

This gazette is published by Can Altay & The Showroom, as part of Can Altay's exhibition *The Church Street Partners' Gazette*, 13 October - 4 December 2010

the Church Street partners



gazette

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From mid-October until the end of November 2010, The Showroom was turned into the production site of a newspaper: *The Church Street Partners' Gazette*. The project drew on research and dialogues with a wide range of people connected to The Showroom's neighbourhood. The *Gazette* was created through open workshops that included headline-writing, storytelling, and public discussions focused on 'Partnership and Transformation' and 'Boundaries and Communities'. Areas of investigation included rights to space, promises and threats related to regeneration, the limits that are presented by physical, social, political and economic boundaries, and ways to expand the notion of partnership beyond its economic and juridical use.

One of the main goals of the *Gazette* has been to address general issues related to city spaces all around the world, whilst locating these debates specifically in Church Street. This *Gazette* does not claim to provide an accurate knowledge or understanding of the area, but does claim the right to produce such knowledge and provide one possible way of doing it. The readers of this edition will find that it contains a wide array of contributions, ranging from experts to the harshest

critics, and from local professionals to the people who live, walk, read and breathe Church Street on a daily basis.

Living elsewhere, I am essentially coming to this as an outsider, however the observations and intense discussions that have taken place around the project lead me to believe that such a publication is a valid tool to address important issues that are affecting the area. My hope was that a contingent community might emerge out of the process of making a publication, and while some of the contributors have not even met one another, they did come together in these pages.

Much of the *Gazette's* contents were sourced through an open call for authors announced through neighbourhood notice boards and some proactive recruitment by the editorial team. I would like to thank all of the contributors to this issue, in particular those who were instrumental in supporting its production, including Ismail Bingor, Robert Goldie, John MacDonald, Emma Smith, Jonathan Mosley & Sophie Warren, Bahbak Hashemi-Nezhad, Chloe McCarthy & Magdalena Novoa, and Victoria Oliver. I am also very grateful to the speakers who contributed to the Discussion Events, and the participants of the workshops.

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EDITORIAL CONTINUES FROM PAGE 1 »

As an arts organisation that is situated in the middle of the neighbourhood, The Showroom was the headquarters for the *Gazette*, and an exhibition the setting for its production. The space was structured to not only host the various activities associated with its editorial formation, but to also frame this process.

A display structure incorporating large headline boards separated two areas of the space: a meeting area where content was generated through open discussions and research, and a process corner where viewers were given tools to input comments into the exhibition. These were accompanied by a photographic survey of the area highlighting neglected spaces and a video of the first edition of *Rogue Game*, a collaborative project involving the simultaneous play of three games on the same pitch, the second version of which was realised with Jonathan Mosley and Sophie Warren in Church Street's Eden House Estate and forms the sports pages of the *Gazette*.

The *Gazette* greatly benefited from the hospitality of Emily Pethick, director of The Showroom, and all of the gallery's staff including Kate Stancilffe, Natasha Tebbs, Louise Shelley, Holly Willats, Lily Hall, and Debbie Herring. I would also like to thank Emelie Ekenborn and Andrea Franke for all of their work towards the exhibition, and the unsung hero of the project, Daniel Mera has been there for every minute of its realisation, even risking his health in the process. The *Gazette* could in no way have been materialised without Asli Altay's input. I am also grateful to Eszter Steinhoffer and Muriel Salem for their own special introductions to Church Street's Market.

I hope that *The Church Street Partners' Gazette* will offer a glimpse of how we can think of our environments in ways beyond the given, dictated means, and of what happens when we decide to say something about them.

Editorial

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A Note On The Gazette's Headlines

Some of the headlines you will read throughout *The Church Street Partners' Gazette* do not relate directly to any of the reports and essays included. These headlines were the outcome of a Headline Workshop that was held on 3rd October 2010 at The Showroom. Run by journalist Victoria Oliver, this workshop involved intense discussions, in particular around problems in the area related to youth, crime, and public services.

Partnership and Transformation

Redevelopment Plans Revealed: HAVE YOU MISSED THEM TOO?

-  → Report
-  → Essay
-  → Opinion



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Discussion Event on 4th November 2010

Natasha Tebbs
reporter

The event commenced with an introduction by Emily Pethick, director of The Showroom, who outlined the history of the gallery and in particular the background to its move from Bethnal Green to the Church Street neighbourhood.

Can Altay, the artist responsible for *The Church Street Partners' Gazette*, spoke about the background to the project. His original idea was to produce a small local newspaper that covered issues relevant not only to Church Street but other cities and areas potentially or actually undergoing a transformation process. He described the exhibition as a 'setting' for the production of the *Gazette* in the sense that it was a venue for events and other ways to generate content. The first event, a Headline Workshop, focused on the key concerns of Church Street in relation to

the question of partnership, something that is embedded in the project and transformation processes generally. Altay aimed for the discussion to examine this further, and for it to encourage people to participate in the processes and claim partnership to a place. He considered himself and the *Gazette* as a partner to Church Street, and stated his responsibility for the project to feed back to the area via the *Gazette*.

Short presentations were given by four speakers: Ed Quigley from Church Street Neighbourhood Management, Hugo Nowell from Urban Initiatives who are preparing the master plan for Church Street, Jeremy Till, Dean of Built Environment and Architecture at University of Westminster, and Andreas Lang of Public Works, a London-based art and architecture group. These presentations addressed issues such as ownership of space, the challenges in drawing up and delivering a masterplan with a 20-25 year timescale, and the possibility of involving people in transformation using bottom-up processes and other more utopian ways of engagement. Other matters raised were the exposure of partnership as unequal and power-driven, and the vision of so-called partnership being replaced by mutual interchange where people respect difference and share understanding.

The discussion was then opened up to the audience and the

conversation initially focused on Church Street Market. Examples were given of positive action taken by market traders to address the needs of visitors, but there were also comments on councils not promoting or seeing value in street markets in the past and about which communities Church Street Market should serve.

Emily Pethick and Jeremy Till moved the discussion on to the practicalities of and motivations for private investment in the Church Street area with its 80% of public housing. Hugo Nowell responded,

"The private developers are interested in it because, in this area property values are so high ..."

Artist Emma Smith then raised the notion of citizenship and queried how transient communities fit into transformations. Jeremy Till noted this as a key question, as he believed that community consultations did not take disenfranchised people into account.

Ed Quigley talked about his experience of working on the Civic Streets project, which had its funding cut after two years of consultation, to which Jeremy Till noted that public trust was "a very fragile beast". Andreas Lang interjected with his view that consultation is very tokenistic and later spoke about the need for transformation to be led by self-initiated processes. However,

several speakers noted a lack of community cohesion in the area and a sense that some parties felt they had more rights than others due to the longer period of time they had lived in the area, a judgement that Can Altay described as "dangerous".

The last part of the Q & A focused on residents' resistance to change and how this may be eased if transformations are driven by a reimagining of space rather than by capital. But for now it seems that projects that *are* realised tend to be ones with a strong financial incentive.

Can Altay concluded the evening by acknowledging that issues related to 'Partnership and Transformation' remained unresolved, as might be expected, but that it was important to continue to question such matters in the open way they had been this evening.

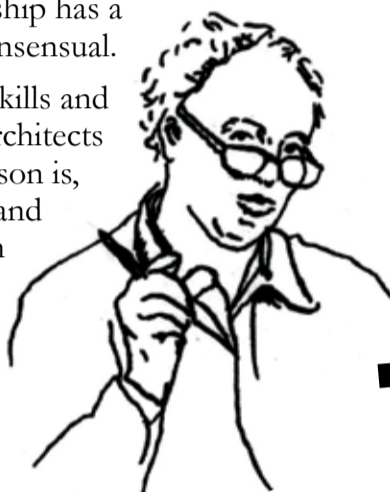


The below extracts are from statements of speakers during the discussion event on 'Partnership and Transformation'. The event took place at The Showroom on 4th November 2010.

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I think partnership is a terrible word, I think it's a word of political duplicity, and a much abused word. We need to rescue it from what's happened: first of all under the Tories, then under New Labour, and it's going to come back at us now, with a vengeance. And why partnership is a dangerous word is because it has a silent word in front of it, which is the word 'equal'. ... Power relationships are completely hidden within the term partnership, because of the silent 'equal' in front of it. The important thing in the forming of any partnership is to acknowledge both power structures and power relationships and yet, these have been missing within the political rhetoric of the partnership. Therefore the word partnership has a supposedly consensual basis to it, but is actually incredibly unconsensual.

Another part of partnership is to respect and acknowledge other people's skills and knowledge that may be better than yours. Professionals and particularly architects are hopeless at doing this, they do it in a completely token manner. The reason is, people define themselves as a professional by defining their knowledge, and therefore other people's is a threat to your professional authority. We can all be transformed through other people's knowledge and professionals find this terribly difficult because as soon as you accept that, you accept your own fragility and by doing so, you actually question your own professional capability.



Jeremy Till
dean of built environment and architecture at the university of westminster



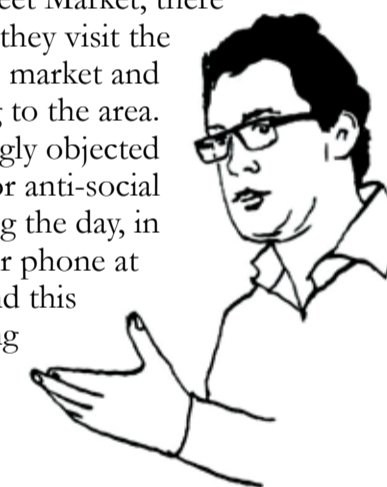
Can Altay
artist

There is something very specific about this area, it's located in a very specific place in London and has different dimensions within it.

Overall it is more about questions of rights to the city and to what degree we, or different groups who inhabit cities, partake in changes; to what degree they have access to change the city and are also able to change themselves with the city.

It's not about owning or belonging, or knowing or claiming a certain territory or power, it's about considering oneself as a partner, even if you are kind of passing by. And to take responsibility for my being here I wanted to turn the exhibition into something that in a sense feeds back to the area, the outcome of which will be in the form of a newspaper publication.

In 1998, a group of residents got together to try and tackle some really intolerable anti-social behaviour problems that were escalating on Lisson Green Estate – youths, gangs, violence, drugs, the rest of it. This group of residents was very effective in dealing with these problems, they engaged with Westminster City Council and the police, and slowly but surely they resolved a lot of the problems in the community. And born out of that was Church Street Neighbourhood Management. On Church Street Market, there are a couple of benches which people use when they visit the market. One of the ideas to help develop the market and make it more attractive was to add more seating to the area. But we came up against a barrier; residents strongly objected to any more seating as they saw it as a catalyst for anti-social behaviour; although such benches are fine during the day, in the evening when people are passing by on their phone at 1am, they decide to have a seat, have a chat and this potentially could disturb the residents, keeping them awake...it is quite a serious problem to residents, in the fact that they want to continue to enjoy their homes.

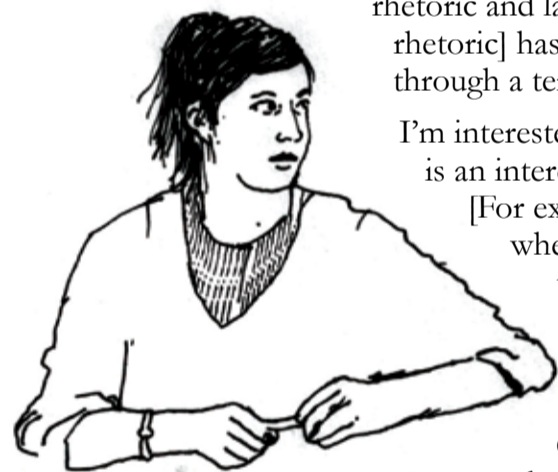


Edward Quigley
neighbourhood management officer

There is a rhetoric of us and the community around partnerships as there is a rhetoric and language in terms of art practice and collaboration. [Such rhetoric] has a means of masking a process of disempowerment through a terminology of empowerment.

I'm interested in thinking around the idea of being a citizen, which is an interesting word and has its own discourse in relation to this. [For example] the idea of being a citizen by defining a location where you live and therefore there being a different relation to what you feel able to enact within a space, how the right to a space is quantified and what this all means when it is considered in relation to other ideas of nomadicism and transient communities.

One of the frustrations and lack of trust in terms of people thinking about redevelopment is that in terms of time-frames when consultation is done and development is implemented quite often people who were consulted no longer live in it. How does a voice become valid and how do you quantify that?

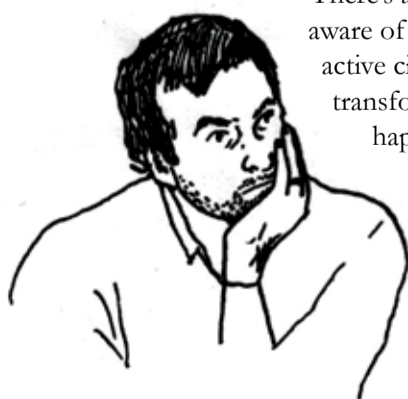


Emma Smith
artist

I feel my experience is centred around the idea of practising in public in the public space. The fact that you go hands-on and 'practice', is quite an important experience of taking ownership for the contributors. The market trader has this very physical engagement with the city, of making. I think this idea of practising within the city, physically adding to a city whatever way you do it, has a lot of impact. All this consultation is very tokenistic in my point of view because there is no real practice developing after the consultation, the practice of collaborative or collective imagination or space-making. That's what made us withdraw from this consultation process, we are interested in living [in] these moments of collective production. They are quite small, ephemeral and fragile. You get your hands dirty. I like the market because of that directness as well, partaking in the making of the city and undoing.

There's a real fatigue with engaging with this kind of culture of regeneration, and I'm sure you're aware of it. It's quite, without being intentionally so, patronising as a culture and it's not helping active citizenship. That's why I am interested in how one can create a dynamic that becomes transformative. The projects we are dealing with are small...but there are situations like this happening all over...against this corporate consultancy-driven process of rethinking the city.

And that is why I fear there is fundamentally a problem in that culture, in how it addresses the citizen and the city; that is my interest and my frustration. I know the examples I gave are very small projects, and maybe optimistic and naive, but for me they always try to test this other route. And I find more and more that these two routes cannot exist at the same time, they have to exist separately from each other. They're quite fundamentally different processes. We worked a lot with the councils to try to improve the public realm, and participatory projects, and they've always ended up being fake.



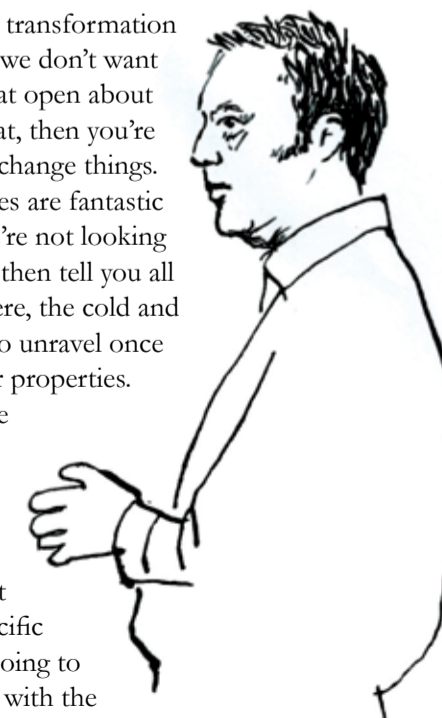
Andreas Lang
architect, public works

As part of Urban Initiatives, I have found the partnership and transformation process in the Church Street area very difficult. Partly because we don't want densification in this area, and so sometimes people are not that open about talking about problems, because they feel if they start to do that, then you're going to change things.

Often when we talk to people, they will tell us that their homes are fantastic and they don't need any changes. [Then later] we reassure them we're not looking at redeveloping the site any more, well, once we've said that, they then tell you all their problems: the fact that they've got water coming in everywhere, the cold and heating problems, all kinds of social issues in the area. It all starts to unravel once you've told them that you're not going to touch their properties.

So in terms of challenges, change is very difficult. People don't want to see change, or some people will want change and others won't. What it comes down to is entirely personal, people are concerned with what is changing in their own environment.

When we consulted with the neighbourhood on a range of development options in September [2010], people didn't want to look at the big picture but at their own home and their specific problems around that. When they then realised nothing was going to happen to their home, they were relieved and often didn't engage with the plans from then on. So change in general is very difficult and an ongoing challenge for us.



Hugo Nowell
architect, urban initiatives



PUBLIC 10
public space researchers

Tomatoes, chillies, cucumber and mint
Doesn't this all give you a hint?
Now it's time to say goodbye,
We gave saving them a try
We gave them a home
And now we left them alone,
No mushrooms now for our favourite gnomes
Before you make Church Street frown
Ask the people if they want it to go down.

Farewell Windrush



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BUS 78*



Setting: The number 78 bus (There has been an accident at Oxford Street station and the trains are not working so the bus is extremely full)

Downstairs a girl is sitting with her head against the window staring up at the sky.

Character 1:

I am sitting on the bus and daydreaming. Two years ago my parents decided to move to London and I felt emptiness in my life. It was a big change. I started a new school, which didn't feel good. I felt lost. I think of my friends in Sweden and the difference between Swedish and English schools. I think of what struck me when I first came to England – seeing how all the schools have different uniforms. And the buses – oh my god they are so big.

Two girls are standing squashed in the aisle downstairs.

Character 2:

I am excited and frustrated. I have been shopping with my friend: a summer dress, knickers and some earrings. I told my friend I didn't have enough money so we went to a cash machine but she couldn't find her card. We searched and searched but we couldn't find it so now we are on the way home.

A boy stands next to them with his mother and two brothers.

Character 3:

This is the first time I have taken the bus. A stranger shouts out to my mother: "Don't push me". "I didn't push you" my mother replies. The boy calls across to his mates: "this woman and her son just pushed me". I take my keys and slide them between my fingers ready to fight. My mum takes my hand and says "don't fight on the bus". I reply "let me fight please". "No," she says "not when I'm with you. When you are alone you can fight."

Upstairs a girl sits at the front with a view from the window. She has been up since 5am.

Character 4:

Last week I waited 20 minutes to take the bus, maybe even an hour. I hate the bus with all my life. It is always full. No one can get on, no space in the aisle. I hate standing waiting for the bus in the street. It's hard in the street. Now I just get up at 5am, get on the bus before anyone else.

A boy downstairs is standing anxiously by the door.

Character 5:

It is my first day at school and I am on a bus going in the wrong direction. I will be late. It is my first day and I am nervous. I can't speak a lot of English and I am worried I will be the only Arabic person there. I will be late on my first day and they will give me a detention.

The girl with her head against the window breaks free from her reverie. They have reached the last stop.

* Bus 78 was Co-authored by students from Quintin Kynaston School and artist Emma Smith as the result of a workshop held at The Showroom with Emma Smith and Can Altay as part of his exhibition *The Church Street Partners' Gazette*. This short fiction story is based on the student's first experiences of the local area, created by exploring the processes by which stories are reported on or retold. The story was contributed to by: Alaa Asghar, Madleen Ali Tahir, Ali Wadi, Ali Taki, Ahmed Suhail, Nian Ali, Quan Tang, Martina Parlicheva, Abir Taoube, Zanticole Daghouz, James Omo, Batoul Taoube, Marwa Nakmoussi, Orva Albazy, Nor Salam, Batoul Taoube, Yageen Osman and Karina Novogrodova.

SUPERMARKETS BATTLE OVER PARKING LOT

The Walker-Talker of Church Street

Louise Shelley
participatory projects coordinator,
the showroom

John MacDonald is the Community Engagement Officer at Church Street Neighbourhood Management and is also known as the Walker-Talker. His integral role links up the community, meeting and talking to as many local people and organisations as possible, explaining the work of Church Street Neighbourhood Management (CSNM) and encouraging them to get involved with CSMN and each other.

Being so closely involved with almost every aspect of daily life in the Church Street area, the *Gazette* was keen to talk to him about 'Partnerships and Transformation': who from the area he thinks 'claims' partnership and how they 'claim' it? What transformations he knows about or can envisage in the area and what the general feeling is about the transformations on the horizon. Finally, how CSNM and himself locate themselves in the midst of this process.

John has been working in the neighbourhood for 10 years now and when talking about the diversity of the area he states that in many ways this is the area's strength. There are many organisations all with different audiences and criteria but often these groups work together on projects, sharing resources and skills. He stresses the importance of communication to bring these partnerships together. He has also noticed bigger businesses getting more involved in the communities in which they are situated, crossing once set barriers between business and community.

John's role in setting up and developing partnerships in the area is hugely important, from organising school coffee mornings, to bringing representatives from various organisations to meet and talk about areas of concern. His infamous Welcoming Tour of the area for new arrivals to the different organisations working around Church Street enables an instant exchange of information between individuals and groups, and allows foundations for collaboration to be laid.

Outside of partnerships occurring amongst the various organisations in the area, John also talks of the sites where local individuals meet. In the café or hairdressers on a Saturday

perhaps, there is a lot of self-organised activity for collective gain. One partnership that isn't visible – the resulting problems of which are palpable to John and the community – is between the older and younger generations in the area. No common ground seems to be identified on which they can partner for combined benefit. John strongly feels that this balance needs to be addressed.

In terms of thinking about transformation, immediately John identifies the new *Futures Plan* for housing in the area, a 20-year programme looking to improve existing homes with a lot of flats being rebuilt. The residents are very sceptical of this and again John stresses the importance of communication in getting people on board. He hopes that, if one or two families will go through the process, then others will start to trust and see the benefit of a change that is desperately needed.

The other area in which John would like to see more transformation is the street market, which he feels is in need of upgrading and attention. In many ways it is completely individual to other London markets, having the street stalls at one end and a large indoor antiques market at the other, all alongside a mix of Middle Eastern cafés. This diversity is at the same time a strength and weakness of Church Street: communication and partnership is needed in order for each to support a collective goal and utilising the skills of everyone involved in the market is the way to succeed. Other transformations in the area can be seen in the improvement of public spaces, both on Church Street and Broadley Street Gardens. The new King Solomon Academy School is another positive new addition to the area, and another site where John regularly organises coffee mornings to talk about local concerns, issues and solutions.

In light of new spending cuts, it is also necessary to address the recent changes happening to the Church Street Neighbourhood Management, an organisation that was integral to the relocation of The Showroom to Penfold Street and to numerous other organisations succeeding in the area. CSNM, the organisation that John works for, is having to undergo major restructuring. With regret John accepts these changes, and despite them, is positive that CSNM will remain a hub for the community and local organisations and businesses. John's role will be reduced to three days a week but he has decided to work an additional day unpaid, saying that it is important to, "give back to the community what they have given me".

Church Street vs. Regeneration

PUBLIC 10
public space researchers

As PUBLIC 10, we are an independent group of students and residents of Church Street, formed to research public spaces and the social, physical and political systems governing them. At first we started observing the communities around Edgware Road, but soon we focused our attention on the Church Street area, its planned regeneration, possible demolition, and pending change.

We spoke to the people from Church Street Neighbourhood Management and are aware that consultations have taken place, but we can't help but question who gets asked and why others don't? How are disagreements between the interests of landlords and the interests of tenants dealt with? We also want to ask people, if any of them want to move, what they think about demolition and forced renovation; and what kind of changes they want and don't want?

To help answer these questions, we ask ourselves: who do we ask and how do we ask them? Instead of researching passively, our methods involve meeting and talking to people in natural environments and real situations. We are using these three methods to engage with the public (see illustrations on page 13):

1. We approach people carrying heavy shopping bags, as they are likely to be local residents, offer to carry their bags and ask to interview them along the way.
2. We present our questions and answers by speaking through megaphones in public spaces, so that everyone can hear.
3. If people are busy or working, we can go and meet them in their building where we can interview them, even in the lift. Such close proximity and limited time can provide us with some sharp responses.

Many of our group members are residents of Church Street, who want to know what we are going to see next in our neighbourhood. As local residents we feel that right now the area is like a big family, to which we can go for help in all of the languages that we speak: Arabic, English, Kurdish, French, Polish, Bengali, Farsi, Urdu, etc.

This family feeling can be seen in Windrush Garden, a community garden located behind Kennet House. Windrush Garden was one of the only mini-allotments in the neighbourhood. Six months ago the garden was at its peak, full of vegetables and there were competitions to see who could grow the biggest veg! But three weeks ago when we viewed the neighbourhood from the rooftop of Kennet House,

we realised that the garden was a lot smaller... we rushed down to investigate! We found many signs saying things like 'This garden will soon be removed', and 'If you are a grower, please remove your produce by the 31st October'. We were saddened by this news and wanted some answers. In the meantime we put up our own signs, telling the growers about who we are and asking them if they would donate any remaining produce to our project.

31st October has now come and gone. As one of the first evictions on Church Street, the garden's doors are now closed. But why are the doors closed? Is it due to local politics, or is it because the neighbouring houses are due for demolition? We see the uprooting of the garden as a symbol for the changes that will face the community. Could the loss of Windrush Garden be used to start a conversation on Church Street about more changes that are bound to come?

On 10th December we will be in Church Street Market to exhibit our findings and experimental research methods. We also want to take this opportunity to talk to you about the future of the neighbourhood. Come and join us for tea and food!

Public 10 was born out of a collaboration between students of Westminster Academy and the Centre for Possible Studies, an offsite project of Serpentine Gallery.

Susan Splender
writer

The expression, 'broad church' means an organisation of many people with different shades of opinion. That is certainly true of Church Street.

A church or temple, mosque or synagogue - all are holy places in which people pray to God. Church Street invites them to gather in daily worship of Money. Buying or selling, except on a Sunday - the mantra is always Money, it's a matter of Livelihood over Sainthood.

Some believe total devotion will bring a greater bank balance and create lasting Joy and Happiness - in short, Heaven on Earth! Others struggle with the weight of personal doubts. Or debts, perhaps.

Whichever it is, come rain or shine, ritual and prayer are conducted in an endless rhythm. Except on a Sunday.

Who are the leaders of this religion? That is a much disputed question. Certain sections of this Church (Street) welcome all in prayer.

There are the specialists in flowers, fish, fruit and veg, batteries, shoes and cleaning products. They tend their stalls like street-preachers and sometimes call out to passers-by, to draw them to their congregations. Yes, indeed, you have to heckle the shekel.

The Pound Shops at the west end by Edgware Road do not operate a strict door policy. Rich or poor, smart or modest, all are welcome. Say a prayer, spend a Pound.

At the centre of Church Street, you can say your prayer and 'spend a penny'. But that's another story - and don't forget to wash your hands, please.

On the eastern side approaching Lisson Grove, you may find it takes more than simply good personal hygiene, a penny or a pound to pass time in prayer.

Just a few steps take you from Low to High Church (Street). Here and there you

How to define
the spirit
of Church
Street?
Various
words spring
to mind.

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the spirit of CHURCH STREET

see humble outposts: a couple of cafes, hairdressers, convenience shops, a shoe cobbler, betting shop and pharmacy.

Mainly, however, it's individual denominations that practise the pursuit of Big Money, through prayer or other means. Within these walls reside the High Priests and Priestesses, sometimes also known as antique dealers, Keepers of Ancient relics and not-so-ancient artefacts.

Through their doors you may enter, typically to be met with a warm greeting. Then, a sharp glance from your shoes back up to your head again. Eyes narrow in critical scrutiny, valuation, evaluation and calculation. For a few seconds you become part of a mathematical equation, concluding in the realisation that you are not a serious prospect. The atmosphere turns very chilly. Time is Money. No deal, no prayer.

These are not places of confession, meditation or contemplation. No songs of praise are required of you, nor browsing, bargain-hunting or window shopping. Except on a Sunday (or weekday night), when nothing prevents hovering outside to gaze at the glorious loot within.

The highest manifestation of worship is the Alfies Antiques emporium. It rises from the ground like a grand cathedral stuffed full of glittering treasures. Take note, 'Mass' here refers to volume or wealth amassed, not a public religious service. Contemplate the sublime beauty within those walls. Prepare for peace to be rudely shattered upon discovery of the prices.

To worship at this end of the Church (Street), it helps to be rich or famous, or both. Seen now and again are celebrities, aristocrats and the occasional superstar. Tales of Madonna driving a viciously hard bargain or Guy Ritchie snapping up paintings have been added to local folklore. Sadie Frost and Sienna Miller have wandered this street - not likely to be hunting bowls of apples for a Pound.

For it is not the Truth within your heart, so much as the Truth within your pocket that speaks most powerfully to some sections of the Church (Street).

Of course, it's well known that some religious people make an outward show of their beliefs and customs - if you've got it, flaunt it! Others try rigidly to follow its rules, quite unable to relax through fear of (financial) damnation.

"I wouldn't say that I am religious, but I am very spiritual..." is a common saying among people these days. Practise your faith in your heart or privately in your home, goes another popular sentiment - who needs the institution of the Church?

Money is a hotly sensitive issue, but which topic is guaranteed to upset or ruin a dinner party? Or to divide a community?

Take your pick: Politics, Religion and Money.

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Church Street Market, A Stallholder's Story

E

Joseph Williams
writer

Alf and Mabel had worked their stall since the mid 1960s, but now the pace of change was beginning to feel too rapid for their comfort. They had started out selling fruit and veg, but over the years climate change had caused a seasonal variation in the world's weather, and availability of certain produce had become an issue. So they diversified into selling a small quantity of children's clothing and household utensils. Then the end of the 60s heralded the imposition of decimal currency, which practically everybody did not understand, at a cost to their business.

Not so long after the weight and measure inspectors were coming around telling all and sundry that the imperial system which goods had always been sold by was to be phased out, and would be replaced by the metric system used all over Europe. It would be impossible dear reader to repeat the expletives that greeted that suggestion.

So now Alf and Mabel were having to attend two lots of evening classes in order to get a handle on decimal money, using pounds, new pence and weighing out fruit and veg in kilos and grams. To add to these problems, the local council were coming around and measuring very precisely the exact space of the stall that Alf and Mabel took up in these originally cobbled streets at the start of their lease. Most, if not all traders in the market, observed a respectful distance from their nearest neighbour. But now with a painted yellow box, a stall number clearly marked on the roadway and a new intake of younger stallholders willing to take an inch off anyone's space, the matey atmosphere of the market seemed to be slipping away. Much to the regret of the old established residents, their own children, some with youngsters of their own, were not prepared to carry on the family business. So now in their late 50s and having held onto the stall for nearly 40 years, Alf and Mabel were staring retirement in the face. Despite this, they had decided that, just as an old soldier would, they'd sooner fade away than throw in the towel.



: it's freezing out here

Peter Duggan & Tamsin Bicknell
coffee stand owners

I was introduced to the Church Street area in June 2009; my first impressions were mixed. However, with my market stand in a key lookout spot on the junction of Salisbury Street and Church Street, I have grown to enjoy the diversity of the local characters, new and old, and the meeting of cultures in this bustling market.

I think I have been accepted by the people of Church Street and beyond, and have found a niche here. I saw a gap in the market in the area for speciality coffee; some people understand the point of what I'm doing, not all, but I have enjoyed the challenge of trying to bring them round! Fourteen months on and I think I have managed to persuade some of the doubters, and the business is doing well. There's a real community spirit between the stallholders and shop keepers, without which, Indie Coffee wouldn't have existed here.

Before Indie Coffee came to life, I had been made redundant, my previous employer being a victim of the recession. At this point I decided to take things into my own hands and create a small, well-run business that would employ me and hopefully contribute to the local economy. With a glut of places to get a decent coffee in the areas of London that I knew best, I took a chance on Church Street, and I'm glad I did.

Then one day their luck changed. They received a windfall from, would you believe it, the Inland Revenue. It seemed that over the past 20 or so years, they had been paying far too much tax and a handsome rebate cheque had landed on their doorstep. Well not surprisingly, Alf and Mabel were jubilant — now they would put Plan B into action. With the cash now available they would purchase a motor home, this would then double as a hot dog stall giving these senior citizens a chance to cease standing on their plates of meat.

However, Westminster Council noted that although the vehicle took up no more space than their original stall, this change of use of that market pitch just might raise some objections from the other stallholders. Not surprisingly there were other health and safety conditions to be met as well now they were preparing food to be cooked and sold to the general public. Within the confines of a street market there could be all kinds of objections, for instance litter being dropped and as with any other fast food outlets, the fear of attracting vermin to the area. Unbeknown to Alf and Mabel, a committee had been looking very carefully at the planning permission to implement this new venture by these well-known local citizens. As the years had rolled by, the multicultural nature of the street had brought with it fresh challenges by other traders wanting to serve hot food on their market stalls. Things were escalating now, and it looked like the local fast food conglomerates would claim that this proposed competition to their core business might seriously hit their profits. So the local council in conjunction with the local Trade Council were called in to set up a public enquiry.

My goodness thought Alf and Mabel, look what a can of worms we have unleashed! Not a few days later the space where Alf and Mabel were to set up their stall was surprisingly empty. This elderly couple had done a runner, deciding that market forces had called time on these stalwarts of the local community, and rather than endure possibly months of argument and counterargument, they had instead decided to pack their belongings and simply set off into the setting sun and retirement.

BOUNDARIES AND COMMUNITIES

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Can Altay's *The Church Street Partners' Gazette* continued with a discussion moderated by Can Altay about boundaries and communities with architect Neil Bennett (Terry Farrell and Partners), David Cunningham (University of Westminster), Chloe McCarthy (My City Too), Jonathan Mosley and Sophie Warren (artists).

Physical, social, economic and political, the boundaries in cities present a series of pressing issues. Departing from the idea that limits within cities are not immediately noticeable, but at times manifest themselves through extreme physicality, this topic focused on such visible and invisible boundaries; how they are negotiated, neglected, transgressed, or forcefully maintained both locally in Church Street and more widely within urban environments.

Church Street is an area that is defined in many ways by the wide range of communities that it hosts. Addressing both the structured community groups, as well as those who are situated on the more precarious margins of society, this discussion attempted to question to what degree these communities negotiate one another, and whether negotiation is a necessary approach to tackle issues that are raised across boundaries within communities both in Church Street and other urban contexts.

Neil Bennett, an architect at Terry Farrell and Partners, who have been based in the area for a long time, has great knowledge of the spatial aspects of the neighbourhood. His introduction was an informative narration on the historical formation of physical boundaries that have come to surround the Church Street area. These included the Regents Canal, railyards, and the Marylebone Flyover connecting to the Westway. He situated where we are and spoke about the particularities of the area especially in relation to the question of boundaries and their spatial implications, and vice versa, the social implications of spatial boundaries.

David Cunningham presented a more philosophical account on the question of boundaries in contemporary life. Cunningham is teaching at the University of Westminster's Department of English, Linguistics, and Cultural Studies, and is deputy director of the Institute of Modern and Contemporary Culture, but it's more his role as member of the editorial collective of the journal *Radical Philosophy* and his work on the politics of the urban space that brought him to this discussion. He was sceptical of the negative tone attributed to the notion of boundary, and warned the audience of the capitalist lingo that constantly addresses the abolition of any and every boundary. Keeping in mind this capitalist desire of not having boundaries on the one hand, and the State's capacity of knowing no boundaries to surveillance on the other, Cunningham discussed French philosopher Henri Lefebvre's proposition, 'right to the city', as a means to mobilise people politically. He underlined that there are certain boundaries one might want to defend and touched upon issues of housing benefit and council housing.

The discussion turned to certain practices in and about the urban realm. One being more formally structured and the other a more artistic take.

Chloe McCarthy is the manager of the My City Too project. She is engaged with the urban realm, especially in terms of questioning the decision and policy-making processes in the city. And with the project My City Too she is positioning young people within this, exposing them to these processes while addressing their voicelessness (or votelessness) in the shaping of urban public space. She followed David Cunningham's remarks by addressing public space, noting that the publicness of public space was another boundary to be defended.

Finally Jonathan Mosley from the artistic collaboration Sophie Warren and Jonathan Mosley spoke about *Rogue Game*. Mosley's remarks about the game put into question the concepts of boundaries and communities in relation to boundaries of movement and boundaries of behaviour and how they are manifested in sports and in life. See also an in-depth conversation on *Rogue Game* on our sports pages.

THE *independent* STATES OF CHURCH ST.



"Always disconnected":
Claim Church Street Experts

Abdul Ahad

writer

"So, where do you live?"

"Church Street/Lisson Green"

"Where is that?"

"Erm, in the Marylebone area"

"Wow, you must be rich."

And there it is. Marylebone, St John's Wood, Paddington, Regent's Park - whichever name you want to use to describe where we live, it doesn't tell the story about the actual area we live in. The Church Street ward has over the decades become gripped with the characteristics associated with an area suffering from ghettoisation. With above national average unemployment rates, below average wages being earned and percentage of young people going to university, not to mention the unsafe feeling many residents have due to

anti-social behaviour, it doesn't paint a very nice image of the area. This, along with many other factors, means that Church Street/Lisson Green is an area that is in the top 2% of the most socially deprived areas in the country. Do I feel as a resident of the Church Street ward that society has deprived me of its riches?

Let me explain. I didn't grow up in a nice big house with a big garden, in a very safe area and didn't go to a public school. Daddy couldn't buy me all of the toys that I wanted as a child or a car at 17. Even the 40p child bus fare was a stretch. But I wouldn't dare say to my father that society has deprived me of putting myself in a position where can I have of all those things. Alright, I no longer need the toys, but the nice house in a nice area is attainable. This is because the very generous society we live in has provided us with the tools in order for us to do so. Free education and health care, welfare for adults who need it, etc. We don't need to look far for inspiration. I would be lying if I

said that I would never want to live in the beautifully designed houses that can be found around Regent's Park, Hyde Park, the West End, Abbey Road, Little Venice, basically all of the wards that surround our own. Even within the Church Street ward, some very nice houses and flats can be found if you head towards the Marylebone Road.

But let's not only focus on the material possessions that measure success. The Church Street ward has its own wonders that cannot be found in our neighbouring wards. There are approximately 30 languages spoken in the area, bringing a wide variety of cultures which we can all learn from, a thriving street market on a Saturday which attracts people from well beyond our own ward, and perhaps the best thing about our ward is that it is located in the centre of one of the best cities in the world.

However, it is still important to aspire to better myself and look at life beyond Church Street. Today we

focus on the things we don't have, but our focus should be on the opportunities we have, but perhaps don't utilise. It is always easy to complain about the things we are lacking, but we should celebrate and utilise that which we do have, and aspire to move forward and grow not only in terms of material wealth, but also as human beings. We live in a city enriched with history and tradition. Despite our comparative lack of wealth in comparison to those in our neighbouring wards, we still have more than the basic amenities that people in many other countries have. We still have the freedom to make choices that affect our lives, and ultimately what more is there to life than celebrating the small moments of happiness that material wealth can merely contribute to, but cannot provide solely.

Magdalena Novoa
architecture and design educator

In the last decade we have seen significant policy changes and initiatives that seek to increase young people's participation in decision-making. Despite this, research still makes clear that many feel they have little or no influence in how their city is developed. By involving young people at a strategic level they will value, respect and take ownership of the spaces around them. Listening to them, making them more involved in the decision-making process and being advocates for good design in their built environment, will stimulate a life-long involvement as reflective and critical participants in their communities. As a new wave of regeneration projects unfold, My City Too, the Young Londoners' Campaign for Better Spaces and Places created by Open City, hopes to influence and advocate such changes on behalf of young people.

Young people are one of the largest sectors of the community, yet they cannot vote, but it is their city too. In addition, they are probably the sector of the community that spend more time in public spaces, such as streets, parks and shopping centres – one of the key user groups who live, learn, hang out and play in the city. My City Too communicates this to decision-makers and design professionals, highlighting how young people's views can play a key role in significantly improving the quality of the built environment for all members of society.

As part of their campaign in July 2010, My City Too Young Ambassadors took to the streets of London in a red Routemaster bus, which popped up during the bustling, lively Church Street Festival.

Using the bus as their platform, the Young Ambassadors spoke with residents and festival goers about what they wanted from their local built environment, taking into account the need to design spaces for every generation. Ideas, comments and pictures

were gathered on postcards and over 250 members of the public took part in the event. The My City Too team exchanged ideas with professionals and the wider community, focusing on one of their Manifesto points:

Every generation should have their own corner in public spaces, acknowledging their needs and making them feel welcome.

This is the only point in the Young Londoners' Manifesto with which some architects have said they disagree with. However, feedback from the Church Street community demonstrates that both generations of old and young agreed with this point of the Manifesto. The ask is not to design completely separate public spaces for each age group, as this has the potential to segregate the community. On the contrary, they propose shared spaces with well designed, designated areas specifically for the use of people from different ages taking into account their different needs.

"The experience of listening to the views of the public about the areas in which they live was both interesting and moving. I really want to make sure that their views are heard as well as mine!"

Carys Payne, age 16, Young Ambassadors

This discussion in Church Street led by young Londoners stimulated debate and better communication across the generations about how local public spaces can be better designed for the whole community. It also challenged design professionals to incorporate the ideas and aspirations of young and older Londoners alike into their new projects.

"It was a great experience to engage with the public in Church Street. Promoting our campaign I learnt so much about what Londoners really want from their outdoor spaces. This project has been invaluable as it has brought together people of my age who have the mutual interest to demonstrate a great ambition for young people to influence the improvement of London's spaces and buildings for all parts of society."

Robert Newcombe, age 15 Young Ambassador

NEIGHBOURS CLAIM PARTNERSHIP

It's
My City
Too!

WhiteKat on Church Street

Lana Vanzetta
director, whitekat

Once You Establish That The Ability To Give Goes Beyond Having, Everything Else Seems A Lot More Transparent.

WhiteKat website slogan

The Church Street Partners' Gazette meets Lana Vanzetta, director and driving force behind WhiteKat.

Gazette: So Lana tell us about the beginnings of WhiteKat?

Lana Vanzetta: I trained as a photographer, shooting for *The Face* and *Wonderland* magazine whilst also working on art-based projects with local young people, which led to teaming up with Kali Madden to create our first campaign, *Bedroom Business*. This was a high profile Sexual Health & HIV Campaign, working with local young people from Westminster to create a music song/video and documentary, that went on to win a *Government for London Best Practice* award in 2009. This was a multi-pronged campaign that saw young people creating podcasts, website content, a documentary and music video, all which can be seen online at www.bedroombusiness.nhs.uk

Since then we have continued to run outreach programs for at-risk youths within the London Borough of Westminster. Working with visual arts, music, fashion and sport, WhiteKat have sought to forge links between diverse groups as well as focusing on individual empowerment.

Gazette: Where are your offices based and what groups are you working with?

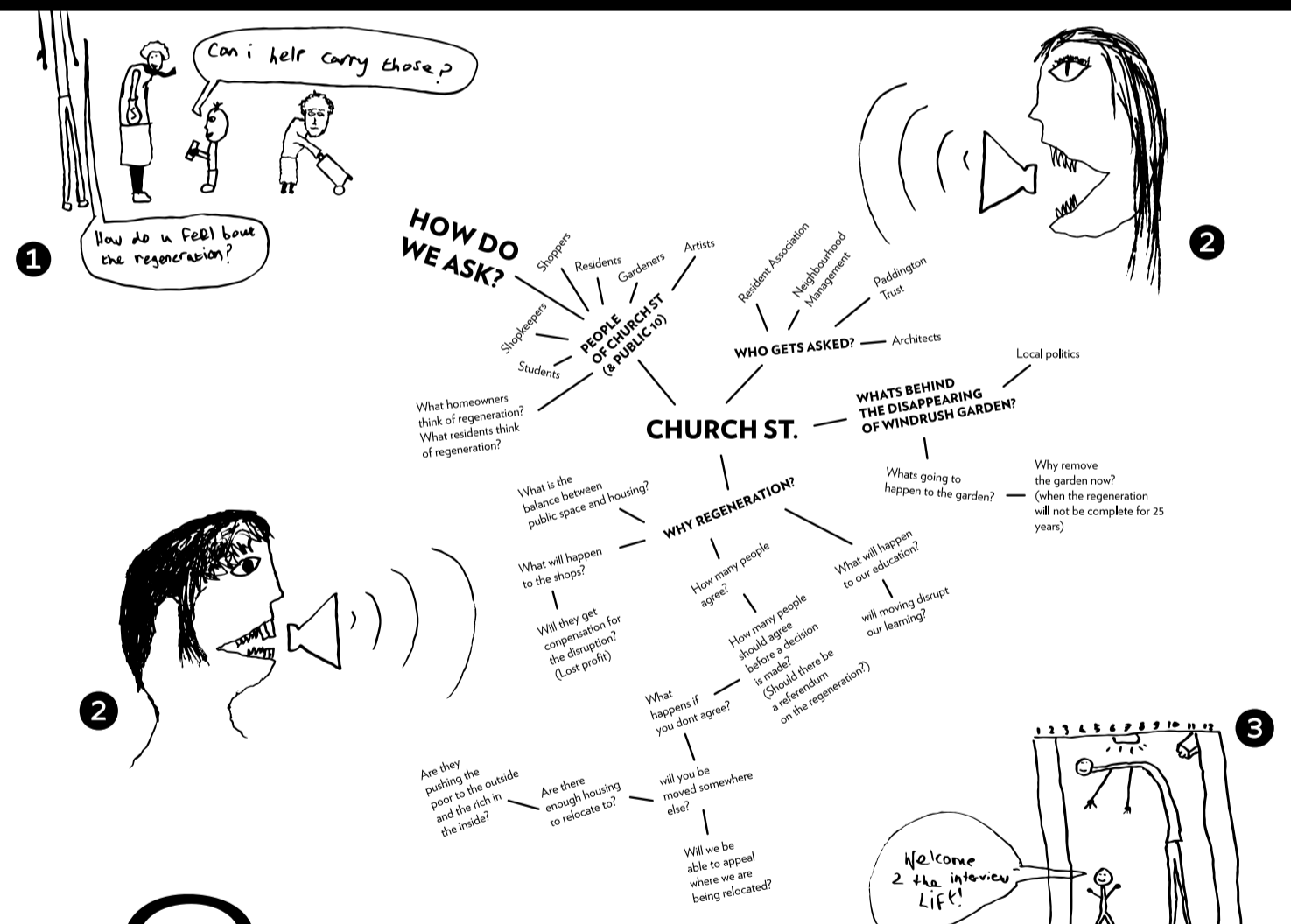
Lana Vanzetta: WhiteKat's offices are based on Church Street and we work with a lot of local community groups in the NW8

area, as well as in south and central Westminster. Outreach sessions in the area take us to Four Feathers Youth Club, London Tigers Football, Church Street Festival, Wilson and Nutford House student residences, football teams and skateboarders at Westminster Academy of Sport, and Paddington Arts amongst other places.

Gazette: What sort of projects do you organise?

Lana Vanzetta: WhiteKat hosts events and competitions for local young people to get involved in that focus on raising awareness of sexual health. We support NHS Westminster on The National Chlamydia Screening Programme by offering young people the opportunity to participate in something creative, sporty or fun while screening for Chlamydia. WhiteKat has put on several football tournaments, taken a Smoothie Van tour to young people in Westminster's housing estates, and held a competition to redesign the 't-shirt incentive' we use. Most recently we've been making sports-based YouTube clips engaging young local athletes to consider their sexual health for World AIDS Day 2010. For World Aids Day 2009, WhiteKat used street theatre to perform a powerful visual piece at London College of Fashion and on London's bus routes, including on the number 18, up and down Harrow Road (see whitekatlondon.com on vimeo).

WhiteKat work with a dynamic team of young people and they are the reason for its success. They come from fashion, sport and NEEETS, and they are fantastic in engaging other young people to promote sexual health, answer young people's questions through peer to peer education and encouraging young people to get involved creatively with what we do. We reach up to 1000 young people each month and we are very interested in the regeneration of the area. We look forward to being a part of a very exciting era, when young people are given a chance to showcase their skills and creativity in the *Futures Plan* for Church Street.



Investigation Tactics

PUBLIC 10
public space researchers

Drawings by
Muhammad Rashid

On Different Frequencies:
Youth warning over attempts to understand
life in Church Street

Spare Change?

if you can't imagine it, you can't ever change it.

Local resident Lily Hall interviews John Philips, from London Print Studio.

The Print Studio has been running on the Harrow Road, North Paddington, since 1974. It started as a visual arts project to assist community organisations to promote their ideas, and has continued ever since to support printmaking, the graphic arts and a wide range of initiatives within the local community.

Lily Hall

It would be really great to talk about the history of the London Print Studio, and how you started working in this area.

John Philips

Well, once upon a time, I left art school as a long-haired drug-taking radical who was entirely unemployable. And in the last thirty-five years my hair's got shorter. I came here as an artist and I was quite poor, and I actually wanted to make images with people who were of the same economic standing as myself. The idea of making images for a public that was much richer than myself seemed silly. I suppose I was part of a kind of anti-capitalist, anti-market driven movement that you can trace through Dada, Arte Povera, all of those movements. My generation was disenchanted with established political parties, and the Print Studio really grew out of that atmosphere.

Lily Hall

Could you talk about the role the Print Studio has played in the Harrow Road area, in partnership with different communities? In terms of regeneration have you seen any parallels with Church Street and the way the area has changed?

John Philips

I'm not so familiar with what's happening in Church Street, I would guess that people who are involved in regeneration or members of community groups don't necessarily look to artists as the solution to their problems. Some may be quite sceptical about what the arts are, and what they can bring; so the onus I think is on the artist to actually help people to understand how art can work for them. And that has to be very practical, people have to see and experience: 'Oh, they created that image and that image affected me' or 'They've created a network of events and that brought people together'. So whatever we do as artists, I think we're always having to demonstrate how useful the arts can be, as it's not necessarily obvious to people.

Even when it is obvious, that's not necessarily directly transferable. People don't necessarily automatically think 'Ah, here's a social problem, I'll find an artist'. I think there's a delicate

balance between the idea that art can be a tool for change, and is something in-and-of-itself.

I think we make images to help us to understand the world anew, a world that is always changing, and we need to be involved with people in order to understand what those changes are. I mean, art is not a tool for social change alone – it is much more than a vehicle for something to happen. I think it's important to ask the question, what is the difference between some kinds of work and community work? When work is really strong it resonates on a whole number of different levels. There can be a superficial role and function to the work to help to change things, but somehow the image has to have a deeper meaning and a deeper resonance. [Referring to the *Gazette*], I suppose I would hope that the typography of the newspaper itself is exciting, and the prose is like a kind of poetry – that it is multi-layered.

Lily Hall

One focus for the *Gazette* has been to talk about the idea of boundaries: how communities create their own boundaries, and how cities and urban spaces build up boundaries for communities. What's been your experience of these kinds of things in Harrow Road and around the London Print Studio?

John Philips

I think it's difficult to see the difference between a psychological barrier and a cultural barrier. It's Badiou's notion of 'habitat', that we live within a cultural bubble which is to some extent a reinforcement of our childhood experience. Some cultures have a more permeable 'habitat bubble' than others, and people self-select into the areas that they feel free to move. So in any given space we experience a maze of barriers that are invisible to others outside, but which are very evident to those who are within. The trick of making 'bubbles' permeable is to somehow create a third space which is outside of people's experience, but which is welcoming and unthreatening. A space where you don't have a preconception that you're not supposed to go there.

People police themselves more than they are policed. How do you create third spaces which are open, friendly, and make it possible for people to engage or interact? That's one of the big problems of urbanism – that it brings communities together but it doesn't facilitate or inhibit their interaction. Conflicts come from misunderstandings that result in yet another invisible barrier.

I think the Print Studio tries to create third space experiences. A cafe – or any social space – is a potential third space. The arts

Ismail Ali
writer

A question for you: what is your mental image of a homeless person in this city? Perhaps a shabby outfit, a wasted figure, an outstretched hand? A long face and low voice, asking passing strangers for "any spare change?"

Top of the Pops in typical responses may go like this:

- 1) "poor thing – have some loose change"
- 2) "no – I will not subsidise your drinking or drug-taking"
- 3) "yes – and I bet you live in a penthouse up the road"
- 4) "I don't give money... but would you like a sandwich?"
- 5) "erm... I buy 'The Big Issue' sometimes, so I do my bit"
- 6) "cheeky beggar... get off your **** and get a job!"

Charming. Of course, *The Big Issue* magazine is due credit for giving the homeless a legitimate means to earn money, build self-respect and upgrade in public status from lowly 'beggar'.

Earlier this year, on Church Street, the soul of that brilliant idea enjoyed a 21st century reincarnation. Tuesday 5 January. Christmas and New Year had fast melted, now replaced by a sheet of snow and bitter wind. But at Patrick Heide Gallery a handful of artists warmed a strong and appreciative crowd with their debut show. It represented months of intense work and a flowering of creative talent, formed against the long hard years of homelessness.

Seymour Homeless Art Collective (SHAC) was formed in autumn 2009 and soon inspired those around them with an extraordinary energy and sense of commitment. I volunteered to write a personal biography for each artist and to document their progress from show to show.

It's not hard to imagine how good people fall through cracks in the fabric of society. Take a few poor decisions, pour in some bad breaks, shake up the situation; you have a potent cocktail that can derail and wreck a life. I fell under such a negative spell myself one time. These days, I am resettled close

to Church Street and feel relatively fortunate in my current position.

Naturally, I am keen to champion this very local story of success. It may sound corny, but it's a tale of triumph over adversity, hard work over hard luck. By applying their time and talent, people really can direct destiny away from the derelict and towards the divine.

The artists are Derek, Joseph, Mary, Rene, Richard, Robert, Stephen, Widget and Zach. Some are resettled in either temporary hostel or permanent accommodation. Others remain on the street and depend on day centres for essential services: food, clothing, laundry and crisis support, as well as training, learning and development.

SHAC enjoys a public profile that grows day by day, supported by the West London Day Centre on Seymour Place and City of Westminster College. In under 10 months they have notched up an impressive set of achievements.

A second show at the Subway Gallery in Paddington pulled a crowd including established artists and dealers. A good number of pieces sold quickly, leaving our artists wearing broad smiles. Warm thanks go to both Patrick Heide and Subway Gallery for their support and good faith.

Meanwhile, news of our story reached further afield, as Tate Modern expressed interest in a future collaboration! No time for any nerves to kick in, the Museum of Everything held a summer event at the Tate, inviting the public to show up with their own art. Pieces approved by the judging panel were to enter the Tate's permanent archive. The event was mobbed by large crowds, but the tension of waiting was rewarded by acceptance of one of our artist's work.

I'd like to thank you, reader, for taking this trip with me. The story continues to unfold as we prepare for the next show. It is likely to be held within the Kingdom of Church Street!

Finally, anybody considering the odds of turning a long-held dream into reality, please consider the ages of our artists. The youngsters start around mid-40s to 50s. Mostly, they touch gracefully into their 60s, 70s, 80s. Food for thought: it's never too late, and all that!

interview

LONDON PRINT STUDIO

Lily Hall

Yes. You instigated a project back in the 80s that took place in a bus shelter and as a local newspaper outside the Print Studio. Could you talk about the idea behind that project?

John Philips

It did involve a community newspaper. We built a shelter outside the building because there was a bus stop there but not a shelter. We created a projection window out of the public loos and we also ran a cable in there so we could play music. We had a space for a community newspaper, and made posters and postcards. I have to confess the only audience were hookers or lost cats! But it was quite amusing to watch people being played music while they were waiting for the bus. Some great things happened: the day after Carnival we were able to project the images of the festival back, so people could reflect on them. The newspaper was more of a 'what's been happening this month?' local paper. It was called *Bus Stop* after the Marilyn Monroe movie.

Lily Hall

You talked earlier about your personal view of the roles that culture can play in regeneration. I think you'll need to get back soon [to the Print Studio] but do you have any final words?

John Philips

Well I think I'd end with Blake's words that 'What is now proved was once only imagined'. Our job really is to help people to imagine.

R

Eszter Steierhoffer
curator

I've always been a regular visitor of the Edgware Road neighbourhood, but came across the Church Street Market only recently. Church Street is minutes away from Oxford Street, Marylebone or Paddington stations and yet, it still feels somehow 'off the map'. Despite its central location it stays a disconnected, hidden pocket of the city. This seemingly inconvenient infrastructural separation, however, is not in all aspects that disadvantageous, but has to a great extent, contributed to the sustention and preservation of an autonomous and unique local scene.

Church Street is colourful and many faceted, the street market and the variety of its cheap off-licence shops, small cafes and fast food restaurants typify a rare and somewhat unusual multicultural environment. That is in great contrast with other prevailing visions of the street: the Alfies Antique Market and the high-profile antique or contemporary design galleries and showrooms. The multiplicity and (not always smooth) coexistence of different layers and microcosms along with the variety of architecture, ranging from old Victorian and Georgian terrace houses to the predominant modernist social housing, results in a particular richness and diversity within Church Street.

But how do aubergines relate to all this?

An exhibition called *Anatomy of a Street* ** took place on Church Street in June 2010. The exhibition proposed to look at sites of accelerated urban transformation and to explore how architecture is embedded in social, political and economic contexts, by mapping local communities, migration, gentrification and local businesses. This project provided the framework for my collaboration with Bahbak Hashemi-Nezhad, an artist and designer who proposed the Aubergine NW8 project. This involved us setting up a market stall for a short period of time on Church Street to sell aubergines and gather recipes. Running the market stall was a direct way for us to learn about Church Street and its ethnically diverse community.

While in traditional English cooking the aubergine might seem unusual, cross-culturally it is a popular staple ingredient. This is well illustrated by the number and variety of the home cooking recipes that our project accumulated in the duration of a few days. Talking about aubergines provided opportunities for informal meetings and conversations, and the Church Street Festival was a particularly good occasion to cook and share some of the collected aubergine recipes.

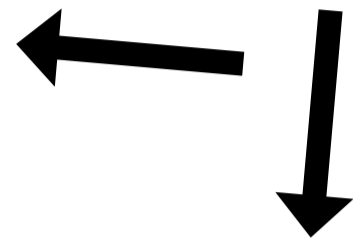
As our contribution to the first issue of *The Church Street Partners' Gazette* I would like to publish a small selection of these recipes from our project in Church Street.

* Recipes are provided generously by residents of Church Street and written up rigorously by Bahbak Hashemi-Nezhad.

** *Anatomy of a Street* was an exhibition curated in shop windows and market stalls by Levente Polyak and Eszter Steierhoffer.

Gathering of
more than two
not welcome

NW8: Church Street and the Aubergine



RECIPES

#1

Tortang Talong
philippines

Serves 3

INGREDIENTS: 9 aubergines (small thin variety), 1 egg, butter, salt, pepper

Grill/bake the aubergines until they are soft and cooked thoroughly.

Once the skin is loosened and toasted, peel the aubergines, making sure the stem is attached.

Hold the stem and mash the aubergine flat, but so that the aubergine is still intact.

Beat the egg in a bowl and add salt and pepper.

Dip the flattened aubergine in the egg mix.

Pan-fry the egg battered aubergine on both sides with a little butter.

Serve as is.

#2

Mashi Badenjan
iraq

Serves 3

TRIVIA: Due to its easy self-cultivation and low price, the aubergine was called the Friend of the Family during the near-total financial and trade embargo placed on Iraq by America in the 90s.

INGREDIENTS: 8 aubergines (small fat ones), 1 bunch of parsley, 500g mince meat, 2 cloves of garlic, 1 large onion, olive oil, salt and pepper, tomato puree, pomegranate sauce.

Split the aubergines open and pan-fry in a little bit of oil until tender.

In another pan, fry the following with a little oil: finely diced onion, 1/2 bunch of chopped parsley and crushed garlic. Cook until the onions are brown, then add the meat, salt and pepper and gently simmer.

Stuff the split aubergines with the meat mix and lay in a shallow oven tray. Pour on top some tomato puree and a little bit of pomegranate sauce.

Place in the oven for 30 mins at 180°C.

Serve warm with bread or rice.

#3

Untitled - Whole Stuffed Aubergine
south india

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS: 10 aubergines (small short ones, or small thin ones cut in half), 1 cup of coconut, 1 cup of ground peanuts, 1 bunch of fresh green coriander (leaves only), salt, pepper, chilli powder (optional), 3 medium sized tomatoes (fresh), 2 teaspoons of ginger (paste or fresh), 3 teaspoons/cloves of garlic (paste or fresh), a pinch of sugar, 2/3 teaspoons of cumin powder, 1 teaspoon of coriander powder.

Use a blender to make a paste from all the above ingredients.

Top and tail the aubergines.

Split the aubergines with a 'X' cut from the top to 3/4 of the way through, making sure to keep the aubergines intact.

Stuff the aubergines with the mixture above, and place in a large pan or wok with some olive oil.

Cover the pan and cook gently for 30 mins.

Serve with rice or bread.

DISPERSAL ZONE DECLARED:

#4

Francesco's Spontaneous Italian
Aubergine Alla Parmigiana de la
Liguria From the former cook
to the Queen of England

Serves 2

INGREDIENTS: 1 large aubergine, béchamel (425ml milk, 40g butter, 20g plain flour, salt and freshly milled black pepper, pinch of freshly grated nutmeg), 80g of freshly grated Parmesan cheese.

Slice the aubergine into 1cm thick discs.

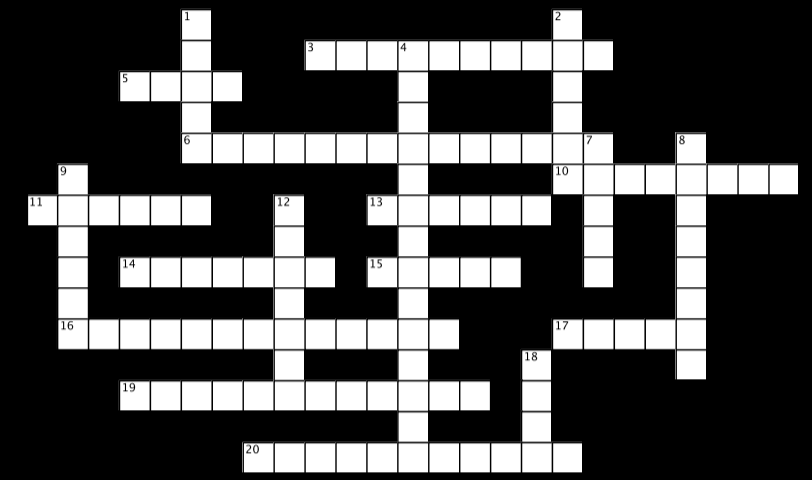
Lightly brush with olive oil and grill both sides until thoroughly cooked and a little charred.

Prepare Béchamel sauce: begin by melting the butter gently - don't over-heat it or let it brown, as this will affect the colour and flavour of the sauce. As soon as the butter melts, add the flour and, over a medium heat and using a small pointed wooden spoon, stir quite vigorously to make a smooth, glossy paste, then add the nutmeg. Now begin adding the milk a little at a time - about 25ml first of all and stir again vigorously. Then, slowly begin to add half of the milk (over a period of about of 3 mins), switch to a balloon whisk and start adding the remaining milk, but always whisking briskly. Now turn the heat down to its lowest setting and let the sauce cook for 5 mins, whisking from time to time. While that's happening, taste and season with salt and freshly milled black pepper.

Place the warm grilled aubergine discs on a serving plate, cover with Béchamel and top with a generous pinch of freshly grated Parmesan cheese and salt and pepper to taste.

CROSSWORD

Church St. Brain Buster



ACROSS

- Selected buildings in and around Church Street will be ____.
- Church Street Festival happens in which month of the year?
- Local gang LGM stands for ____.
- One of the major aims of regenerating Church Street is to bring more ____.
- During the embargo of the 90s in Iraq, the Aubergine was also called "the friend of the ____."
- Lisson Green's territorial rivals, ____ Estate. (Hint: Also the name of a famous composer)
- "Church Street ____ Team" is a team of local people who consult with urban planners.
- Public toilet in Church Street is in what style of late 15th and early 16th Century architecture.
- People of Church Street are ____.
- Name of the shop resisting a major supermarket near Church Street.
- Future of Church Street Market and neighbourhood.
- Regeneration will not only reshape the built environment but also the ____.

DOWN

- Common type of food sold in Church Street.
- Multi-Storey Residential Block on Church Street ____ House.
- A reason for renovation and redevelopment of housing in and around Church Street.
- A common complaint made by Church Street residents.
- Name of the recently closed community garden.
- Greeting in Arabic.
- Riding a bicycle on the back wheel is called a ____.
- The number representing the sound "kh" when typing/messaging in Kurdish.

ACROSS: 3. DEMOISHED, 5. JULY, 6. LITTLE GREEN MAN, 10. TOUR-
CULTURAL, 17. DEANS, 19. REGENERATION, 20. COMMUNITIES
LISTS, 11. FARMER, 13. FUTURE, 14. FUTURE, 16. MULT-
DOWN: 1. FISH, 2. KENNET, 4. OVERPOPULATION, 7. NOISE, 8.
EARTH, 9. SALVAM, 12. WHEELIE, 18. FIVE

Conversation between Can Altay, Sophie Warren, Jonathan Mosley and Emily Pethick

EP: On 27th November a disused sports pitch just off Church Street will be reopened for a performance of *Rogue Game*, a game you devised and first played in Bristol that involves the simultaneous play of three games at one time on the same court, in this case football, volleyball and basketball. By entering these games into competition with one another you create a situation that you describe as 'rogue', and have characterised as one of playing amongst obstacles, negotiation, interruption, fractured order and indecision. Can you talk a bit about how you arrived at the idea of superimposing the play of three games?

SW & JM: The idea arrives out of an enduring interest in the programming and planning of architectural and urban space. We devise ways of intervening within both regulated and more indeterminate spaces to suggest new or contingent narratives. Within our work the soft logic of play and the soft body are applied to the planned and regulated as a way of writing in new possibilities for how we may inhabit or perceive these spaces. We employ a number of techniques of which superimposition is one, others include splicing and collage, as devices for exploring space as a holding place for multiple and conflictual meanings. The multi-court sports hall was a natural development of our interest in the planned and playful. We used the multi-purpose sports hall and the relations of play it set out in its most intended use to both conform to and break with its own condition.

The superimposition of standardised sports in *Rogue Game* amalgamates the component parts to such an extent that it transcends the composite of the three games and puts forward the seed of a new game or a new gaming instinct.

CA: The urban space is at work in the form of many overlaid layers that sometimes interact and at other times remain out of touch. There are certain moments in the urban context where you can observe the clashes of these layers, or the clashes just appear, between groups, between practices, or between the infrastructure and the inhabitant, or even between law and citizen. Such moments are when the complexity of a city becomes visible. One has to live with it, or within it, in some way.

The game space on the other hand seems more regulated: rules are clear and there is a competition at stake; it is more structured and controlled. In a visual sense, the different coloured lines indicate that the space is intended for more than one game. *Rogue Game* takes that game space and acts on it in a way that it remains a game space, its regulations are still there, yet there is a much more complex situation at hand. The three games use three zones indicated by the coloured lines simultaneously, so that both the games, the regulations, and the players are challenged, none can remain as true or as pure as planned.

EP: Given that you all come from backgrounds in architecture it's not surprising that you are coming at this from a spatial perspective, and it seems very appropriate that the sports pages of the *Gazette* feature a game that stimulates other ways of thinking about ways of exploring and inhabiting space. In this sense I'm interested to hear from Can about whether he has thoughts on how this touches on some of the themes that the *Gazette* is addressing in relation to the Church Street neighbourhood: 'Partnership and Transformation', 'Boundaries and Communities'?

CA: *The Church Street Partners' Gazette* is a project that attempts to address such urban issues through a very located position. Over the course of a year that included preparations for the exhibition, my observations and research led me to follow up this question of partnership through a local publication. This at the one hand tapped into issues of small or free press, but more strongly was aimed towards what I observed to be the main issues that related to this neighbourhood. The 'Boundaries and Communities' title came from the observation of how physically and socially detached the area had become in relation to its immediate surrounding in London, but more so how inside there existed these invisible boundaries, between communities, places, businesses, and also how certain groups had established a strong community presence whereas others had been perhaps a bit cast aside. I also would like to believe in the collective production at stake when we talk about places. And this collectivity does not necessarily include willing participation all the time. So I wanted to propose the more disenfranchised, the passer-by, the temporary student, even the birds feeding from the market leftovers, as integral partners. In this sense, the *Gazette* also proposes itself as a partner to the neighbourhood, and dares to discuss issues about the area, with people from here. But it is starting from a position that does *not* claim any authority, the best knowledge or to know what's best for this place.

Rogue Game then is clearly about cohabitation – living together – not necessarily in a harmonious way, as it involves a struggle between these three games and their players. It involves clashes and negotiation of territories, rules, regulations, conflicts, speeds, and blends the games into one another to the point that a basketball player may decide to kick the football (and what happens then?). There is a partnership of shared goals (as in teams), yet also a partnership over space (all partake in this game in the given field). There are clear boundaries that eventually end up being transgressed or shifted. And each team now has to think about their existence beyond beating their opponents, because it's only one against another, there are all these other teams, playing other games in the same field. Therefore it is quite clearly a reflection on matters of partnership, boundaries and communities.

EP: The first rendition of the game took place in a multi-purpose sports hall in Bristol. In the Church Street version you chose to situate it in a disused sunken sports pitch that is embedded at the centre of one of the housing estates just off Church Street instead of another new multi-purpose sports hall that has just been opened close to the neighbourhood. One of the reasons why we were attracted to this particular pitch was that one of the contributors to the *Gazette's* Headline Workshop commented that while a great deal of public money had recently been invested in the renovation of the adjacent library, the sports pitch behind it had pretty much been abandoned, even though the area is very much lacking in social spaces for young people. The pitch had been closed because of the disturbances it caused to the surrounding residents, and the reopening of this pitch for this one-off game involves the repainting of the game markings. In the context of this, the proposition of *Rogue Game* as a space where different systems can be at play simultaneously and interrupt one another, yet not prevent each other from taking place, seems very poignant.

SW & JM: The disused sunken sports pitch offers up a number of opportunities that the readymade does not in this instance. The former as you say is embedded within the Church Street neighbourhood and has been through a period of misuse leading to disuse. It seems pertinent within the context of Can's show to reactivate the space and reinstate its use, even if momentarily, as a place for new and renewed partnerships within the community. As we understand, the pitch had become a heavily contested space between different groups in the neighbourhood and finally dominated by one group to the exclusion of the others, causing its closure. We think that notion of conflict within space is particularly interesting in relation to *Rogue Game* in which potential conflict and collision are negotiated and played out through moments of improvisation, contingency and ingenuity rather than through confrontation and obstruction.

Taking *Rogue Game* out of the dedicated multi-purpose sports hall, which is disembodied architecturally as a space, and situating it in the sunken sports pitch brings the game into the urban realm and part of a much larger urban narrative.

The idea that rules and boundaries can be transgressed through the informal and unplanned possibilities of play, becomes more obviously transferable to the public urban realm rather than remaining within the confines of the multi-purpose sports hall and the game itself. *Rogue Game* proposes another kind of logic for how one might occupy space and resist or destabilise boundaries that are forcefully maintained. The logic of *Rogue Game* proposes multifarious activities and interaction, all overlaid upon one another within a singular spatial volume rather than rigidity and confinement of singular use. This is why the pitch within the Church Street neighbourhood has so much resonance with *Rogue Game* because it offers an environment that simultaneously functions as both a car park and a sports pitch.

The aesthetic of the pitch also made it immediately appealing. Stripped back, abruptly inserted into a car park, encased in fencing and surfaced in dark asphalt provides *Rogue Game* with a hard urban setting which is an interesting counterpoint to the colour and playfulness of the game. The scale of the pitch is much smaller than the multi-purpose sports hall, which will be another influencing factor, compressing the play and producing a heightened performative arena for players. The proposition of *Rogue Game*, the painting of lines on the pitch, the reopening of the pitch for rogue play are all part of the interface and legacy of the *Rogue Game* series within the community. The proposition of *Rogue Game* is an invitation. We hope that it will be passed on and that rogue play will spread.

CA: The whole project claims partnership and responsibility towards the area, not only through being located here in an organisation such as The Showroom, but also in the way that it stimulates various kinds of relationships and interactions on a public site in the neighbourhood. The selection and utilisation of this pitch is an important gesture for the project as, like the *Gazette*, the game ventures outside of the gallery's boundaries, acts within a controversial setting, and hopes to survive and make some sense, for its players and its audience.

Rogue Game

Cory Wharton-Malcolm
sports commentator

LOCATION: Eden House Estate, Penfold Street | DATE: 27th November 2010

"Good afternoon sport fans...here we are today ready, rearing to go...2010 *Rogue Game*. First time in London ladies and gentlemen...three sports combined, basketball, football and volleyball all on one court. The basketball net right in front of the football goal, volleyball net straight across the middle of both pitches. It's absolute mayhem as the three sports go head to head...

...We start with a lovely trick...lovely..fantastic! One of the footballers has just missed one of the basketball players...good effort, good effort. He's now using the young lady who's playing football as his blocker...good effort. Oooh it's got to be a foul, where's the referee when you need him? What's the referee got to say about that? But that's *Rogue Game*...no referee...no rules. Basketball, volleyball, football all collide. The question is what happens next?

...that's got to be a free throw...it's tense...5...4...she shoots, she misses...the rebound...no chance. Straight up the pitch...footballers are in the way...what happens next? The basketball players are making sure the volleyballers are in their way and they are using them to D up.

He's missed it, basketball's finest...we've got a run on, down the line, little touch, little bit of magic...arhhh he's missed it...basketball has hit the rim...good effort...on your way...on your way...send it...he's hit the bar...finally a goal from the blue team. We're off the football and we're back onto the basketball. She shoots...she shoots...just off the rim...defenders got it...off he goes straight under the volleyball net...1...2...3...wonderful lay up..fantastic...over to the volleyball. Young lady with a pink hat spikes the ball...I believe that's now 10 to 7.



Live!

A Recent History of the Eden House Estate Pitch

R

Vince Lyons
village manager, church street estate office

The pitch was opened in 2002 following extensive upgrading to the surface and the building of a roof to enable all-weather play. Keyholders only controlled entrance to the area, and there was a timed automatic door closing system..

Unfortunately older youths soon found ways to gain entry to the pitch, despite these and other efforts made to deter access, and then they started letting their friends in. The area became a hotspot for anti-social behaviour, including drug-taking and older youths taking over the area whilst pushing out the younger kids.

Last year following consultation with the residents bearing the brunt of the problems, we agreed to close the area and refurbish the pitch back to its original state. We agreed that from this point, access would only be allowed for play by Westminster youth services or other local youth organisations.

The Estate Office manages the play areas in Church Street. We are in charge of maintenance and schedule the opening and closing times, which change for the summer and winter. In the morning our cleaning operatives open the gate and in the evening we employ a mobile security company to empty the area and secure the gate.

Since these changes, the estate now has much less anti-social behaviour.

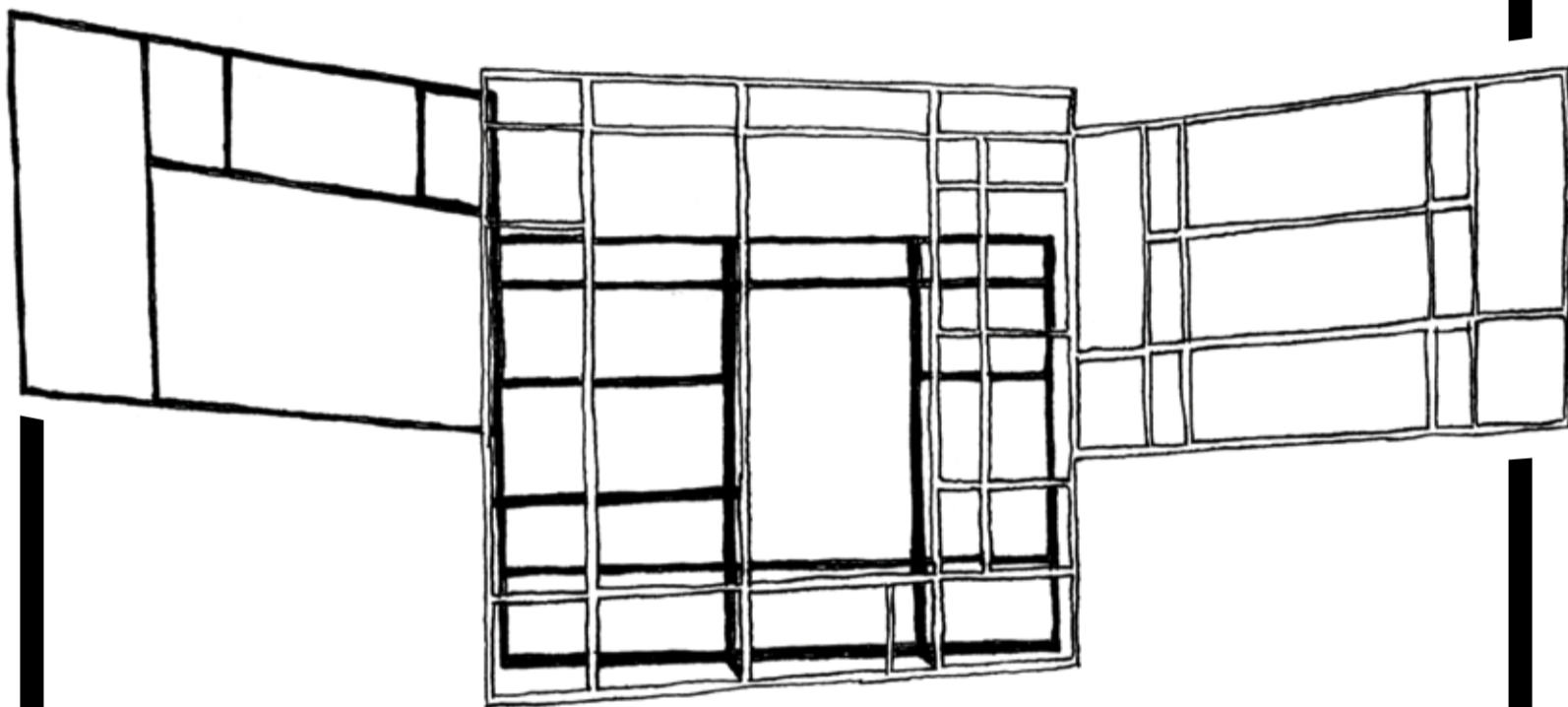
the Church Street

partners' gazette

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The Church Street Partners' Gazette

By Can Altay and the Authors

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