

Meanwhile use and the Carpenters Estate

How temporary interventions within London's largest estate redevelopment scheme are delivering now for communities while building sustainable futures



meanwhile
space

Introduction

Meanwhile use has become part of the lexicon of London's developers looking for productive uses for empty parcels of land awaiting the next phase of redevelopment. The question is now not whether such spaces should be used in the meanwhile, but how they can be used well.

London's largest estate regeneration and restoration scheme is underway on the Carpenters Estate in Newham, between Stratford High Street and Olympic Park. The estate will be transformed by 2,152 new, refurbished and replacement homes, to be delivered by Newham's housing company, Populo Living, over fifteen years. It will be a period of upheaval and transition, bringing new challenges and opportunities for the area. In anticipation of these, Populo have developed an ambitious and considered meanwhile use strategy.

The strategy explores how temporary interventions could start improving life for residents now, and shape the estate of the future. Led by local priorities as established during masterplanning, and aligning with Newham's community wealth building agenda, it identifies the forms of meanwhile use with the greatest potential positive impact, and maps these into the available spaces and times in the masterplan. Using this framework, a series of projects could be commissioned. These include play areas, murals and trails; exercise equipment; community growing and nature spaces; a café in a train carriage; and a mixed-use work, events and food-and-drink space.

Many developers of large-scale regeneration schemes have become adept at harnessing the buzz generated by disposable pop-ups and their patina of social value as a marketing tool. Something different is happening on the Carpenters Estate. Populo are asking a series of questions of meanwhile use. Can it turn a development site into a place that works for residents? Can it do different things for different people in a dispersed but connected way, at scale, and flex as the masterplan is built out? Can it support the commercial requirement of development and help create a desirable destination, but in a way which nurtures and makes space for local entrepreneurs, creative talents and socially-driven organisations instead of displacing them? And can it do all this in a way which is led by local people, works towards net zero and improves biodiversity?

Meanwhile Space acted as meanwhile use advisors to Populo on this programme. In this report we discuss how the programme tests the boundaries of what meanwhile use can achieve within large-scale estate regeneration schemes. Populo's strategic approach, community engagement-through-doing, and integration of circular economy principles, are key features of the programme and are discussed in the pages that follow, alongside descriptions of the various meanwhile projects built and underway. Finally, we consider meanwhile use's legacy within the future development, and its role in building a socially and environmentally sustainable neighbourhood.



Meanwhile Use Map



From the 1960s to Now

The current Carpenters Estate of council-built low-rise housing and tower blocks was built in the 1960s. By the turn of the century it was falling into disrepair and a cycle began of refurbishment and redevelopment proposals, created and then rejected. By 2012, when the Olympic Games brought a new spotlight to the area, half of the estate's residents had already been decanted, but there were still no firm plans in place.

In 2018, Newham decided against a private developer-led scheme, and resolved to redevelop the estate itself through Populo Living, with resident involvement in the design process and 50% social rent homes. The Carpenters Estate Masterplan won planning approval in 2024. Alongside the new homes, the masterplan will deliver new park and green spaces, and new retail, workspace and commercial units.

Many existing residents have been waiting decades for change, while the estate has emptied around them and maintenance has fallen away. But there is still a strong community, with a school, Building Crafts college and pub, and businesses working from the estate. A community garden, food banks, the Dovetail community space, and participatory design activities through the masterplanning demonstrate local energy and identity. The arrival of large institutions in Olympic Park and a new Stratford station entrance into the estate will bring new commercial and creative opportunities.



Construction of the estate in 1968



The new masterplan: *Carpenters Estate Design & Access Statement*

Meanwhile use seed projects

After decades of underinvestment and uncertainty, there was widespread distrust of development on the Carpenters Estate. To provide new ways for residents to connect and engage, Populo launched two meanwhile projects: a community garden (with Social Farms and Gardens) and the Dovetail community space (with make:good). These gave residents somewhere to go to try new activities and get involved, and provided a base for discussing and co-designing elements of the masterplan. Their success provided the seed for the meanwhile use strategy which followed.

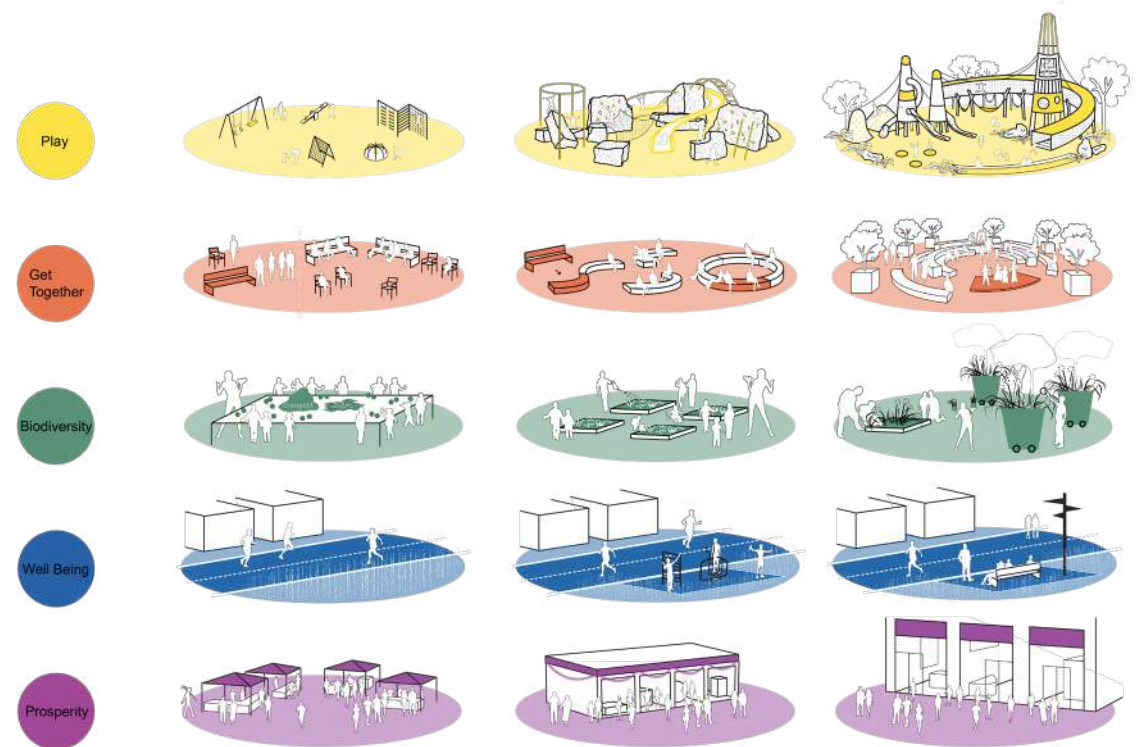


Meanwhile Use Strategy

The masterplanning process revealed both the need for immediate improvements to the estate and the existence of pockets of opportunity within the phased construction programme during which those improvements could be realised. Populo commissioned LDA Design - landscape architects on the masterplan and so already familiar with the site - to lead a meanwhile strategy team who would identify key objectives, develop a coordinated approach to delivery, and maximise the temporary opportunities across the estate and throughout the construction period.

An initial 'understand' phase mapped the existing public realm and its issues (blank walls, poor green spaces, inadequate play facilities), analysed the masterplanning consultation results for residents' meanwhile use priorities, and reviewed the work of the estate's Young Designers Group for design inspiration. From this, and incorporating Populo's ambitions to integrate incoming residents and develop pathways for creative and entrepreneurial uses, the team expressed the objectives of the meanwhile programme in five themes: play, get together, biodiversity, wellbeing and prosperity. Three proposals were sketched for each theme (*right*) and then presented back to the community for feedback, leading to the emergence of another overarching component - colour. The ideas were then compared for scale and cost, speed of delivery, and impact.

The strategy identifies three locations which could



Meanwhile Use Strategy, LDA Design

support clusters of these meanwhile uses (the old tenant management office (TMO), the square in front of the Dovetail, and the central green), and where the masterplan phasing would allow maximum possible lifespan. It connects these through lighter-touch interventions, including a trail of footprints, colourful murals, and community-made planters, to create playful and characterful paths through the estate.

The Meanwhile Use Strategy is not prescriptive. Ideas have developed, and new opportunities - and a train carriage - have come along since it was written. But by setting out the types of projects which are most feasible and best meet objectives it provides a starting point and a framework.

There are a number of benefits to taking a strategic, programmatic and estate-wide approach to meanwhile

use, instead of expecting one project to do everything, or taking an ad hoc approach to a string of separate projects. From a practical perspective, it creates an agreement in principle for meanwhile use. The details of individual projects might change, but budget is ringfenced, there is clarity on overall rationale, and it becomes quicker and easier to get sign off within the developer organisation. Planning advice can be sought early in the process, and additional steps outlined. Delivery can be led by a single client-side programme team, allowing oversight and coordination within which specialist design teams can work. A cohesive strategic approach also allows a lighter ask of the community. Instead of a scattergun interaction with different project teams running their own engagement exercises - it builds on a single stream of coordinated processes and then acts on this information, with opportunities for further participatory work when the projects hit the ground.

On an estate scale, this approach ensures the projects serve complementary but distinct purposes and work together to make space for different users and visitors - from match day crowds to local schoolchildren - and direct them through the estate. With its potential for clustering and linking elements and a distinctive aesthetic style, it also provides a cohesive sense of place and identity at a time when construction works and boarded-off areas can make an estate feel fragmented.

In terms of how meanwhile use is deployed and what it

seeks to achieve, this approach is about a transitional form of urbanism rather than stop-gap opportunism. It forms a connecting layer between a masterplan and the various meanwhile uses, keeping sight of overall objectives while enabling these to be delivered flexibly over time within the changing lattice of development parcels. It establishes integrated processes and channels of communication, allowing feedback and flex between projects as they develop and for the evolution of the whole programme as new directions emerge - at the Carpenters Estate, this was a new emphasis on circular economy, which was flowed out across the programme's component projects as they got underway.

For residents invited to imagine the future estate at masterplanning stage, there is a long wait until that vision is finally built, and it can be a disruptive and anxiety-inducing period as the neighbourhood is reconfigured around them. A strategic programme of meanwhile use can have an immediate positive impact and welcome them in. Residents are invited to help shape step-by-step change as part of the wider processes of transition.

Meanwhile Use Strategy

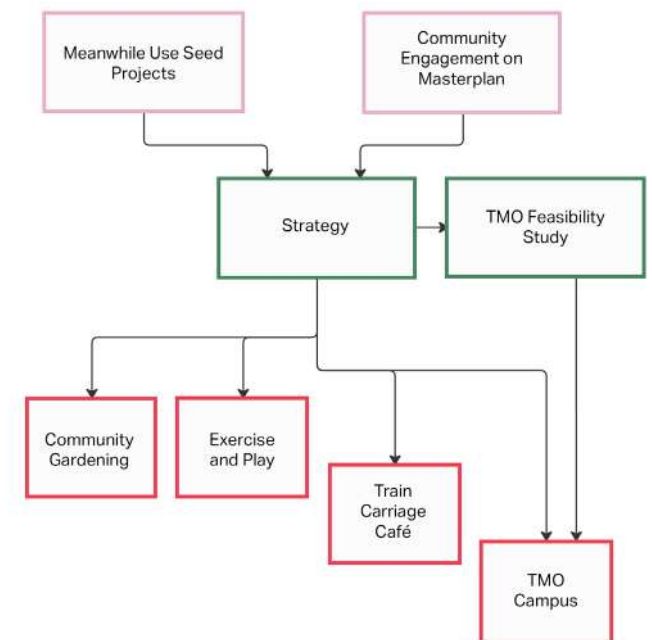
LDA Design - Landscape Architect

make:good - Public Consultation

Meanwhile Space - Meanwhile Strategy Advisors

Tibbalds - Planning Consultant

Mott MacDonald - Cost Consultants



Community Led

The Carpenters Estate three-year masterplanning process launched into a context of undelivered regeneration proposals and years of early decanting. Early workshops, door-knocking and outreach revealed the extent of local disillusionment and degraded trust. Recognising the need to acknowledge and address past failings, and the challenge of engagement fatigue, Populo consciously moved away from a conventional consultation-led approach and towards active participatory forms of engagement and meanwhile use.

Key to the gradual repairing of relationships was the repurposing of a vacant retail unit in the middle of the estate to create a temporary community hub. The Dovetail was a way for Newham council to show residents that it was listening, and also to provide a space where residents could come together as a community. This was particularly important in the wake of Covid, which made the need for collective spaces even more pressing.

The Dovetail quickly became a vital part of the estate's social infrastructure. Set up in 2021 and managed in its early years by participatory architecture and design studio make:good, it has served a dual purpose: it provides a space for sharing information on the masterplan, hosting co-design workshops, and facilitating ongoing dialogue between residents and the council; and, most importantly, it has become a place of self-determined community activity.

Over time, the Dovetail evolved into a community-run hub, with programming co-designed and delivered by residents themselves. Alongside a programme of free-to-access activities, drop-in sessions and training programmes for residents and their neighbours, local people have paid opportunities to become facilitators, offering their own talents, experience and passions to lead sessions. The space has nurtured stewardship, trust and local ownership - foundations for both the meanwhile use strategy and the regeneration programme more broadly.

Through workshops co-hosted by LDA and make:good, a local Young Designers Group produced public art concepts, biodiversity proposals, spatial-use studies and pop-up retail collages. This work inspired and informed concept development for the Meanwhile Use Strategy, generated tangible interventions like the MUGA floor art, and helped test ideas and gain insights into how the next generation envisions their estate's future. The programme formed part of a wider approach to youth engagement which was deliberately informal and relationship-based. Regular sessions for young people in the Dovetail helped create a familiar and welcoming environment, and established a consistent dialogue to embed them within the broader engagement programme. Through a partnership with East London youth entrepreneurship organisation Social Ark, a number of young people have built on these experiences to develop their own social enterprises - demonstrating



Young Designers Group workshops: Design & Access Statement

how meanwhile use can be a springboard not only for creative expression but also for long-term opportunity.

The success of the masterplanning engagement and the seed meanwhile use projects in improving trust, increasing participation and generating insights, led to this approach being extended into a wider meanwhile use programme. Residents' meanwhile use priorities fed into the Meanwhile Use Strategy. As these ideas were developed and started taking shape, community-led design processes for projects like the murals and play spaces made them expressions of local creativity and visibly connect those involved into the making of the estate. Similarly, the community gardening enables local people to construct and care for their neighbourhood landscape. The spirit of the Dovetail will be transferred into the new TMO campus, which the Populo team and local people will co-inhabit, and where shared spaces will be brought to life by events and activities hosted by and for the community.

Unlike more formal and contained estate consultation events, the success of the Carpenters Estate approach is in its sustained and evolving work pre- and post-ballot, in its embedding of council and developer teams to give relationships time to mend, and in the multiple ways found for different people to participate. Step-by-step and using meanwhile use interventions as scaffolding, it empowers local people to build social infrastructures and define their own relationship to place.



Residents' meanwhile use priorities: *make:good*

A Circular Economy Approach

Meanwhile use can be a pop-up-then-junk form of development, or a circular form of development. The Carpenters Estate meanwhile use programme sets new standards for the latter with its principles of refurbish and reuse.

Newham's Just Transition Plan commits to reducing emissions and waste and to building a circular economy; the Carpenters Estate masterplan will retain and refurbish 44% of existing homes, including two of the towers, James Riley Point and Lund Point. But the spark for making the circular economy such a strong feature of the meanwhile use programme came with the closure of a NuLiving factory, which left 200 tonnes of CLT off-cuts stranded. Populo saw the opportunity, and organised for 20 tonnes of the CLT to be transported to the Carpenters Estate, where it was organised and catalogued.

Salvaging materials for future use poses problems of storage, as the materials need to be collected when they are become available and then kept until they are needed on site. Finding underused land where materials can be securely stored temporarily has been key to the success of a circular economy approach at the Carpenters. As designs developed for the various meanwhile projects, the project partners put out calls to their networks for additional materials, and where suitable items were located they have been collected and stored alongside the CLT at the materials storage site. Materials salvaged so far include:

- 20 tonnes of CLT panels
- 30 pallets of granite
- 5 pallets glazed yellow and green tiles
- 50 Nordan Window and Door units
- 15 Rockwall ceiling tiles
- 50 Used PV panels
- 15 pallets carpet tiles
- Valchromat MDF boards
- Scaffolding poles and boards
- Light fittings
- 15 sinks and toilets
- Seats from the train carriage

Play and exercise: The new playground structures have been built from 95% recycled and repurposed materials. The 'treehouses' use half a tonne of the CLT; existing fencing was repurposed to build seats and walls; and marine ply and rope from boatyards was used for play features. The outdoor gym equipment by anti-knife crime charity Steel Warriors is made from recycled knife steel.

Community gardens: Materials for community growing and nature spaces have been acquired through strong local collaborations. The Building Crafts College has provided woodshavings for use in compost bins, on beds, in pond installation and as flooring, wood offcuts for the cooking fire, and oak sleepers for the wetland area and growing beds. Pallets donated by Populo's construction team have been used to make a bug hotel, hair from local



The material storage yard

start-up HairCycle has been made into bricks for the cob oven and a grease trap for the greywater reedbed (which recycles washing-up water), and mulch from the Orchard Project charity has been used for the fruit trees. Volunteers have made seats out of rubble rescued from the construction of the pond, and repaired an abandoned chair and picnic bench. Trees and plants in planters can be moved around the site as it is redeveloped and, when it is completed, planted out.

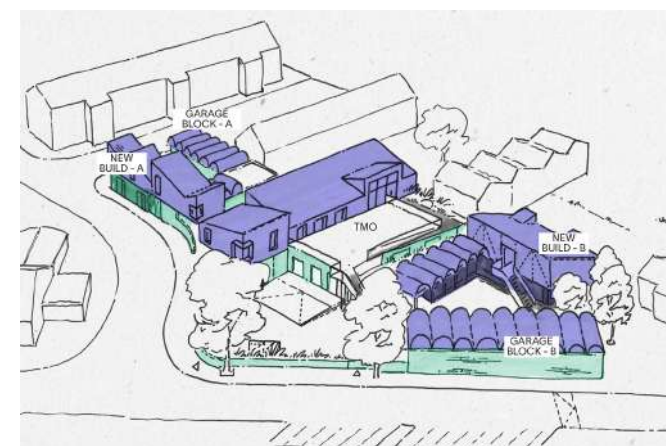
Train carriage café: When it was retired from the railways the train carriage was repurposed as an outdoor classroom for Eureka! Children's Museum in Halifax. It is now embarking on its third life.

TMO workspace: An early feasibility study by JKA and Meanwhile Space compared retain and refurbish design options with demolish and rebuild options. While building new would have enabled the most efficient use of the site, the cost and embodied carbon implications led to a decision to retain as much of the existing fabric as sensibly possible. The final designs retain approximately 60% of the existing TMO and garage structures, adding new roofs to the garages to achieve the necessary head heights and an extra floor to the TMO. Repairs or extensions to the existing walls will use left-over bricks from a nearby Olympic Park development, salvaged windows and doors have been incorporated, and furnishings are being sourced from Populo's existing offices and further afield. Any new-build structures have

been designed for disassembly and reuse.

Meanwhile use, with its repurposing ethos, lends itself to circular economy thinking. It finds ways to successfully inhabit existing buildings, and its agile design processes allow for adjustment around reclaimed materials as they come available. At the TMO, this has resulted in a carbon saving of [xxx], as calculated by JKA using their newly-developed meanwhile use lifecycle carbon assessment tool, tested for the first time on this project. The Carpenters Estate will also provide opportunities to explore what other benefits this approach might have in the context of large-scale estate regeneration scheme, for example by providing threads of continuity and connection to material histories for residents in rapidly changing landscapes.

The programme is a trailblazer for circular economy thinking in meanwhile use. There have been important learnings from the experiments with material reuse - hidden costs, difficulties with certification, the manpower requirements of delivering and storing materials - which can be shared with other practitioners. Through co-design and co-build residents are acquiring skills and knowledges in recycling and reimagining. And through its ambition, the programme can act as a demonstrator for the incorporation of circular economy principles into meanwhile use projects on large-scale estate regeneration schemes elsewhere.



Sketch showing the retained foundation and ground-floor elements of the TMO campus (turquoise) and new-build elements (blue): Jan Kattein Architects.

Exercise and Play

When the masterplanning process started, the estate was desperately short of play and sports facilities. Those that did exist, like a multi-use games area (MUGA), were in poor repair. Not only did this mean that there was not the range of spaces and equipment needed for all residents to keep fit and well, or safe places for children to play, but it contributed to a general air of neglect and provided no incentive for residents to spend time together outdoors, with the natural surveillance this could have afforded and its impact on anti-social behaviour.

Improving play and exercise facilities was a top priority for residents during the masterplanning process, and also presented an opportunity to inject some colour and energy into the estate landscape. It would not have been fair to expect residents to wait until the masterplan was fully built out for these improvements, in which time the inadequacy of provision would have had further negative impacts on health and wellbeing and another generation of children would have grown up without decent places to play. The meanwhile use programme takes immediate action to address this need.

The exercise and play projects embody the circular economy and participatory principles of the wider meanwhile use programme. Through design workshops, hands-on activities and creative engagement prompts, they allow residents to be co-creators rather than passive recipients, and signal a more connected, and community-led journey through long-term transformation.



Footprint trail

Multicoloured footprints weave through the estate, acting as a wayfinding device and linking the meanwhile use projects.

Footprint Trail: Co-Creative Connection



Multi-use games area (MUGA)

A makeover for the MUGA. The bright and friendly new surface was co-created with the Young Designers Group

MUGA: Wood Street Walls and Works in Public



Outdoor gym

As part of sport-for-good charity Steel Warriors' mission to raise awareness of knife crime, knives have been taken off London's streets, melted down, and turned into gym equipment for calisthenics. Free classes for all ages, ability and levels (and including female-only sessions) promote fitness, confidence and stronger communities.

Gym: Steel Warriors. Sponsored by Gymshark.



Murals

The estate's formerly rather grim brick and cement surfaces have been transformed into canvases for the expression of creativity, identity and hopes by a programme of resident mural-making and a local artist paint jam.

Murals: Co-Creative Connection, Global Street Art

Playgrounds

The two play areas were custom built from repurposed materials and in collaboration with the estate's young people, from initial design all the way through to construction. Scale models and "talk with chalk" prompts (*right*) supported the visualisation of ideas, and the participatory approach ensured that local imaginations were expressed in the final designs and that everyone involved felt a sense of ownership.

Playgrounds: Yes Make



Photo: Populo



Community Gardening

Community gardening as meanwhile use has a relatively low capital cost but clear benefits in the greener urban environment it creates and its impact on health, wellbeing and social connection. It is quick to get started and everyone can get involved, with no prior experience needed. By using planters and building any structures to be relocatable, it can also be possible to move growing spaces around an estate as a masterplan is built out and different plots become available. Community gardening was one of the first meanwhile uses on site at the Carpenters Estate and it is now evolving out into new patches of land and creating more biodiverse forms of urban nature.

Before any of the meanwhile use interventions, the Carpenters Estate was overwhelmingly a place of brick and concrete, where uncertainty over the long-term future had militated against improvements or additions to the estate's bare grassed areas. The strength of residents' desire to live in a greener and more biodiverse environment was a key feature of discussions on the masterplan. Their top ten ideas for meanwhile use (p8) included wildlife routes, improved green space, wildflower meadows, and fruit and vegetable growing.

In 2021 Populo and the London Legacy Development Corporation commissioned nature-based community activities charity Social Farms and Gardens to work with residents on the creation of a community garden on the estate. Over three years, local people learnt about

growing and were able to relax and meet neighbours in the new green spaces they had helped to create.

The Meanwhile Use Strategy set out a path for growing this work, with a greater diversity of forms and scales of nature spaces and an expanded programme of activities. Now led by public works, a local not-for-profit supporting community-driven development, spaces across the site have been temporarily turned over to growing and nature:

- **Dovetail square:** Growing beds, herbs, fruit trees and field of pollinating plants with hugelkultur mound
- **Central green:** Wildlife wetland area, bug hotel, composting bins, outdoor kitchen, greywater reedbed and seating. Growing fruit, vegetables, herbs and flowers.
- **Train carriage café garden:** Forest garden, wildflowers, climbers, hedgerows, compost bin and leaf litter area
- **Biggerstaff blocks:** Coming soon.

Residents can join weekly gardening volunteer sessions, and all are invited to community meals (vegetarian and halal) organised in the garden. There are bi-monthly skills-based build workshops, where projects completed so far include compost bins, growing beds and a bigger outdoor kitchen. A bug club every week runs nature-based activities for local young people.



Gardening and the process of creating these new nature spaces gives residents an opportunity to meet new people, learn skills and improve their mental and physical health. It is also a way to make a visible difference on the estate, feel a sense of shared ownership, and acquire the experience to manage and maintain gardens on the estate in the future. There have been challenges for these publicly-accessible growing spaces: plants have been pulled up, structures have been vandalised, litter has been dropped. While there is always likely to be an element of this behaviour with these types of spaces, as an evolving and collaborative process meanwhile use adapts (reinforcing structures, providing rubbish bins) and can slowly change narratives.

Once established, the community gardens bring biodiversity benefits, provide a greener environment for residents, and are places where people can meet and learn. They also act as connecting projects between the larger meanwhile use interventions, and if successful there is the opportunity for them to be integrated into the estate's longer-term future - the masterplan notes the potential for community gardening around the central green and Biggerstaff Road areas.

Community gardening

Social Farms and Gardens (2021-2024)

Public Works (from May 2024)



Train Carriage Café

As you emerge from the new Stratford station entrance on to the estate you are greeted in the meanwhile programme spirit of playfulness by an old train carriage, which sits within a new community garden and has been transformed into the Dialogue Hub café.

This area of the estate around Dennison Point, which is awaiting demolition, was previously an underused patch of grass and carparking and is available for a three-year window before it is redeveloped. Its location near the new station entrance makes it a great opportunity for the right small enterprise to capitalise on increased footfall and demonstrate the potential of creative food-and-drink offers on the estate as the masterplan is built out.

The train carriage café also has a placemaking and community function. The seating inside the carriage and out on the deck looking over the garden gives local people and visitors to the estate somewhere to relax and encounter others over a coffee or snack, and they can join training, community and cultural activities and events. As the gateway for many people into the estate, it makes a statement about the character and purpose of the meanwhile programme, and it is key that it is able to perform both as a fun, active and visually arresting destination site and as a project rooted in local community and social value.

It also acts as a testing ground and showcase for the programme's circular economy principles, proving



Illustration: Jan Kattein Architects



How to order in BSL: dialoguehub.co.uk

the power of invention to repurpose strikingly unlikely objects - in this case, a 1970s train carriage (*right*). The old seats have been stripped out, and the interior has been fitted out with bespoke joinery to create a flexible, multi-purpose space. The challenge of the level change needed to get up from the ground to the carriage door has become a design feature as the carriage is wrapped with ramped decking which can be used for seating, and a service hatch has been cut into the end of the carriage to allow for quick sales to customers hurrying to and from the station.

Populo gave the project development process the time and resources needed to properly explore and define the various functions of this meanwhile intervention, enabling the drawing up of a tenant specification. New local social enterprise the Dialogue Express Café will take the space for the available three-year term and aligns well with the project vision. They will be running a café where local people with hearing impairments work as baristas and digital displays show customers how to order their drinks and snacks in BSL (*left*). They will also host training activities and other events - offering an innovative, creative and inclusive welcome to residents and visitors to the estate.

Train Carriage Café
JKA - Project Architect
Meanwhile Space - Meanwhile Consultants



Photo: Populo

TMO Campus

The flagship project of the Carpenters Estate meanwhile use programme is the repurposing of the old estate tenant management office (TMO) and of several strips of underused garages. The site sits within one of the final phases of the masterplan, and so is available for at least seven years to put affordable work and community space at the heart of the estate. Taking learnings from the Dovetail, the project will relocate Populo's office into closer touch with the people and place it serves, and will secure space for local people to work, meet and play.

The Meanwhile Use Strategy explored ways in which meanwhile interventions could support local people's financial wellbeing through enterprise, employment and skills, in line with Newham's community wealth building priorities. It identified the TMO site as a possible location for these uses, taking advantage of the site's corner position between Gibbins Road and Carpenters Road and the amount of space available to be temporarily repurposed. The TMO has not been used for its original purpose for many years and sits within an underused yard space bordered by garages, with another block of garages alongside. Through providing alternative parking elsewhere on the estate for the remaining garage users and rehousing the much-valued food bank from the TMO, the site can be reimaged for a rich mix of cultural, community and entrepreneurial activities.

The feasibility study commissioned by Populo from Meanwhile Space and JKA was key to identifying a

preferred design option, defining the vision for the project and establishing viability, creating a framework for success. This feasibility process allowed the project partners to better understand the opportunities and constraints of the site, compare the benefits of refurb against demolish and rebuild, and get an early estimate of project cost. By allowing the business plan to be developed in tandem with the concept design, it ensured before moving on to the next stage that the project being delivered will be able to cover its own costs once up and running. In this respect, the decision by Populo to base itself at the TMO site as a tenant paying market-rate rent is a gamechanger. It ensures that the money Populo pays as rent on its office is captured and recycled for community wealth building: it allows rents on the other units to be lowered making them more accessible for local people unable to afford commercial rates, and it makes it possible to create space for a large community hall and a community classroom rather than fill the whole TMO building with higher-income generating workspace.

The TMO campus will offer a range of workspace typologies, from makerspace to studio to showroom, offered on fair and flexible terms and at a range of sizes and price points to support homegrown businesses and creative talent from start-up to expansion. Targeted communication and a clear and transparent allocations policy will ensure that local people have priority in applying for space, and that spaces will be awarded to those who will benefit the most and give back to



The TMO as it is today (*top*), and the garages opposite (*below*).



01 Proposed Site Elevation - West

1:100

Site elevation: Jan Kattein Architects

the community. The intention is to create a nurturing environment for new enterprises and establish a route towards growth into more long-term tenancies in the future development. The spaces created for casual encounters and for a more organised programme of events and activities will help build community cohesion between existing and new residents, and the site will become a beacon of colour and of life.

The large flexible hall space and adjoining café form the heart of the final design. As well as providing grow-on space for the Dovetail, they are an opportunity for an organisation with a strong background in community and creative event organising to take responsibility for curating a programme of events and activities for local people and for visitors. The hall will also be available for affordable hire by residents. A smaller community

classroom space will be occupied by an organisation looking to deliver educational or training programmes.

Populo's offices are organised over two floors of the TMO, and open on the first floor onto a roof terrace which in the summer can be used as an additional events space overlooking the estate. The remodelled garages and new-build workspaces are grouped around yard areas; some of the yards are open and public-facing and others are more private for concentrated work. Food trucks will provide a splash of colour on the corner of the two roads, and offer a commercial opportunity for up-and-coming businesses, particularly on match days.

Once complete, the site will house 25 local enterprises and creatives on affordable and flexible terms, provide 140sqm community space with an inclusive programme

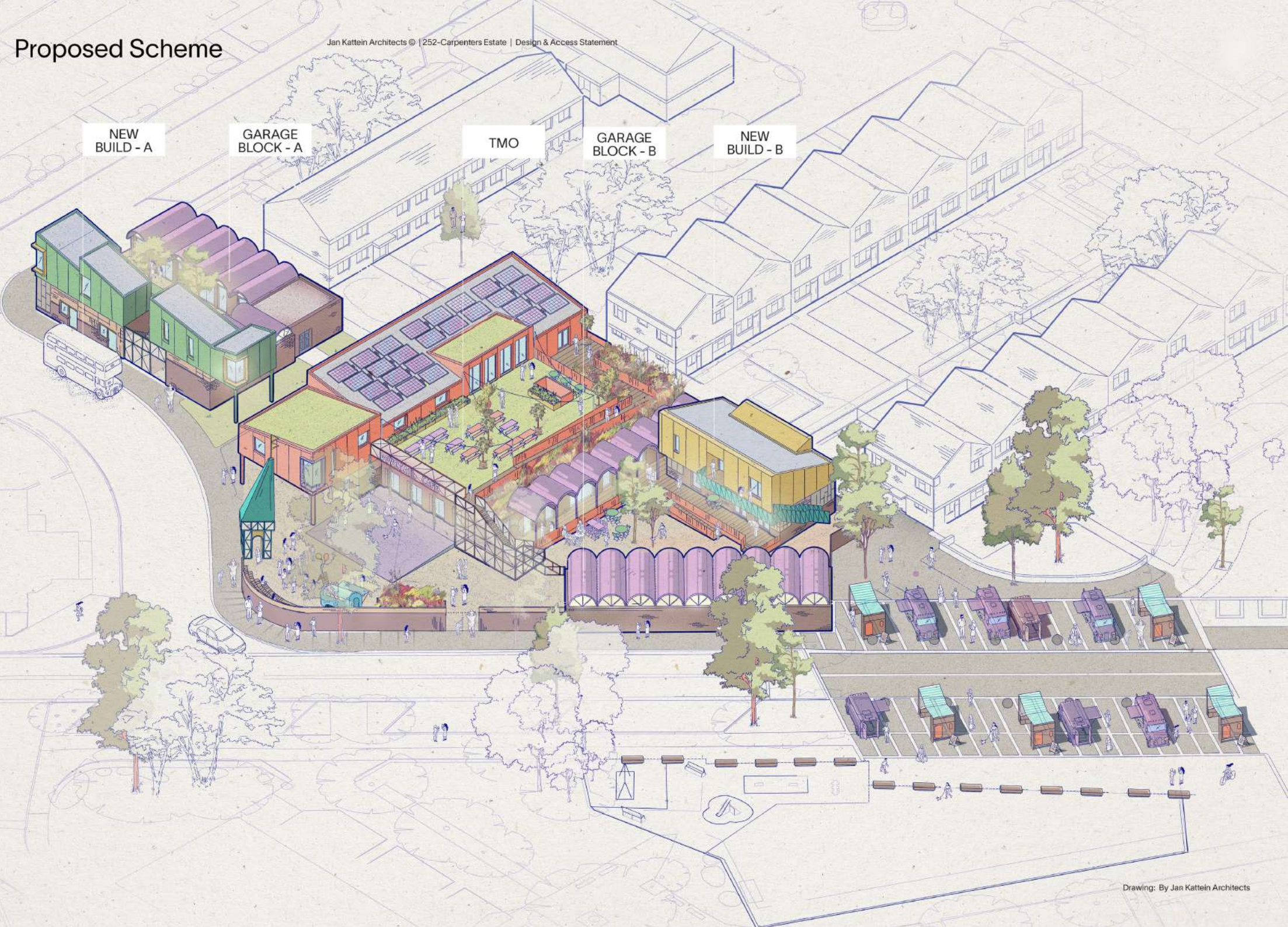
of events, activities and training, and create a welcoming and animated environment where residents, businesses and visitors can relax and connect.

TMO Feasibility Study
Meanwhile Space - Meanwhile Consultants
JKA - Architects

TMO Campus
JKA - Architects
MDA Consulting - Cost Consultants
Meanwhile Space - Meanwhile Consultants
SGA Consulting - Building Services
Simple Works - Structural Engineers

Proposed Scheme

Jan Kattein Architects © | 252-Carpenters Estate | Design & Access Statement



Legacy

The lifepaths of these various meanwhile uses cannot, at this stage, be plotted with certainty. There are still many unknowns: what will users make of these spaces, how will match day crowds react, what connections can be made to Olympic Park cultural institutions? Part of their success will lie in their ability to flex and evolve with this uncertainty. Much also depends on sustained engagement from project sponsors. Too often, the planned legacy of meanwhile use projects is lost as political interest fades post-launch. Populo's continued care and attention will be needed in the face of the rising costs of the wider regeneration scheme to ensure not just that remaining objectives are delivered (a market, for example, requested by residents but postponed) but also to help steward projects through a changing landscape and develop paths for users and uses into the future development.

But it is possible to say what types of impacts are anticipated. Firstly, there are the ways these projects show up in individuals' everyday lives and become entwined with those life histories - the good times had and remembered, the friendships forged, the skills learnt, the business ideas tested.

There will also be a material legacy. Some of the play equipment is designed to be relocated, planters can be moved, trees planted out. This reduces waste, improves value for money, and traces back to a shared past within what will be a radically reconfigured urban landscape.

There is a question around space allocation in the future development. A criticism levelled against meanwhile use is that creative and community uses are elbowed aside once more commercial tenants come along. Certainly meanwhile use has a role to play here in creating an attractive and friendly environment into which new residents and businesses want to move. But if managed well, with space retained for play and wellbeing and laddered rents into affordable commercial units, local businesses and community activities can be supported to grow into a more permanent home, which co-design processes have helped shape.

There are also community-scale impacts which the meanwhile programme, if successful, will seed in the new development: community cohesion, with good relations between new and existing residents; a thriving and networked business community; local pride, with a diverse collective of residents actively involved in local events and community life; and embedded habits of reuse, recycling and care for the estate's spaces. In short, a community that is healthy, happy and prosperous.

Finally, there is the precedent this programme can set for other estate regeneration schemes. It is the project partners' hope that the Carpenters Estate meanwhile use programme will prove that during long and disruptive periods of estate upheaval, meanwhile uses can empower communities now and build towards more socially and environmentally sustainable futures.

What are the learnings for meanwhile use as part of large estate regeneration schemes?

- **Community:** meanwhile use can offer immediate and visible health and wellbeing benefits, and multiple points for discussion, participation and increased local agency in neighbourhood-making where there are challenges with trust and engagement fatigue
- **Circular economy:** while management time and storage space requirements shouldn't be underestimated, meanwhile use projects can lend themselves to reuse of buildings and materials, and act as demonstrator projects to raise awareness and change behaviours
- **Strategy:** a step-by-step and ecosystem-level approach to meanwhile use - from seed projects to strategy, feasibility and delivery - is key to establishing objectives, testing viability, coordination, maximising opportunities, and ensuring interventions effectively engage with wider processes of urban transition



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