

# Cultural Placemaking in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

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THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA



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ROYAL COURT

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A close-up photograph of a bicycle's front wheel and handlebars. The bicycle is locked to a blue metal railing. The railing has the words "SAATCHI GALLERY" printed on it in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The background shows a black metal fence and a concrete wall. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

**SAATCHI  
GALLERY**

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ANDIPA GALLERY

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ANDIPA GAL

Ian Garland

Synthesis I 17.11 - 17.12.11

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# Introduction

## Councillor Nicholas Paget-Brown

This publication has arisen from a desire to explore the relationship between local ambitions for arts, culture and creativity and new property developments in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Culture continues to prove its key significance to our part of London in so many ways and it is heartening that developers, artists and arts organisations have in recent times been collaborating on projects much more closely.

In our desire to find the right way forward for Kensington and Chelsea we wanted to examine what has been achieved, look at emerging patterns and map out the right approach for the borough as a whole.

We are privileged to have a fabulous cultural mix in the borough, ranging from internationally renowned institutions to creative entrepreneurs, from specialist arts organisations to major creative industries. The borough is also home to more than twenty festivals and an increasing number of practising artists are based here, sometimes working in studios offered by the Council and part-funded by valued partners. We believe that our role as a local authority is to encourage creativity, support it where we can and ensure that all our residents have opportunities to engage creatively in ways that work for each of them individually. We are happy for culture to be a key motif for our borough as its future development is shaped.

We are in an excellent position to connect developers to the creative content of the borough, and thereby both to animate and add value to their plans. We believe that, armed with a long-term neighbourhood vision and a clear appreciation of the significance of the borough in the wider London context, we are in a strong position to broker successful partnerships that will benefit developers, artists, residents, local businesses and visitors alike. This thinking covers every stage, from inception through the various phases of development, and on to completion and into use. Each development potentially has a different creative opportunity and, as the most densely populated three square miles in the UK, we want to ensure we have a framework that has an empathetic fit with the area where it is sited.

**Councillor Nicholas Paget-Brown**  
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for  
Transportation, Environment and Leisure





# Profile

## John Hampson, Senior Strategy Officer, Arts and Culture, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is the smallest London borough, excluding the City of London. It is the most densely populated local authority in the United Kingdom and is among the most affluent areas of Western Europe.

The borough is famous for its retail offer – with department stores such as Harrods and Harvey Nichols, and Portobello Road, which attracts visitors from around the globe. It is also home to the Notting Hill Carnival and the Chelsea Flower Show.

Among the borough's many attractions and landmarks are the Royal Court Theatre, Earl's Court Exhibition Centre, Kensington Palace, King's Road, Leighton House Museum and Saatchi Gallery.

Exhibition Road is home to world-renowned institutions such as the Science Museum, the Natural History Museum, and the Victoria and Albert Museum. In a multi-million pound scheme, Exhibition Road itself has been transformed into the UK's most accessible cultural space. Its reopening will be celebrated in July 2012 with the (Exhibition) Road Show. In autumn 2012, Exhibition Road will host a major

presentation of new work by the world-renowned sculptor Tony Cragg. English National Ballet School is located in the Royal Borough, as are the Royal British Society of Sculptors and Christie's the auctioneers.

The many creative businesses associated with the borough include Monsoon, Accesorize and Cath Kidston from the world of fashion; the Independent newspaper and Granta Books from journalism and publishing; with EMI, Sony and Universal Music representing music and entertainment.

The Royal Borough is famed for its spirit of creative independence, embodied by individuals such as Mary Quant and Vivienne Westwood, Mick Jones and Damon Albarn, Lucien Freud and Richard Curtis.



# Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea: Inside the World's Cultural City

Mark Davy, Futurecity

Kensington and Chelsea is a unique place, where a wide range of nationalities and cultures meet in a borough that is a microcosm of our world-class city. London is home to 8 million individuals, their languages and cultures, which provides the cross-fertilisation that makes the capital such a vibrant, self renewing place.

Centuries of investment, innovation, trade and immigration have led to London moving from a city traditionally defined by commerce to one defined by culture. There is now strong evidence of the power of the cultural sector to energise places and provide originality and authenticity to our urban centres. However, with the unstoppable move towards mass urbanisation we need new thinking on how to make our cities great places to live in, in ways that work for both the private and the public sectors.

Planning often separates our urban experiences into places for living, places for business, retail districts for shopping and leisure places for entertainment. This is a path that Kensington and Chelsea has not followed. We believe that the best urban developments are led by mixing uses together – we have always valued the finely

grained rich mix of uses across the borough. We believe that successful urban places, however individual, have in common an atmosphere that might be described as 'seductive'. They work at physical, sensory and intellectual levels, offering experiences that are varied, rewarding, intriguing, unexpected and inspiring.

When it comes to making successful new places, planning in culture from the start (what this report refers to as Cultural Placemaking) is essential for unlocking the seductive potential of urban living. Culture can act as a catalyst for the theatre and activity that enlivens established streets and squares but which is conspicuously absent from many new developments. Cultural Placemaking articulates a distinctive vision for new developments, helping to create real places and provide authenticity and local ownership.



These add value in three powerful ways:

- Forging a distinct identity that creates the 'brand' for the development
- Creating a vibrant cultural life that attracts residents, business tenants and visitors who bring disposable income
- Building support among communities and stakeholders, which will help the planning of the development and to sustain it once complete.

We want to ensure that our new redevelopment areas become places that are attractive to our residents and raise the profile of the borough as a great place to live, work and play. Our shared ambition is for developers, investors and communities to work with us in providing places that can encourage the dynamic mix of people from different cultures, provide opportunities for training and education, great architecture, animated streets and squares, new parks and public places and a varied cultural offer, whether creative industries or museums and galleries.

We aim to introduce new thinking, an approach that will help to provide the creative 'glue' of people and ideas that binds successful urban places together

and makes them attractive to live in. Our embedded approach encourages our partners to see everything as having a cultural DNA, from wayfinding, play, wellbeing, employment, education, leisure and heritage to tourism, and technology.

The residents of Kensington and Chelsea are central to successful Cultural Placemaking. Residents, workers and the millions of visitors to the borough are part of the right commercial and cultural mix. We will work with partners to ensure that all phases of development remain true to their original vision, and with a range of people (from planners and project teams to politicians and local stakeholders) who can champion new developments at every level. We are searching for a new approach to development, one that demonstrates the commercial viability of brokering shared services and amenities, where costs are shared between the developer and local authority to provide facilities and amenities (e.g. a library, gallery or cultural facility) and ultimately to provide real places of beauty and creative energy. Cultural Placemaking looks to create a sustainable mix of residential, retail, leisure and commercial uses, with high quality public realm underpinned by original thinking.



V&A

The chemistry needed for successful Cultural Placemaking begins with knowing where you are. For developers it involves understanding the history and heritage of their sites in the Royal Borough. They must reference the site's history and heritage and look at the cultural context of the site. There are many possible interventions that can help define a new place, from art in the public realm, artist-designed streetscapes, partnerships with festivals and venues, introduction of creative workspaces and the commissioning of architecture that responds to need, to real opportunities and to the social, political and cultural identity of the location. In short, designing a community focused, commercially viable and multi-faceted public realm that combines to realise an attractive place offering a range of experiences.

The idea of Cultural Placemaking is not yet a common term in the property

sector. However, we believe that this pioneering approach, applied across the Royal Borough, will become an exemplar for developers across the UK. Places that offer authenticity, a real identity and which reflect the local community will add measurable value to residential, commercial, leisure and retail development. We appreciate that the process of creating 'real places' is complex and that it requires a diverse skills base; it has as much to do with risk and experiment as the cold realities of master planning.

The necessary dreams, visions and hopes have to be harnessed here and now. The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea wishes to build on London's one-world appeal and its connectivity to the rest of the world. With Cultural Placemaking at the heart of the borough's plans for regeneration, London will gain new creative districts where communities can trade language, ideas and culture.

## The Established Creative District

London is a city of villages, each with its own identity, but gradually new areas of geography have begun to take shape, which we describe as 'creative districts'. Places like Soho, Covent Garden and Shaftesbury Avenue have a long and established history of hosting the arts. They have large numbers of high quality cultural offers, opera, theatre, cinemas, dance, museums, universities, galleries etc. supported by the fine grain of hotels, bars, clubs and restaurants. The established creative district has good transport links, an identifiable location that is easy to find and businesses that supply and support the cultural industries. They attract small private sector businesses that feed off the creativity and uniqueness of the place. But they are also high rent, dense and lack the capacity to expand.

In "Albertopolis", the capital enjoys one of the world's most famous established creative districts. It is home to international museums, world-class education institutions such as Imperial College, the Royal Colleges of Art and Music and cultural institutions such as the Polish Club, Goethe Institut and Ismaili Centre. We believe that there is potential to explore "satellites" of Exhibition Road institutions so their effect can resonate further across the borough. The relocation of the Design Museum to the former Commonwealth Institute is a rare opportunity for a major new cultural destination in the borough that will anchor the western end of Kensington High Street.

## The Organic Creative District

There are many organic creative districts in London, offering a rare degree of edginess and authenticity. The growth of the organic district has evolved via the traditional route of low cost rents and historic industrial buildings re-colonised by the creative community. Successful creative places have retained or rediscovered their cultural identity in the layers left by immigration and upwardly mobile populations, be they Huguenots, West Indian, Chinese, African, east European, Jewish or Bangladeshi. Each transient community has left cultural traces, architecture, street names, markets, food and festivals.

A real organic creative district is visible in the creative industries, the markets, festivals, music and graffiti. It also offers authenticity through the people who live and work in the area, the local businesses, restaurants, hairdressers, sandwich shops, design agencies and nightclubs. The brand of the area is original and independent, with local businesses using art and design to create a distinct and original identity.

The Royal Borough's organic creative district is centred on Portobello Road. Its effect has already been seen to resonate across the borough with antique shops and vibrant street-life springing up on Golborne Road, for instance. A well-designed wayfinding strategy could better join Portobello Road with other creative districts across the borough; and link to currently less well connected areas and amenities like Wornington Road and the new Kensington Academy and Leisure Centre.



## The Emerging Creative District

The emerging creative district features hidden pockets of creative talent and is waiting to be discovered. Such places offer opportunities to find 'big ideas' that can connect their people and organisations under a single theme. The Royal Borough's main emerging creative district is the land close to Kensal Gasworks. Small clusters of creative businesses are housed in low cost creative industry spaces at the Grand Union Centre, Ladbroke Hall and the Saga Centre on Kensal Road. The cultural diversity of the borough is also reflected in the voluntary organisations which work from the Canalside building on Canal Way and the area is closely associated with the Royal Borough's proud black music history. These "green shoots" of creative potential should be considered in regard to both the development of existing facilities, and new developments on brownfield sites such as Kensal Gasworks. For instance, by hosting Notting Hill Festival-related cultural facilities, such as music, costume, arts and crafts and fashion, or incorporating the area's cultural heritage into the design of architecture, landscape and public realm. (See Case Study).

## Case Study

A good example of a place that is working to develop its cultural identity is Deptford in South London, which has a long and rich history connected to the Royal Docks and the Thames and the industrial history of London. Deptford has emerged as a thriving cultural place, its relative isolation attracting a burgeoning cultural population of writers, musicians, artist, designers and dancers. Deptford also builds on the cultural permanence represented by the internationally renowned LABAN dance centre, the Albany Theatre, Goldsmiths College and the large numbers of galleries and hundreds of artists and craftspeople working in converted industrial buildings. This is a unique cultural destination, defined by the Deptford X visual arts festival and supported and sustained by the community.

The Royal Borough is rich in art and culture. We host national institutions; the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Royal Court Theatre are at the heart of the Royal Borough's cultural offer; the Saatchi Gallery opened in Chelsea in 2008 and other major cultural institutions like the Serpentine Gallery, the Albert Hall and the Louise T Blouin Institute are close by. Major cultural and creative industry businesses of the calibre of the BBC, EMI and Granta are in, or adjacent to, the Royal Borough. We are home to significant cultural events: the Chelsea Flower Show, London Fashion Week and the Notting Hill Carnival.



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Lane from the Thames

22

Road to  
Bull

20

## The Planned Creative District

Interest by property developers and their design teams in culture-driven regeneration is becoming more mainstream. The market, investors and purchasers require authenticity, a sense of place and an identity that responds to the area in which they are sited. A new approach to placemaking is emerging, one where the masterplanning process follows a period of cultural planning, which in turn helps provide a vision of what the place is to become.

Planned Creative Districts are marked by meaningful consultation and engagement, and partnerships with the local authorities, which identifies the organisations, ideas and individuals that will help define place. This is what we want in Kensington and Chelsea. We need partnerships with developers that are positive and forward looking, that see the benefits of connecting people, communities and businesses through shared cultural goals. We need cultural partnerships to help fill new commercial spaces, to provide ideas for the animation and sustainable use of the public realm, and we need to encourage great architecture, interesting street furniture, thoughtful public art and intelligent wayfinding that develops a unique visual identity for the Royal Borough.

The Royal Borough's strategic development sites offer opportunities for developers interested in the idea of the Planned Creative District. First, at Earl's Court, where plans are underway for a wider regeneration scheme encompassing adjoining land within the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, and where planning policy requires the area to retain its cultural

significance after the replacement of the Exhibition Centre. Second, the new development area around Lots Road Power Station, with its antiques trade and connection to the Kings Road. There are also mixed-use development opportunities at Warwick Road and Kensal Gasworks.

Our redevelopment areas have all the ingredients needed to make great places: history, heritage, community and the wider offer of the Royal Borough's powerful cultural identity. The creative district approach offers developers, stakeholders, creative organisations and the community an opportunity to help build places where the contemporary, cultural identity of the area shapes the look and feel of each development site.

## Case Study

Kings Cross has the new Central Saint Martins College at its centre and Kings Place and Antony Gormley's (David Chipperfield designed) studio nearby. The developers have used the international profile of Saint Martins College to offer authenticity and glamour to investors and have encouraged further cultural investment from creative agencies, theatres, galleries and creative industries, helped by the local authority. A culture led approach helps attract the large commercial businesses needed to fill office space, the bars and restaurants, the investors and purchasers, the retail and leisure businesses and ultimately the community who will work and play in this rediscovered part of London.

# CHELSEA FUTURES SPACE



# The Royal Borough: Seizing the Opportunity

The Royal Borough contains the greatest concentration of recognised Creative Districts in London: Exhibition Road, Chelsea, Notting Hill and Portobello Road. Other neighbourhoods are coming up fast. The borough's cultural life is a prominent part of its appeal for residents and it brings in millions of visitors each year. Further economic benefits are realised through the 4,000 creative businesses based within the borough: the creative ambience is a major draw for them.

The Council is committed to safeguarding the borough's cultural excellence and to maximising the benefits of culture for local quality of life and economic performance. The Arts and Culture Policy contains specific objectives for regeneration, urban development and creative businesses. The Culture Service works closely with the planning, neighbourhoods and town centres, street management and licensing teams to deliver these objectives. Their joint work ranges from temporary uses of vacant property, to long-term planning for the strategic development sites within the borough.

The Council now has a unique opportunity to engage the developers of these strategic sites – and those active

elsewhere in the borough – to further enhance the borough's cultural offer. The potential benefits of the Council working with developers in this way are considerable. They include:

- The ability to plan the development of cultural infrastructure over a long period of time
- The ability to influence the style and content of such amenities, not merely their existence
- The ability to lever in capital investment without burdening the Council taxpayer or necessarily diminishing Section 106 developer contributions
- The ability to form strategic partnerships with key arts and cultural organisations



Envisaging the borough as a tapestry of existing and potential Creative Districts is a simple means to bring developers and the Council together. In doing so, Kensington and Chelsea would be a pioneering authority – the first to take a planned, holistic, and long-term view of working with the private sector to deliver new cultural provision.

Ultimately, this way of working will further enhance the profile and desirability of the borough as a cultural destination.

To pass up this opportunity means to risk losing inward investment and high-quality cultural infrastructure. The upcoming generation of artists and creative entrepreneurs often chooses to locate in places like Shoreditch, Deptford or Bermondsey due to their greater affordability. The Council also needs to work with developers to increase the borough's stock of affordable workspace, if it is to remain a location of choice for the next Damien Hirst, Tweetdeck or Last FM.

The creative and cultural sector accounts for around 15 per cent of employment in the Royal Borough, within around 30 per cent of the borough's business units. Kensington and Chelsea ranks joint-fifth in London, alongside Westminster, and behind Hammersmith and Fulham, Camden, Islington and Richmond. Numbers of creative and cultural businesses in the borough have remained relatively steady over the past few years with some fluctuation between business types.



Welcome to Earls Court





# Case Studies

Alex Homfray, BOP Consulting

This section explores how three major development sites in the Borough can be treated as Creative Districts: Earl's Court, Kensal Gasworks and Lots Road. Our analysis draws on desk research, site visits and the Futurecity/BOP Creative District Profiler. The Profiler is a data tool designed to analyse the potential of any neighbourhood as a Creative District which pulls in visitors and investors. The Profiler scores the neighbourhood from 0 to 5, against eight factors associated with successful Creative Districts. More details on the Profiler are overleaf.

# The Creative District Profiler

The Futurecity/BOP Creative District Profiler is a tool to identify the strengths that any neighbourhood can draw on to become a Creative District with an exciting cultural life which attracts visitors and investors. The Profiler also highlights any weaknesses. To run the Profiler, we first define the neighbourhood as a circle extending for half a mile around a central point. This is a ten minute walk. Then we score the neighbourhood from 0 to 5, against eight factors associated with successful Creative Districts. We derive the scores from robust national and London data sources.\*



## Creative Residents

The proportion of residents who have creative jobs (Experian)

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## Younger Residents

The proportion of residents in the key 25-34 age group (Experian)

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## Ethnic Diversity

The proportion of residents who belong to ethnic minority groups (Experian)

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## Cultural Offer

The number of cultural venues (Culture24 and Experian)

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## Retail Offer

The strength of the neighbourhood's retail offer (Venuescore)

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## Public Transport

How good the public transport links are (Transport for London PTAL data)

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## Land Availability

The area of land that is available for redevelopment (National Land Use Database)

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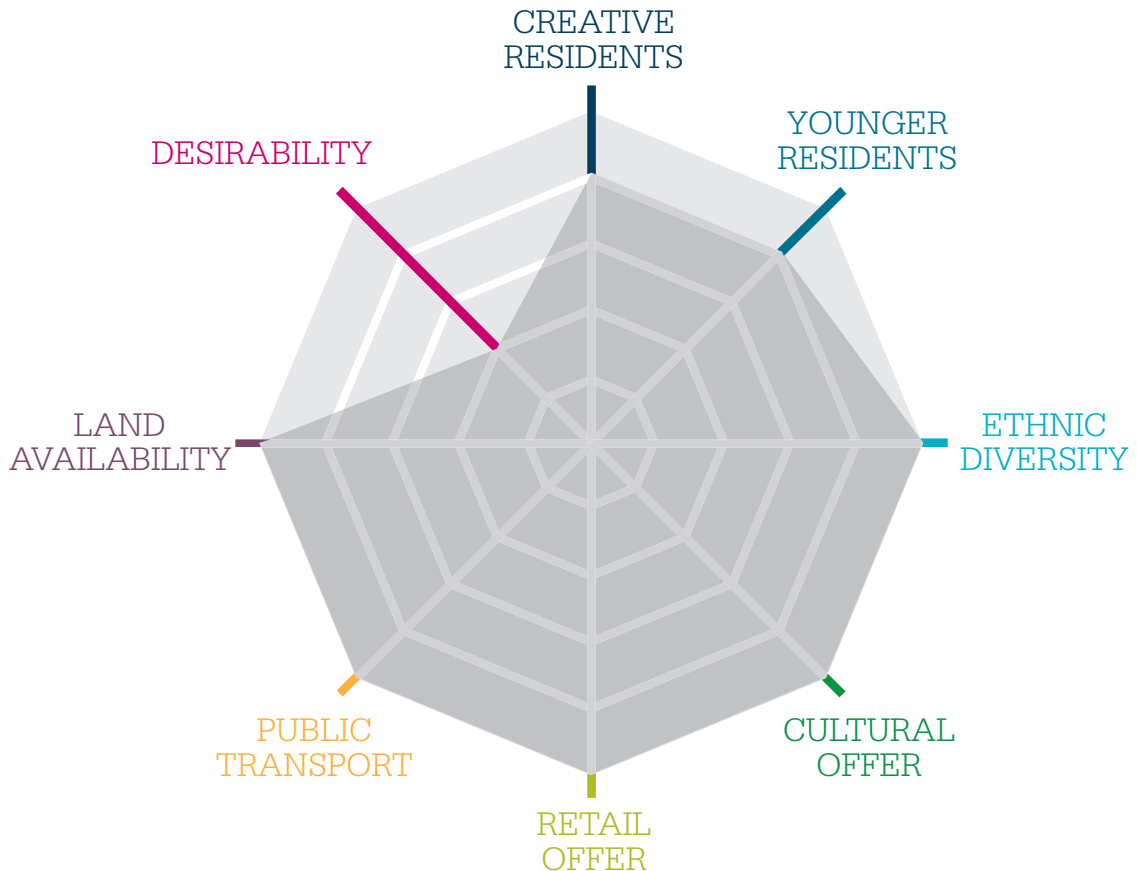


## Desirability

The number of residents in the AB social class who have chosen to live there (Experian)

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# CASE STUDY: SHOREDITCH AND SPITALFIELDS



The scores are mapped onto a grid to reveal the neighbourhood's unique profile. This profile can be compared to other Creative Districts. For example:

- Established Creative District
  - Albertopolis
- Organic Creative District
  - Shoreditch and Spitalfields
- Planned Creative District
  - Kings Cross Central
- Emerging Creative District – Deptford

The Profiler is based on robust data sources, and it draws on Futurecity/

BOP's many years of experience with major regeneration projects. However:

- The Profiler does not provide the final word on any neighbourhood. It provides a rapid initial analysis to kick off more detailed planning.
- The Profiler should always be used with a walking tour of the neighbourhood. This will add rich qualitative detail. For example, the Profiler assesses the strength of the local retail sector, but only a site tour will reveal the unique mix of shops and the experience of using them.

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\* The profiler uses a unique combination of commercial and government data to establish an objective indicator of creative potential. Datasets include the national Experian demographic database, the retail ranking survey Venuescore, Transport for London's Public Transport Accessibility Level, and the Department for Communities and Local Government's National Land Use Database.

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# Earl's Court

## Earl's Court

The Earl's Court Exhibition Centres will host the indoor volleyball at the 2012 Olympic Games. Following this, the landowners will be looking to redevelop the site, together with the adjoining TfL depot, Seagrave Road carpark and two housing estates in LBHF. The Mayor of London, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, and London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham are currently finalising a planning framework to guide redevelopment in this area, known as the Earl's Court and West Kensington Opportunity Area. This planning framework envisages the vast 37 hectare site becoming 'West London's New Urban Quarter offering thousands of New Homes and amenities'.

As redevelopment involves the demolition of the Earl's Court Exhibition Centres, the planning framework requires new development to 'create a lively cultural destination with a variety of culture, arts and creative facilities that continues the Earl's Court brand'. The planning framework requires that this cultural destination is anchored by at least one large cultural facility and complemented by a number of smaller arts and culture facilities, affordable artists' studios and other creative workshop and studio space. The planning framework does not prescribe the occupier of these facilities, as this will be subject to discussions between the developers and GLA, RBKC and LBHF cultural advisors.

- Over two-thirds of residents have

creative jobs, which is way above the London average

- 28% of residents are in the key 25-34 age group, above the London average
- 23% of residents belong to an ethnic minority group

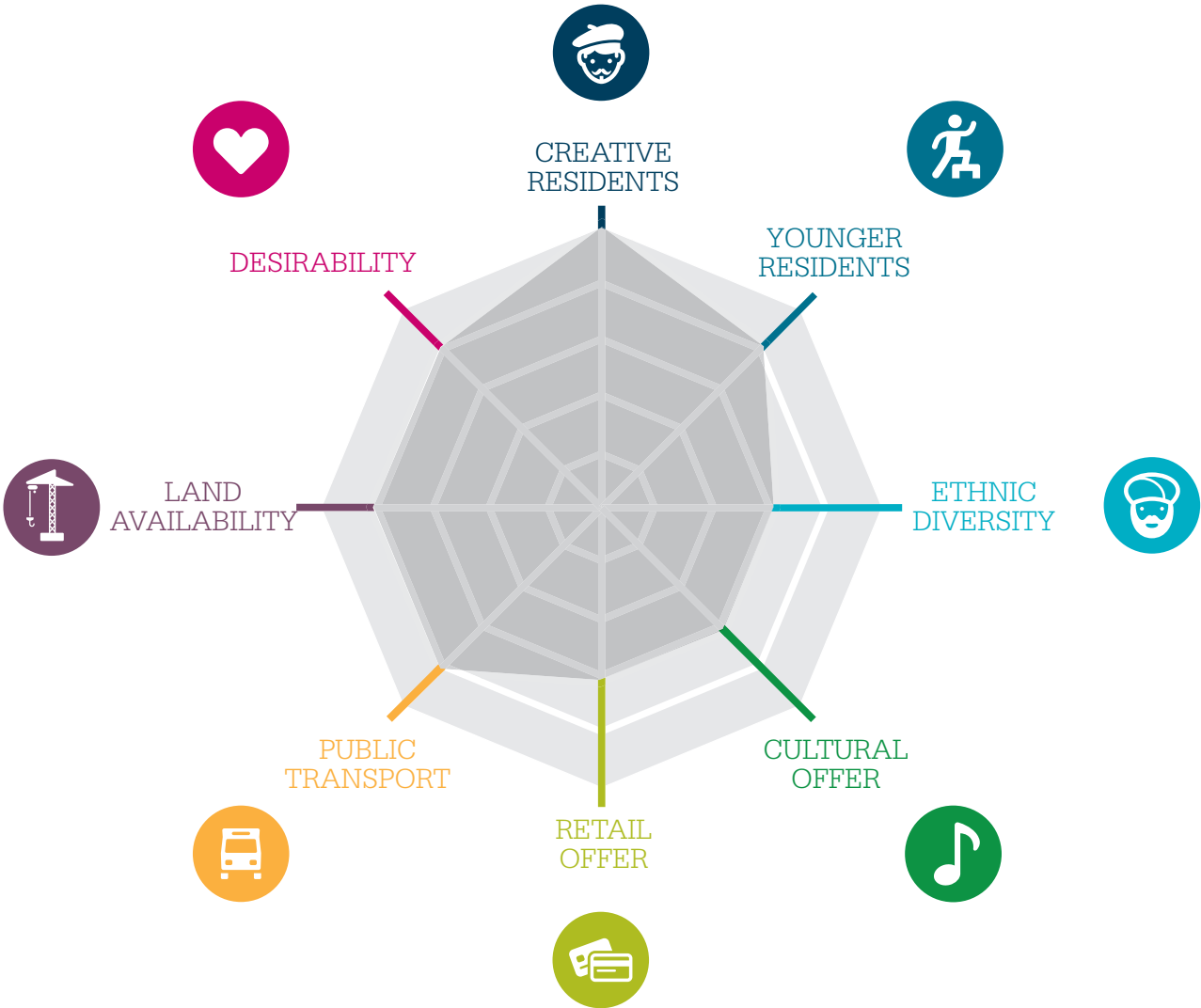
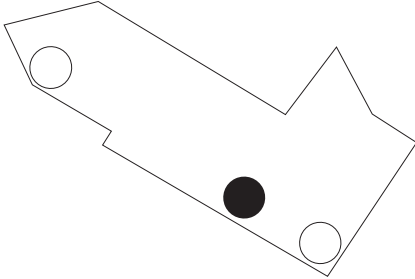
Likewise the Opportunity factors are firmly in place:

- A substantial amount of brownfield land is being brought forward and the landowners share a clear vision for its development
- SW5 is considered a desirable postcode by the AB social class, who make up some 37% of local residents

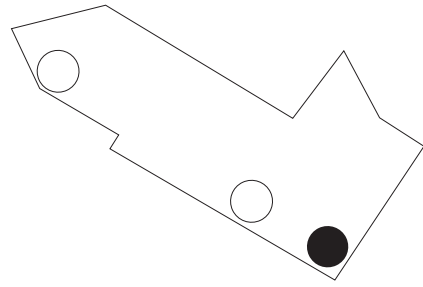
Earl's Court's infrastructure factors are also promising. There is an established heritage and a reasonable existing cultural offer to build on, with the potential to partner cultural practitioners based elsewhere in the boroughs of Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham. Public transport is good, and the current retail offer will be further strengthened through the redevelopment.

- Venues include Earl's Court Exhibition Centre, the Bhavan Centre, London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art, and Miss O's
- Reasonable retail performance and daytime footfall, designated as a Minor Retail District by Venuescore (with a high proportion of independent shops by London standards)
- Good public transport connectivity with an average PTAL rating of 4.5

Earl's Court is effectively being regarded as a Planned Creative District. This is a good fit with its existing dynamics: most of the factors associated with a successful Creative District are already in place. Investing in culture will not just put the new Earl's Court on the map: it will unlock demand among the many cultural audiences and producers already resident locally, while attracting new residents and businesses with similar profiles from across London and beyond.



# Lots Road



## Lots Road

This area of contrasts sees Kings Road giving way to secluded side streets and the riverside, with well-used community amenities alongside pockets of quiet creative energy. Dominating the area, the towers of World's End Estate face those of Chelsea Wharf. This area rewards the explorer with unexpected discoveries though, in urban design terms, it would benefit from greater focus and connectivity.

Culturally, Lots Road is a centre for creative learning and production. Much creative energy is contained within the KCL School of Design, the Heatherley School of Fine Art and the English National Ballet School. The famous antiques trade along Lots Road is joined by a wider range of creative businesses including mini clusters such as the 92 Lots Road complex. There are just two established arts venues, the 606 Club and Chelsea Theatre.

The Power Station is an imposing local landmark. Its redevelopment is an opportunity to provide a new focal point for the area. The approved Hutchinson-Whampoa scheme retains the power

station building and will create a signature waterside restaurant, cafes, retail units and offices together with a leisure complex and 800 new apartments.

Lots Road is very promising as a Creative District. The People factors associated with a successful Creative District are already in place:

- Approximately half of residents have creative jobs, which is very high – way above the London average
- 19% of residents are in the key 25-34 age group, above the London average
- 23% of residents belong to an ethnic minority group

Likewise the Opportunity factors are firmly in place:

- A substantial area of brownfield land is being brought forward for development within Hutchinson-Whampoa's Lots Road Power Station mixed use development (now underway)
- SW10 is proven as a desirable address; the AB social class make up some 36% of local residents

Lots Road's Infrastructure factors are also

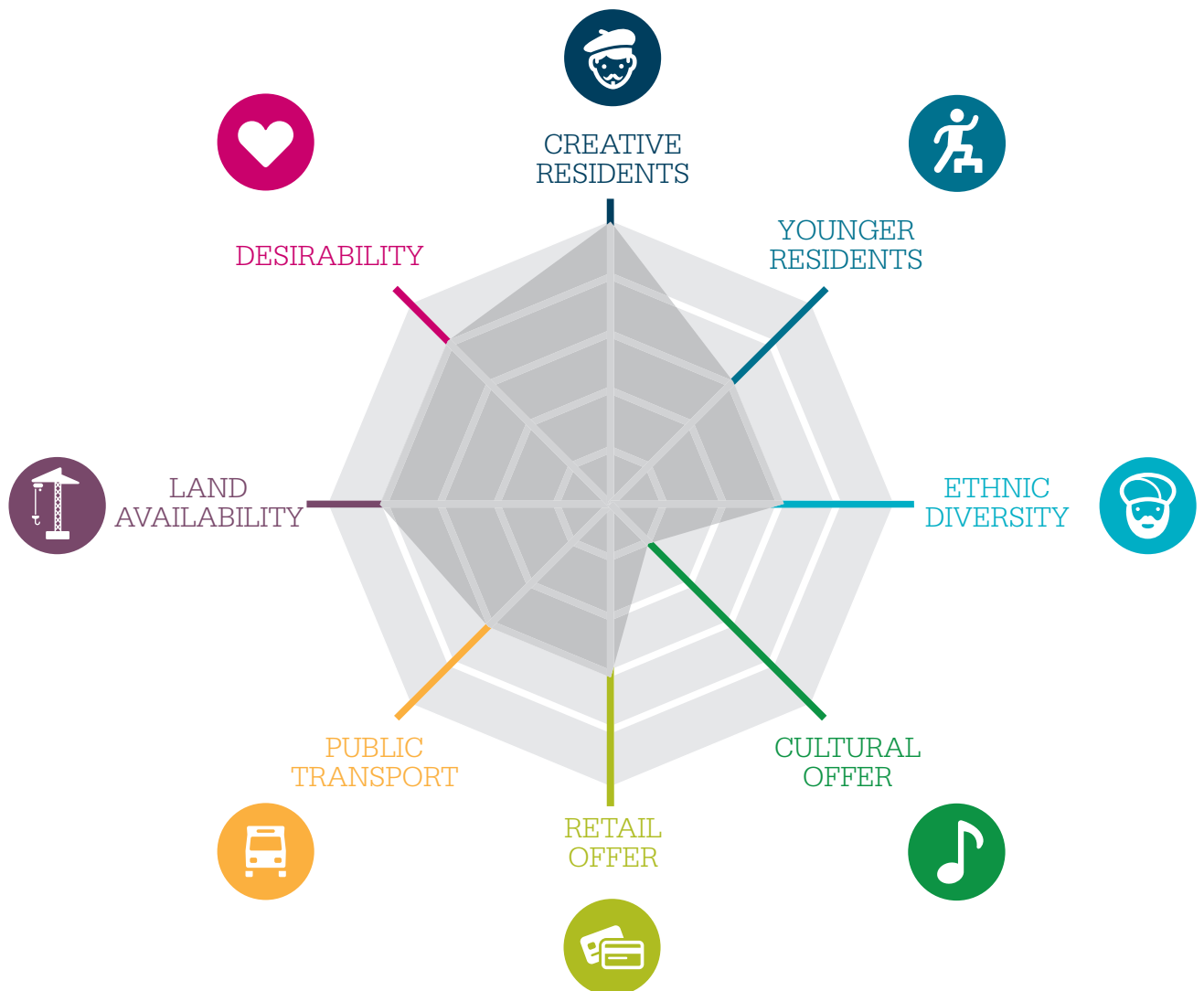
promising. There is a modest cultural offer to build on, particularly by tapping into the creative energy of the two art schools. Public transport is reasonably good, and the retail offer is to be strengthened.

- The two established cultural venues are the Chelsea Theatre and the 606 Jazz Club – although there is significant further creative energy contained within the three arts colleges (specialising in design, fine art and ballet) and in small creative industry clusters such as 92 Lots Road; and through evening venues such as Embargo nightclub
- Reasonable retail performance and daytime footfall: Fulham Road is

designated a Minor Retail District by Venuescore, and the busier parts of the Kings Road are not too far away (both boast a high proportion of independent shops by London standards)

- Public transport connectivity is very good around Fulham Road though the riverside is less well connected: the average PTAL rating is 3.5.

Around the area culture can play a major role in connecting disparate neighbourhoods, for example through a public art trail, and by providing spaces and events to bring residents together. Retention of affordable workspace may become an issue in future as regeneration gathers pace.



# Kensal Gasworks and Surrounds

## Kensal Gasworks and Surrounds

This part of North Kensington is not well known to many Londoners. At present, the huge 17-hectare Gasworks site is isolated even from local residents. Yet, a residential-led mixed-use development on this site could yield over 2,500 new homes, potentially served by a new Crossrail station, and fund improvements to the canal towpath.

Using the Creative District profiler, in terms of People factors:

- 26% of local residents work in creative jobs, which is around the London average
- 18% of residents are in the key 25-34 age group, which is around the London average
- The area is very diverse – one in three residents belongs to an ethnic minority group with, for example, visible Caribbean, Portuguese and Iranian communities supporting various social centres and cafes

The Infrastructure factors are not strong yet but new development will help address this:

- Few public cultural venues – although many small creative businesses and community/arts organisations are housed within former industrial buildings

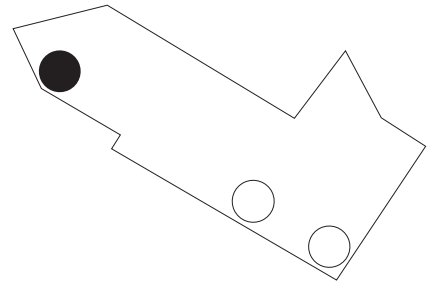
- Limited retail offer catering primarily for local residents
- Reasonable public transport connectivity, with a PTAL rating of 3.5. The proposed new Crossrail station will boost the accessibility and profile of the area.

The area will see considerable development over coming years and there are signs that it can attract the more affluent housebuyers who will help to make the development viable:

- A very substantial area of brownfield land, though this is split into multiple sites/ownerships
- Considered a desirable location by a significant number of the affluent AB class, who make up 26% of local residents

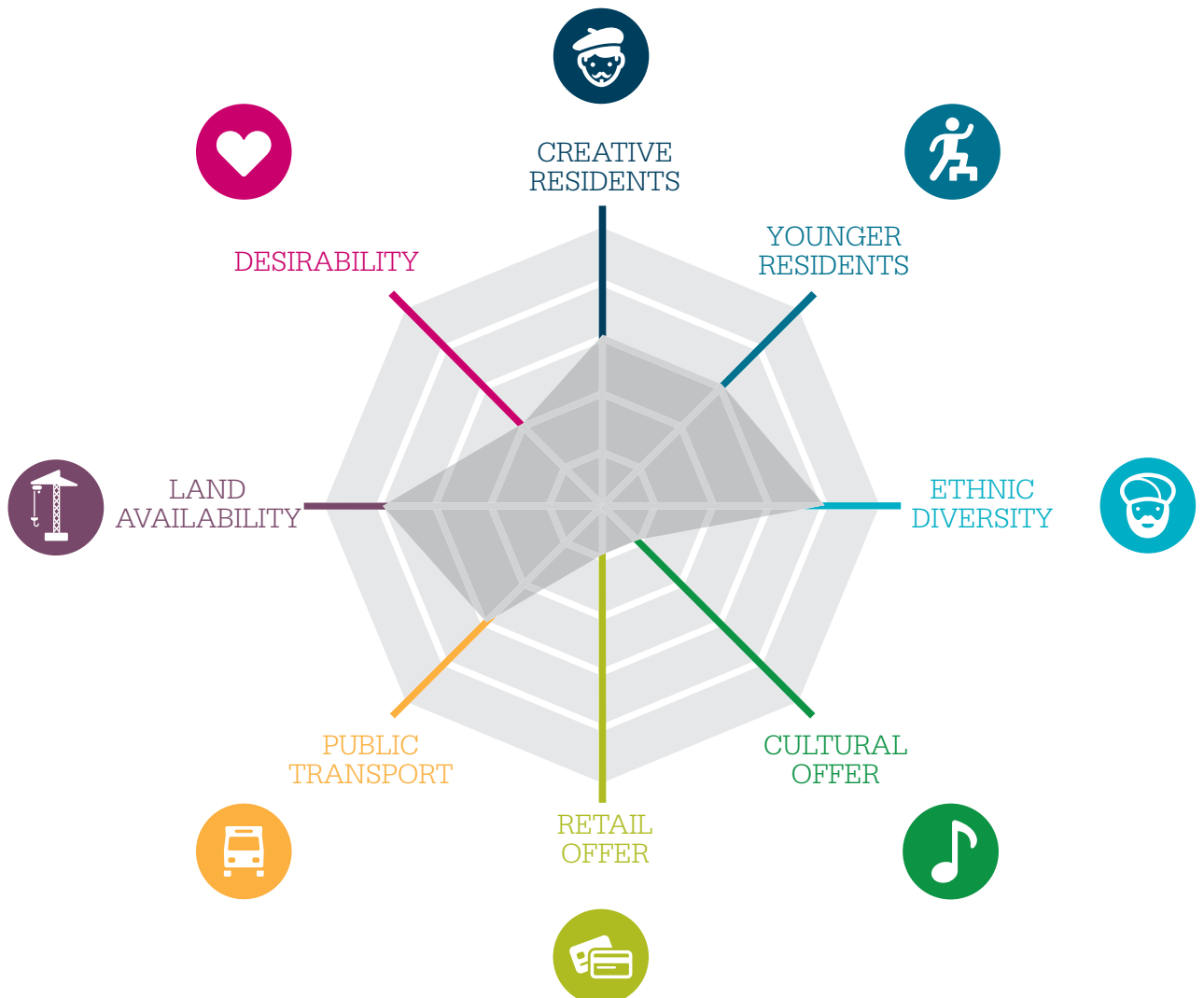
Kensal Gasworks would suit treatment as an Emerging Creative District, which celebrates the local black and independent music and other cultural heritage, and offers new opportunities for existing practitioners. The community spaces required on the Gasworks site by the borough's Core Strategy could support outreach/expansion for arts organisations – whether already locally based or from further afield. There is a particular opportunity to provide a new facility to support and showcase Carnival Arts. The rich and strong associations of North Kensington with the film industry provide





further inspirations. The site could support studio spaces, fit for purpose for the twenty-first century, accommodating independent producers and other industry suppliers. Such workspace could be complemented by teaching facilities for specialist higher education departments in film, and enterprise and business development programmes.

Key infrastructure projects at Kensal Gasworks could benefit from the injection of a creative spark to provide new icons for the area. For instance, a new footbridge across the canal could be treated as an artwork in its own right. Likewise the proposed new Crossrail station presents an opportunity to commission dramatic artist-led façade designs or public artworks.









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# Kensington and Chelsea: Cultural Motifs

The distinctive cultural identity for all regeneration sites in the Borough will be forged over time but they should form part of complementary borough-wide cultural motifs. These five snapshots suggest some cultural motifs that may be used across the strategic development sites to bring them into the mainstream of Kensington and Chelsea's cultural character.

## The West{walk}way

Across the borough we see a contrast between busy main roads and secluded (almost secret) back alleyways. In a variety of forms, these echo the diversity of the area. When signposted, the signposting has no unified style, with no indication as to the destination of each path, and the proximity of other facilities (e.g. shops, cultural or infrastructural). These paths currently provide access only to people with local knowledge. Outsiders find them by accident if at all. These paths form the basis of a network across the borough, at a human-scale. They open up the borough to unexpected, locally specific connections. They should be pointed out and celebrated.

A wayfinding strategy might aim to lift the lid on these secret walkways to create a West(walk)way. We would recommend

that all new developments feature such pathways and access routes, and are signposted to form part of this network.

## Dwelling in Unity

The African-Caribbean heritage of the north of the borough is justly famous and celebrated. However, there are a number of other communities in the strategic development areas which, to a greater or lesser degree, define the locations, and would form exciting, place-specific starting points for a cultural masterplan.

For instance:

The Portuguese and North African communities on Golborne Road, Wornington Road and round Trellick Tower. Alongside shops, bars, cafes and restaurants, there are a number of cultural organisations already in existence in that



area, such as the Al Hasinya Centre, which works with Moroccan and Arabic-speaking women, and the Al Noor Youth Association. Warwick Road, Earl's Court and High Street Kensington have a visible Iranian community. This has resonance with the north and south of the borough – with the centre of the Shia Ismaili community at the Ismaili Centre in South Kensington and with the Iranian Research & Advice Centre, based in Canalside House, in North Kensington. The history, culture and traditions of these communities could resonate through new developments – in signage, art, colour or texture.

### Celebrating The 'Royal' Borough

The borough can make more of its 'Royal' status, both to make it more culturally integrated and to tie new initiatives into a borough-wide identity. This could be rolled out with immediate effect, taking advantage of the established link with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee in 2012. New developments could take the form of naming strategies, visual motifs or design detail.

### The home of independent music

The area from Portobello Road, through Ladbroke Grove and beyond the Kensal Gasworks to Brent has been home to some of the most important black music in British cultural history. North Kensington has a valid claim to brand itself the UK's home of black music.

Alongside carnival, its heritage includes:

- Norman Jay MBE
  - Good Times Sound System
- Lovers Rock
- Broken Beat
- Goya Records
- Adela Studios and the Old Gramophone Works
- 4hero & Drum 'n' Bass
- Neneh Cherry and Rip Rig & Panic
- The Tabernacle and Powis Square's new bohemians
- Mangrove, Ebony Steel bands and Carnival Mas
- Tim Westwood and UK Hip Hop
- Many independent record shops and distributors

# RARE BOOK PRINTS PHOTO





This cultural brand can become a powerful identifier in the North Kensington development areas, not only reflected in their choice of public art, but also in the choice of creative industries which can inhabit new developments, giving vibrancy to the local area.

### Placemaking with public art

We believe that there are two main ways for public art to be part of the developers' cultural palette:

1. To build upon and complement existing public art.
2. To tie new developments into the surrounding area with a coherent public art strategy which resonates and finds echoes in the surrounding area.

There are some notable examples of public art in the borough, particularly to the north, instigated by the Westway Project and its legacy. The work is of variable quality, but we believe that it should not be discarded but rather built upon. For instance, in new developments around Trellick Tower, Wornington Green and Kensal Gasworks, there is the opportunity to use existing public art initiatives as a basis for a North Kensington style.

Across the borough, there is an opportunity to use blank walls and hoardings as a "canvas" for art commissions. These would form part of the public art strategy for each new development.

Although there are a number of large employers in the creative and cultural sector – Associated Newspapers, the Exhibition Road museums, some record companies and architects' firms – most creative businesses in the borough are small. The majority have always been based in the borough and are well-established.

CASH  
BUT SPIRIT  
YUKON / ASK



# Cultural Interventions

## A series of initial ideas for consideration.

The arts are central to the identity of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. They come alive to residents and visitors through our festivals and outdoor events, through world-class museums and galleries, and through the network of studios and creative industries that provide a cultural DNA for the borough.

We now have the opportunity to harness the creativity of our citizens and the emerging cultural sector to influence the placemaking agenda, and help landowners, developers and their project teams develop a vision for strategic development sites across the borough. The present Cultural Placemaking publication aims to meet the growing interest of property developers in culture-driven regeneration, and inform decisions at every stage of the development process: from masterplanning and architecture to public art; from meanwhile uses to cultural partnerships and the marketing and promotion of new places.

Investors and consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of real places and locations. We feel the time is ripe for a new approach to placemaking, in which consultation and engagement are meaningful and directed. Such an

approach offers ideas, opportunities and partnerships for the developer, and connects project teams to organisations and individuals who can provide an authentic identity for redevelopment areas. We believe the vision for the new development sites should be informed by a cultural audit, which provides in-depth research into history, heritage and contemporary identity. Awareness of the opportunities provided by localness will help the creative application of stand-alone artworks, art interventions, art and architecture projects, innovative approaches to infrastructure, wayfinding, signage, street furniture, lighting and the use of temporary projects to animate brownfield sites. This Cultural Placemaking guide offers developers a toolkit for building places where the contemporary, cultural and real identity of an area genuinely influences the identity of each new development site.

The introduction of arts and crafts into the architecture, landscape and infrastructure from the outset leads to a culturally rich urban landscape that engages and enhances the local area, while simultaneously creating a range of measurable values for the developer. We believe there are many opportunities for embedding culture in new developments, from the use of commercial space for the creative industries, to cultural partnerships with local, regional, arts and community organisations .

We want to encourage partnerships that are positive and forward looking, that see the benefits of cultural capital generated by local communities and businesses connected by a common goal. Cultural partnerships can help fill new commercial spaces, provide ideas for the animation and sustainable use of the public realm and encourage great architecture, interesting street furniture, thoughtful public art and intelligent wayfinding, each contributing to the unique visual identity of the Royal Borough. Each of our strategic redevelopment sites has all the ingredients needed to make it a truly great place, home to distinct and vibrant communities made up of people, traditions, customs and cultural activity from across the world.



## Ten Embedded Arts Ideas

### 1 Art and Architecture



The external skin, cladding, glazing and design of a building can be treated as a large-scale sculpture, transforming it from mere functionality into a dramatic and iconic work of art. Such a commission can take into account external features such as the cladding treatment, relief works or the use of colour and pattern. A temporary artwork or super graphic can enhance windows and façades, through the application of graphics or as a projection surface.

A programmable lighting scheme can help a building change colour, provide kinetic movement, and relay text or imagery. Interactive LED lighting can provide animation through programmed shifts in colour. Working in collaboration with artists and lighting engineers, the design team

can create an ever-changing and evolving work of art, which acts in response to changes in natural light and climate.

Essential lighting can also be incorporated, making a vital contribution to external landscaping, illuminating public areas at night, outlining pedestrian route ways, and drawing in visitors to a focal point.

## 2 Graphic Applications



The application of graphics can be translated onto both interior and exterior surfaces of buildings, including walls, floors and ceilings. This creates a unique environment, which encourages the engagement of people using the space.

Key considerations include the influence of communication graphics, signage and advertising.

Works embedded into the internal fabric of interior spaces are robust, durable and easy to maintain. Temporary graphic works, such as hoardings, banners and flags, also serve both functional and aesthetic purposes. Such works can change over time, as part of an ongoing art programme.

## 3 Glass



Glass elements of a building can become canvases for artists. Imagery such as photographs, text, graphics and colour can be transferred to glass through durable vinyl and etching processes. Small-scale images, patterns and colour can be etched or printed repeatedly throughout a building on individual window panels.

## 4 Street Furniture



This is visually more interesting than the traditional palette of urban street furniture, while no less functional. We understand street furniture to include all of the following as they exist in the public realm:

- Bollards
- Cycle racks
- Embedded text
- Gates and fencing
- Hard landscaping
- Lighting
- Play equipment
- Public art
- Seating
- Signage
- Soft landscaping
- Tables
- Temporary architecture

## 5 Lighting



The use of lighting in new development areas can provide a wide range of place-making opportunities. It can accentuate routeways and entranceways, provide atmospheric lighting, creating a sense of warmth and vibrancy, illuminate buildings, infrastructure, landscape and the public realm, and provide drama and focus, safety and animation. Options include:

- Colours/temperatures
- Computer operated, programmable lighting linked to water features
- Green lighting powered through wind, sun, movement, and sustainable energy
- Internal lighting within architectural spaces
- Moving (kinetic)
- New media showing text and animation
- Projection of images, animations, text and films on key surface areas
- Stand-alone, commissioned public artworks
- Suspended lighting to create carnival or festival lighting in the squares, park spaces, recreational riverside
- Temporary lighting
- Wayfinding

## 6 Naming Strategy



A naming strategy can start off as a competition to create new names for the buildings, gardens, roads, squares and places within a redevelopment area. Names can celebrate the heritage and history of an area, famous people and events, a mercantile or trading past. Alternatively, names can accentuate the present activity and identity of the area.

## 7 Wayfinding



Wayfinding for an area can be distinct, local and original, delivered through commissioned design features with a strong visual presence. Wayfinding can be temporary, linked to flags and banners, hoardings and social media, planting and landscape. Possibilities range from specific sites or journeys and movement, which might include audio work, to a fully integrated approach linked to all aspects of the architecture, infrastructure and landscape of the site.

- A naming strategy
- Art in the public realm
- Clear information on places, amenities for visitors and residents
- Colour, pattern, texture and form

- Creating places for live events and activities
- Defining a site's key points through the architecture and infrastructure
- Heritage and history
- Historical and anecdotal information
- Maps showing the development site and its connections to external communities, amenities and businesses
- Navigation and use of public spaces
- Navigation information through a range of signage and information
- Small-scale sculptural markers through street furniture
- Text/symbol based signage embedded in route ways and paving,
- The character of streets, avenues and boulevards, piazzas, squares and parks

## 8 Communities



Good Cultural Placemaking is about developing public realm, architecture and an identity that references the locale and the communities nearby whether people, places, businesses, trades, history and heritage, sports and wellbeing, the arts, food, language and identity. Involving the communities in establishing the identity of new developments can lead to:

- An improvement in educational resources and knowledge
- The creation of a 'can do' approach to local issues
- The creation of new networks and contacts for the area
- The development of local pride and distinctive identity
- The growth of skills and knowledge
- The improvement of the local environment
- Widespread belief in an area's ability to change and renew

Local champions act as advocates for the cultural programme. Individuals with an interest in the long-term cultural identity of an area can provide a vital link between the professional skills of arts educational bodies and the pool of talent and ideas in the community. The net result is that community leaders become familiar with the training, support and language required to make a real contribution to the cultural programme of the area.

## 9 Commissioning Artists for Embedded Arts Programmes

Wherever possible, public art and embedded arts projects should be developed through a shortlisting process, the presentation of ideas, and a selection process involving a curator and representative panel. The project brief should ask the artist to address issues such as:

- Accessibility to a wide range of users, ages, ability levels
- An understanding of fabrication, engineering, design, and costings
- An understanding of installation and legacy issues
- Evidence of previous work
- Experience of working in collaboration with other disciplines
- The heritage and history of the site

Opening embedded arts programmes to a variety of specialist disciplines will ensure that the responses are diverse. A competitive tender approach will encourage artists to work as imaginatively as possible, while retaining a practical and functional focus. The winning concept could go into production to be installed permanently across the site.

Lead artist commissions are best developed by integrating artists into the design team, which then works alongside architects and landscape architects, in close collaboration with curators. Lead artists are selected through a competitive process.





## 10 Project Toolkit

A placemaking toolkit can inform development design teams of the range of opportunities of any particular area, including ideas on:

- Appointing curators and lead artists to work alongside the project team
  - Developing a 'meanwhile programme' of temporary use
  - Developing a placemaking toolkit for the project team and future phases
  - Developing the idea of the arts as catalyst for the interpretation and celebration of the history and heritage of the site
  - Encouraging appreciation of local wildlife and ecology, history and heritage
  - Encouraging artists to respond to the historical and contemporary identity of the area
  - Encouraging festivals and live events
  - Encouraging interdisciplinary practice and collaborative partnerships between artists, designers, cultural organisations and the project team
  - Encouraging the participation of local people, schools, cultural sector, business organisations and other interested parties
  - Engaging individuals, organisations and communities in influencing the look and feel of new developments
  - Ensuring that the cultural offer adds to the wider creative and cultural identity of the area
  - Identifying local education providers, schools, colleges and universities
  - Opening up the development sites to 'meanwhile' uses
  - Providing a contextual relationship with the site through an understanding of the history and contemporary identity of the locality.
- Providing creative industry space for a range of cultural uses
  - Providing opportunities for local involvement through a programme of community events and a culture-focused consultation and engagement programme
  - Providing partnership opportunities between the developer, the borough, local businesses and community groups
  - Seeding ideas for later phases of the development
  - The key characteristics of a local area, through its history, lives, heritage, architecture, hidden places etc.
  - Using a website to record and report on the best ideas
  - Using history and heritage to inform ideas for the parks and open spaces, trails and signage, temporary events and interpretation
  - Using hoarding space as a visual celebration of the history of the area
  - Using local and specialist knowledge to inform the project briefs, projects and creative practitioners
  - Using local history and hidden memories of a place through contemporary interpretation





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# Next Steps

To help realise the Council's vision for cultural excellence in the Borough, developers are encouraged to:

- Explore the heritage and the contemporary cultural context of their sites
- Brand and animate their developments via new cultural spaces, cultural partnerships and programming
- Be imaginative and bold in their thinking and their proposals
- Broker relationships with the cultural organisations that can provide content for new cultural spaces or festivals
- Connect new provision into the cultural life of the Borough including through marketing, signage, and engagement with residents.

The Council will support developers in the generation and realisation of cultural proposals.

It will:

- Offer advice and guidance on the cultural elements of developments

Meanwhile cultural organisations and practitioners may wish to:

- Assess their ability and readiness to work with developers
- Approach developers with the aim of forming partnerships on new developments.





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# Report Partners



The Culture Service at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

... is committed to encouraging arts and creativity, in all its forms, for the benefit of residents, and all who work in or visit the borough. We work with a large number of partners – across the Council, across a broad swathe of the business community, and with the voluntary, education and not-for-profit sectors – to develop and enhance still further the Royal Borough's outstanding reputation for innovation, excellence, and creativity.

For further information about this document, please contact John Hampson Senior Strategy Officer, Arts and Culture, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

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## FUTURE\CITY

Futurecity

Futurecity is the UK's most successful culture and placemaking consultancy. We work in partnership with property developers across the UK. We argue that for everyone involved in property development, culture should be seen as a long-term investment that builds real places through activity and animation, offers authenticity and ultimately raises values.



BOP Consulting

BOP Consulting specialises in culture and creativity – their role in social and economic development, and their impact on the environment. We use our knowledge to develop public policy, and to advise clients in regeneration, property development, innovation, education and the third sector.

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