an amateur orchestra that doesn't always follow the conductor.'

# Appendix C1 – Haberdasher workshop preparation documents

## **Email correspondence with members of Haberdasher Residents' Committee**





Re: Mapping Haberdasher workshop information

Monday, 22 March, 2010 15:48

om: "Jan Ashby" <janashby@talktalk.net> To: "Hannah Jones" <welshhan@yahoo.co.uk>

Glad everything was ok yesterday, I really enjoyed the day and I think the others did too. I will be great to se the DVD when it is

As soon as I know when we are having the BBQ I will let you know the date and we can do the follow up session then if you like.

Thanks also for providing the lunch, I meant to thank you when I left you yesterday.

Hope to hear from you soon.

Best Wishes

.lan

---- Original Message --From: Hannah Jones

To: ianashbv@talktalk.net

Sent: Monday, March 22, 2010 3:29 PM

Subject: Re: Mapping Haberdasher workshop information

Dear Jan

Thank you very much to you and the rest of the Haberdasher team for taking part and hosting the mapping workshop yesterday. I have gathered together all the photos and footage from the event and there are some great images!

I will put everything onto a DVD and send it or bring it down to you in the next week or so. I will also transcribe the time plan.

It would be great to have a follow up session, perhaps co-inciding with the barbeque in a few months, where I can show you how this mapping session has been developed in my research and we can present some of the outcomes to other residents and perhaps Jamie from the Shoreditch Trust.

All the best

Hannah

--- On Sun, 21/3/10, janashby@talktalk.net < janashby@talktalk.net > wrote:

From: janashby@talktalk.net <janashby@talktalk.net>
Subject: Re: Mapping Haberdasher workshop information
To: "Hannah Jones" <welshhan@yahoo.co.uk>
Date: Sunday, 21 March, 2010, 9:24

Ok Hannah, I probably won't be downstairs till 10.00 but I'll ring you as soon as I am on my way downstairs. Jan Sent from my BlackBerry® wireless device

From: Hannah Jones <welshhan@yahoo.co.uk> Date: Sun, 21 Mar 2010 09:09:50 +0000 (GMT)
To: Jan Ashby<janashby@talktalk.net>
Subject: Re: Mapping Haberdasher workshop information

Just heading towards Haberdasher my mobile number is 07870695991 just in case we can't find each other. See you

Sent from han's phone

On 18 Mar 2010, at 22:44, "Jan Ashby" <janashby@talktalk.net> wrote:

Hi Hannah

We have put seven posters up in the notice boards on the estate but so far we have only got five volunteers for Sunday, I hope we can manage to complete the project with so few people. Hopefully someone might come along that we haven't heard from yet.

See you Sunday

Jan

--- Original Message -From: Hannah Jones To: Jan Ashby

Sent: Wednesday, March 17, 2010 2:34 PM

Subject: Re: Mapping Haberdasher workshop information

Dear Jan

Just to let you know that I have received the plans of Haberdasher in the post. Thank you very much.

Best wishes

Hannah

--- On Mon, 15/3/10, Jan Ashby <janashby@talktalk.net> wrote:

From: Jan Ashby <janashby@talktalk.net>
Subject: Re: Mapping Haberdasher workshop information
To: "Hannah Jones" <welshhan@yahoo.co.uk>
Date: Monday, 15 March, 2010, 11:09

Hi Hannah

Thanks for sending the poster, I am just printing them off and will get them put in the notice boards

I am putting the diagram in the post today, it has some pictures of around the estate on it, I hope it will be useful. Not too sure if the library would have any but it's worth asking or perhaps even Hackney Archives.

I am a little concerned of what will happen if we don't get enough people to come along on Sunday. I'll try to ask as many people as I think will come but can't promise that we will have 12, I'll let you know how we are doing as the week goes on.

Please get in touch if you have any queries.

Jan

---- Original Message -----From: Hannah Jones To: Jan Ashby

Sent: Friday, March 12, 2010 2:45 PM Subject: Re: Mapping Haberdasher workshop information

Thank you very much for letting us use the meeting room.

The diagram that you have and any old photographs would be brilliant thank you. My address is 44, Hawksley Road, London, N16OTJ. Rachel and I are currently putting materials together for the mapping activity and we wondered if there were any old images of the estate that might exist? Would I be able to find these in a local library?

We also want to print a plan of the estate that is table top size (approx. 1metre by 2metres) so that we can all map together. I will get back in touch with Jaime to see if he knows of some plans that can be scaled up to a large size.

I am attaching a poster for the notice boards. Rachel and I will also come down to visit the estate next week to see if we can drum up some participants.

Thanks very much for your help.

Best wishes

Hannah

-- On Wed, 10/3/10, Jan Ashby <janashby@talktalk.net> wrote:

From: Jan Ashby <janashby@talktalk.net> Subject: Re: Mapping Haberdasher workshop information To: "Hannah Jones" <welshhan@yahoo.co.uk> Date: Wednesday, 10 March, 2010, 8:54

Dear Hannah

Thanks for the information on the mapping workshop it looks very interesting.

You are welcome to use our meeting room for the day, we have had a few problems lately with a leak in there but at the moment it is dry so I will keep my eye on it.

As far as a map is concerned I have small diagram of the estate along with some photos that were taken when some building work was going to be done a few years ago, I don't know whether it will be any good but I could put it in the post for you if you like.

Let me know if you need it or if you have managed to get one from somewhere else.

Jan

----- Original Message -----From: Hannah Jones To: Jamie Eagles ; Jan Ashby Cc: Rachel Wingfield

Sent: Tuesday, March 09, 2010 5:58 PM
Subject: Mapping Haberdasher workshop information

Dear Jan and Jamie

Please find attached an overview of the mapping workshop proposed for Sunday 21st March. Jamie, we would be delighted if you would like to take part if you are free on the 21st March.

We would like to get hold of a map of the estate for the workshop. Rachel mentioned that you might have a contact at Hackney Homes who might be able to help out with getting hold of a plan of the estate. I am aiming to print a large map of the estate for us to work with in the workshop.

I also wanted to ask if we could use the meeting room at Haberdashers for the workshop. Part of the workshop will include walking around the estate taking photographs of spaces and it would be great to have somewhere on-site to do the actual mapping. I thought that we could create the map itself around a table.

I will provide lunch and coffee for the participants and bring along all the mapping resources. Hopefully, at the end of the day we will have a large map of the estate full of creative opportunities. We will also have photographs of the session.

I am just working on the poster for the day and will send this to you shortly.

Thanks very much for your help.

Best wishes

Hannah

# Poster to enlist volunteers for mapping workshop

# MAPPING HABERDASHER

A one-day creative mapping event at the Haberdasher Estate



10am – 4pm Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2010 Lunch provided

Residents are invited to take part in a creative and fun one-day event working with designers. We will be collectively re-imagining the awkward spaces on the Haberdasher Estate as positive, engaging and creative opportunities. We will create a big map of the estate that can be used for funding reports, campaigning and to strengthen community relationships.

Location: The Haberdasher Estate meeting room

For more information or to take part please email: welshhan@yahoo.co.uk

# Workshop outline sent to residents and design team

Hannah Jones, March 2010

# MAPPING HABERDASHER

Proposal for a one-day workshop at the Haberdasher Estate





**Date:** Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2010 **Time:** 10am until 4pm

Number of participants: minimum 12 residents and 4 designers

Location: On or close to the Haberdasher Estate

#### Overview

Residents are invited to take part in a one-day workshop where we will collectively re-imagine and map the awkward spaces that exist within the Haberdasher Estate proposing how they can be used positively.

As a part of the MetaboliCity project last summer we conducted a workshop that was attended by two members of the Haberdasher resident's committee and growing group. At this event one of the issues highlighted by the Haberdasher team was the need for some kind of master-plan to upscale and communicate the food-growing activities that are taking place on the site, both to fellow residents and to potential funding-bodies and collaborators.

In response to this request, the objective of the 'Mapping Haberdasher' workshop will be to create a map to communicate the space identified by the residents that could be used for food-growing activities and other positively transformative activities or designs for this neighbourhood. This map can be used for funding reports, campaigning and to strengthen community relationships. Through the mapping workshop the residents become the experts, sharing knowledge about their environment. This workshop is also intended to be a motivational event to get people coordinated and excited about the growing season that is about to start.

## What is a mapping workshop?

Throughout the day, participants of the workshop including residents and designers will all work together on drawing a large map of the estate. In the map we will highlight the spaces that are awkward and re-imagine them in a creative and positive way. What we should have at the end of the day is a map that contains a joined-up set of ideas for how to improve the neighbourhood. We should have generated a collective knowledge about the environment that can be used to inform a master plan for the space. We will have a great visual picture of the Estate that can be used

Hannah Jones, March 2010

to communicate with funding bodies and perhaps create a Haberdasher postcard.

## Documenting the event

Drawing materials will be provided and the map itself will be filmed using time-lapse photography to record how it evolves through each stage of the workshop. The workshop itself is a part of a design research project conducted by Hannah Jones. The conversations that take place around the map will also be recorded. The information recorded at the workshop will only be used for Hannah's research project. The identity of the participants and designers involved in the workshop will remain anonymous in the project's documentation. After the workshop, the residents committee will be given the map and the photographs of the map. They will also be given a copy of the 'Mapping Haberdasher' case study research report.

#### Outline for the day

#### Session one

#### 9.30am - Coffee on arrival

#### 10am - 11am - Introduction

Each participant will be asked to bring along to the workshop an example of a space on the Haberdasher estate that they personally find awkward. This might be a space that is neglected, difficult to manage, uncomfortable or unsafe. In the first session of the workshop we will all present these spaces for discussion. (write the awkward space on a post it note and pin to the map and the discussion takes place)

#### Session two

## 11am - 11.45am - Coffee and walk

We will all go for a walk around the Estate and visit some of the spaces introduced in the morning. We will look out for other awkward spaces and take photographs of the spaces.

## Session three

#### 11.45 - 1.15pm - Drawing up spaces

We will work in four teams on different parts of the map. Using the photographs taken on our walk and other drawing and collaging materials each team will explore one awkward space. The teams will be asked to map the physical characteristics of the awkward space (i.e. low ceiling or uneven ground), the navigational restrictions of the space (i.e. bad signage or congested areas), the socially awkward characteristics of the space (gangs of teenagers or dog walkers) and the natural effects that make the space awkward (i.e. flooding or weeds).

#### 1.15pm - 2pm - Lunch provided

#### Session four

#### 2pm - 3.30pm - Re-imagining space

We will work again in four teams, drawing on top of another layer of paper on our existing map of awkward spaces. In this session each of the teams will be asked to re-imagine their awkward space as a positive space. How will the physical, navigational, social and natural characteristics need to be re-tuned to transform this space into a healthy, joyful, connected space in the environment?

Hannah Jones, March 2010
Cassian files
Session five 3.30pm – 4pm – Joining-up our map
Each team will present their part of the map and we can finish with a discussion
about the connection between each of the different spaces and how we can take
the map forward for funding documents, postcards, posters, etc
, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,

# **Ethics form**

Practicing Awkward Space in the City: Mapping Haberdasher Workshop - 21st March 2010

#### **Project information**

This workshop is a part of a research project conducted by Hannah Jones. The overall aim of Hannah's research is to carry out a series of co-design workshops with designers, local residents and non-designers based upon mapping and reimagining different urban everyday environments.

#### Informed Consent Form

This form is for you to give Hannah permission to use the data collected during your participation in the 'Mapping Haberdasher' workshop. Please read the following carefully before filling out the form, and do not hesitate to ask questions if necessary.

A variety of data will be collected about your participation in the workshop (e.g. photographic evidence, workshop materials, informal interviews) and it is anticipated that this information will be used in a number of ways, e.g.:

- Teaching: the material has value in teaching and may be shown to appropriate students and staff for educational purposes;
- Professional: the material may be published in academic articles or books or shown in professional conferences;
- Public: the material may be shown in public venues, including on the Internet, in exhibitions, or in the popular press. This constitutes release of the material to the public domain and that may be seen by any size of audience. Where possible we will ensure that material is anonymous (e.g. in professional publications or teaching contexts) but this will not always be possible. You have the right to withdraw consent at any time and your data from that point on will no longer be used in future publications. However, we may not be able to retrieve information already published in the public domain. Signing this form will indicate that you consent to our using the materials we collect during your participation in all of these ways.

## Consent to sound / image recording and data collection

I hereby confirm that I give consent for material derived from the workshop can be used as outline above. I understand that my full name and contact details will not be associated with the data generated in publications. I confirm that the purpose for which the material would be used has been explained to me in terms that I have understood and I agree to the use of the material in such circumstances. I understand that the researchers will stop recording or erase segments if I request them to in a reasonable time. I understand that if the material is required for use in any other way than that explained to me then my consent to this will be specifically sought.

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# **Appendix C2 – Mapping Haberdasher workshop transcripts of audio recordings**

Taken from the recording of the mapping workshop that took place on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2010, in the meeting room on the Haberdasher Estate in Shoreditch, London.

Participants:

Hannah
Ayako
Mark
Mathias
Neil
John
Vi
Eileen
Jan
Hyaesook
Maureen
Mary
Recording 1 - 21_03_2010 10_17
(18mins19secs)
(10111113133603)
(101111113193663)
Introduction – discussion leading up to going for the walk around the estate
Introduction – discussion leading up to going for the walk around the estate
Introduction – discussion leading up to going for the walk around the estate  Jan:  'Was that thing I sent you any good?
Introduction – discussion leading up to going for the walk around the estate  Jan:
Introduction – discussion leading up to going for the walk around the estate  Jan:  'Was that thing I sent you any good?
Introduction – discussion leading up to going for the walk around the estate  Jan: 'Was that thing I sent you any good?  Hannah:
Introduction – discussion leading up to going for the walk around the estate  Jan:  'Was that thing I sent you any good?  Hannah:  'Yes it was great, I had lots of bits of different maps because I was trying to find a
Introduction – discussion leading up to going for the walk around the estate  Jan:  'Was that thing I sent you any good?  Hannah:  'Yes it was great, I had lots of bits of different maps because I was trying to find a
Introduction – discussion leading up to going for the walk around the estate  Jan: 'Was that thing I sent you any good?  Hannah: 'Yes it was great, I had lots of bits of different maps because I was trying to find a map or plan of the estate  Neil: (In background) Is there sugar over there for the tea please
Introduction – discussion leading up to going for the walk around the estate  Jan:  'Was that thing I sent you any good?  Hannah:  'Yes it was great, I had lots of bits of different maps because I was trying to find a map or plan of the estate

I've got a friend who is an architect who did some work around here and they had
half of the estate
Jan:
Oh right
Hannah:
And then I ended up drawing a satellite image because it had sort of uh
Maureen:
(Interjects in conversation) They weren't the architects that were involved in the
estate plus project?
Hannah:
No, they weren't working on this estate they were working (obscured by laughter from
other participants)
Maureen:
All of these, a lot of these blank spaces that we have got on the estate, um we went
•
through, I mean we have put such a lot of work into it as a group, was something
called estates plus, where Hackney suddenly got it brilliantly wrong (tails off)
Jan:
(Interrupts) Yes that's just the diagram that I sent, what they proposed
(p)
Maureen:
They were going to build on all these built spaces all along (referring to map)
Jan:
But thank god
Maureen:
The only thing we can think of is that the credit crunch did us a favour.
The day aming the dan amin of the affect the droute of union and do a favour.
Jan:

Yes, they were going to put 40 flats all along here (referring to map), all along Chart Street

Maureen:

Oh my god it would have been a nightmare, it unbelievable. Can you imagine the builder's lorries going in and out of the estate, no access...

Hannah:

Yeah (In agreement, following conversation). I thought that they were going to repaint it

Jan:

No its some big regeneration scheme that's going on all over Hackney. I think some sites might still be going ahead

Background chatter

Jan:

But it started off there were going to be 40 flats and they were going to go here and here and here (referring to map). And then they decided they were not going to do this bit so they were going to do there and there. Then it went down to about 14 and then it went down to about 6 or 8 (Eileen gets involved in conversation). And then they decided not to. And in the end Maureen emailed them and said, "Oh that's good cause we've started growing vegetables". (Big laugh from group)

Hannah:

Okay (starts off) so shall we just start by introducing ourselves

Ayako:

Okay my name is Ayako, you probably met me at the MetaboliCity workshop

Jan:

(interrupts) Oh on the Saturday...

Ayako: Yes, I work with Loop.pH to work on metaboliCity project but also Hannah used to be my tutor at Goldsmiths so that's the connection and why I am here and my background is graphic design and I work on communication and stuff like that as well
Jan: Okay
Neil: I'm Neil, resident on the estate
Eileen: I'm Eileen, resident on the estate
Mary: I'm Mary, Vice Chair of the TRA (Tenants Residents' Association)
Eileen: Oh I'm on the committee as well (laugh)
Jan: I'm Jan, chair of the TRA (Tenants Residents' Association)
Hannah:  And I'm Hannah and I'm going to help with the mapping session today and document it. So my background is in, I'm studying a PhD at the moment where I'm looking at spaces in cities and awkward spaces in cities and how they might offer positive or creative opportunities in the city. So how we can work with these spaces to find new opportunities at the local level rather than a top down approach like the architects going in and building the flats
Mathias: Sorry, (interjects) did you have any exchange with the architects?

Maureen:

Yes we did, we had a big function here didn't we in the middle of... Jan: Oh yeah, before we did the garden and they invited everybody to come along and they showed what they were going to do and asked people what they would like and yeah... Maureen: One of them was saying of course this would be, talking about our lovely garden, this would be a perfect place to dump building materials, and we all went yeah? (Everyone starts laughing and chattiness occurs) a classic place to dump building materials, well up yours... Mathias: So they really did just come in to show you what they were coming up with Jan: Yeah, I can't remember who they were now, I've got all the stuff upstairs, I can't remember who they were Mathias: And did they propose to do anything nice to the estate as well, the existing one as a result of it? Jan: They did say they were going to do Maureen: Well it started with

Mathias:

Jan:

Did they not try to sell it to you?

That would be typical of Hackney

Maureen:

Well it started with, you know if you do this we will guarantee that you will get at least £75,000

Jan:

Yeah I can't remember now

Maureen:

Yes I think it was £75,000, and we thought in all honesty we've got to go along with it, so we went along with it. Fine, and then we said well we want the guarantee of that money and then all of a sudden Hackney started to back-track and then they said oh "I don't know if you were going to get it all, you don't know if it going to be at your disposition, yeah we might spend it on the estate' and we said no it will be what we choose and in the end it worked out that we were going to get nothing

Jan:

It sounded like, in the end, that we were going to have to have this but they were going to be spending the money on other estates

Maureen:

Yes

Jan:

Yes, I remember now

Maureen:

Didn't they show us a plan for the big grass?

Jan:

Yeah, they were going to do something there on this one (refers to map)

Maureen:

(Others chatting agreeing etc... throughout)

They were going to put more (bins?) there you know... and more trees and things, quite nice if it had been done but in our dreams... Maureen: Cause one of the big arguments is if you approach Hackney and talk about trees, they always say to us, well you know we can't plant trees on Haberdasher Estate because there's no top soil there and its all on bomb ruin. Well it wasn't bomb ruin actually, these were Georgian houses would you believe, with lovely gardens, so its not entirely... there's somewhere some beautiful soil and gardens underneath you know, so that's not strictly true. Jan: Where were the houses, all along Haberdasher? Maureen: The whole block wasn't it. Maud had photographs of the houses. Eileen: There we little turnings, off the turnings... Mary: Apparently there were three pubs down there Eileen: There were shops Jan:

And wasn't there a road that went straight through?

(Group agreement)

Hannah:

When did the estate go up?

Maureen:

1969
Jan:
I thought it was about 70'?
Maureen:
Well our houses went up first in 1969 and then they gradually built
Mary:
I moved in 70'
Hannah:
So it's quite a recent history then, the estate as it is now
Maureen:
I can remember it but I am probably the eldest here
Jan:
Yes but you were born here as well
Maureen:
Well I was born down the road
Jan:
I've only lived here 30 years, only (laughs)
Maureen:
But I mean once upon a time, cause these garages that go around us, there was like
um, it's all blocked off now but it was like a link road that went all the way around. So
you could come down that road, turn left and drive all the way around. But we had to
have it blocked off because it was we managed to get racing kids, do you remember
(others agree)? On their motorbikes, they used to whizz by, round and round

Hannah:

(everyone making lots of noise 'oh no" etc...)

like to go and have a look at when we go on the exploration?
Jan: Are we looking at sort of not very nice spaces? Like when you say awkward spaces, do mean spaces that are a bit dark
Hannah: Yeah
Jan: 'Cause there's a few of them, the old pram sheds
Maureen: They're awkward and dark
Jan: We've got two lots of pram sheds
Eileen: Jan have you got the keys for under there then?
Jan: Well the ones under here
Maureen: (in background) I have
Jan: Under here it's open at this end but its like a bomb site inside, there's no lighting. And there's pram sheds under this block is it all the way along? Where you live
Mary: Yeah

Are there any spaces that people can think of off-hand on the estate that they might

Jan: But we haven't got keys, we can show you them but we can't get in. But we can actually get in this bit (refers to map).
Hannah: Yeah
Jan: But there's all rubbish in there, looks like somebody's been me and you went in there didn't we you know when we were thinking about doing the mushrooms there's no lighting and it looks like somebody's been sleeping in there. In one of the pram sheds there's
Neil: A mattress, quilt
Maureen: How did they get in there?
Jan: Its open, I'm trying to get a padlock put on it
Neil:  To be honest, some of the places that they could sleep or whatever, there's a lot worse, that probably is one of the nicest and clean. You're in your own little cupboard they've sweep out all the rubbish and then they've made a little doorway
Jan: And it's out in the open isn't it (Two + people speaking). Well we can go in there and have a look. Oh we haven't got a key for that bit, you know right down the end or your garages
Maureen: I've got keys

Jan:
Oh you have
Maureen: For under lan Bowater
1 of affact fait bewater
Neil:
Have you got the recent ones, 'cause someone came and cut the lock off before?
Maureen:
Oh so it might not be
Jan:
Oh it might be a new one
Maureen: I certainly had a key
Mary:
When I asked in the xx if anyone had a key they said nobody had one
Jan:
Well under this, as you go down the garages, right garages here (referring to map) and at the end there, there's a big gate but the key you've got probably isn't right, but
there's a big void that goes right there.
Mary: That was where they could all go around, the cars
That has more they sould all go around, the sale
Neil:
Which is Haberdasher Street, this one?
Jan:
oan.

Um, yup there's pram sheds along here (referring to map) and we can get in there, well rather we can show you them but we can't get in. That's all the pram sheds... We can go into the garden shed, if we had torches, cause where our garden shed is (few seconds discussion between residents e + j locating shed on map). So you go in here, this is our garden shed and there's a few little pram sheds there but then it goes right underneath to here (all focusing on map). I don't really wanna go in there but... I took some blokes in there the other day to look at a leak that we've got and I thought that it was just pram sheds and all of a sudden I turned around and they just disappeared, they just went and they just carried on walking right along here. I didn't realize it went right through there.

Neil:

Have you got the keys to that one?

Jan:

I've got my keys on me. So we can look at that as well

Hannah:

Are there any other spaces?

Jan:

Um, as I say, there's over there but Frank's the only one who's got the key for that. Put it on, it's about there Neil (they are now scribing on the map). And it goes right under Ian Bowater.

Neil:

The doors in the middle (working with map)

Neil:

Somewhere to make look nice would be you know the stairwell, over by the front of East Road

Jan:

Oh right, East Road (referring to map)

Neil:
You know when we walk sown this road? You know the bin chamber? Over there
(People agree)
Hannah:
We looked at that before didn't we?
(Everyone orientating themselves with the map, Hannah is introducing red (awkward
hot spots) and yellow (you are here) stickers to code the map)
Jan:
So this is Chart Street, (map rustles, Hannah agrees) there are some, like, voids,
there
Maureen:
I don't know what they are
Neil:
They're garages aren't they?
Jan:
No here (Refers to map)
Maureen:
You mean where it goes a bit like that(Refers to map)
lan.
Jan:  You know where Down and Konny lived, here, say this is where Down and Konny
You know where Dawn and Kenny lived, here, say this is where Dawn and Kenny
lived, there's those, and you can see inside
Neil:
And you've got the pram sheds up there
Maureen:
Are they pram sheds?

Jan:
Where do you get in though?
Maureen + Neil: Upstairs
Jan: No underneath, say you're on the street, in Chart Street, not this Chart Street that one,
Maureen: You go down the little steps and then if you look right there's a great big door
Jan: Is there?
Neil: Yeah, same at that end
Jan: Oh I've never seen that
Maureen: It like that piece going out, we'd all walked past that, day in day out, and not one of us could remember whether it was
Jan: (Interrupts) which bit?
Maureen: You know, where you were going to put your tomatoes, do you remember
Jan:

Oh yeah, and we couldn't remember what was, I swore blind there wasn't anything underneath it and it was built on garages

Maureen:

Yes, do you remember?

Jan:

Yes, I remember that, so that's over here isn't it (refers to map). Where we're definitely going to do the tomatoes. We've got to because I've over-estimated on my tomato plants upstairs and I've got millions (big laugh). And they've only been in two weeks and they're like that already (makes measurement).

Neil:

I might take a couple off your hands

Jan:

You can have some. I've got 34 pots (group wow), with about 6 in each, Neil said why did you get so much you do realise that each one is a plant. So I worked out I've got about 200!

(group wooo)

Mathias:

So your going for the Haberdasher sauce this year? (Laughs)

Jan:

Oh yeah, I think what we'll do with that money, because Maureen did a couple of 2 hour stints at, Hackney homes had a residents open day and they gave us £40 worth of vouchers and we can use them at home Base or B&Q, one of those. I was thinking that with one of those we could get some grow-bags and then put the tomatoes in there.

Maureen:

Yeah

Jan:

Cause otherwise they're not all going to go in my bag

Maureen:

That's what I thought we were going to do

Jan:

We were going to buy a plant but we could spend half on plants and half on grow bags. Anyway, getting back to this sorry...

Maureen:

My plant place that I am quite interested in and I don't suppose you would perhaps regard it as awkward is that bit right down in the corner there. Which is quite a nice space, nice and open,

Jan:

And there's nothing there, is there?

Maureen:

There's nothing there, what I thought was, we're always being criticized on this estate having nowhere for the children to play. I thought, because its lovely and sunny, and I looked around there this morning and there's no windows that the kids would bother anybody, and its all underground so there would be very little noise, and do you know what I thought would be nice

Jan:

It's not near any of our flats

Maureen:

It's not near our flats

Jan:

And poor old Maud's not there now

Maureen:

I thought it would be nice to make it into a sort of short tennis court, then, perhaps have a basketball ring on the wall
Jan: That would keep a few people quiet wouldn't it? It's a good idea
Maureen: It a lovely flat area, and this astro-turf isn't that expensive and I thought that if we could cover that with astro-turf and I don't know if you know short-tennis, you don't play it with, I mean they will play it with whatever they want, short tennis you just play with rackets so it doesn't go all over the place
Jan: It's quite a high wall as well, it's not going to go over into the street
Neil: The other up shot of that is that when Hackney Borough council get rid of that plant thing over there, you could have the fencing and out it on the wall.
Jan: You know over there, the what's it called, the plant room
Hannah: That's owned by Shoreditch Trust isn't it?
Jan: Yes but that's going (lots of voices) there been some builder's lorries there
Neil: You might wanna ask for the fencing now, ask Jamie
Jan: Yes cause we asked for the water butt as well
Neil:

And the stones we want before they go in the van
Jan: Is Jamie involved with that?
Mathias:
Yes, you should speak to him about it and ask him to open it up for you guys so you can just pick whatever you like because I don't think they are going to spend an awful lot of time thinking about what they are going to do with it.
Jan:
They've got all those pots all those bloody flowerpots
Mathias:
Yes there's lots of stuff
Jan:
Right I'll get in touch with them
Mathias:
And you just need to shift it over there in a little trolley or something, make it a bit easier
Jan:
Have you got a pad or a pen or anything?
Hannah:
I've got a pad
(Rummaging)
Hannah:
Okay so when we go off on our walk
Jan:

Sorry, I have got one more space... I have always think well if we could do something here, it won't be anything like that because it's too near where Maureen lives, but you know where Neil: (Interrupts) The play park at the back Jan: No that's the play park (referring to the map), there's the garages, when you get to the end of the garages then you've got the stairs going up... at the moment its used as a drug, um, thing, cause I've been getting in touch with the police and they've made an arrest (Everyone interested) There's drug dealing going on Mary: Frightened the life out of me the other day when I went down there Jan: It's really weird because they're like middle-aged men Maureen: Oh, it's not kids is it? Jan: No they're all about 40 something... so up against this wall here there's a big void, there's a big something Neil: Where the old fire hydrant is Mary: It's all across there isn't it, quite a big area

Jan:
Yes actually there's a big space, well we can look at that anyway
Mary:
That doesn't interfere with the garages does it
Jan:
Yes but there is something because I've always thought, "oh you know"
Maureen:
Its so grotty there as well isn't it?
Jan:
Yeah (few people agreeing)
Neil:
Right one more space maybe, you know you've got stuff on this green but the other
green has got nothing
(Everyone humming in agreement)
Neil:
Not to say about the thing of like vegetables and so but have somewhere nice where
there's loads of plants
Jan:
We put a couple of plants out there out of Maureen's garden
Maureen:
We've also got the walnut tree and the bay tree
Jan:
Are they going down there or in the garden?

Maureen:

No I think it's too windy there

Neil:

Instead of having boxes, we could dig, you know when you raise beds, the mound of topsoil and then plant underneath so instead of spending most to build a bed just do a circumference of a space there, dig it turn it over then the plants bulbs will come back every year

Maureen:

Well, what we did was we put some plants there last autumn and we put a notice there saying we're putting these plants here if they survive because we weren't sure what the vandalism thing... If they survive then obviously the gardening people will come and do something about it come spring because its something we have got in mind to do. I don't know about digging beds there Neil because it strikes me as the more beds we keep digging the more work it is and the thing we are short of is labour.

Hannah:

What we were, what I was thinking of doing today, but we can see how it goes, is that we go off now for our exploration, collect and photograph the spaces, there are two cameras, and we've got a photo-printer, so we can photograph the spaces, come back and print the spaces off so we have some material to work with. And then we've got these two packs of cards, so the image on the top is of the estate, you can see through to all the spaces

Jan:

Okay yes...

Jan:

And then inside each pack there's a collection of prompting questions to explore different aspects of the spaces. There's questions that are to do with the physical nature of the spaces, so you know, "are there any objects there?"

Jan:

So do we do this when we come back?

Hannah:

Yes, and its just a way that we can guide the discussion about the spaces and why they might be awkward

Jan:

So first of all we're just going to go out and have a look

Hannah:

Yes, and then we'll have a discussion about it using these cards and then we can start to think about how they can become more positive opportunities after exploring why they are in the state that they are in and then the final bit I thought we could make connections between the spaces. So things like (stumbling) How different opportunities can connect up. Like you were talking about labour intensive work... so how resources from one space, like the trellising might become useful for another space.

Maureen:

The other thing we have got to think about which is something that has had to guide us on other thing we have done on the estate, is obviously we have to follow health and safety, I know its horrible but you know, we do, we have to think a bit forward

Hannah:

Yes

Maureen:

Otherwise we're in dead trouble

Hannah:

Yes definitely, so I think on one side we can wildly imagine what the possibilities could be like the idea of the tomato green house, and we can push it as far as it will go but then at the end we can come back with some questions that are realistic. So if we start by exploring wildly

Jan: Yes if

Yes if we could do it all and we had no health and safety and loads of money

Hannah:

Yes and then we can come back to the practicalities at the end when we discuss how this can become useful to put into reports and things like that.

Jan:

Okay, so if we have only got two cameras what are we going to do, go in two groups?

Hannah:

I thought we could do two teams and then we can do the mapping at the same time. We've got two torches (laughs) for the dark spaces.

Jan:

Right am I the only one with keys

Maureen:

Well if we're going walking around the estate I'm going back to get my dog so I will bring another torch with me

Jan:

I could have brought a torch

Hannah:

And we've got these arrows, so when you photograph the space or aspects of the space you can point it so when you come back you can remember specifically what you were looking at but also it can help when we come back with the photographs later as a reference.

Mary:

Hokey doke

Hannah:

If we get into two teams that are a mixture of
Jan: Yeah people who know where things are
Jan: Yes and I'm the only one with the keys
Maureen: So five of them and five of us
Jan: Yes so if you're going to look in the pram shed, you take my keys you go in there cause I can never get the door open and then you can loc this door up
Neil: Right I'll take group one first (everyone laughs)
Jan: Okay (people negotiate groups)
Recording 2 – 21/3/2010/11/27 (52 minutes)
We have arrived back from the exploration around the estate. We have gathered some extra participants along the way. First tings first we have a cup of tea. We thn carry out the mapping session.
Jan: You live on Hawksley Road then, I have got a friend on Hawksley Road
Hannah: Yes

(There is a discussion between Hannah + Jan about the location of Hawksley Road, whilst other participants chat in the background and make tea, there is a lot of tea or coffee requests people are very chatty. John, the chair of the residents committee, s ze are

to the second property of the second property
who has lived on the estate since the beginning has arrived and is settling into the
discussion. They start discussing their summer barbecue. People reorganize chairs
for the new participants and to prepare for the next stage of the workshop. They
discuss filming the event for themselves and using the video camera but then realize
that we can give them footage. People are talking over each other. Sound becomes
more difficult to transcribe. They continue discussing the tenant's barbecue. They a
planning to grow their own salad for the barbecue. People start looking through
pictures off their own camera. They discuss the menu for the barbecue. Laughing
and jovial spirits.)
Maureen:
Is it much more because I think she wants to start?
Jan:
Okay sorry no there's not much more (counting something on the camera)
Hannah:
So did we discover any other spaces on the exploration?
Jan:
Yeah right down the end of the garages but you said you did that bit didn't you (to
someone in the other team, they agree).
Hannah:
The bit Maureen said underneath where Dawn and Kenny live
Jan:
Yeah we've done that.
(More tea and coffee negotiations with Ayako)

Hannah:

(Discussing with Neil the Bing aerial photo of the estate that shows the space before they have started to introduce greening.)
Maureen: When you Google my house you get Jan walking down there
Jan: Yeah I'm on there
Maureen: My friend was in Singapore and emailed it (Jan on Google)
(More tea and coffee negotiations with Ayako)
Hannah: Shall we have a look at the photographs that we've taken?
Mark: Yes probably all together would be good
Jan: Let me get a chair
Hannah: Lets look at them on the computer first
(Tea and chairs negotiations)
Maureen: Gosh this is marvellous the way it is instant, instant!
Neil: Oh look at Eileen, look there we go! (Lots of laughs)

(Eileen is photographed with the arrow and everyone congratulates her on being the pointing lady)
Jan: I was wondering how that was going to work. Cause when you said we were going to take photos I was wondering how we were going to look at them. Oh this is brilliant.
Mark: Well we print out the best ones, so lets look through all of them
Neil: That looks quite good actually
Jan: Oh that's in the garden shed
Neil: Haberdasher dungeons!
Mark: Okay, everyone ready?
(All say yep)
Neil: We can make a copy. (Neil describes how to transport data)
Hannah: We can put the images on a DVD for you.
(Collective chat about data transfer and then more tea and coffee)
Mark: It probably best to select one image for each site that we want to talk about.

Neil, do you want to narrate?
Mark:  If you talk us through where we've been, okay so this is the pram shed isn't it?
Neil: That's the gardening storeroom, where we keep all our gardening tools and then it goes all the way underneath where we are sitting now. Under the tower block
Mark: A lot of water in there
Neil + Jan: Yeah, we've had a flood in there
Neil: Then it goes right the way through to the other side of Haberdasher where there's a ramp, the entrances. Then there's the wonderful Eileen "arrow lady"
John: Yes, that's the door handle (imitating Eileen's picture – gets a laugh)
Neil: That gate and stuff was painted by us just to make it look a bit more alright, and the wood was put up to stop foxes and pests getting in there
Jan: And I didn't want it there. I think the foxes should have somewhere to go
Neil: There's plenty of space on the estate they can go
Jan: I know, I know

Jan:

Neil:
The last thing you want to do is go in there, open the door and for a fox to run at you
(Collective agreement)
Neil:
They're not going to hurt you but the poor fox will be more scared than you
Jan:
Alright, alright
John:
He's watching too many nature films that's the problem
Maureen:
That's the entrance to the garage on the Bow water court
(Collectively discussing the garages and their situation)
(John confirms they are open garages)
John:
What are those dots then? (John is familiarizing himself with the map)
Neil:
Have you got post-it notes so we can stick?
Hannah:
Yes we can put descriptions on them that's a really good idea
Maureen:
You can tell its North facing cause of the moss.
Jan:

Timmy's got in a picture look (people discussing Timmy)
Jan: What do you want? Post-its
Mark: That's actually down here
(People are looking through the photos and locating them on the map and describing the sites they have identified on post-its and adding them into the map)
Jan: They're the sheds on Cullem Welch. They're here
Mathias: That's the ones here
(All discussing the space in the photograph and start arguing over where is East Road)
Jan: It's this bit here Mathias, the garden cause we did this bit – shall I put a post-it there? (Neil + Jan are arguing over what pram sheds they have visited in their separate teams "its here, here" Bowswater and Cullemwelch)
Hannah: Shall we put road names in?
Mathias: Neil's writing them in post-it notes
Jan: On the actual map?
John:

That would be better. You would have more orientation
Jan: That's right, so this is Chart Street
Neil: Is it w e I c h Welch?
John: Not as in Welsh
(Laughs and more notation of place names)
Mary: Looking at it like this it looks awful doesn't it?
(More notation)
Maureen: Should we mark the towers as well?
Jan: I'll write them on in a minute
Maureen: With that or with something else?
Jan: Shall we write on the top of the block the name?
Mark: Have you got another colour maybe?
John: I still haven't got the idea what it's all about

Mathias:
We're trying to find some unused difficult challenging spaces and documenting on the
map to see we could do with them. You missed the introduction.
John:
Yeah but I didn't get up early enough (joking).
(Laughs, you can here the other participants filling in the road names and blocks)
Jan:
If I put Edward Dodd, so all that is Edward Dodd, this is Ralph Brooke, Eileen?
Eileen:
Yeah
reall
Neil:
Then the other part's Cullem Welch
Jan:
So Neil you do that, that's Cullem Welch
(The place naming goes on with everyone agreeing the territory)
Maureen:
I think that helps to identify it a bit more
Jan + Neil: (take most of the responsibility for annotating the map)
Mark:
And we are actually here
(All laugh and say yes - they use the arrow to show where we are, there is a joke
about using Eileen's arrow "arrow woman")
and an acting and an anomality

(They start putting the gardens in and taking about what they are going to call the area 'court yard' – they talk about the spaces they are proud of)
John: Box garden because it's full of boxes
(Putting stuff into the map, lots of talking Mark's picture of a crack)
Jan: Tomato farm
Mark: Tomato farm
(Still selecting images to print, reflecting upon their walk and about the estate in general, good discussion, prompting reflection on previous discussion)
Mathias: That's the first thing you see when you come to the estate
Neil: That's why I thought that would be a good space to do something
(Collectively going through images and discussing the spaces)
Jan: If we get enough interest and we fill all these bags up then we could go in there
Jan: These are Neil's tower blocks
Hannah: I like those. They've got a bit of architecture to them
Neil:

And here we go there's another one of Eileen!
(All laugh)
Hannah:
You could have a whole new signage system
(Group discuss - That's here, this is here)
Mark:
And apparently there were sheds there before
Jan:
Yes that's right
Eileen:
If you look at the floor you can actually see the markings where the sheds were
(All look at pictures and are in agreement)
Neil:
See that's green house two in about 2012
John:
That's a good space that is
(Lots of over-talking whilst going through images)
Maureen:
When they were first knocked down that set, because I think they were some of the
first to come down, lots of people who lived in Anthony Cope that time were interested in putting pots and plants there but of course it almost all private lets in
there now and I can't think they'd be bothered to do anything.

You know what we could put there, if we got all of that stuff from the plant room across the road, Neil, you know the plant room across the road, if we do manage to get all that stuff we could put them here, in between the two Anthony Cope's where you've got that big space, right next door to where Michael lives we could put all the pots

Neil:

Lets see if Shoreditch Trust want to relocate that plant room over to there, if they literally not pick it up, if they wanna pay, because its going to cost money putting it up. There's nothing to say they can't pull the fences out of the ground, dig the appropriate holes, put them in with a door and that way no-one losses out... It would be the Shoreditch Trust and Hackney Borough doing it and it won't cost us anything.

Jan:
I'll email them

Hannah:
I think that this is something that could be thought through in Lego

Mark:
Okay if we go to team two now

Maureen:
Aren't these pictures good? I'm surprised they're nice

Jan:
Nice, wait till you see in here

Maureen:
And there was already an arrow on the wall (all laugh)

Maureen:

That's where I want my little sports ground

That's the pram shed again
Jan:
2012 sports pavilion (joke)
Hannah:
Oh I like that one
Maureen:
Good picture nicely composed
Jan:
This is coming into the mushroom Pram shed, you wait till you see inside, under
Anthony Cope. This is all the rubbish, we're going to find someone to come and clean this out
Maureen:
This is where Peter used to feed the cats
Jan:
Oh yeah, look this is the sleeping bag in one of the pram sheds
Neil:
Look how clean this one is compared to the rest of it – if we let him live in there, rent free will he clear it up for us (joke)
noo wiii no cloar it ap for de (jeke)
Neil:
A lot of the rubbish under there is like crisp packets, food wrappers, I wouldn't be surprised if he has created most of that rubbish
Jan: God
(chatting in background)

Jan:
Someone said they saw Frank going in there, Frank the mechanic, he used to sleep
in a car
(Maureen recounts a story about talking to Frank and him going into the pram shed –
everyone chatty)
Jan:
You didn't see him come out
Tod didn't ood him doline out
Hannah:
Oh that's sad
On that's sau
Marinaga
Maureen:
Saturday I think it was
Hannah:
Well I don't think anybody's been in there for a while, it doesn't look it
Maureen:
Well I'm looking at that sleeping bag
Hannah:
Yeah
Jan:
Right where are we now,
Jan:
That's the other end where you can't get through, that's the other end of this bit
Mark:
Right
Mouroon
Maureen:

But it's locked
Jan:
Then we went onto the grass didn't we?
Mary:
And all these we are talking about having removed
Jan:
You know these old fire hydrants
Maureen:
They're an eyesore, aren't they?
Mary:
Before the paintings done as well
Neil:
I tell you what would be good before you do get them removed, to see if the down
pipes over there if a tap with live water, because of all the gardens that are there, if we put a tap with water
Eileen:  You know where there was one? a tan you know where Llive?
You know where there was one? a tap, you know where I live?
Neil:
Hmm in agreement
Eileen:
That one there, I don't know if it works
Jan:
No it does we used that

(Neil described a tap to put in for the gardening and how it could open up new possibilities for gardening)	
Jan: Yeah we'll get it looked at	
Jan: There are lovely tower blocks	
Hannah: Shall we have a picture of that?	
Neil: Oh Jan, just quickly, Maureen said you know that clematis plant you saw in that corridor, Lidls, $\pounds 2.99$ at the moment	
Jan: Oh okay	
Maureen: I just bought two	
Jan: Oh right	
Hannah: Where's that?	
Jan: It's here	
Jan: Yeah we could put them around the lamppost	
Hannah:	

We need to write that
Jan:
Garden area,
Maureen:
I tell what else I've got that can go around that lamppost, morning glory, I've got a packet of them indoors, I'll leave them out for you tomorrow
Jan:
Hokey-doke and I'll give them to Neil
Neil – talking about planting broad beans – this starts a conversation with Maureen + Jan about planting – and then back to the map
Maureen:
Somebody wanted to build a community hall there
Jan:
Well I think it's an ideal space because we've never had enough money for a community hall
John:
Well it would be better that this place here
Jan:
It's a nice big space but I mean where would we get the money from to build a community hall?
Mary:
Its also out of the way, people may break into it
Jan:
Yeah but then you've got that wherever it is haven't you?

(35.44)
Jan: But even if you had it in the middle here you'd have to have someone keeping an eye on it
Neil: But you know you can always have the windows, you know the grid that goes all the way around
Jan: I'm not being funny but would you need windows, oh yeah I suppose you would for the light
Jan: Oh well anyway
Jan: How much are porta-cabins?
Maureen: £10,000 pound
Jan: Oh – maybe there's a grant we can put in for? Say we haven't got a community hall, innit
Maureen: What's the matter? come on
Eileen: Well it's just that if you do have a community hall it's a lot more work for people
Jan:

Yeah, I know that

Neil:
You need to employ someone but then again it could be a good thing
Jan:
Interrupts – you don't need to employ anyone
Maureen:
We're going off the map here
Jan:
I know but we are looking at what we can do with the spaces – I'm not being funny
I'm in and out I work from home, John's around
John:
I'm around yep
Jan:
You what I mean, if you've got enough people, you're off two days a week, you're not going to be in there all day long you just need to make sure its clean and
going to be in there all day long you just hood to make out one in cloun and
Neil:
Or if you could rent the space to people, say like Mathias and Rachel, if they wanted to do a 'workshoppy' there were
Jan:
We're not going to charge them
Jan:
No I'm not saying charge them but if people used it for doing events
Hannah:
That's a good idea
Jan:

Neil:
No but not for parties, for educational things
Jan:
Well its something we can think about but I've always thought that it is such a waste
of a space
John:
It's a waste of space
Hannah:
I think it's a good one to do when we do the re-imagining
Jan:
Yeah well we can think about it
Neil:
Start building a little hall Neil
John:
It's a Lego
Jan:
Oh John's going to build one, oh that's a good idea
Jan:
Right this bit along here, you know where the pram shed is by Dawn and Kenny live,
that is looking in from Chart Street, what were they called, they were parking bays,
they had numbers on,
lon
Jan:
Open garages

Yeah but we don't want people thinking they can use it for parties

Open garages right, that was along here, and we were looking through, do you know where I mean, actually do you wanna write in mauve Chart Street cause it goes just along to here
(Chatting in background – marking the map)
Jan: Well some of them are open and we looked in and you can see the numbers down the end and the arrow, its what you were saying about when they used to drive all the way around
John: That's right
Jan: See where that door is down here where I'd never been before, where the door is there's an arrow coming out from the door
Maureen: I've walked past that so many times
Jan: There that's where it comes out
(Yeah – collective)
Jan: Right okay so you've done that, open garages Chart Street, stick it there, Mary
Eileen: I want a hotel on Mayfair (laugh)
Jan:

sports ground up here
John: What will you play? Table tennis?
Jan: It Maureen's idea, a very good idea
Jan:
We can put a basketball thingy
John: Where's that then?
Mary: By Dawn and Kenny, where they used to park their car
Jan: By the end of the garages
John: Oh Yes
Jan: Maureen said we're always getting people saying there's nowhere for the kids to play
John: Well that's right no
Maureen: See that line there, we could get a tennis net
Jan:

This is the sports ground we're going to have, John you missed that, we're having a

And against that wall there, this bit (humming and haaring) where we could put a
basket ball net.
Jan:
It's just a waste of space
John:
It's a bloody good idea
Jan:
I think it is and as I said it's not near where any of us live
Mathias:
This is where you get the fences from the plant room onto your
Neil:
On to them walls there
On to them wans there
John:
There's not much to be done apart from a piece of something to stop the ball
Maureen:
Well I tell you what I'm going to do is I'm going to measure that and I'm going to cost
it out for how much it would cost
Hannah:
To put some astro-turf
Jan:
Ah I just thought, £4000 what would that do? Because you know what we haven't put
in for I've got a note on it upstairs, we haven't put in for tenant's levy special
projects
Maureen:
MIGGIOGII.

There we are then I'll cost that out

Jan:
Because last year we got about £4000 special projects. I'll get a form from Debbie
Maureen:
Okay and I'll do it
Hannah:
This is the really weird one on the
Jan:
Oh right that's here
Mary:
In between the bags
Jan:
You know what (everyone chattering about where this space is). You know the Mary
Lloyd pub where we had the gardening meeting, opposite there, there's a door. Now
if you come down the garages, that's what it is
Eileen:
I've got a funny feeling that those doors were put on years later, leaving the rubbish
in there
Jan:
There's a supermarket trolley in there as well
There e a supermanter treney in there as well
Mary:
Remember when they went around with all them metal doors
(Lots of chatter)
Jan:
But I mean what is it?

(Chatter)
Mary: I don't know, it wasn't nothing, it is just an open area
Jan: But we could do something with that
Hannah: You could put something in it, display something in there
Jan: Are there flats above that?
Mary: No
Maureen:  Do you know what, I'm very much against graffiti on walls but I think that would be a very good space for
Hannah: Yeah
(Couple of mumblings about graffiti)
Neil: You know on the way down to Brick Lane they've got that wall, you know if you could get a graffiti artist
Jan: Like Banksy or someone
Neil:

To do something tasteful
Jan:
Could we not send Banksy a letter and say help yourself?
(Collective agreement)
Maureen:
You know what would look nice, looking at it like that, if we had a jungle and then put
fake tigers in there
Hannah:
Yeah!
Neil:
You know the place to get the information from is the police station cause they have
a list of all the contacts for people that tag stuff.
(Neil describes how the police have info about taggers)
Neil:
(Gets a pen and imitates some graffiti) You know, you might be able to get some
interest and see examples of their work and then say could you do something
(Everyone agreeing)
Maureen:
Yes but lets have something nice not like the horrible one, the one on xxx house,
that's awful
Hannah:
I like the fake animals as well
Jan:
We'll have to have a little think about that

Hannan:	
Okay so we're back here – on the grass	
Jan:	
Down this end, they're nice and clean, there's the foxes been in there clearing	ng up
(Group deciding which photos to chose)	
Maureen:	
When we had a walk around with him he mentioned something about under	there,
can you remember?	
Jan:	
No, I can't remember	
Maureen:	
What's that then?	
Hannah:	
The football	
Jan:	
The garages, yeah the garages under Ralph Brooke	
Hamah	
Hannah:	
That's the tomatoes	
(Discussion about the maint islands as the sector)	
(Discussion about the paint job for the estate)	
lone	
Jan:	
That's xxx doing the recycling	
lan.	
Jan:	

(About the paint job) He's been to measure everything up all the cracks and
everything, the concrete, the everything and the scaffolders have been in. So at the
moment it's still on track. John, it's still on track.
John:
It's still on track. I'll still go around and take some photographs though
Eileen:
I was looking around Ralph Brooke around my block and it's subsiding
(Taking about greek and subsidence and walking up flate with abonning)
(Taking about crack and subsidence and walking up flats with shopping)
Jan:
Would you like to move?
rread yea me to more.
Eileen:
I don't want to move of the estate
Jan:
You should come in our block
(Lots of chatting now in the background, Mark + Mathias discuss technology and Jan
+Eileen +John + Maureen discuss the flats on the estate – a hostage, lego house)
Jan:
What's that? is that our community hall?
Neil:
Yup, I don't think to be honest we're going to have enough bricks to finish it all.
Jan:
Doesn't matter we're only looking from above anyway.
Hannah:

The photos are all being printed now, so we can match those up with the spaces. So the next stage is thinking about some of the ideas for the spaces, some of the opportunities for the spaces and building them. So Neil's already started onto the next stage. So they don't have to be fit to scale with the map

Jan:
Oh yes
Hannah:
So we can start to make some of these ideas and place them on the map and we can
photograph the map
Jan:
Okay right well lets get some of these cups out of the way
Eileen:
I best leave you to that because I'm going
Jan:
You've done your bit with the arrow
(Everyone saying goodbye)
Jan:
Yeah thanks Eileen
Hannah:
Thank you
THAIR YOU
(Bit of chatting as Eileen leaves)
(Dit of offatting do Elicon loaves)
Hannah:
We've got lunch as well we could start that
(Another participant arrives)
Jan:
Hello Vi, that chairs still warm, Eileen's just had to go back, do you want a cup of tea
or coffee

John's wife:
No thank you
Jan:
We've been all over the estate taking photos
December 2 04/0/0040/40/40
Recording 3 - 21/3/2010/12/19
(34.05 minutes)
This transcript includes the conversations taking place, whilst the participants, work
on transforming the awkward spaces they have identified on the Estate.
on transforming the awkward spaces they have identified on the Estate.
Starts with group chatting about plug sockets in the resident's meeting room. John
explains about the 'horrible bits and pieces on the estate' that we are transforming.
3
Hannah:
Okay we've got the community centre on the go
Jan:
Right. What we've done Vi, do you wanna explain what we've done, yes you explain.
This is Hannah, this is Violet, john's wife.
Hannah:
We've been on an exploration around the estate and we've photographed spaces
that are awkward, so spaces that are difficult to manage or that become neglected.
So, we've collected these spaces and what we're looking at is how they can become
positively used, so how we can transform them into opportunities for the estate.
There's this space here at the top of Chart Street, which we decided could provide an
ideal opportunity for a community hall.
Jan:
We're just looking at spaces and thinking what could we do there.
Jan:

Like you know up in the corner of Anthony Cope, you know, Chart Street there, you know where you've got the bit down by the garages, Maureen, has said how about a mini sports ground, you know because everyone says there's nowhere for the kids to play on the estate. Little basketball thing, perhaps a little net where they can play across it. And I said, you know where at the end of my garages are, you know when you get to the end, you've got that nothing space and I said that's an ideal space for a community hall. We're looking at spaces and seeing what we can do with them.

(People start getting involved in working on the map. Hyaesook cuts out astro-turf.
Talk about the aerial photos of the estate from Google)
Maureen:
Look that's before we had our garden
Jan:
Because Google's been going for a while
Maureen:
We've always said we haven't got a picture of what it looked like before the garden.
Jan:
I tell you what you've done us a big favour
Mary:
Cause that's how it was before
Jan:
Because Hackney Homes do an award thing
Neil:
Hackney in bloom
Jan:

That we got runner up for one year and we wanted some photos of what it used to
look like before and what it looked like now, so yeah we can use that, brilliant great.
Are you gluing
Mary:
Is that our new community hall then?
Neil + John:
Yes
Jan:
Vi what we're going to do is we're going to try and recreate all these spaces that
we're suggesting and then they're going to take photos of the map. Then when we're
trying to put in for grants we can say this is where we mean here.
Vi:
So you're going to try and get money for all of this then?
Jan:
Well these are just some ideas
Maureen:
Well when you send off for a grant if you can send something like this it's something
to help them make up their minds with. We've never had anything
Jan:
Are we going to put green where the green is? Do you want the green spaces filled in
with green?
Hannah:
Yeah
Jan:
Right I'm going to do a net

(People discuss how to make stuff on the map)
Maureen: This is definitely nursery stuff
Jan: I was going to say Maureen should be okay she's a secretary for a nursery
(People chatting about people on the estate and making stuff – the net, the green tennis court, etc all working together, participant n is doing all the grass.)
Jan: So there's your tennis court Maureen
Maureen: That's terrific
Jan: Shall we put a couple of dots?
(laughs)
Hannah: It looks really good.
Jan: Right we need to put grass here
Hannah:  Maureen maybe you could do the jungle with the tigers
Maureen: Oh right yes I'll do the jungle, I need something to cut

TREES - Everyone

Just quickly, we've got seating areas, we've got toilets that could go over here.  There's a kitchenette area,  Jan:  Oh my god! he's gone into real fantasy  Neil:  Right John, next project! What are we building now?  Hannah:  What about the mushroom farm?  Jan:  It been put on hold now because we're not sure we're going to get the health and safety okay because its under flats, there's no lighting in there. You know our garden shed they wouldn't come and repair the lighting in there because we're not actually renting the space. So we don't know whether we would get electricity in there so we don't know if we're going to be able to do it. Neil, tomatoes, the tomato farm  Neil:  I'm just building a little box garden
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renting the space. So we don't know whether we would get electricity in there so we don't know if we're going to be able to do it. Neil, tomatoes, the tomato farm  Neil:  I'm just building a little box garden
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don't know if we're going to be able to do it. Neil, tomatoes, the tomato farm  Neil: I'm just building a little box garden
Neil: I'm just building a little box garden
I'm just building a little box garden
Hannah:
Hannah:
We need a fence for the tennis court
lan.
Jan:
It's got a wall there
(A group discusses making the jungle)
( J
Neil:
We've got loads of little trees here

(Looking through the Lego pieces. People making things.)
Jan:
We want a lamppost and a seat on here.
(More discussing making)
Hannah:
I'd like a little carrot please (for a bench)
Jan:
In the garden we need a lamppost
Neil:
I'm doing the garden (collective ooooo)
Maureen:
Could you pass the glue over please?
Maureen:
Did you draw this Hannah?
Hannah:
Yes I traced it and printed it off a big printer in college.
(Little plants and flowers, using post-its to make flowers – a few people make flowers)
nowers)
Mathias:
I think we should stop on this one and move on to something more specific
Vi:
Is this the first one of these you have done?
Hannah:

Yes		
Neil: We're a pilot for a lot of things aren't we!		
(In background Hannah explains the concept of the workshop)		
Maureen: I think someone should do the gardens down the back of Haberdasher Street.		
Neil: Oh, I think I'm going to run out of Lego		
Neil: You can use some stems of broccoli for that		
(Chatting about possibilities with materials)		
Neil: We're a bit light on the old materials there		
Vi: We should have a tree end of Chart Street		
(Discuss where to place a tree)		
Hannah: I think a lot of trees on the estate would be good		
Neil: Jamie wanted to plant 5 trees		
Vi: More trees the better		

When we've enquired about planting trees before with xxxx they said you can only				
plant trees where there have been tress before and I said well that's not true because				
you've been planting trees all over Royal Oak Court and there never been trees there				
before and he said well I don't know about that.				
Maureen:				
That's a fantastic garden				
Jan:				
Where am I putting the rest of these?				
(Everyone laughing and enjoying themselves. People continue to chat)				
(Everyone laughing and enjoying themselves. I copie continue to chat)				
Vi:				
So this is all a proposal at the moment is it?				
John:				
So what's this representing then?				
Mathias:				
The pram shed underground				
(Everyone talking about task)				
lan.				
Jan:				
Oh that's the tomato thing, we need something red can someone make some				
tomatoes?				
(People negotiate the task)				
(. Jop.oogonato trio taon)				
John:				
It's the tomatoes!				

Maureen:

(People discussing where the space is, participant f says she's never noticed that. Participant j talks about keys, someone talks about mushrooms, laughs, all participating) Vi: For all this to happen we've got to get the money first Jan: Well no its just really ideas (Discuss how it can be used in background) Neil: We could map out the whole area in Lego! Maureen: Are you pleased with this? Hannah: Yes, I love it Maureen: Oh good Neil: I think this has gone better than we thought. (Everyone agrees) Jan: Yeah, no, it is

So then you're going to put that there

Mathias:

Maybe if we print the pictures half size, with two on one, we can do the same foldy thing half size and then they're not taking over too much		
(More chatting and laughing about a helicopter)		
John: I thought we could go green and get an incinerator and stuff		
Neil:		
Yeah what about put that on top of the tower and have solar panels and stuff, wind turbine		
Vi:		
This bit here, what goes there, that photograph?		
Hannah: We haven't figured that one out		
Mary: Horrible bloody corner		
Neil:		
Got any more trees there John?		
Hannah:		
You've got two trees over there haven't you?		
(Discuss where trees are on estate)		
Hannah:		
What shall we do with this corner?		
Maureen:		
YOU COURT I DIST DISTE THATA THAVA AIA		

Mary:	
What's going to happen about the development?	
(Discuss earlier conversation about the flats that were going to be built. Talking about dogs.)	лt
Maureen: The only thing I can think of down there is to do something similar to hear	
Hannah: Yeah another attractive space	
Jan: Is that a bowling alley (laugh)	
(Lots of dogs turn up – everyone says hello)	
Maureen: Right we're going to put grass there?	
Hannah: We could make a wall panel, some drawings	
(glue etc)	
Hannah: Astro-turf and pretty graffiti	
Mathias: Who wants to draw some graffiti, Maureen?	
Jan: She's the one who goes around with cans!	
(big laugh)	

Recording 4 - 21/3/2010/12/19
(38.23 minutes)
The residents are carrying out the re-imagining exercise.
Talking about graffiti – positive graffiti
Maureen:
And here we're going to have a palm tree
<i>N C</i>
Vi:
Is the painting going to happen?
(Another discussion about the painting job on the estate)
(A discussion about graffiti)
Maureen:
Are you sure you want me to do this to your lovely photos?
Hannah:
Yeah
(Another discussion about the painting job on the estate)
Mathias:
It could be as simple as a graffiti artist could go up once the scaffolding is up and
doing bits of it?
Vi:
Well, why not
(People humming and harring)
(Another discussion about the painting job on the estate)
(who has a local solor about the painting job on the estate)

Jan:	
I don't know if they	would
Maureen: I don't know if you k	know, Mathias, but have you seen the graffiti round by Charles Sq
Mathias:	
Yes	
Jan: By the fire station	
Maureen: It's so vicious	
Jan: You know the amou	unt of people who stand there taking photos of it is amazing but I much
Maureen: I'm empted to get a	tin of white emulsion and paint it all over
Mathias: But you know the b	eginning of Bethnal Green Road
Vi: Yeah that's the one	I was on about
(Mathias describes	the long walk with graffiti)
Mathias: We can invite the o	ne around who we like
(Collective laugh)	

Neil:
If they were willing to do that for nothing
Jan:
We need to find out if it will be painted
(Bit more talk about graffiti and imminent paint job)
Neil:
Right what are will building next then?
Hannah:
Right, is this the other display here with the tigers?
Mathias:
Strange little underground box type thing
(Talk through each space)
Hannah:
The gardens the box gardens, the mushroom sheds, the tomato green house, the
threes and growing sites, the community hall
Vi:
What are the red spots for?
Hannah:
They are the awkward hot spots
Jan: We put them on before we went out and took all the photos so we know where we
We put them on before we went out and took all the photos so we knew where we going
Neil:
But now we don't know where they are (laugh). Corner of Cullem Welch, back here

(Group talking)
Maureen: This space out here is lovely
(Talking about map, talk again about the plant room pots and resources) (Talking about pram sheds and recounting the story about Frank sleeping in there. His car, his flat)
Jan: What you building now?
Neil: It will all be revealed and you will find it funny
(building something with John)
(Talking about the heating in the room and fixing it up)
Mathias:  Do you know what your budget is for maintaining all the green spaces? Jamie might of talked to you about this before.
Maureen: What, do you mean our budget or Hackney Council's budget?
Mathias: What Hackney's paying?
Maureen: They're charging us roughly £30 a flat, so that's (calculators out) £5400
Mathias: £5400? That's the yearly budget to manage all the green spaces on the estate?
, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,

Maureen + Jan:

Yes

Mathias:

I visited this estate in Camden in February and what they've done there they have a big community centre this one of the estate that was actually built. So they have a lot more community infrastructure built like proper structures like that. They have a used pub (?) in there and a big meeting hall with a garden in the back. But what they've done is they've basically set up a social enterprise a not-for-profit company to manage the green spaces themselves and they're using the budget so it goes straight into the company itself so the council haven't got anything to do with it

Maureen + Jan:

We've asked at out gardening P.M.O but we've never got anything back but we've asked a couple of times about that.

Mathias:

So you've asked about that and you haven't got a reply... but you would be up for doing that?

Maureen:

Yes we would

Jan:

We've never actually applied in writing

Maureen:

Yes we did, there was a guy called Alan who was supposed to get in touch with us about it, you know what Hackney's like there's no continuity with them...

Maureen:

Oh so you speak to one person one time and... Alan goes off and then a new guy appears and then you're back to square one

Mathias:

Okay

Maureen:

I went down that road 10 or 11 years ago when I was chair of the T/A because I was disgusted that we were paying all this money and getting very little back. I mean when you think that all they do with that money is cut grass and cut bushes – they do nothing else

(Neil + Maureen + Jan criticize the green space management)

Mathias:

They work together with an organization called the East London Community Recycling Network and what they do a lot is they set up big composters on the estate to basically compost all of the green waste and what they do is work together with the estate but they actually come in to maintain it. So they start it up and make sure it works well, plus the organisation of collecting the waste and the compost coming out of the machine is xx responsibility. If all the flats would participate they would do 20 tons of compost every year that they could use themselves or that they could sell to someone else.

Maureen:

(Talks about recycling being difficult to get people involved in let alone composting)

Mathias:

What happened on the estate in Camden is that everybody's got a small special green box

Jan:

Maureen's got one cause she's on ground level

Mathias:

And the community recycling network guys come to pick them up and put them in the composter

Jan:
So that means leaving the green boxes out on our landings in our blocks which is not
allowed (other agree)
Mathias:
It must be similar in Camden maybe they knock on people's doors?
(People sound unconvinced)
Nie:li.
Neil: Why can't we get what Jamie's got at the waterfront
(Talks about waste mulching machine)
Maureen:
It's never going to happen – it all goes down the shoot
Mathias:
It will take time in Camden it started out at 10% and now its 25% maybe, it works well
and builds over time
Maureen:
I buy compostable bags
(Talks about compost boxes)
Mathias:
There's one thing that they do which helps a lot they provide powders, Japanese
name, powder you put over compost kills all odours
Maureen:
Yes
Jan:
Is it the old doctors surgery Neil?

Hannah: Shall we have a lunch break?
Maureen: I think that we should and get the gardening money – if we had £5500 a year we could use it to
Mathias: You could find a part-time job for someone – add gardening to it – composting to it – and something like this to it
(Starts lunch talk - sandwiches)
(All admiring the map)
Hannah: It will look good when we clear all the stuff away and then we can look at connections.
Mary: We need graffiti on those walls as well
(Talking about paint job, and talking about map whilst munching. Handing out sandwiches)
Maureen: Laughing at astro-turf
(Talking about grand children – one of them royal academy exhibitor, someone else talking about a friend who is an embroiderer)
Mary: I can't imagine our estate looking like this actually, if it ever happens, it would be lovely if it did

Neil:

Never say never. You never would have though we would have transformed that place into a garden... how many years did that take...

(Conversation about changing the estate and about how some of leaseholders wouldn't pay £100 to pay to do up the green spaces – and so we lost £35,000. Then talking about not putting railing up...

Maureen:

When you're a free holder – you all own a share... (talking about the running of the estate (quite heated). Service charges etc... cost of flats).

Hannah:

How long have the pram sheds been empty?

Jan + Maureen + Neil + Vi

About 25 years – over time they closed them down

(talks about the changing skyline and new development in the area including shops... Tesco discussion begins)

### Recording 5 - 21/3/2010/13/32

(15.04 minutes)

This audio is taken from the mapping session end of lunchtime.

Jan:

When I heard they were putting Tesco there, I was elated, I was so looking forward to it... do you know I've been in there 3 times

Mathias:

It's not a supermarket, it's just for people who don't want to cook

(Everyone agreeing)

Vi:
It's really expensive
Maureen:
And they don't sell fresh food
And they derived hear look
Neil:
It's not the price of a normal Tesco
Mark:
Oh right it's a metro
Neil:
I would go as far as saying Marks and Spencer's in Moorgate is cheaper
(Carry on talking about supermarket comparison and then squash, still eating lunch)
Hannah:
Right the next stage; we've done all of the spaces
Mary:
We've got to tidy up
the te get to tall up
Maureen:
Are you getting all the photographs that you need?
Hammaha
Hannah:
Yeah, we will take some more at the end
Jan:
And then we can talk about the connections
(All tidying, Lego etc more sandwiches – doing some DIY in the room – Mathias
and Neil talk about tidying up some planting around the back later. Bit of gardening
talk. Talking about rubbish. Tea and coffee. Talk about the proposed community hall.)

Mary:

I think the priority of this place first is things like under there where we saw today, getting them cleared out and getting rid of the rubbish and getting this place looking up a bit better

Jan:

Yes and the thing is you know Mary, we haven't got enough community spirit in the estate

Mary:

No

Jan:

They probably wouldn't use it anyway, all they would use it for and I know Neil said about hiring it out and things, but all it would be used for is meetings and the amount of people that come along we might as well have them in here. I just think that if we ever did have one, if someone came along and said have you got the space for one, well we have. But we haven't got the community spirit on the estate to warrant one really.

Mary:

We haven't, look how many turned up today

Jan:

Went we have the meetings its only the committee members that come

(Talk about room – it was going to be a laundrette. Someone talks about new lawnmower and how someone got John to mow for them and then sharpen their knives – and in return she gave them a load of cds, books and stuff for a charity shop that they work in (participant g). Talks about charity shops. John is fixing a plug socket. Talking about electrics/ heating in the room. Chatting about the estate and auctioning flats. New person moving to the estate – guy in a wheel chair – came to look at Jan's flat... talking about someone they know who was looking for a flat with a dog. Drilling, sky dish, )

(37.24 minutes)
This audio is taken from the mapping session where the participants are evaluating the spaces that they have been working on.
(Starts with residents talking about service charges, garage cost, flat prices, council tax)
Hannah:
Now we are on the final session
(all say yes)
Hannah:
And we are going to map on a continuum the spaces on the map that are easy or
most attainable to achieve and the parts that are perhaps more difficult or more blue- sky. We could do 3 day, 3 weeks, 3 months and 3 years.
(Negotiating how to construct the evaluation model)
Shall I draw a time-line?
Jan:
Its up to you
Mathias:
We could start with what is easiest and what is hardest the two extremes.
Mathiae
Mathias: Cost or something?
Hannah:
We could have easy, to really awkward

Recording 6 - 21/3/2010/13/52

Neil: Impossible
Hannah: Maybe awkward is in the middle
Hannah: Shall we end with 3 years
Neil: Something would be achievable in between
Hannah: Shall we have a budget one, what would be the most money, in terms of the biggest fund you could get the largest amount you would spend on one of these spaces
(Conferring)
Mathias, Jan, Neil, Maureen: £50 +
Jan: Start with a packet of seeds £2
Jan: And this one
Mathias: Let's make it £5400, the yearly budget for managing green space
(Continuous negotiation of the continuum by all)
(Looking at how to present it whilst filling it in offer to transcribe it )

Hannah:
Okay shall we go space by space? Where shall we start?
Maureen, Mary, Neil:
Okay
Jan:
The box garden, that's going to definitely be done.
Hannah:
So this is the community hall
Maureen:
Impossible
Jan:
Unless you build it out of Lego (laugh)
Jan, Maureen, Mary:
Right down the end (of the continuum)
Hannah:
Okay
John's wife:
The only thing that is achievable right this minute is the planting of something isn't it?
Mark:
£50K, between awkward and impossible?
Hannah:
There's not one that exists already is there so it could fulfil a possible need
Neil:

Like I said before, if you could rent out a space to people for meetings, then you could generate some money to put back into it to pay the electric bill...

Mathias:

If you would have your green space stuff managed and you could set up some composting and expand the growing scheme and all that and you do well at managing it then at some point you could have a not for profit company and this kind of thing could be quite achievable cause you would need a space

Neil:

If you get £5400 a year to mow the green

Maureen:

Something like that

Neil:

I'm not being funny but for one person a weekend every 2 months to mow it and you pay them for the 3 hours... you could get a driver one which is even quicker, you could cut down labour time and have that outlay of about £800 - £1000 to buy the machines and some money aside to maintain blades etc... and if you've got more money you can put it into other areas you need to.

Mathias:

That's managing green spaces

(Hannah is annotating the continuum, residents discuss green space management)

Neil:

The whole point would be to do it in house

Jan:

We can't even get people to water the plants let alone mow the grass

Jan:

That's a different thing

Jan:
If we pay people £10 an hour, cash in hand they would be banging on your door
(Everyone agreeing)
Hannah:
How long would it take to arrange the self-managed green space initiative?
Jan:
3 months?
Mathias:
Maureen has been had it for a while, you need someone from Hackney to support it
Maureen:
Okay Jan and I will get together and write another letter to them
Neil:
What's the estate called in Camden
Mathias:
It's called the Maiden Lane Estate
Neil:
Okay, maybe we could go down there and see what they are doing
Jan:
Maiden Lane estate
Neil:
We could see how they arranged it with their council
Mathias:

Theirs is a bit different because the reason why they are working with them a lot
more is because they've got so much trouble from them that they're trying lots of
different things to turn it around.
Jan:
Oh right
Mathias:
So they have an awareness of them because of all the negative things going on.
(Joking about causing more trouble on the estate to get noticed by Hackney)
Mathias:
Pursue it a bit more, maybe we can ask around a bit and find out if anywhere in
Hackney its been done before because if there's an example, you can tell them we
just wanna do what they did
Mouroon
Maureen:
If you're a natural TMO (explains two examples of people who have done it as part of
whole set up). When we asked if we can have a gardening TMO they said ooh we
haven't come across this before
Jan:
And then we never got any further
The first the first got any families
Maureen:
Its about a year before, we can have a look through the minutes and find the name
Maureen:
If we start now it will take a year
Hannah:
So it's achievable
Jan:

Yes, it's achievable (more in agreement)

Hannah:

So its achievable, its around £5400

(Mathias goes into costs, it gets in money)

Neil:

Just another thing, if it did happen we could get in touch with the people at St. Luke about the labour exchange – if you give them a hand for 4 hours then they will come and give you a hand for 4 hours. I'm sure if no-one was interested on this estate and it got a bit bigger then we could put a notice up on their estate saying looking for a gardening volunteer...

Hannah:

They also have volunteer schemes don't they

Neil:

Paid work £10 an hour or something

Mathias:

They have something which is really great called a time bank so that the person who is managing the green spaces who is managing the greens spaces and any volunteers is also managing a time bank which means the time of volunteering that you put into a project is accounted for and you build up a credit and at some point when you need some help you can get the help from the time credit bank. Which is nice because the people who are volunteering its added up and its accounted for and they can get something in return which is not necessarily always money but its ...

Hannah:

They also bring in people from companies and things don't they? Because companies have got CSR – corporate social responsibilities

Mathias:

Exactly, if you have this infrastructure you can always extend it more and bring in they are working at St. Luke's with a big law firm and across the country they have 10,000 employees and every employee has to do one community project per year (continue to discuss this idea and other organizations that do this)

Maureen:

They do this interesting thing where... the cleaners are in charge of the bankers...

Mathias:

We had 20 lawyers building two walls in St.Luke's

Hannah:

So that's business in the community

Maureen:

The trouble is Mathias, having lived in hackney and Jan will vouch for this as well, you find a lot of these people won't get involved with Hackney...

Maureen:

Hackney's given so many people so much grief that they won't get involved with Hackney, hopefully it's better now

Mathias:

I think it's a bit of a better time for these things now, that generally there's more awareness, actually the Mayor started to work with an established business man - he's starting this project that's looking especially at the Shoreditch area and this business man is raising 10 million pounds a year to invest in community projects. So I think there's lots going on...

Neil:

Now is the time to get on the wagon

Maureen:

We'll give it a go

Mathias:
Keep going (carries on a bit)
Neil:
The green house is achievable
(Everyone laughing)
Hannah:
Okay, lets do the green house then
(Laughs – about the model made out of cress container)
Jan:
Well, we're definitely going to do it we're just waiting for the grant money really
Hannah:
And how far is it on the budget?
Maureen:
It's going to take a year
Hannah: Okay
Okay
Mathias:
The cheapest we could make it would be about £500 in materials
Neil:
The whole space?
Mathias:
No, the whole space would be about £2k
Hannah , Naile
Hannah + Neil:

We've got the tomatoes! We've got the food to grow in it
Mathias:
We're going to start growing this year right
Maureen + Jan:
Yeah
Jan:
We've got the vouchers and we can go and get the grow bags, so we can put them in and grow the green house around it
Maureen:
Yep
Hannah:
Shall we put grow bags?
Maureen:
Oh yes, within three weeks
Hannah:
And funding?
Maureen:
We've got funding for that (talk about her and Jan getting the vouchers)
Neil:
I think we should find out what events are going on this year and we go in for all of them
uiciii
(Discuss going in for Hackney in Bloom)
Hannah:
So shall we put festivals in?

Jan:
Three months
Neil:
Within 3 days we can start planting stuff, beans
Jan:
Well Maureen's already bought some
, ,
Maureen:
Marigolds, good for pests
Neil:
Going to put some fox gloves in
Jan:
So, the sports ground, so what do we want, astro-turf?
oo, the opene ground, so what do no want, dono tan.
Maureen:
We're going to apply for £4000
(Discussing funding)
Hannah.
Hannah:
And how long
Maureen:
A year
Hannah:
Next year it will be all action
(laugh)

Jan:
It's achievable
Hannah:
Brilliant, so everything is looking very achievable
Maureen:
It's just getting the money out of the people
Jan:
Yes but as you say if you put in for enough things you know
Neil:
The barbecue, within three months
Maureen:
(Talks about Madeline from Kew)
We need public liability insurance – discusses this – have you come across this at
all?
Mathias:
Yes, we need it all the time. We have one with the company because whenever we
do things
Maureen:
Have you got a company? Could you give me details of it?
Mathias:
Yes, do you want an insurance broker?
Maureen:
All we need is access to someone who can help us get public liability insurance
Mathias:
It only like about £300 for a 12 months period or something

(discusses)
Maureen:  Its helpful because you've been through the process is it possible to use your name?
Its helpful because you've been through the process, is it possible to use your name?
Mathias:
Yes, absolutely
Maureen:
I'll give that a whirl
(Add in barbecue)
Neil:
For planting, thinking abut recycling and all that, hat about using tyres, linking them together and filling them with earth and growing inside, because the garage I use, they change a lot of tyres, motorbike tyres are round (discusses staking them up - people agreeing it's a good ideas)
Maureen:
There's no toxicity in them is there?
Mathias:
It would be good to put a liner around them
Neil: Tarpaulin, or canvas
raipadiiri, or darivas
Mathias:
Yes
Neil:
They can be painted they're classically black but you could spray paint them

white

Mathias:
I'd probably just leave them black
(Neil carries on discussing the idea, the design)
Hannah:
3 weeks to 3 months?
Hannah:
Could be a part of the barbecue
Mary:
We need to go down the health and safety
Jan:
If we make sure we put them somewhere that if they did catch alight they wouldn't
catch anything else
Neil:
(discussing how to design the tyres)
Maureen:
Have you got the right job Neil that's very clever
Jan:
Well tell him if he wants to get rid of them we'll have them and we can stick them
under
Mary:
Well maybe we should find out first because if we can't have them then we've got
to get rid of them
Neil:
Yeah (continues to discuss tyres)

Mathias:
Neil should make one up
Jan:
Yeah make one
Mathias:
So he can show it and you will know what you're getting into see what it looks like
in the garden
Neil:
You could wrap it around the outside fence and it could be like a crash barrier,
anyone come down that ramp and they'll bounce back up!
(chatting and laughs)
Jan:
Don't forget people park up against that
John:
Yes you have parking
Jan:
You'll have to have them on the inside
Mathias:
If you have them on the inside and you plant them with willows they are the best
wind-breakers around. So you could have a whole line of willows around there.
(Discuss willows)
(someone else turns up – maybe dogs?)
Mathias:

(talking about how you could use the barbecue to get everyone involved in the planting)		
Hannah:		
Okay so we've got the tyres		
Mathias:		
We need to find somewhere to get good soil from		
(discussion about soil)		
Jan:		
We've got the community hall, perhaps we should have a Haberdasher T.R.A		
lottery (Talks about private members lottery club)		
Neil:		
Lottery grants,		
Mathias:		
There's one called changing spaces which is something perfect for this		
Jan: Community hall is more achievable by the minute!		
Community Hair is more achievable by the minute:		
(Talking about lighting on the estate)		
Hannah:		
Recording 7 - 21/3/2010/14/29		
(16.42 minutes)		
This transcript covers the evaluation session.		
(Talking about an arrest made for drugs on estate)		

Hannan:
Okay, we've done the sports ground, we've do the community hall, oh we need to do
the mushrooms
Maureen:
Personally I think that's a pipe dream because we're never going to get permission,
its under people's flats, you can't
Mathias:
I would try to get some estate composting in there
Maureen:
Don't you need heating and lighting in there?
2011 tyou noon nonning and lighting in those .
Mathias:
No it's a machine that does it all you need is to just run some power for the machine
No it's a machine that does it all you need is to just full some power for the machine
Jan:
There's no power in there though is there?
There's no power in there thoughts there:
Neil:
You could get one of those generators, you put petrol in it, you start it up
Mathias:
No you would just need to run power from somewhere in there to the machine
Jan:
I mean there are light fittings in there
Neil:
I know where that power comes from, you know the garages, you know the other side
on the wall there's a black junction box, basically the lights over there used to feed off
the garage lighting.
Mathias:

It can't be hard to reinstate it. The compositing is quite achievable because DEFRA has money for it. If you're a housing estate and you want to compost on the whole of the estate DEFRA pays for the infrastructure and the East London community recycling network operates the machinery. So all you would need to do is to help organise the collection, help getting it known on the estate, so there's something going into the machine.

Jan:
Right, so that's just like kitchen waste?
(Mathias talks about different composters, and collection)
Mathias:
It's something you could discuss at the barbecue and you could find out about other schemes in London
Jan:
You can keep it out on your balcony, off the kitchen, we've all got little balconies off
the kitchen
Mathias:
You sprinkle Bokashi on it to get rid of the odour
Hannah:
And how much is it?
Mathias:
To get it all installed it's about £8000.
TO get it all installed it's about 20000.
Hannah:
Okay
Mathias:
That's something DEFRA supports.

Jan:
Right, the graffiti
Maureen:
So we need to go along to Brick Lane, see what we like
to we have to go diong to zhok zane, odd that he like
Mathias:
You should go the beginning of Bethnal Green Road there's an event space called
Rich Mix opposite there and rich mix organise this
(Chatting about graffiti wall)
Jan:
I could take some photos with my phone
Neil:
You could say we like your style of graffiti but we'd like it in this design, with palm
trees or whatever.
Jan:
The only thing I'm worried about is if we got them to come and put the graffiti
somewhere like this, when the painting of the estate goes ahead and they paint over
the top its going to be a waste of time.
(Conversation about the graffiti with participant o)
Hannah:
If it's an art mural perhaps the council wouldn't paint over it
(hummmm)
Mathias:
Do you know when the start of the painting is?
Jan:

It's supposed to be starting in April			
Jan: (Update's everyone about painting progress)			
(Maureen leaves to go and walk her dog, says thank you and arranges to get together with Jan about the TMO – collective goodbye)			
Hannah: So what have we got left, the final stages of the continuum the windmill? The green energy roof solution			
Mary: Impossible? (Laugh)			
Hannah: How easy is it?			
Neil: Well the waterfront restaurant has solar panels on the roof, paid for by Hackney generating electric to power their hot water			
Hannah: So it's not impossible			
Jan: I can't see it being all that easy, you've got to get permission			
Neil: Once its installed we'll all be heroes			
Jan: Cheap electricity bills			
Hannah:			

Well lets put it up the end but now never know they might do it anyway soon				
(Vi announces she needs to leave)				
Hannah:				
I think we've done it anyway. The other display would be the same amount of time as				
the other art display.				
Mathias:				
Is that good Hannah?				
Hannah:				
Yes that's great				
Mathias:				
Did we complete the last steps?				
Hannah:				
Yeah, I'll write this up and send it as a time plan				
Jan:				
Okay, and you've taken all your photos				
Hannah:				
Yeah				
Jan:				
He's drawing the community hall				
(Chatting)				
Jan:				
Neil's built the tower block, so we've been around all the estate				
(Jan summarises the process to someone who has just arrived, and talks about the				
groon house) Oh look the sun's come out				

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 _		

So we're definitely going to do that so you know what we need to do, John, you know the wall... we need to put a big triangular piece of wood there cause they can literally jump over there (Jan + Neil + Mathias discussing the balcony and greenhouse area which people trespass into).

Neil:

We should go around and take picture for Hackney in Bloom.

Jan:

I imagine they'll do that

Neil:

No lets get some when the beds are empty so we can say this is how it was in March and this is what we've done in the last 4 months

(Hands over Bing photo of estate)

Mathias:

Are they online actually?

Mark:

Yes it's a website called Bing

(Discussing what the garden looked like before)

(Everyone packing up)

Hannah:

We need to take one more photo

# Appendix C3 – Evaluative material

## Notes after the Haberdasher workshop

Taken from my research journal, Sunday 21st March 2010.

Process - The connection between the areas that we walked around, developing the map of the estate, the hypothetical opportunities and the time line/ awkward continuum, budget worked well.

Design tools - The photo printer worked really well, being able to collect images and print them straight off and put them on the map to build up an account.

Design tools - The arrows worked really well as an ice breaker but also look go in the photos and were used as the mapping went under way to point to issues on the map.

Design tools - I didn't use the question prompt cards, mainly because it felt like it might have slowed down or contrived the process or got people to regurgitate information. Need to think more around them. Although designing them was helpful to look out for things on the day.

Design tools - The time-lapse recording worked really well at showing the map's evolution but also people's body language and the rhythm of the workshop – residents will like this feedback I think.

Design outcome - The map outcome was better than the residents expected, nearly everyone got involved in the mapping without feeling intimidated and the Lego actually helped to manage some of the personalities.

Process - I need to work further on the analysis of the spaces, do a second phase of exploration drawing on chapter one framework.

Process and evaluation - Follow up workshop in July alongside the barbeque.

Process and evaluation - Put images and film on a DVD and we have given them the map, and photos on a DVD and the video.

Design roles - Role of the facilitator in the workshop, playing by ear, letting things evolve quite freely with gentle facilitation. Alert to changes to the plan and sensitive to new relationships or possible directions.

Design outcomes - re-imagined spaces

Self-managing the green spaces

The sports ground

The community hall

The display art spaces for graffiti

The wind turbine/solar panels on the tower

The garden box

The mushroom shed

The tomato greenhouse

Trees and shrubs

Research questions, insights and analysis -

Pull out different ways that people interpreted awkward space

How easy did people find it to re-imagine the space?

How much awkward space on the estate?

Participant breakdown

Meeting room, Recording equipment

## **MA Design Futures Seminar**

Key points draw out from an audio recording of a 'reflection session' with the MA Design Futures students at Goldsmiths, University of London, the day after the workshop on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2010.

- 1.) A lot of surveillance of the environment dog walking
- 2.) Why a pram shed? The old 60's prams Building a space... There are no lifts
- 3.) Outside balcony space building a greenhouse structure
- 4.) Self-managing the estate Handing over responsibility
- 5.) Hunderwasser mould MANIFESTO
- 6.) The layers of information contained in the map
- 7.) From impossible to possible as the evaluation discussion goes on. The Community Centre From the impossible to the possible (Wood, 2007)
- 8.) Helpful to see the time plan
- 9.) The tools make sense to the residents and get close to tools that architects and planners understand
- 10.) Not going in with an agenda helped mutual win-win situation
- 11.) Having gone in previously with Mathias and Rachel who have made a positive intervention on the estate was helpful
- 12.) Working with cynical participants 'these things never lead to anything'
- 13.) I went in with a team tools like being able to print out images, put a film together, putting together visual information and being able to articulate and gather evidence for what we do

- 14.) Things that didn't work out prompt cards
- 15.) Next steps Barbecue, Community postcard

## Appendix D1 - Co-evaluation meeting questions

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2011

**Technical considerations:** Discussion recorded using a digital camera.

**Resources for meeting:** 'Mapping Haberdasher' workshop report, film of the walk around the estate, time-lapse footage of the mapping exercise, photographs.

Time plan: 1 hour

### Question category 1. Warming up

Talk through key parts of the workshop report

One year on – what has happened since we last met?

#### **Question category 2. Workshop Feedback**

- a. What do you remember most about the workshop? Key moments...
- b. What elements of the workshop were most engaging?
  - Walking tour
  - Awkward space explorer's kit
  - Mapping exercise
  - Re-imagining exercise
  - · Evaluation continuums
- c. What did you take forward after the workshop What did you do next?
- d. Was the workshop useful? Why?
- e. How did the workshop impact upon your activities on the estate?
- f. What did you learn from the workshop?
- g. How did the workshop effect your perception of the estate?

## Question category 3. The role of design

- a. How does design play a role in your everyday life?
- b. How have you experienced working with designers?
- c. What are the benefits?
- d. What are the challenges?
- e. How would you define design?

# f. Are you a designer?

# **Question category 4. Future activities**

- a. What will you do next?
- b. How might design support the next steps of your plan?
- c. The ethics form how would people feel comfortable being represented in my research?

# Appendix D2 - Revisiting Haberdasher transcripts of audio recordings

Taken from a meeting with the residents held on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2011 in Maureen's kitchen on the Haberdasher Estate, London.

Participants:
Hannah
Neil
Maureen
Jan
Eileen
John
Mary
Recording (1:14:34)
Hannah:
So this is the time-lapse recording, remember when we hung the camera from the
ceiling and we took a photo every 5 seconds
Jan:
We saw it at Waterhouse yeah
Hannah:
So this is the first stage where everyone is talking about the spaces they have
identified and everyone is sticking down awkward hot spots
(Hannah goes on talking through the process.
And also describes the DVD with the documentation, photos, tour around the estate
and time-lapse recording.)

I'm not sure how this can become useful and I know that we have forgotten the

process a bit and that it was quite a long time ago

Hannah:

Jan:
I can't remember when it was now
Hannah:
We did it in spring 2010
we did it in spring 2010
Neil:
Where's that thing now?
Jan:
What are you looking for?
Neil:
That time thing.
Jan:
Oh yeah, that was all that stuff we used the carrots and the cress I'd forgotten that
bit.
(Neil and Jan flicking through the report)
Neil:
We can tell you what we've done out of this lot graffiti's been done hasn't it. Its
been painted Planting of the estate
Hannah:
How's that been going because you said you've had a quiet year this year.
riow's that been going because you said you've had a quiet year this year.
Jan:
Yeah, none of us have had any time. I mean the only thing we have done is we've
had the greenhouse built.
Neil:

We've got the public liability insurance, we've got that. We've got the greenhouse built and been in for Hackney in Bloom and won a highly commended. We've been in for London in bloom and got recognised for all the growing material, they said if next year we could get more of that from someone else 'cause I literally didn't have any time to meet the lady when she came to look, if we walk around we could probably get a silver guild or something. The greenhouse is done. Community Hall, that's a bit of a sore subject with this lot.

of a sore subject with this lot.
Jan:
I don't think we were ever really serous about that. We wouldn't want one would we.
(Collective no)
Maureen:
Too much responsibility.
Mary:
From what we get from the girls from the meetings it is a big responsibility.
Jan:
And nobody come to the meetings anyway.
Mary:
Although most of them don't work do they because they're always there, it takes a lot of their time up, its like a job.
Hannah:
And who are they?
Jan:
The other TRA's.
Hannah:
Right and they run the

Mary:

St.Mary's... I mean Doreen's in there most of the time and St.John's and Geffery.

Jan:

Yeah, they've all got halls.

Hannah:

Its interesting in the discussion about the community hall because at some point everybody is saying how terrible it is and then it suddenly becomes like a way to run things and then it becomes terrible... its really contentious throughout the discussion and yeah it's a lot of responsibility to set it up...

Maureen:

And there's always accusations like they rent it out and people aren't dealing with the money properly and you know quite innocent people get accused of not dealing with the money properly. Mostly by people who stand on the other side and do nothing themselves, you know they don't really know what's going on. I mean there has been some skullduggery but not as common as everybody makes out.

(Goes on to discuss people who run community halls)

(A further discussion takes place about how these community halls are run off good will and how people should be paid and have a contract from the council.)

Hannah:

We were talking about this idea of managing the green spaces on the estate, is that something that you're still interested in?

Neil:

Ah that was talking the gardening in house...

Jan:

Oh gardening that's right

Neil:

No 'cause we spoke to Malvern Bourne and it got a lot better in-nit, they do a lot more they come more often. The reason why we did our community garden, which wasn't a part of it so we don't say anything but we just let them do it.

Maureen:

They've also reduced the cost for the lease holders and it isn't as expensive as it used to be.

Hannah:

So they've changed the service... Are there any other bits and pieces in the timeline?

Neil:

(Goes through the barbeque which still happens each year, the planting of tulips and daffodils)

Jan:

There's still a bit of painting to be done by Chart Street, I've got the paint upstairs.

Neil:

(Grow bags we've got and hopefully raised beds by next year, the tyre planters we haven't done, estate composting on its way)

Hannah:

Is that going to happen?

Neil:

Yeah we're just waiting for the right boxes.

(A conversation takes place about meeting a composting guy we met at the Waterhouse who was running a service on his estate. A comment from Maureen that he is another one who doesn't work all day.)

Neil:

The wind turbine I don't think is going to happen, solar panels...hmm.

Hannah: It seems like quite a lot has been done?
Jan: It's actually more been done than I remember.
Mary: Yeah when you look at it that way.
John:
I think we've done bloody marvelous.  Neil:
We've still got 2 years till the community hall then.  Mary:
No way, I'll have no part of that and as I told someone at a meeting the other day, if we had a community hall on the estate I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing because it takes too much time and I've got enough to do.
Maureen: We were criticised because we didn't do anything about the Royal wedding.
(A discussion about how they always put something in the newsletter about if people want to arrange a trip or something there is money available. TRA meetings committee meeting members and complainers. If people with children wanted to go to a pantomime the money is there.)
Jan: I don't think we've got many kids on the estate.
(Collective agreement)
Jan:

We don't seem to have a lot of old people or a lot of kids. I think there's a hell of a lot of subletting going on because I'm seeing 40 something professional types. I just keep seeing all these strangers... I keep seeing loads of people you know not from years ago.

Hannah:

There's lots of changes going on around since we did the workshop.

Jan:

Down towards Old Street? Yes there's a hotel, the hotel's finished, Premier Inn.

Neil:

Oh yeah Premier Inn City.

Jan:

And another lot, more student accommodation, then we've got that lot over there.

Neil:

Urban what's it called?

Hannah:

So you've got all the people working in the city moving in?

(The discussion continues about new builds around the estate)

# Maureen:

I mean some of the people on this estate who have got children so of often put in a little moan about oh there isn't anywhere for the kids to play, and Jan said if anyone was interested the money could be raised for it but the point is why should we do it? When my children were young here we did more things for the children 'cause we had the children so therefore now I'm old I expect people with children to do things for their children.

Jan:

Or even inquire.

Mary:

Things have change over the years, they're the ones with ideas about what they're kids like.

Eileen:

But if you think about it in the Maisonettes and in the one bedrooms there's not many children.

Jan:

That's what I'm saying... I don't think there's many kids on the whole estate now or old people... there all 30/40.

Eileen:

If you look at the bottom balcony (they all try to identify which block) its nearly all men they're putting in the one bedrooms.

(Everyone chattering)

Hannah:

When people are subletting they don't invest in the surroundings maybe?

Maureen:

Nor do the professionals that live here they don't want to be involved in the community. On the other hand we are so lucky because we don't really have a lot of trouble, especially the people that are here, don't give us any grief.

(Collective no)

Jan:

Really when you think about it the only grief we do get is from people who don't live on the estate, you know, that's why we're trying to get, the council are hoping to gate the whole estate off you know, put like an entry phone system all over the... They are a few people who are against it and we think its because they're lease holders and

they've got to pay and they've already got big bills because of the painting that's
been done and the aerials and everything.
Hannah:
Why are they putting the gates on? Just for security?
Jan:
To stop people from yeah to stop people from
Eileen:
They do use the stairs, they come in and you don't know where they're from.
Jan:
You can literally come up from Old Street, come in up there and walk straight
through. And you get kids riding around on bikes and it will stop all that.
Jan:
And all the workmen from that new building they're sitting all over the place having
their lunch and leaving all their rubbish behind.
their latter and leaving air their rubbish berinta.
Hannah:
That's maybe a negative side of the development that's going on around you didn't
need to have a gate and stuff before but now that there is a change.
Jan:
But that's what I'm saying, the only problems we've got on the estate are from people
outside coming in, we haven't got any problems within.
outside conning in, we haven't got any problems within.
Jan:
It's like a maze isn't it?
Many
Mary:
It's the quite areas, the stairwells that are exposed
Mauroon:
Maureen:

Every other estate in this area is gated... so therefore, as the police pointed out, we're more vulnerable now to the drug dealers and things. I mean it's the undercross, I came in the other evening and there was people underneath these steps, I mean I was too frightened to do anything about it myself.

was too frightened to do anything about it myself.
(Everyone comments 'oh no')
Hannah:
There is lots of pockets around the estate and dark spaces.
Neil:
They're around the garages.
Maureen:
Yes it's the awkward spaces that we all walked around.
res it's the awkward spaces that we all walked around.
John:
I don't know why they don't brick them all up!
Eileen:
They can look over the balcony and see who's coming up the stairs, who's walking
down the street and you know they don't leave here, they're bringing their bikes up
Hannah:
Yeah because you have all these different viewpoints
Eileen:
And you know they don't live here. So there are people
Hannah:
Issues with the security
Eileen:
And you've got issues with people keeping their motorbikes in their houses

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(Talking about issues to do with people keeping motorbikes in their houses)

#### Hannah:

You all work together a lot with the committee and the growing stuff so you've got a community amongst yourselves?

Jan:

Well yeah... (discussing the committee members and gardening)

(Time check, its 1.10pm)

# Hannah:

I have written down some questions. What do you remember most about the workshop?

# Jan:

Well I remember all the walking around, because we went around in two groups didn't we and we went off in opposite directions and we pointed out all the spaces. I remember doing the map thing, I didn't actually remember (the broccoli) until I just saw it. I remember Neil doing the Lego.

# John:

That was very good because it was three dimensional you see.

# Maureen:

I thought the thing that was amazing really was you know, I used to walk my dog around the estate regularly and I'd seen all these grotty spaces time and time and time again, often thought to myself "God awful thing that is, awful space". I tell you what was good about doing that was, for me personally, it certainly made me look at the place and think "well yes we could do something with that" because never up until that point... it did sort of stimulate your brain a little bit so you think well yes there is a possibility of doing... I mean I think sometimes, well I did think we were in the realms of fantasy, but I did think it was good from that point of view. I think as a group we don't get the pressure to think artistically, we're all very pragmatic people aren't we (agreement)...

John:
Well I'm arty farty I am
(Big laugh)
Maureen:
It needs somebody outside to come in and sort of say 'well what do you think of that you know because we don't'.
Hannah:
The outcome, the map was something that transcended everyone's expectations
Maureen:
I know it was amazing.
Hannah:
Because aesthetically
Jan:
Yes, I remember the map.
Maureen:
The other thing was, particularly amongst the arguments that we had between
ourselves, that although all of us have walked around time and time again, half the
time we couldn't remember which was where anyway. I mean I remember you and I (to Jan) arguing about the garages I mean Jan walked her dog, I walked my dog
but we neither of us really knew
Hannah:
So there are spaces in the back of your head but you never really trace them.
Maureen:
No you never really look at them.

Jan:
When your walking around with your dogs your in a world of your own anyway, I'm
always falling over, not looking where I'm going I'm thinking about something else.
Honneh:
Hannah:
Do you remember something Neil, is there anything specific apart from the Lego
Neil:
I'm the youngest so I should remember. It was a full packed day wasn't it about three
and a half hours
Hannah:
Cause you took us on the tour of the under the
Neil:
Under the tower block
Hannah:
With the leaf burner
With the load barrier
(People recollecting the event)
Hannah:
I'll show you the video
Jan:
That's what I remember from that day, well I did know about that anyway, was the
fact it went under there, cause when I had to take someone down there to show then
a leak, but I didn't know until that day that we originally had that big, where you could

n drive all the way around (group chatter) I didn't know that.

(Hannah and John laugh about rock pool screen saver on computer)

Neil:

She's got the old keys look for the padlocks for the gates.

(Maureen gets out biscuit tin full of keys)
Jan:
What's this for East Road?
Maureen:
That's the East Road gate.
lan:
Jan: Oh the gate outside Ian Bowater. Oh right so you don't want them?
Maureen:
No I don't.
Jan:
Oh I'll give these to Neil. Estate's garden store. My old trowel is in there Neil.
(Discussing keys)
Maureen:
Sorry about that
Hannah:
This is pre-painted
Jan:
Oh its like a horror film sorry Neil.
(All watching film commenting, laughing Haberdasher dungeons)
Neil:
There's a cupboard down there for every single flat in the tower block.

Jan:

Yeah, we had one
Hannah:
And was it really for prams?
Eileen:
Oh yeah, I had a pram one
Neil:
It wasn't just for prams, it was prams and storage.
Mary:
That's before people would think about breaking in or nicking people's stuff.
John:
I lost my bike, I put it in it was gone a couple of days later.
Maureen:
But don't forget at that time as well we had a caretaker on the estate.
Neil:
Nobby?
Jan:
No Vic.
Neil:
The one who used to live at the thing
Eileen:
We had a little swimming pool, paddling pool.
Neil:

That's where we've got the tree now.

Eileen:
And Vic said that there was a load of glass so we had that altered and made a
sandpit.
(Collective yeah)
John:
Good caretaker was Vic.
Eileen:
Yeah he was bloody marvelous.
(Reminiscing about Vic)
Jan:
Oh look at me with the arrow.
Neil:
There's little Timmy look (Maureen's dog).
(collective aaaahhh, he's dead)
Jan:
It must have been spring, it wasn't warm.
(Laughing at film)
Hannah:
So I'll give you this (the film) so you can have a look at the day.
Maureen:
What was your next question?
- ·
Hannah:

So we've talked about the things you did after the workshop and what happened next, so was the workshop helpful?

Jan:

What the mapping?

Jan + Maureen:

Yes, it opened your eyes and made you look at things in a different way.

Mary:

And looking at this now, you can see that what was there and what things have been done, thing that have been accomplished in the year.

Jan:

Really, if we hadn't had a look at that (report) we probably would have thought that we hadn't done much this year, and we have. Apart from the green house, we have done more than I thought we had.

Hannah:

And so what is the vision for the greenhouse?

Neil:

It took a while to find someone to build it. (talks about how people haven't been able to do much)

Mary:

All the people that have been shouting about it not being available, it's been available for months now and no-ones using it.

Jan:

They've had the keys since the barbecue in August.

Maureen:

I was walking around the estate with a friend of mine and two guys from where all the single men are were complaining, and the language was unpleasant, because we

haven't been gardening... I said, you know what, your home all day, go down the market and buy the plants and put them in yourself, the TA will pay.

(Discussing Hoxton market for seeds and belligerent people on estate, looking in people's windows, people hanging around outside properties)

# Hannah:

This question is about the role of design, you have worked with designers on lots of different projects, you were talking about working with designers the architects and the regeneration, Rachel and Mathias with the growing project. The question is about what the potential of design can be in supporting local activities, how can it be a beneficial experience. How you define design and how you have experience working in different ways?

# Maureen:

Its summed up in the mantra all architects design council flats and live in Georgian houses. I think there is a whole breed of architects that should be put against the wall and shot.

# Neil:

If you look at the new build over on East Road it so art without face (?). We used to be able to see the Wheel, if you put the 17 storey and the 13 over that why you could still see over that building.

(Discussing the block built, and the ability to see landmarks, discussing the new building, and buildings in general, Eileen leaves)

# Maureen:

The actual living on these places they don't think about the way ordinary people live. I mean when we moved in here, it was a brand new house, it was lovely, but we had no room for a fridge in the kitchen, no room for a washing machine.

# Mary:

The three bedroom got piddly little kitchens but the two bedrooms got bigger kitchens.

Maureen:

They still perpetuate these things, I mean I know they're constrained by...

Hannah:

Those new flat won't have the measurements or the spaces that these flats have...

Maureen:

...They always talk down to you, they said all these new flats here, they're going to be Parker Morris plus three, as if we didn't now what Parker Morris was and they were shocked to find that we all knew what Parker Morris was cause all our flats were built to Parker Morris standards and so consequently we've got big diners...

Jan:

What is Parker Morris?

Maureen:

He was a man that tried to lay down guidelines for what size, space electric sockets, he was for people like us, your flat's a classic example.

(Talking about their flats, local authority flats, penthouse qualities, the flats were initially built privately but in the building slump in the 70's the local authorities took over and that is why they have large rooms)

Maureen:

It was built for the haberdasher estate, the worshipful company of Haberdasher.

(They all agree they love their flats, talking about Undercroft studies with architects on a weekend, they looked at the flats)

Mary:

The thing that gets me is we've gone through these things with architects and they've put drawing up and attended road shows and then nothing comes of it.

Hannah:

What about design in the sense of, for example, the MetaboliCity project, the
workshop that we did making the balls, where its not an architect process, its about
designers handing over a design process?'
Maureen:
That was terrific.
•• ···
Neil:
Simple and effective.
Jan:
Everyone raved about it.
Everyone raved about it.
Maureen:
Talks about the structures from MetaboliCity and how she has a friend who worked in
a school who wanted to use the structures and she gave them Mathias' number but
she could never get through to them. And it was sad because it would have been a
nice continuum. I was a bit disappointed.
Maureen:
It's a shame
Hannah:
They've been trying to keep things up and running balance of
community/commissions tension between how to keep funded and keep going but
also work on projects that you find interesting, suppose it's the same as food growing

# Maureen:

and running community centres...

People don't realise, one of the jobs I do for the youth club, sat down with Neil and Jan doing grant forms, people like Mathias have to do that, it takes 4-5 hours. Your brain goes into jelly.

Hannah:

Yeah.

Jan:

We don't need to put any more money into the estate in regard to gardening because we haven't got the workforce... people aren't interested.

Maureen:

It's just a place for them to live.

Hannah:

The contrast to that, at St Luke's, there are waiting lists for allotments. Lots of people are interested in growing food but it's how do you (tails off).

Maureen:

The one thing we haven't had here is, and it's not a criticism, lets all meet on a Sunday but Neil's not here, there's no enthusiasm.

Mary:

Even for the barbeque some committee members can't give me one Sunday to show up.

Neil:

Like with the grow bags, people like to say we'd do this growing... They say look at the weeds ... Pull 'em up then.

Maureen:

I made this criticism to Jan ... there's no point having a member of the committee that only wants to get things done because it affects them in particular.

Hannah:

Individualist attitudes.

Mary:

Years ago before I was on the committee, I've always said I don't need an army behind me, if I didn't like the look of something id get onto the council straight away...

kids, rubbish, cleaning... I give what I can when I can is because I like where I live and I want to maintain the look of where I live.

Jan:

If we didn't have a committee we wouldn't get anything done. We wouldn't have had the painting done...

... Last Sunday morning, I'd been out till 1 o'clock, special occasion, 80<sup>th</sup> birthday... 10 to 9, real bad headache, knock at the door, the women whose carpet went missings' daughter, cos' she cant speak English, in her pajamas was having a party that night, is it ok if she puts the furniture outside?

(Gasps)

Mary:

You've even had people come up to you saying that their lightings not working above their door.

Jan:

Have you phoned up? Why should I phone up? I could ring up, I used to about every little thing...

Hannah:

It's not sustainable.

(Complaints about peoples' attitude about not bothering to ring up the council to report problems with the lift.)

Jan:

Lift doors clanging open on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, I phoned up (flat next door to lift) and asked have you reported that, she (woman on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor who doesn't use the lift) thought it (the problem) was on the ground floor. I shouldn't think so (that it had been reported), we haven't because we don't use it (because, it transpires she's scared of lifts). Never mind me, I only live on the 16<sup>th</sup>, so if it goes out of service ...

Another classic example, we came home from holiday one year, my husband and I, we had all our suitcases, both the lifts out of order, an old bloke said are the lifts still out of order? I said how long have they been out of order? He said, all day. I said, have you reported? He said, no I only live on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. We had to carry our suitcases up 16 floors.

Hannah:
O my god!
Jan:
Even though we're friends and we're on a committee, we just have that community a
lot of people haven't got, that's why its so hard to get people interested in the
gardening.
Hannah:
It sounds as if there's a lack of shared responsibility.
Mary:
They think its done by magic.
Hannah:
Yeah.
Jan:
Maureen puts in the newsletter, "don't leave it up to anybody else to report repairs"
and puts the repairs number in big numbers.
Maureen:
Its not just Haberdasher, its endemic.
Hannah:
There's a new movement towards localisation.
Maureen:
That's a joke, David Cameron's talking out the back of his head.

#### Maureen:

I made a classic gaffe at the last committee meeting 'all of the people on the committee are well over 50, and Madeline got all ... Who does David Cameron think is going to run all these voluntary things? Look around at us, we're all old.

# Hannah:

Because there was a community at that time, now less so, there's not the delegates, people coming forward.

# Hannah:

How could design become more beneficial?

# Mary:

More consultation with people to do with the area.

#### Hannah:

What about the idea of visualising things, could that be helpful? How you create shared accounts of the environment where you live. Create a new perspective on the environment. Part of the process where people have more investment, a shared sense of responsibility.

#### Maureen:

If we went to another estate and looked at what they'd done, it would expose it to us and we probably wouldn't of thought about it. Most of it probably wouldn't relate to us. But you think, that would look nice.

# Jan:

You see something in another tower block, the one on the corner of Pitfield Street and Old Street and you think that looks really nice, big tiles. Now with one of our grants we're going to get our lobby done... I know people from other estates who've been at big meetings where they've shown a film and someone's said, don't your gardens look nice.

(Talking about telling somebody who used to live on the estate how much has changed in the last 20 years.)
Maureen: I admit I had a complex about bringing friends here.
Neil: When it was a shit hole.
Maureen: Exactly.
Mary: The only thing that spoils our estate now is the mattresses out the front of the building.
Neil: People have a new bed every year.
Jan: What annoys me is that whenever you see on a sitcom a council tower block, there's graffiti, the lifts aren't working the flats are awfulwhen I used to work, everyone thought I lived in a place like that.
Hannah: In New Cross, the towers have become luxury apartments.
Maureen: Some of the council estates look shabby on the outside, but if you went into them you would love to have the homes they have got.
Jan: People say it's a lot bigger than I imagined.
John:

She said, I didn't expect this.
Hannah:  Maybe celebrate the positive things that have happened and communicate it.
Maureen: Perhaps we'll do that in the next newsletter. It's a shame we don't have any old photographs.
Hannah: I found one online, an aerial one.
John: I might have one knocking around somewhere.
Hannah: You know the chart where you're aiming for things to do, showing that some of those things are done and there are still things to happen.
Maureen: Before and after the sad thing is, is that this estate used to be all Georgian houses.
Mary: I'd love to see that.
Jan: I come from Walthamstow and you can buy those books; what your street used to look like.
Maureen: You can get them in the Hackney archives.
(Jan talking about walking around the estate with an old friend)

(talking about someone from TRA)

Jan:

She said where's that street now? When you pull something down you can't get your bearings ... Ivy Street.

# Maureen:

We had an incident recently where a communal path, which everybody used to use suddenly got blocked off, somebody bricked across it. Consequently instead of walking through everyone had to walk all the way around the estate, everyone was absolutely up in arms.

Jan:

Not just the people who live on the estate, people who cut through.

Maureen:

It was so sad for the OAPs on that estate

Hannah:

Why did they do that?

# Maureen:

It was one lunatic said the path was being lifted by the roots of a tree, which was true but he didn't consult anybody.

Jan:

He was the chair of the committee, had been for years, isn't anymore.

# Maureen:

One of the approaches we took, our estate worked with them, was to find out what was there before, we went to the archives, where that path was it was all streets. Our argument was it was a public right of way ... All the OAPs with their sticks were climbing over the wall, it was so funny.

Jan:

Did you see the Time Team program? Archeological digs, Maureen had a starring

role... It was called ... umm.

Maureen:

Buried in the blitz.

Jan:

Buried in the blitz. They got people to dig and they found all the little streets.

Hannah:

That's why they've put that stone there (in Shoreditch park), to mark a meeting point.

Jan:

People came along who didn't live there anymore and they got little things like little bits of glass, pictures of a cat, with a bit of a house in the back and they did it on line and set up what the streets looked like ....

... Maureen was on it, you went to the RAF Museum, she was sitting there reading and then all of a sudden a bomb was dropped.

Maureen:

Well what happened was, during the war we kept getting massive explosions and the government didn't want to tell us we were being bombed by super sonic rockets... (Maureen talks about the war and her Time Team experience and how her children weren't interested. Lots of Ah's).

(Hannah talks about her Nan running pubs).

(Jan talks about the Ashley Judd edition of 'Who do you think you are?' US version).

Jan:

...The family tree of Haberdasher.

Hannah: (Wrapping things up)

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It will be really interesting what you do with this, if you need help with a newsletter.
Jan:
We're trying to put a newsletter together
Maureen:
It would be nice if the little group here got together. We could work it out together. It's
a bit late to do it before Christmas.
Neil:
Make it a new-year project.
Hannah:
It's a good way of communicating.
Jan:
We do do a newsletter twice a year.
Managara
Maureen:  Everybody who gets it say, same old stuff, same old moan, they say all we do is
moan.
Hannah:
This will be a positive reimagining (consulting notes) What are you thinking of doing to do next?
Mary:
Not a lot
Ha ha ha
Jan:
We're going to do a Family tree.
Neil:

Newsletter, wooden garden box.

Jan:

We are going to do the boxes, we've got the wood.

Neil:

If people see they're getting a nice built wooden box instead of a bag...

Maureen: (toward Neil)

Now you're life's changed... you've got a bit more time ... you need to send out notes saying we're going to have a weeding weekend...

Jan:

Well we're going to a have a weekend making the boxes.

Neil:

We need to get a letter done to tell people the dates first.

Maureen: (toward Neil)

Unless you make it communal. I've known you since you were a kid, I know Mary and Jan, half these people on the estate don't know you from Adam or Jan. It's not fair to say people aren't interested.

(Neil's says he didn't say people weren't interested, how busy he's been and how busy everyone else has been too).

**ENDS MID SENTENCE**