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CULTURAL STRATEGY

PHASE 4 CULTURAL PLAN ROLE AND VISION

Role of the Phase 4 Cultural Plan

This chapter sets out the Culture and Placeshaping Vision and Plan for Phase 4. An outline Cultural Strategy will follow as part of the revised Masterplan for phases 5-8 of the redevelopment in 2023. Together, these will seek to enrich the identity of Woodberry Down and the experience of living here. Through culture, heritage and community focused proposals, the additions to the development look to build further on the uniqueness of the local area.

An approach has been developed for Phase 4 which will continue into the Masterplan approach. This is the result of research, consultation, and engagement since early 2021 including detailed dialogue with the Woodberry Down Design Committee. It takes into consideration the social value that can be brought to the area through both physical regeneration and to community-building. This will further both the sense of place and of belonging at Woodberry Down.

The Phase 4 Cultural Plan aims to:

- Reflect the history, heritage and community of Woodberry Down
- Recommend a Cultural Vision for Woodberry Down
- Identify place-shaping and cultural Focus Areas
- Develop opportunities for community engagement and creative partnerships
- Establish Commissioning Principles for Public Art
- Identify cultural project opportunities
- Set out a governance approach and a delivery plan

Phase 4 Cultural Delivery Plan

To ensure the successful implementation of the Phase 4 Cultural Plan, Woodberry Down Regeneration Partners are working together to agree the delivery approach.

This will include consideration of governance, decision making and a robust cultural commissioning approach, as well as opportunities for local community involvement.

The Delivery Plan will also include the cultural plan budget, approach to artist recruitment and specific commissioning opportunities and timelines.



Hidden River Festival Poster © Manor House Development Trust

Cultural Vision

Our vision for culture and place shaping is to build on the unique local identity and heritage of Woodberry Down, highlighting a sense of belonging, pride in the community and the rich natural setting.

When asked during recent consultation ‘What does Woodberry Down mean to you?’ and ‘What do you most value about the local area?’, many people have referenced the community as being at the core of Woodberry Down and how it has evolved over the years.

In general, people are positive about the area and its location, about the natural setting and the diverse community. They highlighted that it was the many and varied communities coming together that make up the essence of what Woodberry Down is.

The estate was built in response to a need for more housing after the Second World War but whilst housing was built, so was a community created. As stated in Woodberry Down The People's Story - 'the story of a building, sustaining and refreshing of a community'[1], Woodberry Down represented a 'spirit of togetherness' and that this 'neighbourhood spirit' is still in evidence. Also referenced in the publication is the transformation of the environment, with improvements to the southern section of the New River and the retention and improvements made to the reservoirs 'out of this world'.

This vision has evolved through stakeholder engagement including a Community Heritage Workshop that took place in November 2022.

National Policy & Strategy

During the development of this plan, a wide range of local, London and national policy and strategy work has been assessed. Nationally, the Planning Policy Framework includes the need to provide for the cultural well-being of communities. Alongside this, Arts Council England’s Let’s Create strategy seeks to enable everyone’s creativity to be ‘valued and given the chance to flourish’[2].

Hackney

The London Mayor’s Cultural Strategy prioritises providing Londoners ‘with access to culture on their doorsteps.’[3]

Hackney’s Arts and Culture Strategy describes the borough as the ‘creative heart of London’. The vision for culture is to make Hackney ‘a place for everyone’ and to ‘make regeneration work for culture’[4].

Culture is part of the council’s Inclusive Growth approach that seeks to support cohesive communities, education, employment, health, and the local economy. The Arts and Culture Strategy, together with Hackney Council’s Ageing Well and Child Friendly Place Strategies, collectively encourage the creation of public spaces that work for everyone. Social interaction is encouraged to help mitigate increasing issues around loneliness, as well as more involvement in the planning process. The council’s Community Plan emphasises the importance of connecting with neighbours and feeling safe to well-being, and how community events and opportunities to gather are important, as well as the continued need to rebuild communities following the Covid pandemic.

Woodberry Down

A number of Woodberry Down specific documents influence the culture plan. It builds on the Social Life Report (2020) that referenced a loss of ‘sense of place’ and insufficient connection to local history in earlier development phases, with a perception of a ‘widening community gap’. The report went on to say that people locally want ‘more intriguing things to do’ & ‘activities that bring people together’.[5]

A Public Art Strategy was produced for Woodberry Down in 2017. This saw arts and culture as key to regeneration and was designed to guide public art commissions funded through Section 106 commitments. Although some arts projects have taken place in the intervening years and no significant bespoke public art commissions have resulted, this plan takes forward a number of the aspirations, such as seeking to ensure that the themes of community engagement and creative interventions into physical regeneration can be varied forward within Phase 4. This plan also seeks to identify and invest any earlier S106 for the arts that remains available.



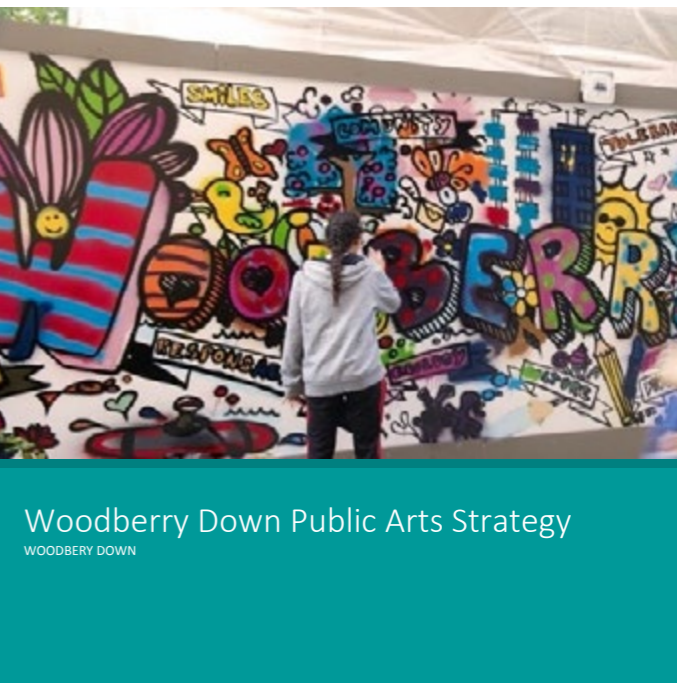
Relevant Plans & Strategies



Mayor of London Cultural Strategy



Hackney Council's Arts & Cultural Strategy 2019-2022



Woodberry Down Public Arts Strategy

[2] Arts Council England Lets Create Strategy 2020-30
[3] Mayor of London Cultural Strategy
[4] Hackney Council Arts and Culture Strategy 2019-22
[5] Social Life report 2020

CULTURE & HERITAGE

Culture in Hackney

Hackney has a wide ranging and vibrant cultural offer across the borough. However, most provision is clustered away from the north side of borough and centred in town centres to the south or in Haringey to the north. The nearest creative hub is the Haringey Warehouse District, however the New River acts as a barrier and otherwise, there are very few immediately local arts organisations providing creative community activity and no known creative workspace in the local area including artist studios.

Culture in Woodberry Down

The main creative offer for the community in Woodberry Down is via local organisations such as at the Manor House Development Trust through the Redmond Centre where a range of courses and workshops take place each year including regular meetings of the Woodberry Warblers choir. Activities specifically for young people are provided through Famestar, a non - profit organisation that uses the visual arts and media to showcase and develop local youth talent as well as activities provided through The Edge youth club or in local schools.

Locally in the public realm, the Hidden River festival is an annual cultural highlight bringing together local arts, culture, music and food with the community. Other events and activities include those provided through the redevelopment programme such as outdoor screenings and seasonal community events, such as the Winter Light event in 2021. Local community gardens and the presence of the London Wildlife Trust at Woodberry Wetlands, and the Coal House Café venue, raises strong potential for a wider range of activities to connect the local community more actively to the unique natural setting.

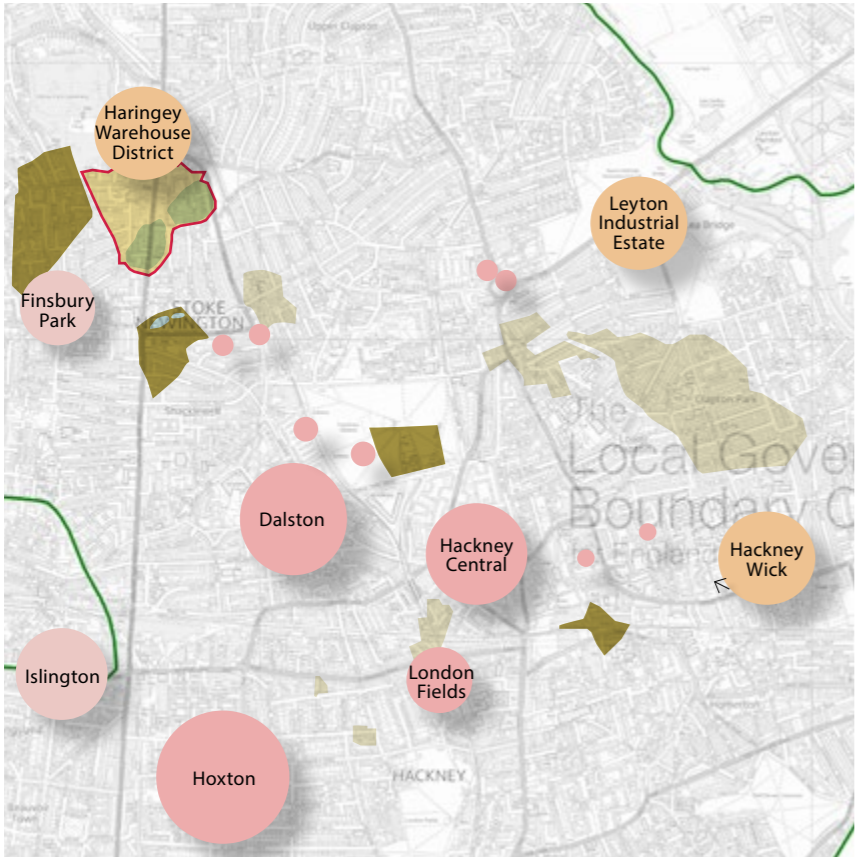
Much of Woodberry Down’s culture comes through the diverse local community, through food and through the outdoors where programme such as Active Within run by Notting Hill Genesis offer free physical activity for the community.

Local groups such as the Friends of Woodberry Down, Famestar, Woodberry Aid and others generate a range of events such as Inter-Gen, annual event bringing together older and younger residents for food and performances.

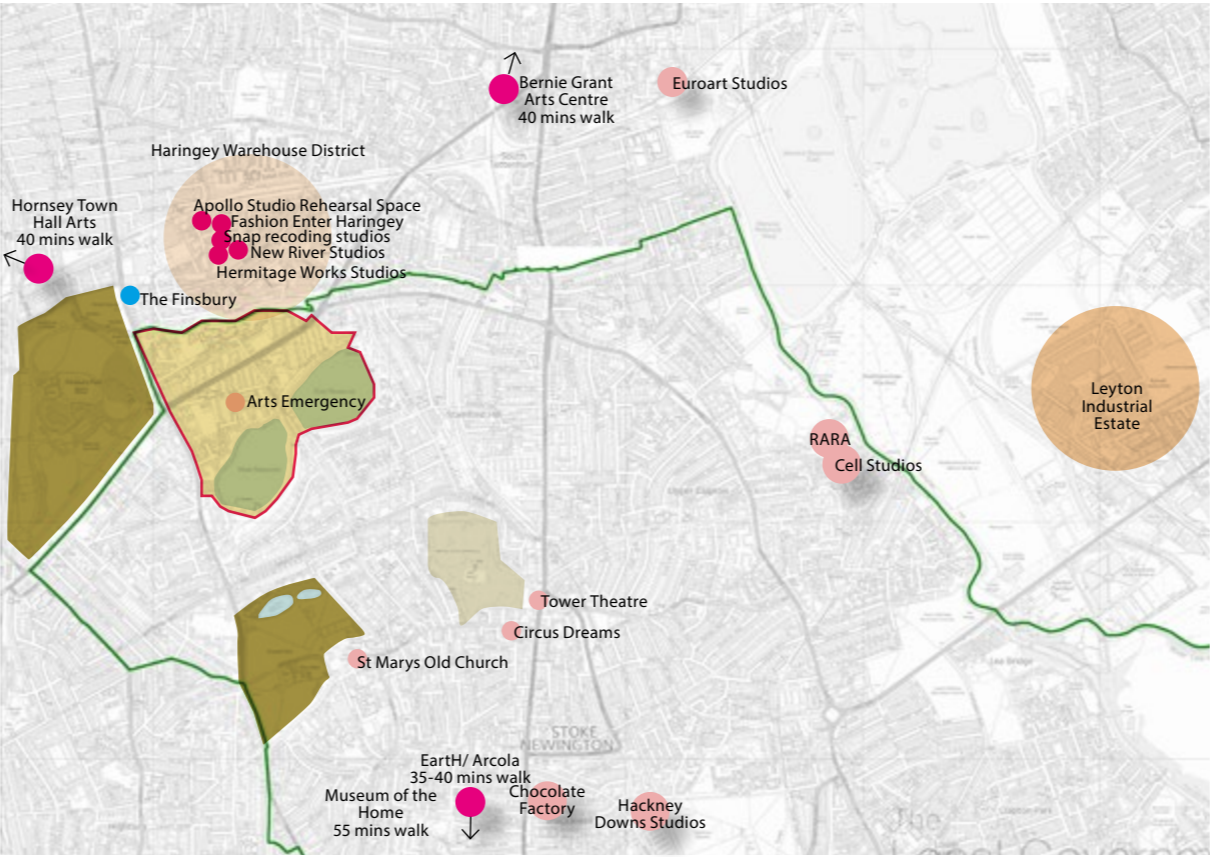
Woodberry Down’s Heritage

This plan draws on Woodberry Down’s local heritage to influence the evolving identity of the area as new development phases are realised. Long-term local residents are proud and passionate about the area and many have lived at Woodberry Down for over fifty years. Newer residents enjoy the proximity to central London whilst living beside the Wetland’s natural vistas.

A number of heritage projects have been undertaken in recent years, including the collection of oral histories and the publication of “Woodberry Down, The People’s Story” which reflects residents’ lives on the estate through first hand memories and personal photos. More recently, a Community Heritage Workshop took place in November 2022 to take an overview and capture the key strands of the area’s heritage, with input from local residents and stakeholders. Annotated by a scribe, this further evidenced how Woodberry Down’s heritage is multifaceted, providing a rich source of ideas and stories to inform cultural projects including public art commissions. There are stories of urban planning and social housing, culturally diverse communities, post war optimism, campaigning and protest, and the evolution of the natural environment.



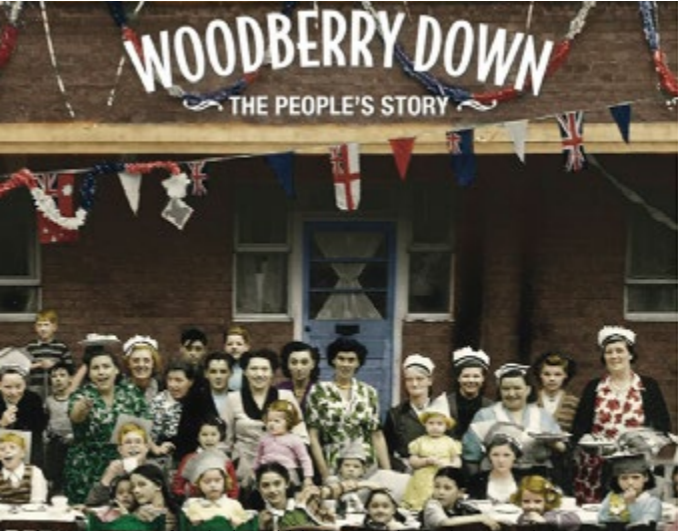
Borough wide cultural mapping



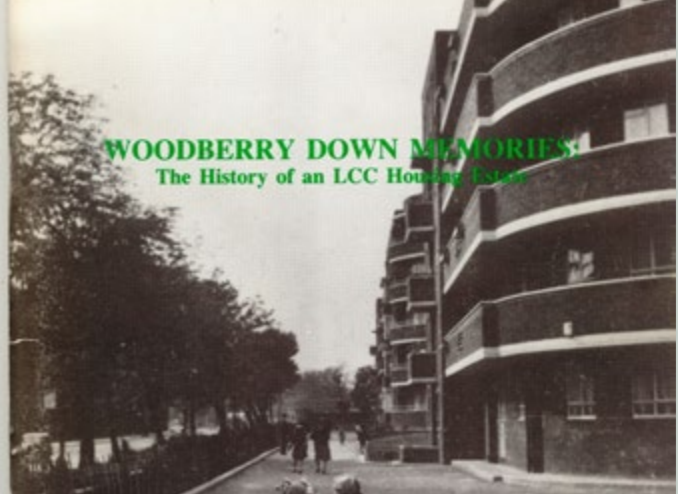
Local cultural mapping



Woodberry Down prior to regeneration



Heritage Lottery funded oral history project 'The People's Story'

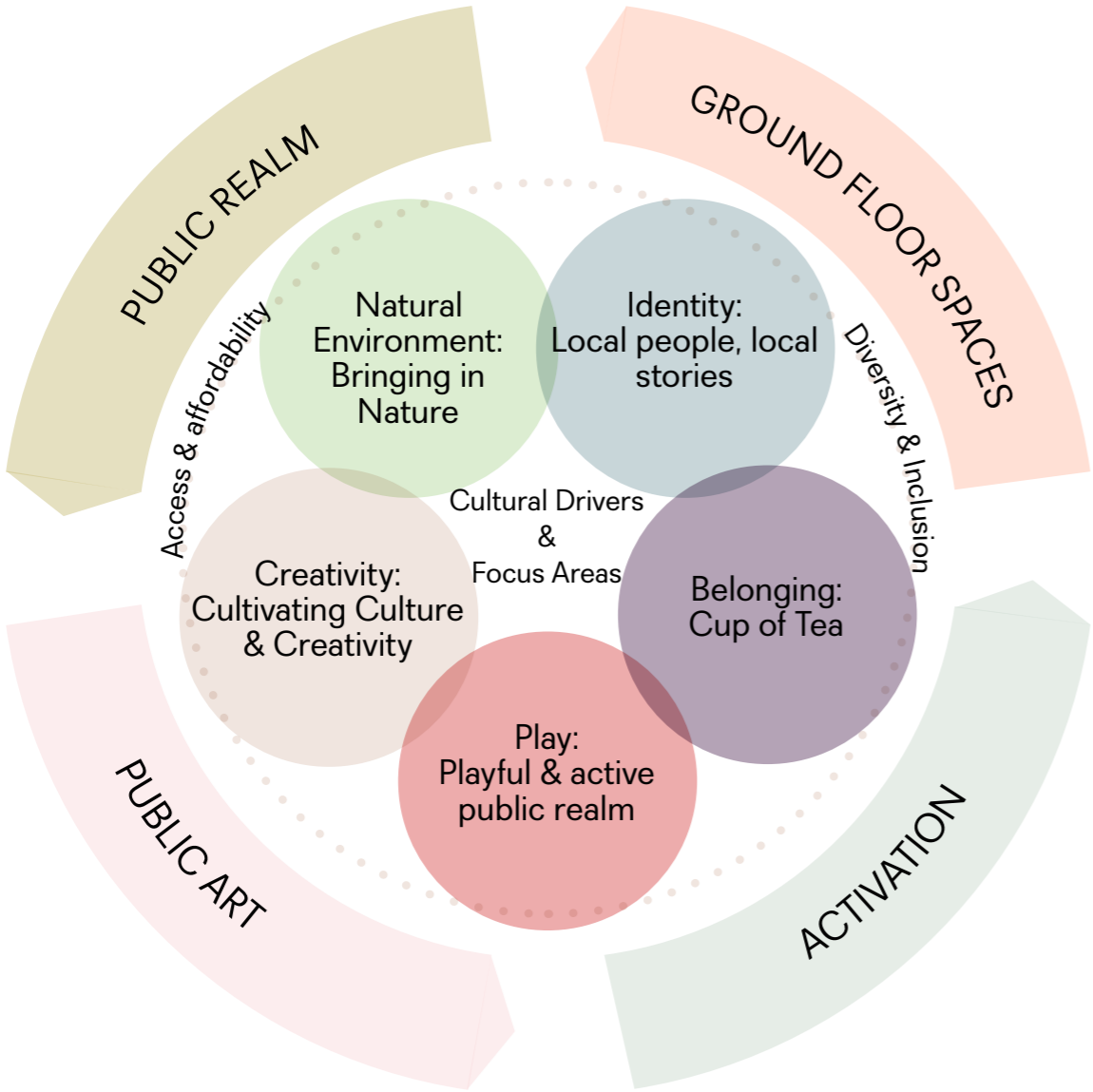


Woodberry Down Memories

Underpinning Principles

To develop this plan, a range of strategic and local research has been carried out alongside public consultation and engagement. This has facilitated the creation of a plan which draws together and builds on local interests and context.

Underpinning culture and placeshaping principles have been established through this process with stakeholders and the wider local community. Central to these are to ensure that the diversity of the local community is celebrated and that Woodberry Down is designed for and provides for all, with inclusive opportunities for everyone. This includes ensuring affordability when considering ground floor provision including retail.



Cultural Priorities

Through consultation and engagement, cultural and placeshaping priorities have been agreed as follows, driven by what people most value:

NATURE

Celebrating the natural setting, including water, and seeking to bring nature into all development phases through interconnected green spaces and routes



View of the Eastern reservoir

IDENTITY

Focusing on the local community and finding ways to share local stories of people and place



Woodberry Down life

BELONGING

Described through the words 'Cup of tea' denoting the value people place in knowing their neighbours and being able to connect with people in Woodberry Down



Woodberry Blooms Flower Shop & Creative Enterprise

CREATIVITY

Cultivating ways for people to take part in culture & creative activity locally



Lantern Making Workshop for the Winter Fest 2021

PLAY

Designing a playful & active public realm that everyone can access and enjoy



Spring Park Playground

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Through consultation and engagement, input has helped to shape and guide this cultural plan. All public consultation at Woodberry Down since July 2021 has included information and questions on culture and asked what people would like to see delivered. In addition, a series of creative engagement activities since winter 2021 continue to take place with the local community. These have sought to strengthen feelings of community and offer additional opportunities for residents to feed into the emerging cultural plan through conversations that took place whilst undertaking creative activities. Learnings built up from consultation over time has confirmed key findings that have shaped the plan.

Engagement has included:

- Public consultation activities
- Design Committee Workshops
- Creative Engagement Workshops
- Youth Engagement

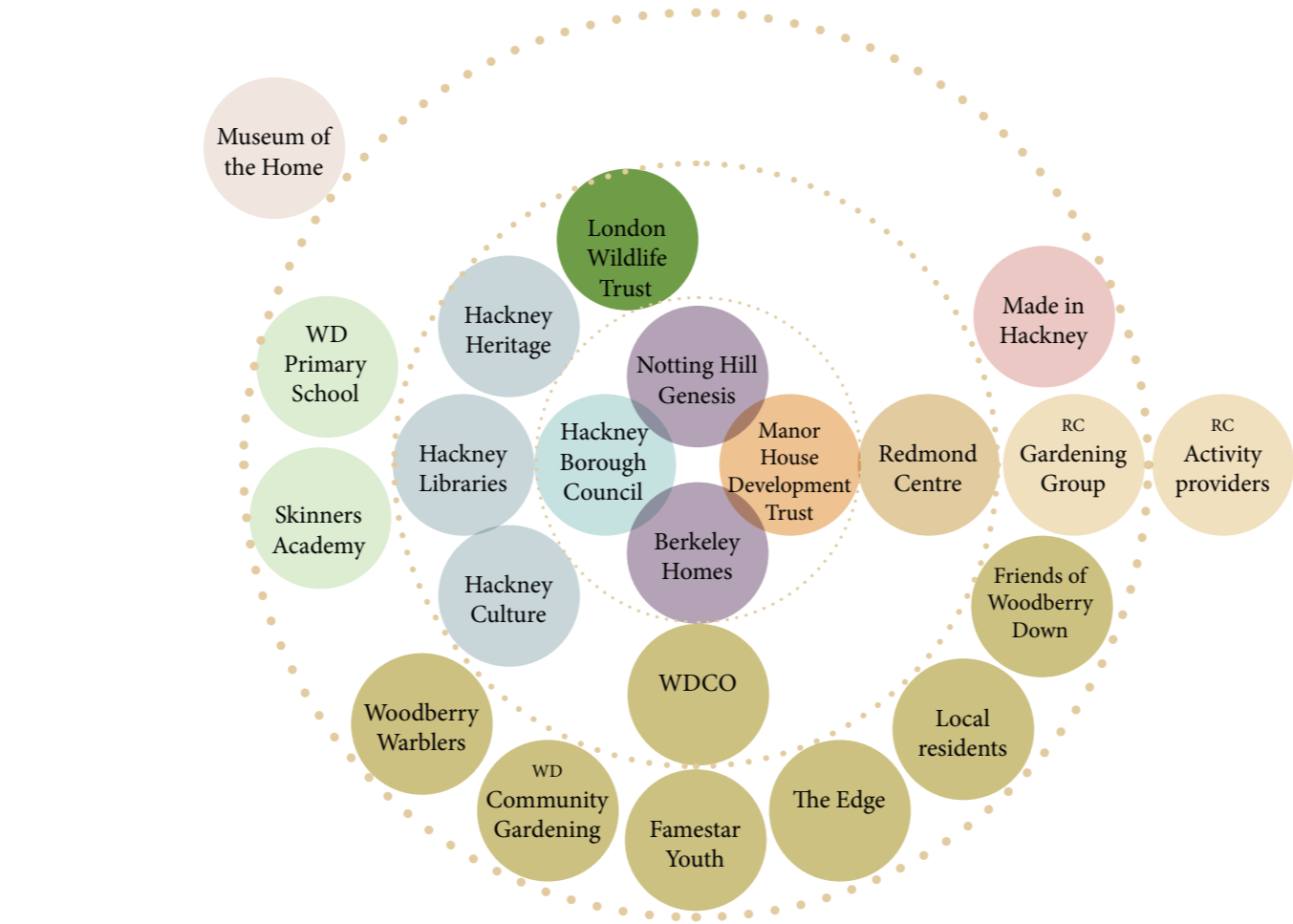
Lantern Project

In winter 2021, Hackney based artist Emily Tracy was commissioned to lead a creative lantern making project at Woodberry Down. The aim of the engagement was to generate creative activity amongst the Woodberry Down community and enable informal conversations to generate views to feed into the development of the Cultural Plan.

Workshops took place with local groups and for the wider public to create lanterns that were displayed at the community Winter Light event in December 2021. Lanterns were then carried by local community members as part of an illuminated procession to the Redmond Centre where the artworks were exhibited in the windows through to the New Year.

Key feedback was as follows:

- Creativity; A strong appetite for creative community activity
- Natural Setting; The desire to connect people to nature on their doorstep
- Affordability; Increased access to affordable spaces & activity
- Events & Belonging; More communal activity to encourage connection
- Public Spaces & Play; Varied flexible playful public spaces



Stakeholder Consultation to date



Bunting engagement during June 2022 Public Consultation



Creative Engagement with Friends of Woodberry Down



Youth consultation during lantern making 2021



Winter Lights Festival



Winter Lights Procession

Youth Engagement

The Lantern Project Workshops took place at Woodberry Down Primary School, The Edge Junior youth club and with local residents at a public drop-in session. In addition, a number of public realm design workshops are running during Autumn 2022 at Skinners Academy and other youth settings. These are adding to the understanding of local people's thoughts and aspirations in relation to their environment, arts and culture.

Formal consultation rarely appeals to young people and it was felt that a more creative approach could benefit younger consultees and provide valuable feedback, as well as piloting ways to involve younger generations and generate interest in their environment.

Workshops focused on the local public realm, comparing the older areas with those already improved. In particular the area known as the Rose Garden, on the west side of Woodberry Grove was explored. Phase 4 development proposals will transform this area into a new Civic Hub which will form the heart of Woodberry Down.

The workshops are giving young people the opportunity to consider how public realm is used and designed and how creative design can respond to local needs. The students who have participated to date gained an insight into the design process and its application in real life. The students had a range of suggestions, some specifically for their interests as well as for the use and enjoyment of the wider community.

Heritage Workshop

A Community Heritage Workshop took place in November 2022 to invite input from local residents and stakeholders about local heritage. The outcomes of this will help to guide future public art commissions.

Cultural Focus Group

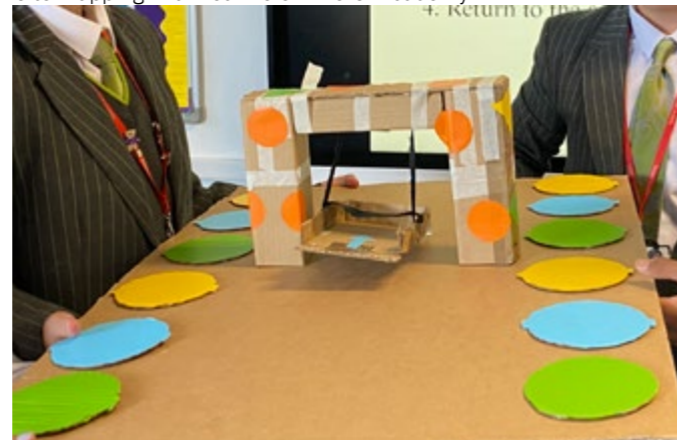
It is planned to bring together key stakeholders from local community and cultural providers with a view to better connecting and communicating what is on offer in Woodberry Down to the wider community. With greater connections and networking can come scope for more ambitious partnership working, fundraising and resulting activity that can benefit all in the area.

Further engagement

It is intended to continue to deliver activity through development partners and with the local community, that will lead into the delivery of this Cultural Plan and generate interest and awareness.



Site Mapping with Year 10 Skinners' Academy



Wheelchair Accessible swing proposal



Mobile basketball hoop proposal

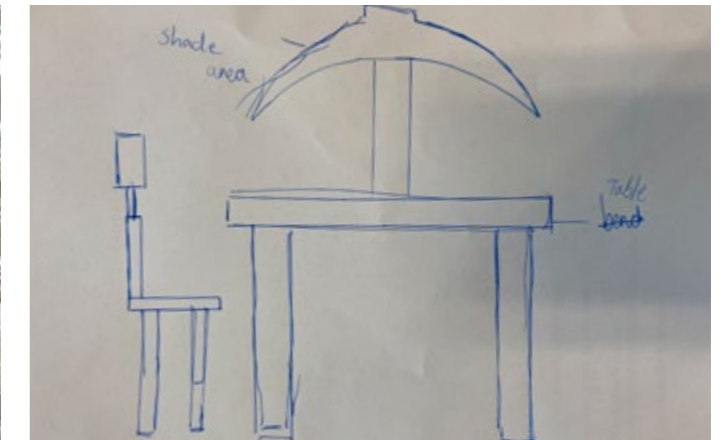
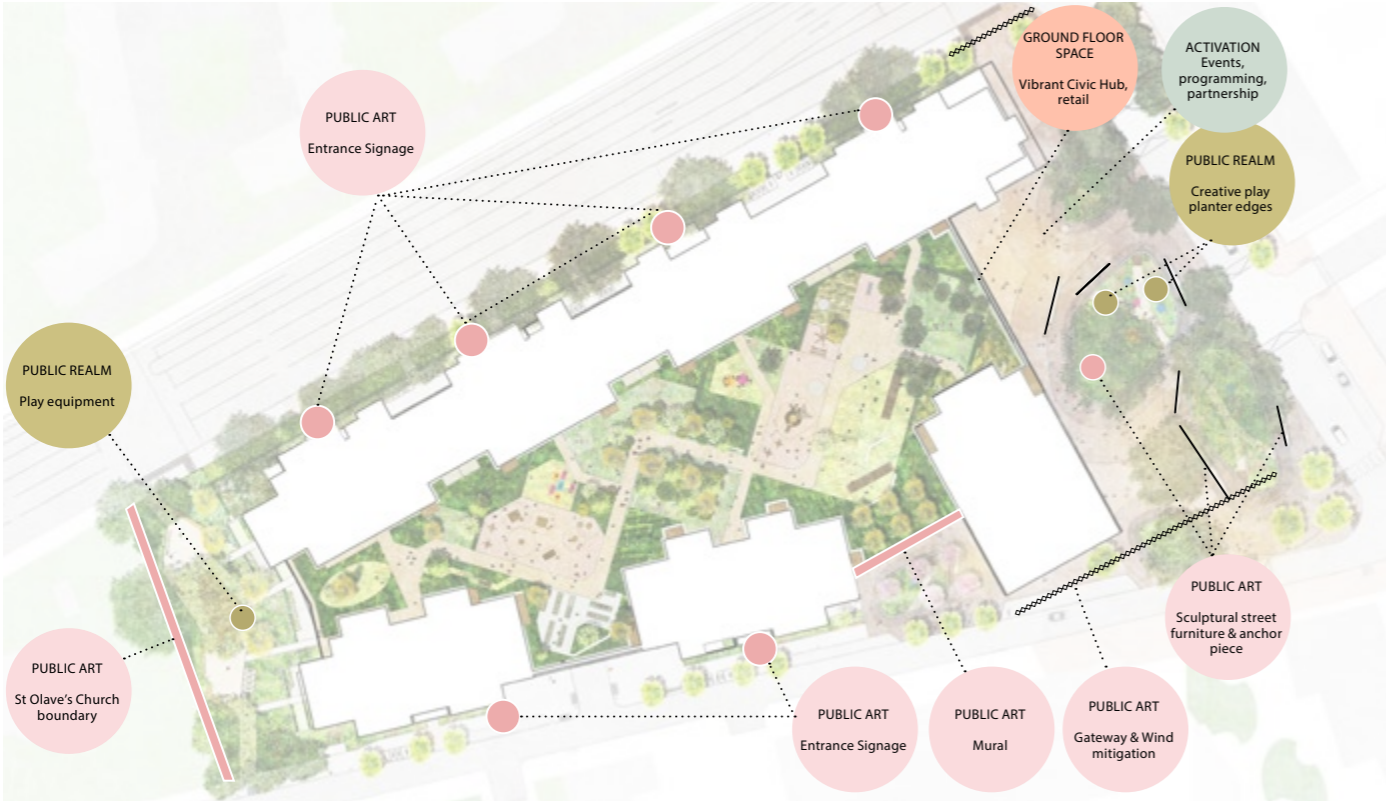
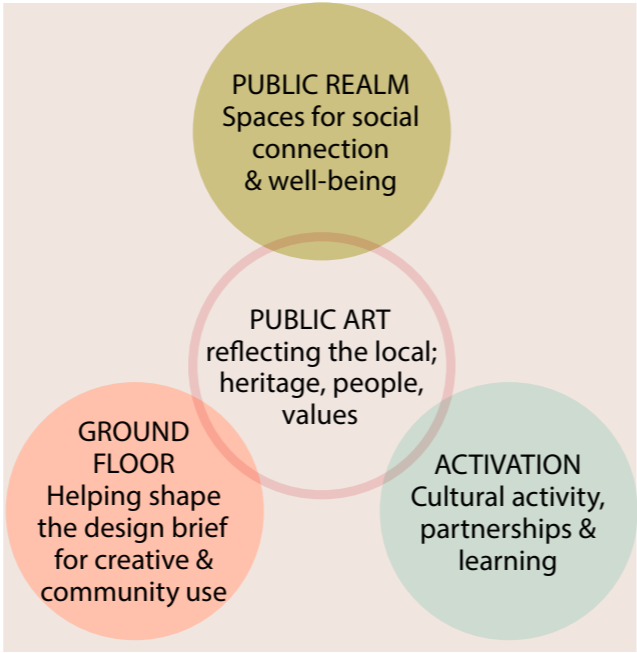


Table and bench proposal

PHASE 4 CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

Cultural Focus Areas in Phase 4

We have identified 4 Cultural Focus areas which the Cultural Strategy will seek to shape; these are Public Realm, Ground Floor Uses, Activation and Public Art. A variety of opportunities have been identified across Phase 4 to realise the Woodberry Down cultural and placeshaping priorities across these 4 focus areas.



Cultural Focus: Ground Floor

- Providing a vibrant active community hub space

During public consultation, the relocation and expansion of the existing Woodberry Down library has been highlighted as an opportunity to bring a range of benefits. There could be scope to co-locate other uses that both add social value and help to fund the library. The previous Woodberry Down library closed in 1996 and a small library space is located in the Redmond Centre though with limited opening hours and staffed by volunteers. Without a public-facing front door, many local residents are not aware of its existence and there is limited activity on offer.

Hackney Borough Council is undertaking a feasibility study to assess the viability of locating a larger library, and of the potential for other co-located facilities, in the ground floor of Phase 4 facing onto Central Square. If feasible, this may include a low-cost café with outdoor seating in the square and will consider the potential for an outdoor podium level terrace space to be included. The study will identify local need and demand, and what mix of provision would offer the right fit for the area, in line with the priorities of the Cultural Plan and of the borough's wider objectives. These include skills and the economy, wellbeing, inclusion and opportunities for young people.

As it stands the space is submitted for flexible uses, whilst the feasibility study is ongoing in the background.



West Norwood Library

Cultural Focus: Public Realm & Activation

- Welcoming outdoor spaces that will accommodate a variety of uses

Central Square will become the new civic heart of Woodberry Down. It will be designed to enable small-scale events & community activities such as markets and small-scale performances, outdoor screenings or festivals. There will be seating, planting and playful features to encourage daily social uses for all ages. Public artworks will be integrated that stamp Woodberry Down's distinctive identity within the public realm and provide opportunities to community engagement in the commissioning of these.



Public Space Choir



Creative street furniture in Sheffield by David Appleyard

Cultural Focus: Public Art

Integrated bespoke artworks that reflect Woodberry Down’s unique identity, heritage and diverse communities

Public Art has been identified as a valuable way to reflect Woodberry Down’s identity and heritage, to add character to the public realm and to build community involvement with creative projects.

Three areas have been identified where there is potential for public art commissions to build on the cultural plan drivers.



Bird bath public art commission

Central Square

A series of public art opportunities have been identified within Central Square. This may include some of the following. For example:

- An Anchor Artwork
- For example, a ‘bandstand’ or ‘arbor’ focus artwork that may result in the structure itself or an element such as the floor, associated seating that can invite people to gather & become a focal point for small events or day to day shelter.
- Playful Seating
- Seating that can also offer play while reflecting aspects of Woodberry Down such as a surface design or text
- Planter beds
- Edges can be cast with textures or text to add interest, or the surrounding floor could be designed with an associated approach
- Play Opportunities
- Playful interactive elements (rather than play equipment), for example; stepping stones, a trail in the ground or smaller-scale seating
- Drinking Water Fountain
- A bespoke design would create a point of interest and support community well-being by offering free access to water in the public space
- Wind Mitigation
- Should it be determined that additional mitigation for wind is required, this could offer a canvas or focus for a public art commission



Anchor artwork precedent



Drinking water fountain precedent



Planter edging precedent



Playful seating precedent



Play opportunities precedent



Wind mitigation precedent

PHASE 4 CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

Mural & Building Signage

A façade mural may form an anchor artwork that reference the listed mural in Woodberry Down Primary School, adding a feature to this quieter public realm area or a different suitable façade location such as the gateway corner of Seven Sisters Road and Woodberry Grove.

The mural could be linked to bespoke signage for individual buildings through a family of coloured or patterned tiles that reference the original tiled building signs on all original housing blocks.



Building naming precedent



Mural precedent



Community mural precedent

St Olave's Boundary

The public realm route passing north-south along the eastern edge of St Olave's Church will be enlarged and enhanced as part of Phase 4. The boundary wall offers a potential opportunity for a public art treatment developed with the community. This would create a focal point on the route into and out of Woodberry Down here and could involve lighting to enhance the space at night and help build a sense of safety. Lighting could highlight artwork or shine through an artwork to highlight cut-out images or text that will then be projected. Playable features are another commission opportunity in this space.



Art boundary precedent



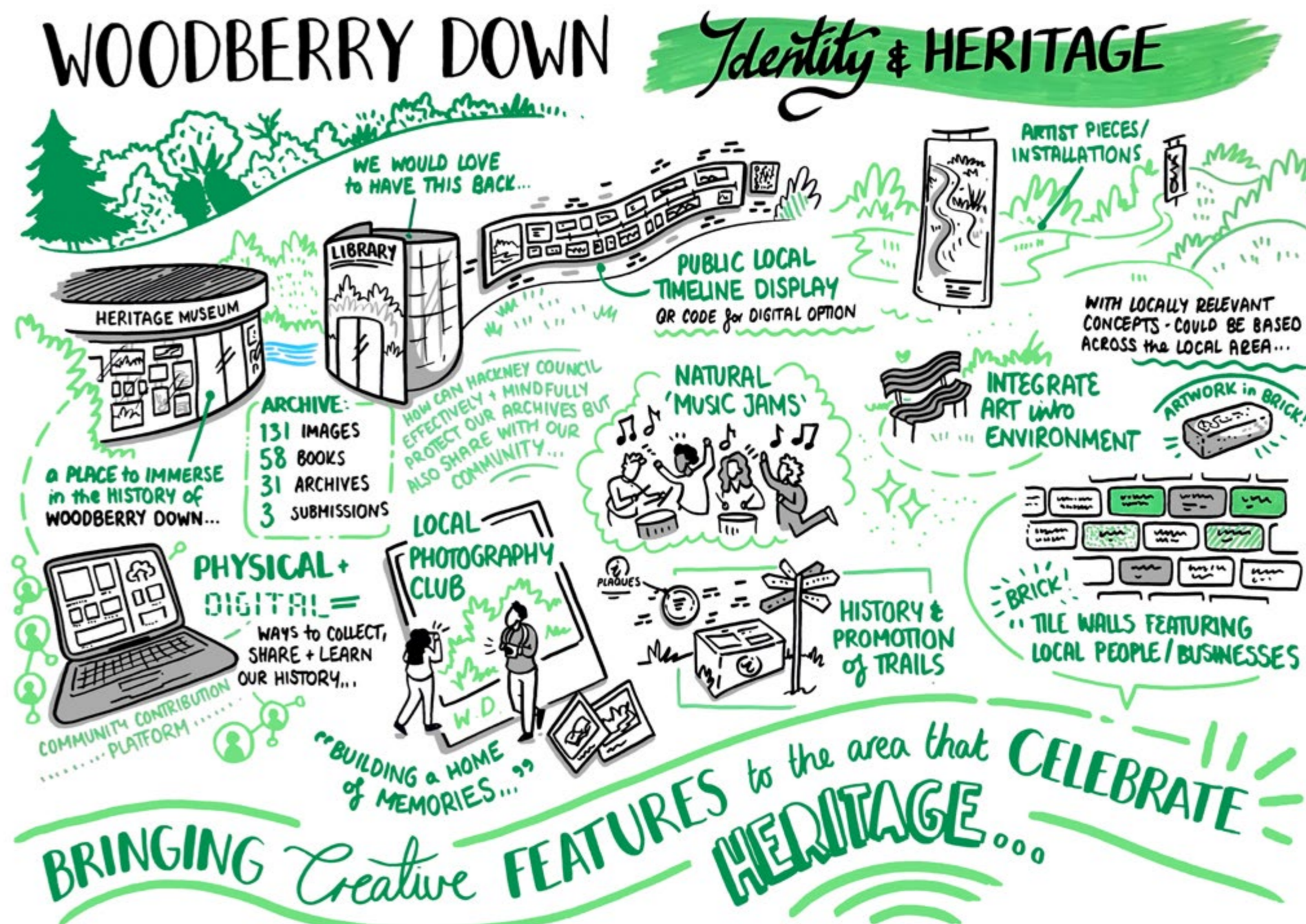
Art boundary precedent



Illuminated lettering precedent

Next Steps

- Build on the outcomes of the Heritage Workshop to feed into Cultural Vision and delivery plan.
- Complete Creative Engagement Workshops with young people on the subject of public realm and deliver findings to project partners and stakeholders.
- Set up Cultural Focus Group to encourage cross working and oversee development of cultural delivery plan.
- Ensure continued engagement in development project delivery across all ages, backgrounds and abilities.



Outcome of the Heritage Workshop illustrated by live scribe artist Amber Anderson



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