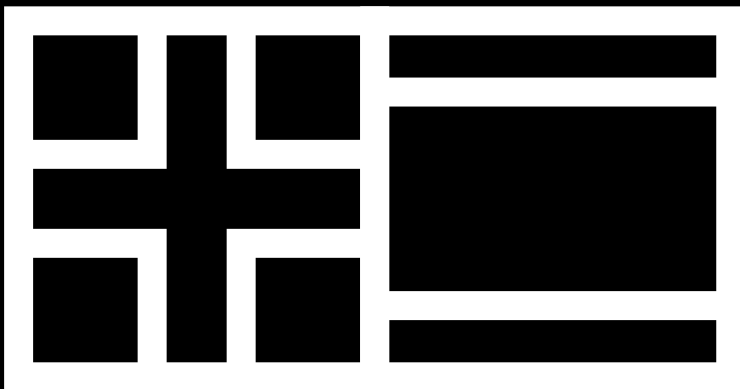


The Royal Docks Economic Portrait

Spring 2023





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Executive summary

This study provides a portrait of economic activity in the Royal Docks area, one that builds an understanding of the people that create the economy of the Royal Docks, the spaces they work in, the things they make or do, and their own perspectives on their work and the context in which it takes place. The focus of the study is on a series of 1:1, interview-based illustrated Case studies taken from a sample of businesses in the area. Businesses were selected after a comprehensive business audit was carried out to ensure a diverse range of business types were identified. These have been analysed to identify themes, clusters, networks and finally recommendations to help guide the Royal Docks team to develop, update and refine the support they offer to businesses and organisations in the Royal Docks area, as well as continue to develop their approach to attracting new enterprise and sectors to the area.

Key concerns and themes in the current context are as follows:

- There is a strong parity between the sectors the Royal Docks team aims to support and existing kernels of opportunity on the ground.
- In general there is a positive feeling about being in the Royal Docks among the businesses, and a welcoming of regeneration and change.
- This is accompanied, often, by anxiety that regeneration will lead to displacement and a lack of affordability.
- There is a perceived need for greater business support especially in terms of building communities, networking and sharing resources.
- There is a strong appetite to provide training, internships, apprenticeships and similar programmes, but support is needed to get this off the ground.

- There is a strong cross-sector appetite to improve environmental responsibility and innovation in sustainability, this again would benefit from support including linking up supply chains and promoting circular economy principles.

Opportunities to enrich the existing economy in the Royal Docks, suggested by this study, can be summarised as follows:

- Support the existing industrial sector, including construction, to innovate and become more sustainable.
- Provision of 'move on' space for emerging and growing businesses, ensuring the right mix of unit sizes.
- Good quality food is a growing theme but it could be better connected to the huge supply chains surrounding the existing global hospitality sector.
- There are extensive production facilities that could play a strong role in how culture is made and experienced here.
- The Royal Docks benefits from an unusual number of creative businesses requiring large-scale affordable workspace, and this is being supported actively at the moment through new provisions such as the Factory Project. Work to ensure the longevity and long-term affordability of creative workspaces like this should be a priority, such that it is not displaced elsewhere in the coming years.
- The water is a powerful asset to boost not only marine and green tech innovation, but also the leisure, residential and workplace appeal of the Royal Docks.

Introduction

Economics in place

The purpose of this study is to set out a detailed understanding of economic activity in the Royal Docks area, and one that is concerned more with economic 'character' than with economic output. Our intention is to provide an understanding of the people that create the economy of the Royal Docks, the spaces they work in, the things they make or do, and their own perspectives on their work and the context in which it takes place in order to better identify the themes and clusters that exist or are emerging out of this economic activity in the Royal Docks. This knowledge, it is hoped, will help the Royal Docks team to better understand the economic communities present in the docks to continue and develop its support for economic activity in the Enterprise Zone and beyond.

The economic portrait is built upon a business audit that geographically covers an area including the Royal Docks and its surrounding neighbours. This helps us to capture significant institutions like the English National Ballet, allowing us to make a more comprehensive analysis of how the proximity of such organisations might have an impact on the local economy. The audit was produced using a combination of desk research and journeys around the Docks, capturing 1,030 businesses that are located and active in the area (rather than simply registered locally) with a view to building a portrait of economic activity and impact. Of these businesses, which represent over 20,000 jobs; 18% are industrial and the remaining 82% fall under various types of service industry. The largest proportion of businesses fall under the 'other services category' (33%) which is a diverse category including IT and software development services, nursery schools, and various other types of service and consultancy.

The focus of the Portrait is on a series of Case studies; detailed 1:1 conversations with key individuals drawn from businesses and organisations across the community. The Case studies have been chosen in collaboration with the Royal Docks team to reflect the diversity of economic activity in the area as well as that of the individuals and teams that make it happen. The selection also aims to look beyond some of the clear economic anchors of the place – ExCeL and London City Airport, for example – to reveal organisations and stories that might not have previously been reached. The Case studies have generated quantitative information about economic activity but, more crucially, have explored the culture of Royal Docks businesses: how they understand the opportunities and constraints that this place presents to them, their hopes and expectations for the future, and how they relate to each other and to the wider communities and places of the docks. Each case study is illustrated with specially-commissioned photography of people and place.

The raw material of the Case studies is then analysed in order to identify themes, clusters and networks. In this context, 'themes' are trends and sectors present or emerging throughout the Royal Docks, 'clusters' are situations where connected or related activities are physically close to each other, and 'networks' are connections, support structures and other uniting threads that help businesses and organisations work together in this place.



Out of these themes, clusters and networks, we make a series of recommendations to help guide the Royal Docks team to develop, update and refine the support they offer to businesses and organisations in the Royal Docks area, as well as continue to develop their approach to attracting new enterprise and sectors to the place.

Historian and social thinker Colin Ward defined 'work' as all human activities that address social needs and demands, whether or not they are included in official employment statistics or formal remunerative arrangements. Building on this spirit, we have not defined economic activity in terms of profit and turnover but in terms of contribution to the wider economic ecosystem of the area, considering a wider territory of production, making, social value and creativity than might typically be covered in such a study. In this context, the activity of a local allotment grower is as interesting as that of a major international employer, and just as compelling in terms of what it might tell us about future opportunities for community wealth-building, sharing, social value and public benefit. This shift in economic identity is also increasingly important in drawing global investors who have interests in investing in developing areas and their communities.

Type of business (1030):

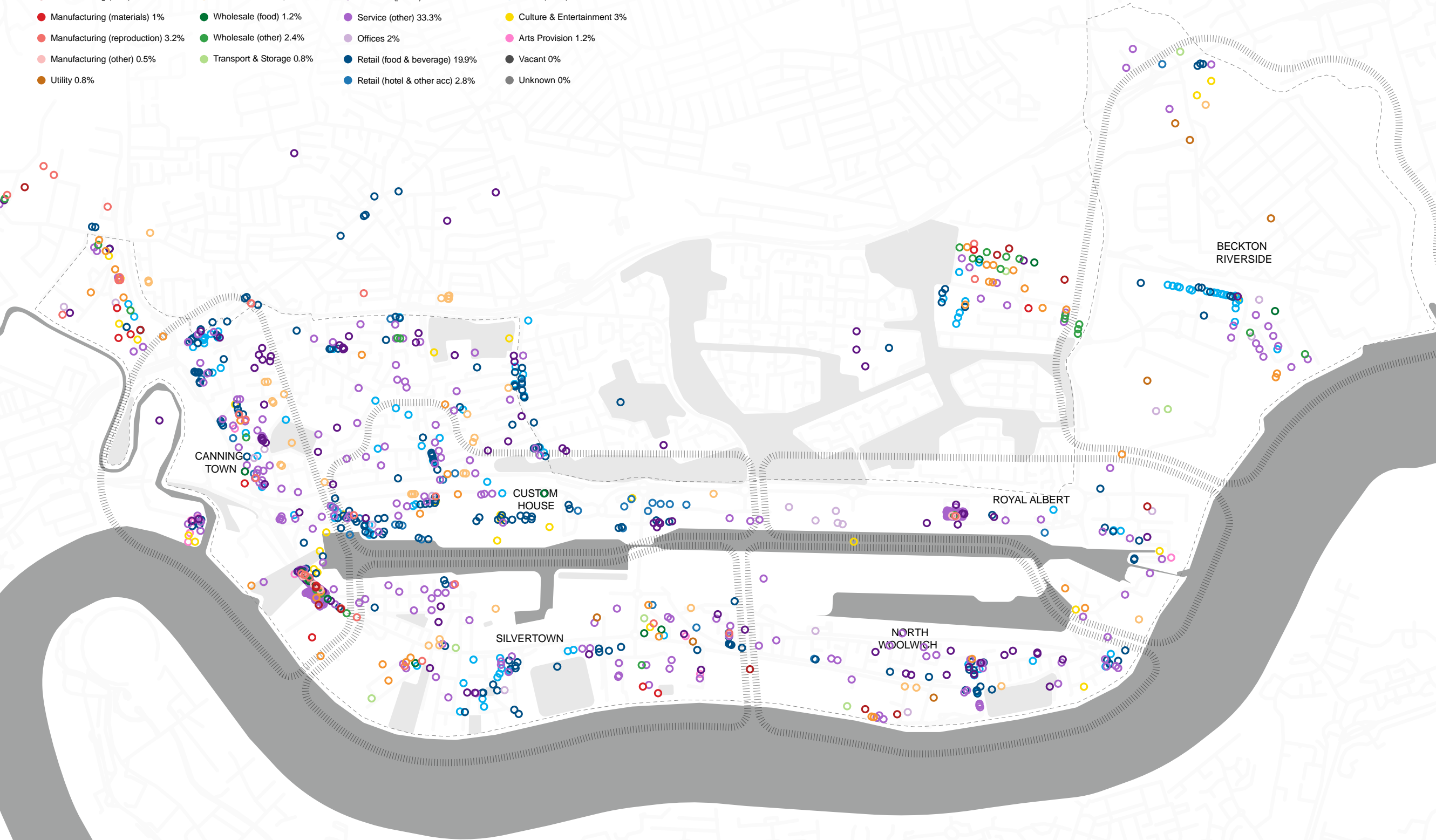
Industrial (18.4%)

- Manufacturing (food) 1.2%
- Manufacturing (materials) 1%
- Manufacturing (reproduction) 3.2%
- Manufacturing (other) 0.5%
- Utility 0.8%

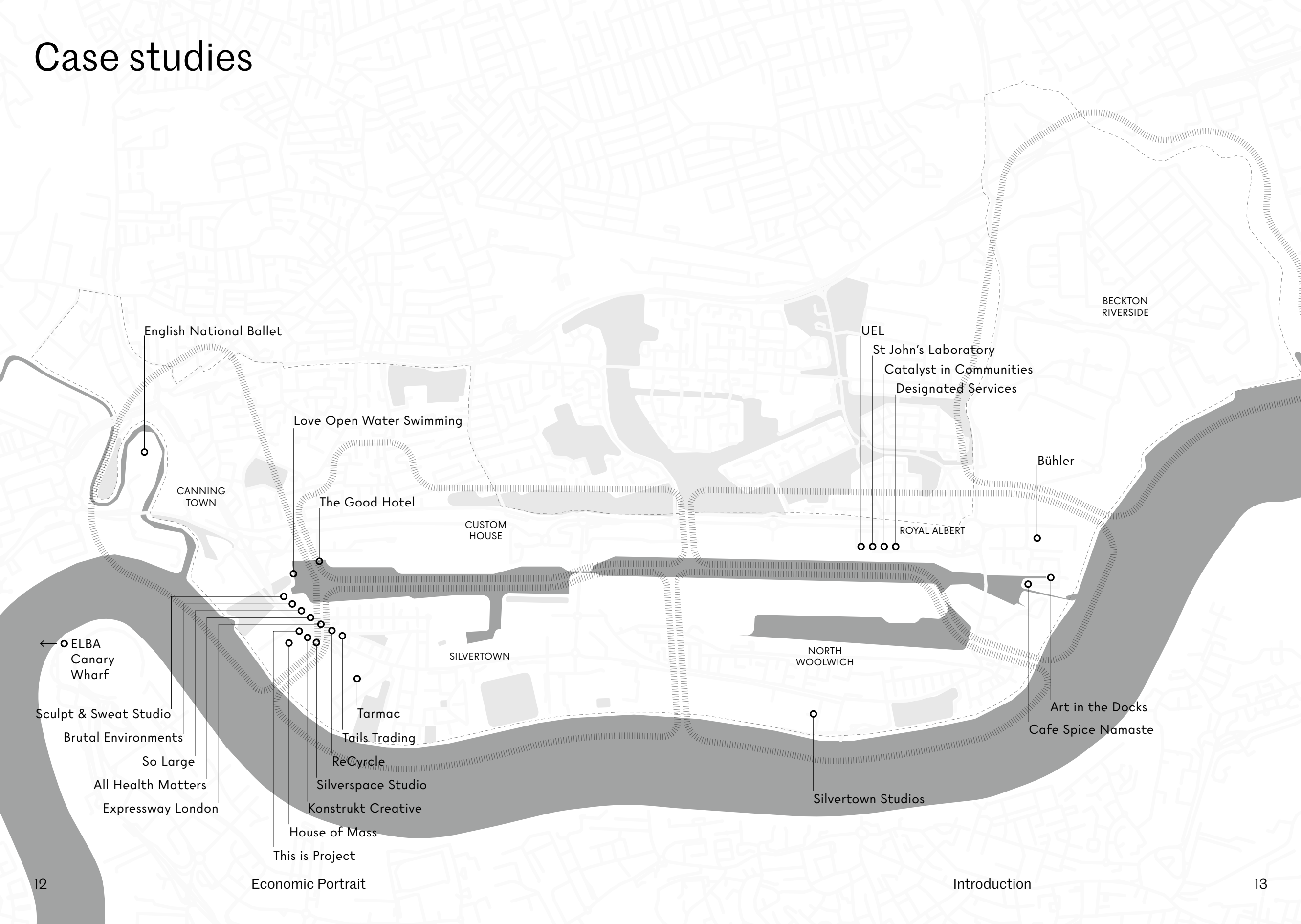
- Construction 3.9%
- Vehicle Sale & Repair 3.7%
- Wholesale (food) 1.2%
- Wholesale (other) 2.4%
- Transport & Storage 0.8%

Services (81.6%)

- Services (public) 9%
- Service (other) 33.3%
- Offices 2%
- Retail (food & beverage) 19.9%
- Retail (hotel & other acc) 2.8%
- Retail (product & services) 10.3%
- Retail (other) 0%
- Culture & Entertainment 3%
- Arts Provision 1.2%
- Vacant 0%
- Unknown 0%



Case studies



English National Ballet

CANNING TOWN

Love Open Water Swimming

The Good Hotel

CUSTOM HOUSE

UEL

St John's Laboratory
Catalyst in Communities
Designated Services

BECKTON RIVERSIDE

Bühler

ROYAL ALBERT

ELBA
Canary Wharf

SILVERTOWN

NORTH WOOLWICH

Sculpt & Sweat Studio

Tarmac

Art in the Docks

Brutal Environments

Tails Trading

Cafe Spice Namaste

So Large

ReCycle

Silvertown Studios

All Health Matters

Silverspace Studio

Expressway London

Konstrukt Creative

House of Mass

This is Project

Economic Portrait

Introduction



Case studies

“The availability of large sites and large scale buildings allow us to price workspace affordably, which then attracts an interesting mix of tenants. It’s hard to find sites like that in London.”

Joel Davies, This is Projekt

Joel Davies

Cultural Director

This is Projekt

“A lot of our funding outputs are around community wealth building and employment. The Silver Building has a free event space for local community groups.”

The Silver Building, 2016

Use Class E

Activity/sector

Primarily creative sector; artist studios, fashion designers, set designers, audiovisual engineers etc.

Facilities

Affordable workspace, communal bar/cafe, free event space for local community groups

Employees

80 This is Projekt employees across London with 35 tenants operating within The Silver Building, ranging from individual artists to 20+ employee businesses

Networks

12 sites across London. Connections to Husk Beer and Good Hotel



This is Projekt is an affordable workspace provider that takes on leases of empty buildings which are to be demolished or developed, and refurbishes them as meanwhile use workspace. They have twelve sites across London with varied buildings from central London office blocks to warehouses in Outer London. Their most established premises in the Royal Docks is called The Silver Building, formerly the Carlsberg-Tetley brewery, which has been hosting predominantly creative sector tenants since 2016.

“If you create an interesting space, people are prepared to travel to work there and hang out there.”

“[Our] tenants are a really interesting mix, from smaller artist studios, to fashion designers who employ 20 plus people – the warehouses at the back house set designers and audiovisual engineers.”

The industrial history of the Royal Docks along with the ongoing redevelopment of the area has resulted in a number of large sites becoming vacant. Such sites in a Zone 3 location are hard to find elsewhere in London and so have been attractive to light industrial creatives such as set designers and audiovisual engineers.

The Silver Building hosts a series of cultural talks and exhibitions alongside a free community event space and a communal bar/cafe. These facilities and the ongoing programming contribute to the cultural offering in the area, however there is an opportunity to provide more cultural events and venues to attract people to the Royal Docks and to host the people that currently work and live in the area.

With the help of the Mayor of London’s Good Growth Fund, This is Projekt have secured another Royal Docks site, the former Tate & Lyle warehouses and yards. The match funding has allowed for the renovation of The Factory Project, which opened in March 2022 and aims to support enterprise, generate employment, and promote culture.

Jameelah Webster & Alistair Ganzia Community Officer & Sustainable Enterprise Manager UEL Business Centre

The University of East London’s Docklands campus supports SMEs and alumni businesses in what used to be their own business centre, but which is currently being transformed into the Sustainable Enterprise Centre (SEC) within the larger ecosystem of the Royal Docks Centre for Sustainability (RDCS). Within this new flexible workspace, the SEC’s programmes will enable the launch, development, and growth of sustainable businesses that create good jobs for the borough. Businesses will have access to the specialist facilities of the new Centre, University academic and research expertise and student talent, and a network of experts and investors. The SEC will also support the Community Wealth Building ethos of the RDCS by creating a mutually supportive ecosystem where entrepreneurs can access specialist academic expertise that supports the core activity of their business and in turn provide relevant work-based learning opportunities for students and local people.

“There has been a big rise in local people who live in the docks coming to use the hot-desking space.”

University of East London, 1999
Use Class F

Activity/sector
Innovation, research and education

Facilities
Affordable office and co-working space, funded internship scheme, meeting space, communal cafe, access to university library, all becoming the royal docks centre.

Employees
1,500 approximately

Networks
Our Newham Work, Newham Sparks, London Design and Engineering University Technical College, The Incubator & Accelerator Network (IAN), Newham Council, Tate & Lyle.





“The University offers internships to students which are paid, allowing students to gain experience, and small businesses to access the support they need, without the financial burden.”

“There is a disconnect from Canary Wharf, a huge financial district that hasn’t quite been tapped into yet.”

Part of the unique offering for businesses based at UEL is the funded internship scheme. UEL provides paid internships for students, allowing them to gain experience, and small businesses to access the support they need, with less financial burden and risk. As many students at UEL are from the surrounding area, the internship scheme supports the local economy and community. The University has ambitions to provide further support for businesses to grow and become more sustainable by implementing sustainable development goals and programming upskilling and consultancy for businesses and local communities, especially within the tech and data industries.

During the pandemic, The University saw a rise in enquiries as businesses/individuals in the Royal Docks wanted to work in an office space without having to commute to central London. The Royal Dock location seems to have retained its popularity with leases at the University running at high capacity and being long-standing.

Within the Royal Docks, The University has close connections with a number of charities, public organisations and educational institutions such as; Our Newham Work, Newham Sparks, Newham Council, and London Design and Engineering UTC. These networks all improve the university’s offering in terms of apprenticeships, placements, and employment. Whilst connections within the Royal Docks are present, there is a sense of disconnect between UEL and the neighbouring business districts such as Canary Wharf. There is an expectation that the Mayor’s move to the Royal Docks will increase activity and interest in the area, allowing wider networks to form.

Daniel Forsythe

Head of Operations

Expressway

Expressway is a business centre for SMEs and creative businesses providing office space, workshops and warehouses. Located beneath Silvertown Way, Expressway has recently been refurbished and offers fully furnished office and industrial maker workshops hosting 140+ businesses. Occupiers include architects, a gin distillery, artists and financial services, to name but a few. A significant number of tenants are longstanding SMEs with their founders or employees being local to the area.

“During the pandemic, when people didn’t want to or couldn’t be in central London, they used the Royal Docks more.”



Expressway London,
2003
Use Class E

Activity/sector
Workspace

Facilities
Managed affordable workspace including; 124 offices (150-1,200 sqft), 27 light industrial units, maker units, storage, and event space

Employees
350-400 tenant individuals

Networks
Good Hotel, Good Vibes, Open Desk Furniture, Brutal Environments, and City Hall

“Co-working spaces are for anyone who lives in the area, anyone is welcome to use the space for working. Industrial uses vary from furniture makers to breweries to fishmongers.”



“People get the sense they are arriving in the Royal Docks when visiting Expressway, especially if you get off at Royal Victoria.”

Daniela Neugebauer Founder & Director House of Mass

House of Mass is a not-for-profit studio, currently based in the Silver Building, that offers training, practice/event space, and networks for local performing artists and communities. Daniela has been a professional dancer for twenty years and wanted to continue advocating dance and performing arts by supporting artists with practice and performance space as well as encouraging multi-disciplinary collaboration between artists and communities.

**The Silver Building, 2021
Use Class E**

Activity/sector
Performing arts

Facilities
Dance studio and
production room

Employees
1 full-time, 9 freelance

Networks
This is Project, Studio
Wayne McGregor,
Swiss Cultural Fund,
English National Ballet





“The artists that are in the Royal Docks are really exciting. There is a growing art community and a real feeling of opportunity. We work with a range of artists from the Royal Docks. For example Sung Im Her from the Belgian contemporary scene, or the transdisciplinary artist Adam Moore, who live in the Royal Docks and so we connected with them, as well as with numerous other dancers and teachers in the area.”

The Royal Docks has a growing arts community which makes the Silver Building an exciting place to be as it is both well-connected and has a feeling of opportunity thanks to the many different and innovative businesses in the area. House of Mass is a partner with This is Project and works with works with a range of artists and organisations from the Royal Docks such as Sung Im Her, Stage Ready Performing Arts, and the English National Ballet, to deliver dance programmes and classes for all abilities and ages. Among the workshops and classes delivered, ‘Movement Radio’, a virtual class run for the general public, by various international and top DJs (Dance Jockeys) in the industry, such as dancers from the Royal Ballet, Lyon Opera Ballet, Studio Wayne McGregor and Rambert Dance Company, and ‘Studio Digitus’, a platform for artists to talk about their projects when they couldn’t physically perform during the pandemic, were both notable.

“The Royal Docks make a real effort to push the work of the creative community through festivals and art.”

House of Mass currently offers community workshops and provides reduced-price tickets to local residents, however, they want to grow their community offering to provide a range of classes taught by top artists and performers that are made available to anyone. A circular business model is employed for this where a proportion of the income from the training and development space is reinvested into the business to support artists and provide greater access to the performing arts.

Tom Brennan

Director St John's Laboratory

Established in 2012, St John's Laboratory supports the life-science industry by acting as a global distributor for research kits and antibodies for biotech, pharmaceutical, and research organisations. The majority of clients are academics, researchers and scientists based across Europe, China and the UK. St John's Laboratory are striving to become an industry leading business promoting quality and sustainability through networking events and sustainable practices.

“Being a scientific company, it is a priority for us to be on a university site, as we need to be close to where the ideas are being generated. There are so many departments at the university to connect with, we're looking into collaborations with the art department, filming, and gaming.”



**University of East London,
2012
Use Class E**

Activity/sector
Distribution to support life
science research

Facilities
Office space

Employees
2

Networks
School of Health Sport
and Bioscience and the
Sustainability Research
Institute, both based at the
University of East London's
Docklands campus

“The university has never felt stagnant, there has always been progress. This is the reason that we choose to stay.”

“Everyone would benefit from a tool or mechanism that gets businesses working together and sharing services internally.”

Based at the UEL, St John's Laboratory are able to form relationships directly with the researchers and academics who are generating the ideas which shape their industry. It is a priority of Tom's to be located on a university site due to the facilities, connections and bio-science internship opportunities. UEL is a prime location in the Royal Docks as it hosts a network of scientific businesses which can't be found elsewhere in the docks. The Royal Docks does however have a wider network of manufacturing and distribution businesses, something which is not common in the otherwise service-led sectors of London, and this is an advantage. The University's location close to London City Airport, and an unusual density of courier depots, makes them one of the last pick-up locations of the day, resulting in a streamlined distribution process.

It is evident that the connections within UEL have been, and continue to be, important to the success of St John's Laboratory. However, Tom notes a distinct lack of connection to the wider docks area, with very little networking and leisure amenities where businesses can connect outside of the workplace.

Through collaboration and Research & Development, St John's Laboratory hopes to achieve greater sustainability in their methods and practices; from the sourcing of materials through to distribution/validation methods. By collaborating with various departments and the Sustainability Research Institute at UEL they hope to increase their distribution efficiency through online automation, and reduce their waste from packaging. The digitisation of their processes would bring financial stability but would decrease the need for additional employees, however there are future opportunities for employment growth if the manufacture of antibodies could move to the UK and a laboratory space could be obtained at UEL. Tom hopes to employ two interns from UEL's Bioscience department in the near future.

David Kinsella

Director of Research & Development

Bühler UK

Bühler began as a family-owned iron foundry in Switzerland over 160 years ago. Today it has become a multi-disciplinary company specialising in the manufacture of plant equipment and related services for processing food and materials, with 11,000 employees spread across 140 countries. Bühler's technologies contribute to material finishes, car parts, electronic components, agriculture, and food production, and their factories worldwide process 65% of the world's wheat supply, 60% of its chocolate supply, 30% of its rice supply and manufacture 50% of all car components.



Bühler UK, Royal Albert Docks, 2007
Use Class B2

Activity/sector
Original equipment manufacturing

Facilities
Manufacturing warehouses, offices, research & development space

Employees
280 in the Royal Docks, 11,000 worldwide

Networks
Local schools and colleges

“We’re putting apprenticeships through R&D and the manufacturing teams, and we’re developing a more structured scheme where we partner with local schools to provide opportunities for local talent.”

Bühler opened their first London site at St Katharine Docks in 1947 where they operated as a seed distributor buying and importing seed. Since then Bühler have remained in east London with their site moving to Bow, then Fairfield Road, then Pudding Mill Lane and finally to the Royal Docks. The Royal Docks site opened in 2007 and is one of Bühler's 27 manufacturing sites worldwide. It is part of the company's Digital Technologies division which specialises in digital sorting technologies that use lighting and artificial intelligence to process items for both the food and materials industries.

Employees at Bühler cover both technical and non-technical roles, among them: research & development engineers, software engineers, scientists and assembly technicians. In general, the non-technical roles are undertaken by people local to the Docks and the technical roles are undertaken by people from further afield, reflecting the specialist experience and skills required. David has found that technical roles are harder to fill than the non-technical roles as there is great competition with businesses that are located in Zone 1 and are surrounded by a cluster of similar businesses. He hopes that, as the Royal Docks area develops, there will be more housing, local amenities and business support to attract future employees. As well as employing local people, Bühler are working to improve their connection to local schools this year to provide more Research & Development internships and apprenticeship schemes.



“Skilled R&D engineers, software engineers and scientists are hard to find. There is competition with central London and it is difficult to attract people to the Royal Docks. When there is work in Zone 1, drawing people out to Zones 2 & 3 is difficult.”

Sunday Okwuma

Director

So Large

Expressway, 2018
Use Class E

Activity/sector
Business support for young entrepreneurs

Facilities
Office space

Employees
1

Networks
Peacock Gym

So Large is a social enterprise set up to support and mentor young entrepreneurs who are starting their own businesses. The support offered by So Large includes workshops, talks, and 1:1 mentoring, and covers topics such as business management, interview preparation, and sales and marketing. The support is aimed at people aged 17-35 who are lacking business skills and are at risk of falling into crime.



“I’m excited about the way that the Royal Docks is changing, I’ve been in Newham for a long time and the area used to feel quite unsafe. The Royal Docks is becoming a city of its own.”

“I’d really appreciate more help and support to find a space to run workshops and classes two or three times a week.”

So Large’s founder, Sunday started working as a cleaner in Canary Wharf, before getting accepted for a sales and marketing role which offered training on the job. This career led to experience of the business management sector and eventually to the founding of So Large.

So Large moved from Canary Wharf to the Royal Docks in 2018 to obtain a larger office space which was closer to Sunday’s home. Based in Expressway, they hope to rent an additional event space to run weekly workshops and classes, and support more young people. So Large has close connections to Peacocks Gym, a boxing gym located between the docks and Canning Town. A personal interest in boxing and the reputation of Peacocks Gym led to So Large mentoring a number of boxers. Boxing and the principles behind the sport have since become teaching tools used in mentoring and workshops.

As a long-term Newham resident, Sunday is excited to see the rate of change that development is bringing to the Royal Docks. He feels that the area used to feel quite unsafe but that this has improved through the activation of spaces and buildings, with the Royal Docks becoming ‘a city of its own’. However, Sunday feels that the Docks is lacking a diverse culinary and leisure offer for the students, residents and workers of the area, especially when compared to nearby Canary Wharf.

“We provide opportunities to young people to remind them that there are other avenues away from crime.”

Alex Heyes and Kevin Sawyer

Directors
Konstrukt Creative

The Silver Building, 2018
Use Class E

Activity/sector

Set construction for TV,
photography and film,
furniture restoration

Facilities

Workshop and yard space

Employees

4 full-time with up to 20+
freelance workers when
required

Networks

Sonny Evans Events
Production, Penguin Media
Hire, Box Deluxe



Run by two East Londoners, Konstrukt Creative is based in a light industrial unit at the Silver Building, in which they construct sets for TV, photography and film. All of the sets are prefabricated in the Royal Docks workshop before being transported to the set locations, which are most often in West London. Early this year Konstrukt Creative also began to import, restore and sell Scandinavian furniture. As this part of the business progresses they hope to obtain a showroom in the Silver Building.

“Having creative industries within the city provides opportunities for creative people to live within London. If you start pushing our sort of business out then creative people and freelancers will move as well because that's where the work is.”



“Being close to central London and able to work with production studios in west London [is key].”



The majority of Konstrukt Creative’s work is of a large scale and on a freelance basis, hence the need for a large workshop with the flexibility for larger teams, storage for materials, yard access for deliveries and collections, and a good road network for vehicular deliveries and logistics. As they see it, the large units and open spaces left over from the industrial era of the Royal Docks provide ideal locations for light industrial and creative businesses. It is hoped that these repurposed spaces will continue to allow creatives to live and work relatively centrally in London without the need to relocate to Outer London.

The Silver Building has created a concentration of creative businesses that has allowed Konstrukt Creative to share work and recommendations with other businesses in the building, including; Sonny Evans Events Production, Penguin Media Hire and Box Deluxe.

After being relocated from their previous workshop due to the Olympic Park development, Konstrukt Creative are aware of the impacts that development can have on the creative industry, especially light industrial businesses. Konstrukt’s founders hope that development in the Royal Docks will provide workspace for light industrial uses as well as more typical office space in order to provide a more permanent and durable home for businesses such as theirs.

Siddharth Shankar

CEO

Tails Trading

Expressway, 2018
Use Class E

Activity/sector
Finance

Facilities
Office space

Employees
150

Networks
Satellite offices and
warehouses across
London



Established in 2017, Tails Trading is a brand portfolio business that distributes around 300 consumer brands globally. They provide analysis, investment, branding and legal advice to businesses to launch products into global and individual markets. Selling directly to businesses such as Target, Walmart, Tesco and Sainsbury's, Tails Trading have experience in the food & drink, luxury goods, homeware, industrial & agricultural, technology, and fashion sectors.

“One of our employees travels from North Greenwich using the cable cars every day. Now that the Elizabeth Line is open it provides much better connection to the west London.”

“Having the Mayor of London in the Docks and the construction of the Silvertown Tunnel will help the area; the profile will go up and security will be better. 'We need a bigger office but I'm very attached to our space at Expressway.'”

“As the Royal Docks changes I would like to see more parks and playspaces for kids as well as more convenience shops, retailers, restaurants and bars.”

Tails Trading was initially based in St James's Square, Mayfair, for three and a half years until the pandemic when they moved to the Royal Docks. The move was for financial and convenience reasons. Rental prices in the Royal Docks were a sixth of the cost compared to Mayfair and a number of employees lived in east London making commuting easier. Since moving, Tails Trading have become attached to the area, considering it to have good road connections (including to the M25), good public transport links which will improve access to west London and Heathrow Airport now the Elizabeth Line is open, and an increasing profile due to the recent relocation of City Hall.

Although development is bringing more workspace, housing, and activity to the Royal Docks, Siddharth feels that more green space and convenience amenities are needed to help businesses attract employees to the area. Siddharth feels that the Royal Docks is currently popular due to its affordability and is beginning to thrive as a place in consequence, but that the affordability that triggered its popularity needs to be retained so that businesses and residents aren't priced out.

Tails Trading hopes to scale up their business with larger office premises, in the Royal Docks, and the launch of an in-house retail channel for luxury products which will showcase potential future clients what the company is capable of. Ideally the business would be supported through a government scheme or an apprenticeship scheme, however in the past Tails Trading have found these difficult to access.

Yasmin Abu

Director

Designated Services

**University of East London,
2021**
Use Class E

Activity/sector
Accountancy

Facilities
Private office space

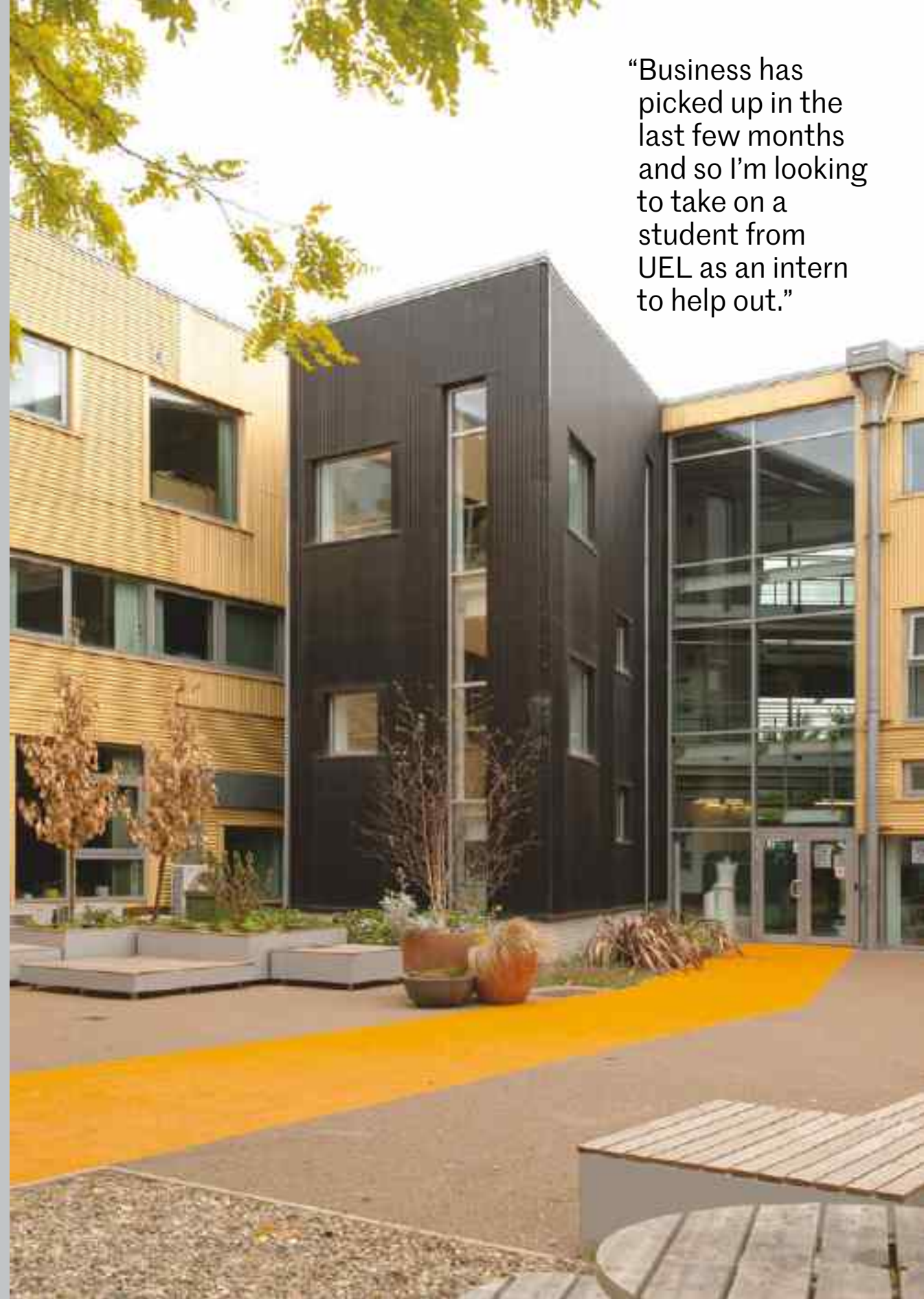
Employees
1

Networks
Catalyst in Communities,
J.S. Wright

Designated Services was founded in 2018, by Newham resident Yasmin Abu, to provide accountancy services to small and medium sized (SME) businesses across a broad range of sectors. Many clients are based in central London, however Yasmin notes a growing number of clients from the Royal Docks that are start-up businesses, especially within the marketing and IT sectors.

“It has helped working in the University. I’ve been able to gain clients by just walking around the corridors and talking to people. I often recommend the UEL to friends who are working from home.”

“Business has picked up in the last few months and so I’m looking to take on a student from UEL as an intern to help out.”



“More formal networking across the wider Royal Docks would be beneficial, especially as the area grows and more businesses move in.”

Yasmin started out in a home office. When the pandemic restricted meetings and interaction, she was concerned about social isolation and became keen to rent an office space locally. After some research into workspaces in the Royal Docks, she moved into the co-working space at the University of East London. Yasmin has since upgraded her membership to rent a private office space with the hope that a student intern will be able to join in the coming months.

Yasmin appreciates the University for its affordable rates, and the ‘effortless’ networking opportunities within the community of businesses that it provides. As a concentrated community of start-up and medium businesses, the University has exposed Designated Services to a number of businesses that require accountancy services whom they might not otherwise have reached, among them Catalyst in Communities and J.S. Wright.

Whilst Yasmin is an advocate for the area and both lives and works in the Royal Docks, she would like to see stronger growth and diversity in business activity, and an increase in leisure amenities for residents and workers. She would also appreciate more opportunities for networking across the Docks, building upon the model established by the University, thus creating, she hopes, a self-sustaining network of businesses.

Robin Lockhart and Bob Singha

Director of Development and Director of Coaching Catalyst in Communities

“Being based at the university and adjacent to the Royal Docks gives investors, collaborators, and funders the reassurance to back us and work with us.”

Catalyst in Communities is a social enterprise and not-for-profit that provides workshops and events for young people in Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Waltham Forest. Their overall initiative is to support disadvantaged young people and communities through programmes, connections and conversations, with the hope of reducing participants' susceptibility to crime and violence. Workshops also provide positive outlets for skill-making, education and employment, and Robin and Bob have ambitions to develop a tech library for young people to access equipment, skills and education.

University of East London,
2021
Use Class E

Activity/sector
Social enterprise for youth programmes

Facilities
Office space

Employees
4

Networks
London boroughs of Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney, and Waltham Forest, University of East London, London Design and Engineering UTC, Foundation for Future London, GLA, ELBA, Football Association, Cricket Out



“We try to connect people to place by opening up the conversation with young people to improve their perceptions and mindset about the areas they live in.”



Established for 12 years, Robin and Bob recently moved to the UEL, where Robin studied. The Royal Docks is an attractive location for Catalyst in Communities as it has established educational institutions, such as UEL and London Design and Engineering UTC, which provide networking opportunities to a variety of sectors and industry professionals. They see the Royal Docks as not only a London resource, but a UK resource with the potential to become a leading research hub.

Robin and Bob feel that more could be done in the Royal Docks in terms of supporting social enterprise. Catalyst in Communities suggested enforcing commercial levies for corporate businesses which could then fund youth or community services.

Funding plays an instrumental role in the success of the programmes offered by Catalyst in Communities. Their work varies depending upon available grants and demand from participants, however fashion, football and media are regularly explored. It has sometimes felt that the business has to develop their programmes around their funders' requirements rather than responding directly to local needs. Funding has generally been secured through Foundation for Future London and the Greater London Authority, with support from the East London Business Alliance. Robin and Bob are keen to transition towards funding from commercial partners as they stimulate levels of interest and engagement with young people that are otherwise hard to obtain with local authority and charity based funding/programmes.

“There should be a commercial levy placed on corporate businesses that are based in the Royal Docks to sponsor local youth services or community services.”

Ian Vine, Kam Bains and Jas Sapal Co-Founders Silvertown Studios

London Audio Visual Limited, the organisation behind Silvertown Studios, emerged out of the 2008 financial crisis to provide specialist audio-visual equipment rental for corporate and government events. A successful trial studio in Southwark led to the creation of Silvertown Studios, which opened soon after as a permanent multi-use studio space in the Royal Docks. Silvertown Studios focuses on providing innovative technologies to media clients and aims to improve the environmental impact of production.

**Standard Industrial
Estate, 2022
Use Class E**

Activity/sector
Film and production studio

Facilities
6,000 sq ft multi-use
studio for film, LED Stage,
Virtual Production,
sound treated studio,
production studio

Employees
17 full-time with up to 50
freelancers at any one time
depending on projects

Networks
ExCeL, Newham Council,
UEL

“We want Silvertown Studios to be one of the leading independent studios in the area, to give film production crews access to a beautiful space with amazing technology.”



“We have plans to take on more industrial units in the Docks to expand Silvertown Studios® virtual production facilities and services. We are passionate about the creative industry and forming a solid filming base in the east of London.”

“Silvertown Studios® is a carbon neutral studio providing innovative technologies to production companies.”

A large studio set featuring a prominent blue backdrop with the Silvertown Studios logo. The backdrop is flanked by two tall, black metal lighting towers. Above the backdrop, a smaller blue panel also displays the logo. The set is illuminated by several bright spotlights mounted on the lighting towers and overhead rigs. The floor is a polished, light-colored concrete.

silvertown
studios®

silvertown
studios®
from AMBIEN.

“Company Directors, Ian, Kam and Jas, chose the Royal Docks due to the availability of more affordable space, easy access to west London on the Elizabeth Line, and close proximity to long-term client ExCeL.”

Jas and Parveen chose the Royal Docks due to the availability of more affordable space, easy access to west London on the Elizabeth Line, and close proximity to long-term client ExCeL. Parveen notes that, although the majority of production studios are in west London, talent is often located in east London. She also noted the forthcoming Dagenham Studios, which when built will be the largest film studio in London, situated nearby in Barking and Dagenham. For Parveen this signals a wider shift east for the industry.

An example of technology found at Silvertown Studios is their LED ‘virtual wall’, which replaces the well-established ‘green screen’ technology and increases production efficiency by allowing real-time editing – the ‘effect’ can be viewed live in the studio rather than having to wait for post-production, reducing the risk of re-shooting. This technology ‘found its moment’ during the pandemic when location shooting was inevitably compromised, and continues to be a growth technology.

Jas and Parveen have ambitions to improve their contributions to sustainability and community responsibility. In terms of sustainability, they are joining ‘We Are Albert’, a BAFTA organisation founded to reduce the environmental impact of the TV and film industry. They are also working with Carbon Neutral to explore only using renewable energy. They hope to become a leading industry example to help other film studios reduce their carbon footprint. In terms of community provision, Jas and Parveen want to work with Newham Council to facilitate partnerships with local schools, and train local young people through apprenticeship schemes, feeling that at present their other studio gets more support from Southwark Council than they receive in Newham. They also have a keen eye on preserving competitive business rates and ensuring that industrial units and similar spaces are maintained and expanded in the Docks.

Simon Tibbo Business Development Manager All Health Matters

The Royal Docks clinic opened in 2013 as All Health Matters recognised the area would be reconfigured following the 2012 Olympics and was likely to attract new business. While at the time this was a quantum leap for the fledging company’s growth, All Health Matters have not been disappointed, and for over ten years have delivered quality services to local businesses, along with creating jobs for the community.

“Since Covid restrictions have lifted, flexible working has very much continued as common practice. Footfall in our clinics has reduced mainly to satisfy just those who require ad-hoc individual appointments. As a result, we now offer flexible contracts with the inclusion of virtual services to meet client needs.”

**Expressway, 2015
Use Class E**

Activity/sector
Occupational health

Facilities
Office space

Employees
26 full staff across all clinics, 4 employees in Royal Docks

Networks
ExCeL, Tate & Lyle, Transport for London





“Our E16 clinic was set-up to accommodate new businesses we expected to move to the area following significant development post 2012 Olympics.”

More often than not, the businesses that work with All Health Matters are industrial or require physically demanding, repetitive, or noisy work, however they also offer vaccinations, wellbeing and display screen equipment assessments which cater to a wider range of sectors. Due to the nature of the Royal Docks, and the provision of industrial workspaces and businesses, they feel that a clinic in this area is well-situated.

All Health Matters was a family business for twelve years before the founder transformed it into an employee-owned organisation. Since this transition, Simon, a business development manager, has been appointed to expand the business and improve community links. He has ambitions to start networking events to help raise the business profile in the area and has already exhibited at the annual Safety and Health Expo at ExCeL. Simon hopes that these events will help to identify future clients and collaborators in the Royal Docks area as well as bring people together in the occupational health sector. A number of the current varied businesses in the Royal Docks lend themselves to Occupational Health needs and Simon is keen that the varied industrious, creative, transport and manufacture businesses in the docks are retained to allow All Health Matters to expand and form more community links.

Samantha Dean

Director of Human Resources

English National Ballet

Founded in 1950 as London Festival Ballet, English National Ballet (ENB) is a dance company and dance school. It is one of the five major ballet companies in Great Britain and was established to support greater access to ballet for as broad an audience as possible. This ambition is fulfilled through live performance, digital learning platforms, an in-house orchestra, and a diverse engagement programme. Their ambition is to continue to make ballet an accessible dance form locally, nationally and globally.

“There is a big emphasis on outreach and engagement, you don’t have to be a dancer to be at the English National Ballet.”



London City Island, 2019
Use Class E

Activity/sector
Performing arts

Facilities
Dance studios, offices, event space, production studio

Employees
180 full-time with over 300 freelancers

Networks
University College London, University of East London, Newham College, Queen Mary University of London, The Lockdown Room, Newham Council, various London theatres

“We moved here as we wanted more space and a headquarters which could represent the company.”

In 2019 ENB moved from South Kensington to a purpose-built building on London City Island as they needed more space and wanted a contemporary headquarters that could represent the ideals of the company. They were able to input a great deal into the design requirements and aspirations for their new headquarters to ensure their new building was appropriate for their current and emerging requirements. The building provides dance studios, offices, event space, and a production studio for up to 300 people. Samantha considers that London City Island is well connected to the wider city and highlights a number of current cultural initiatives, among them ‘The Line’ (the-line.org), a public art walk which travels from the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park to the O2 arena, via the new ENB building.

English National Ballet’s activities are funded through ticket sales, fundraising, trusts, donations and supporters such as Arts Council England and Ballymore.

As a charitable company ENB has a comprehensive community and engagement programme which caters to a range of ages, abilities and interests. One of their longest-standing community programmes is Dance for Parkinson’s, a project produced in collaboration with University College London which offers dance classes led by professional dancers and musicians to people with Parkinson’s disease. ENB also works with their Royal Docks neighbour, the University of East London, to provide graduate jobs and internships.

“We have links with the University of East London to provide graduate and internship programmes.”

Ian Parks

Chief Executive Officer East London Business Alliance

The East London Business Alliance, ELBA, is a business charity that was founded in 1989 to connect businesses and communities in east London. The core objectives of the charity are to promote social mobility, tackle inequality, and address poverty. They tackle these social issues by connecting people and facilitating events and workshops. Rather than providing funding, ELBA is a 'doing' organisation, working with over 70 businesses and 150-200 community organisations such as schools, colleges and universities. Businesses that they work with cover banking insurance, legal and finance, property development & management, and technology companies.

“ELBA don't offer funding, we are a charitable organisation ourselves. We are a practical doing organisation, we connect people, we facilitate events and workshops.”



**City Reach, Isle of Dogs,
2001
Use Class E**

Activity/sector
Business charity

Facilities
Office space

Employees:
44

Networks
London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Newham, Hackney, Waltham Forest, Barking and Dagenham, and Islington, University of East London, Newham College, London City Airport, Royal Docks Learning and Activity Centre, Docks Academy, Fight for Peace, Tate & Lyle, Good Hotel

“Silvertown and North Woolwich are all isolated communities, sandwiched between the airport, the docks and what is now Crossrail.”

Within the Royal Docks, ELBA are focusing on supporting the communities in Silvertown, Pontoon Dock and North Woolwich. The communities here were highlighted by Ian as isolated with inequality, lack of social mobility and low employment all present. Ian feels that the infrastructure in the docks, such as the Docklands Light Railway, London City Airport, the docks themselves and Crossrail, had cut off and restricted these communities from the wider city. In Silvertown ELBA hopes to support community organisations working with the environment, support young people throughout education to make better career choices, and support local people to get into good jobs and careers. Examples of their work in Silvertown include; providing primary schools with reading and gardening programmes, and running tech up-skilling for older people in collaboration with the Royal Docks Learning & Activity Centre.

ELBA have many connections across the docks, including with educational institutions, businesses and community organisations. Ian sees many opportunities but has concerns that these are not often joined up with the people who most need them. To improve this, ELBA would like to expand their network and collaborate with the Greater London Authority and the Royal Docks team, and to be more formally involved in the wider development of the docks and Enterprise Zone.

“There is not a shortage of opportunity. The problem lies with trying to connect people to those opportunities like to be more formally involved in the wider developments of the docks and around the Enterprise Zone.”

Christopher Gibbons

Head of London Sales & Commercial Manager Tarmac

Tarmac began in the UK over 150 years ago and has grown to become one of the country's leading producers and suppliers of cement, asphalt, aggregates and concrete. The company has had a hand in supplying many of London's largest projects, among them the Shard, No.1 Blackfriars, East Village, the London Aquatics Centre, and Heathrow and London City Airports, along with many of the developments that are happening in the Royal Docks today. During the pandemic Tarmac also supplied the concrete necessary to install the CO2 tanks at the ExCeL when it temporarily hosted NHS Nightingale Hospital London.



**Knights Road, West
Silvertown, 2008
Use Class B2**

Activity/sector
Materials Processing

Facilities
Concrete mixing plant

Employees
30 at Silvertown site,
7000-8000 UK wide

Networks
RMS (Recycled Material
Supply) Limited

“Tarmac has picked up a lot of work due to our being in close proximity to so much development.”

Tarmac relocated to Knights Road in the Royal Docks in 2008 when their site in Pudding Mill Lane, along with surrounding industrial land, was earmarked for development as part of the London 2012 programme. Where there was a focus on production at the previous Stratford location, Christopher has observed the Royal Docks becoming very residential in comparison, such that the scale of production on their site has had to reduce. Despite this, Tarmac values the Royal Docks location for its convenient road links into and around London. Due to the roughly two-hour setting time of concrete, it is key for Tarmac's plants to be in close proximity to current and future new development.

Just across the river, at Murphy's Wharf, Charlton, is one of Tarmac's largest processing plants where 3 million tonnes of marine dredged aggregate is produced annually. This is transported from the site by road, freight and river transport. The existence of Tarmac's site in Silvertown means that they can envisage increased use of the river for logistics.

Tarmac's sites implement sustainability systems wherever possible to reduce their demand on natural resources. For example, rainwater is collected in pits on the site and reused in the concrete mixing process. Tarmac work closely with Recycled Material Supplies Ltd (RMS) – a neighbour in the Royal Docks – to help recycle waste concrete and other materials.

As a company, Tarmac values apprenticeships and has a nationwide apprenticeship program. This draws people into the company from a young age to teach them about the company and its values before progressing them further. They are keen to work with schools to raise awareness of potential careers in the industry. Working with The Supply Chain Sustainability School, based elsewhere in east London, Tarmac are able to offer people industry experience and are keen to continue working with young people in areas surrounding their sites to improve local employment opportunities.

“With all the development going on there is a massive difference in how the area feels, it is now more commercially-focused.”



Sharaf Rahman

Co-Founder & Director ReCyrcl

Expressway, 2022
Use Class B2

Activity/sector
Material Processing

Facilities
Office space

Employees
4

Networks
UEL, Royal Docks Team,
Royal Docks Public Spaces
Community Working Group



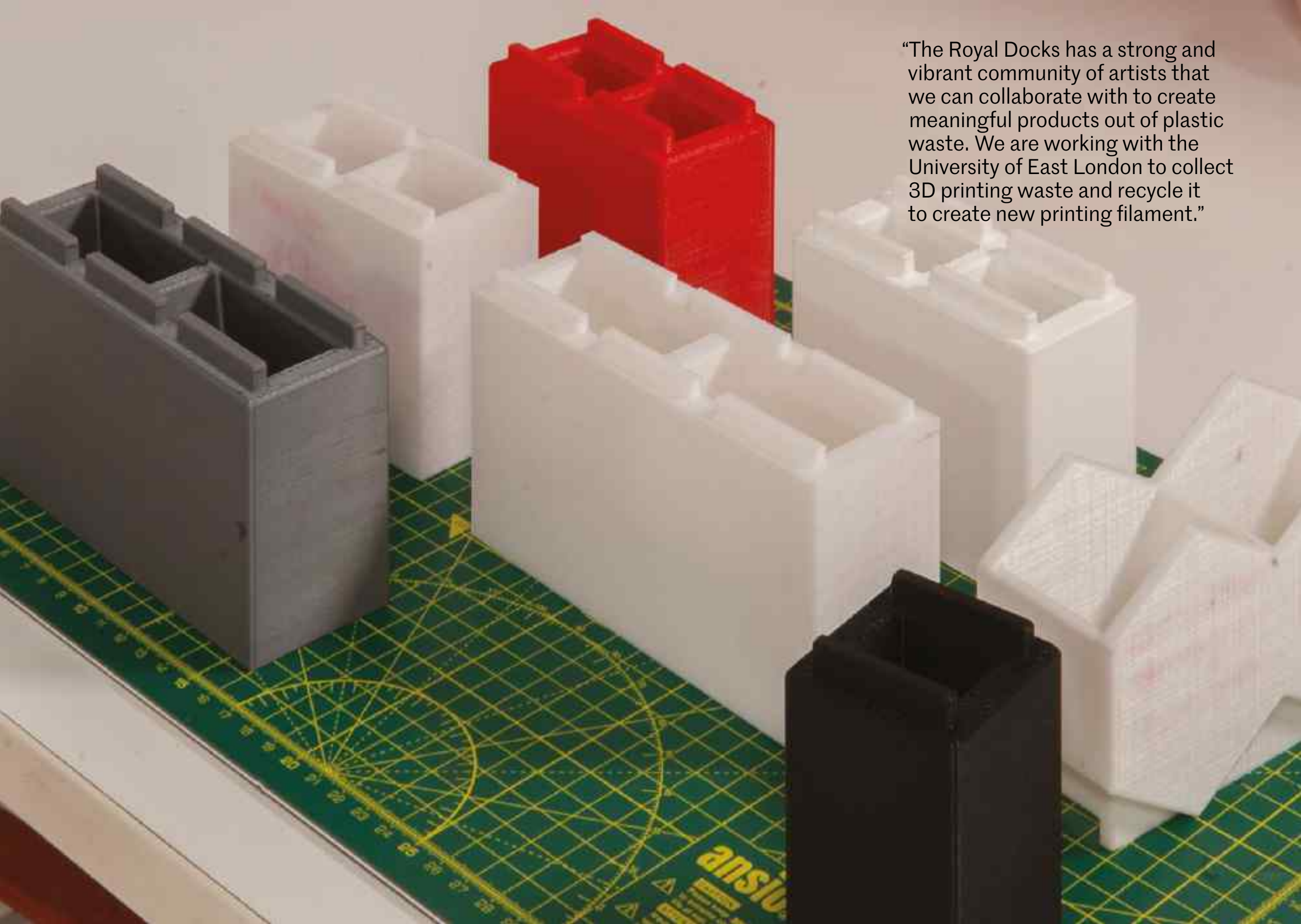
“ReCyrcl can help the Royal Docks improve its recycling rates and transition to a circular economy model. We started in Newham as the borough has one of the lowest recycling rates.”

ReCyrcl is a clean-tech company that, following the spirit of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, is digitising the process of waste management of plastics for reuse. Founded in 2019, the company uses new technologies to provide waste management and resource recovery systems that promote a circular economy approach. Their core product at the moment is filament for 3D manufacturing processes.

Sharaf, who co-founded the business, lives in the Royal Docks and after some research thought that the area would be ideal to locate ReCyrcl. Firstly, he identified that the host borough, Newham, has the lowest recycling rates in greater London, thus providing an opportunity to ‘prove’ the technology of ReCyrcl in a challenging context, help the Royal Docks and Newham improve its recycling rates, and ultimately to promote a circular economy model. Secondly, Sharaf was impressed with the potential to collaborate with the existing community of creatives in the Royal Docks in order to create meaningful products out of plastic waste. Sharaf’s intuition has already borne fruit as ReCyrcl was recently commissioned by the Royal Docks team to create an installation piece for the Royal Victoria Floating Garden.

Sharaf believes that collaboration and networks are key to the ongoing success of ReCyrcl. To steer their mission forward ReCyrcl run recycling workshops, offer volunteering opportunities, provide free waste collection services to businesses, work with University of East London researchers to develop more sustainable materials, and are exploring apprenticeship schemes to train and recruit people locally.

In the short term, ReCyrcl have ambitions to collect more plastic waste from local businesses and institutions, and continue developing their incentivised recycling app to reduce plastic waste. The long term ambition is to create such impactful change in the Royal Docks that it influences the practices and processes of the rest of London.



“The Royal Docks has a strong and vibrant community of artists that we can collaborate with to create meaningful products out of plastic waste. We are working with the University of East London to collect 3D printing waste and recycle it to create new printing filament.”

Amelia Lester-Hinchiffe and Tom Allanson

Directors Brutal Environments

Expressway, 2022
Use Class E

Activity/sector
Creative Design Studio

Facilities
Studio/Workshop Space

Employees
2 full time directors,
up to 40-50 freelance
contractors

Networks
Konstrukt Creative,
Penguin Media Hire,
Onward Display, Allnighter
Studio, Expressway,
OpenDesk



“This has been such an incredible step for our business... to be around so many creative spaces is so beneficial, being able to use local sources for collaborations rather than having to look elsewhere.”



Brutal Environments is a creative design studio offering an all round design, fabrication and installation service. The studio takes on projects of all sizes from large-scale set and festival design through to smaller-scale bespoke interactive sculptures and installations. The company was created by partners Amelia Lester-Hinchiffe and Tom Allanson, both of whom have backgrounds in events and theatre: Amelia previously worked in TV and Film as a producer and art director, and Tom previously worked as a lead designer and project manager for various theatre companies. After having gained enough experience in the relevant industries the pair felt it was a good time to start their own studio.

After moving out of their old studio in Hackney Wick, Amelia and Tom were drawn to Expressway for its affordability and location within the Royal Docks. They describe the Royal Docks as a place that feels like

“Moving down to the Royal Docks has been such a game changer. Compared to other places the Royal Docks feels like it is growing and growing.”

it is constantly growing, and they enjoy the location of their studio for its proximity to so many other creative businesses both within Expressway itself and in the Silver Building across the road. Having links to businesses like Penguin Media Hire, an equipment hire company whom they met while using the bar at the Silver Building; and Onward Display, a sign makers that they have worked with for many years, means that Brutal Environments' supply chain becomes hyper-local and reduces their transport footprint significantly whilst making collaborative working much easier.

Brutal Environments enjoys an ongoing working relationship with Expressway after being commissioned to work with OpenDesk to design and fabricate the furniture for their lobby and office spaces.

Amelia and Tom are already looking for more studio space at Expressway and are committed to growing their business within the Royal Docks. However, Amelia is conscious that the Royal Docks needs to stay affordable to preserve the creative industry and networks it already has, and to help incubate creatives and provide younger talent with the space that they need to thrive within the industry.



Calvin Mlilo and Michael Daley

Directors
Silverspace Studios

The Silver Building, 2018
Use Class E

Activity/sector
Photography Studio

Facilities
6 tenanted spaces
including photography
studios and offices

Employees
5

Networks
Craig Green, Liam Hodges,
others in the Silver Building



“The views from our studios at the Silver Building of Canary Wharf and the O2 draw people from all over the UK.”

Calvin and Michael both grew up in the London Borough of Newham and have been working in the area since graduating with degrees in photography from the University of East London in 2011. The pair found that there was a lack of genuinely affordable studio space in the area and saw an opportunity to fill the gap in the market. Silverspace Studios, based in the Silver Building, provides photographers with affordable studio space, professional equipment, and technical advice from the studio holders, as professional photographers themselves. This business model helps to make the studio space accessible not only for professionals but also for students and young professionals who are just starting out.

As the pandemic started the studio closed for three months while restrictions became clearer as to which industries were allowed to continue work. As the TV



“The cool thing about the Royal Docks is that there is so much coming up, you have to keep your eyes on what is happening.”

and Film industries were allowed to continue, Calvin and Michael adapted what they had to offer and opened up their studios for advertisements and filming, this propelled the studio forward in difficult circumstances. Over time the studio space has become more flexible with spaces being hired not only for photo shoots but also for events, exhibitions, and yoga and fitness classes.

Silverspace Studios has thrived in this location, growing from two studios to six. The Royal Docks is not only a place that is close to home for the pair but they also appreciate how it draws people from all over the UK, including significant brands like Balmain and designers such as Craig Green, who is also based in the Silver Building.

The Silver Building has been a great source of clients as a large number of its tenants are creatives. However Calvin and Michael are conscious that with future plans to redevelop the Silver Building they will have to look for a new space. Being in Newham and in the Royal Docks is non-negotiable for the pair so they are keeping a keen eye on various areas as they develop. Despite this challenge, Calvin and Michael do see the need for development. They believe that as the development process has an effect on not just bricks and mortar but also on the livelihoods of people it is important to keep the process transparent, open and honest. They hope that this would allow people to understand and empathise with development rather than be angered or upset by it.

Calvin and Michael are keen to raise awareness locally of creative careers, especially amongst minority communities in the borough. They plan to work closely with local schools to host presentations, workshops, and studio visits, and would be welcome to support from local authorities in hosting internships and apprenticeships.

Victoria Hadley

Director

Sculpt & Sweat Studio

Sculpt and Sweat Studio began when personal trainer Victoria Hadley saw a gap in the market for a female[1] only fitness studio. In a previous role, a large population of her clients were avoiding the gym due to confidence or values or beliefs such as from her Muslim clients she decided to launch Sculpt and Sweat Studio. The business has two faces, in the hours that the gym is not open, Victoria's partner runs a physiotherapy clinic.

As a resident of the Docks herself, Victoria sees the area developing into its own 'little city' that is well connected and in good proximity to Central London. She feels that the community that exists in the area is diverse and thriving, especially as more and more housing is being built. For Victoria, the water is a central part of living in the area and plays an important role in the identity of the Docks.

Victoria opened her studio in the Docks two years ago in Expressway. Although Sculpt and Sweat Studio has thrived here, some clients have expressed concerns to Victoria about the location feeling unsafe at certain times in the day. With this in mind Victoria has confirmed the launch of a new expanded studio inside the Commercial unit at the front of the Hoola Building in Royal Victoria from summer 2023.

Victoria feels that having her business in the Royal Docks has allowed her to keep her training prices affordable by offering a mix of classes, personal training and semi private personal training and as a result she has been able to build a loyal client base. The average age of her clients has risen with younger people feeling that personal training is less affordable. Therefore they have switched to classes or semi private training instead.

Expressway, 2020
Use Class E

Activity/sector
Gym/Fitness

Facilities:
Gym & Physio Clinic

Employees
1

Networks
Expressway

“The Royal Docks is close enough to get into central London but still feels like you are out of London. The water is great as well.”

“The Royal Docks is beginning to feel like its own little city.”



Mark van 't Klooster

Business Manager

The Good Hotel

The concept of The Good Hotel emerged as a result of founder Marten Dresen's commitment to supporting education in Guatemala, which began in 2009 with the founding of the Nuestro Futuro Elementary School, Ciudad Vieja, Guatemala. Since then, the foundation has opened another elementary school as well as a secondary school. Following the success of these school programmes, Dresen founded the Good Group and opened the Good Hotel as a 'social business', working with the tourism industry in Guatemala. The idea was that the hotel would provide graduating students with opportunities to build careers in the hospitality industry.

The second Good Hotel opened in Amsterdam, utilising a floating platform purchased from the

“It would be nice to see more social business being ingrained in the community, to contribute more to society.”



Royal Victoria Dock, 2017
Use Class C1

Activity/sector
Hotel/Social Business/
Hospitality Training

Facilities
Hotel and conference
facilities

Networks
GLA, ExCeL, O2, Our
Newham Works, The Line,
Royal Docks Team, RODMA

“The ExCeL and
O2 are the biggest
drivers in the area.”

Dutch government. Training programmes initiated in Guatemala were then piloted in Amsterdam, and their success suggested that the model was applicable in diverse contexts. The Good Group now has four hotels, in Antigua, Amsterdam, London and Guatemala City. All four hotels are social businesses running the same training model, known as the Good Training Programme.

The case for a Good Hotel in the Royal Docks, for Mark, was made by the presence of ExCeL and O2, both of which bring people to the area all year round. The hotel originally had a five year lease but now considers itself a permanent presence on Royal Victoria Dock. As in its other locations, the group is committed to having a positive local impact and works closely with the borough-led programme Our Newham Works to put as many long-term unemployed residents through their four-month programme as possible. Those graduating from the programme either typically go on to work at the Good Hotel itself or at any of their partnering hotels across London.

Although the concept of a floating hotel is a one off for the Good Group, there are ambitions for more Good Hotels in London, each with unique designs that respond to the context and character of the area. There is a strong belief that where possible all businesses should be socially responsible offering training, upskilling or community engagement in the areas that they occupy.

“The Royal Docks is a unique place. It brings in so many different people at different times.”



Cyrus & Pervin Todiwala

Head Chef & Owners

Cafe Spice Namaste

Since 1995 at their original home on Alia Street, Tower Hill, Cyrus and Pervin Todiwala have built a loyal following for their distinctive and highly-regarded Indian and Parsi cuisine. During the Coronavirus pandemic their home building in Tower Hamlets was sold, forcing the couple to consider new locations, and in January 2022 the new Cafe Spice Namaste opened in the Royal Docks on the edge of Albert Basin.

Cyrus and Pervin enjoy the expansive views over the Royal Albert Dock that their new restaurant benefits from, and many other things about their new location, but they have some concerns that the area does not currently benefit from enough footfall from local residents.



Royal Albert, 2022
Use Class E

Activity/sector
Hospitality

Facilities
Restaurant, kitchen, training academy, prep kitchen, professional training facility

Employees
20

Networks
Bow Arts, GLA, Well Bean Co.



“There is a feeling here that you are not in London, more like you are by the seaside or sitting by the water. It’s a great atmosphere.”

The level of engagement since opening has been quite low despite offering resident discounts. At present, the core customer base is mainly made up of people who have become loyal to the couple and the restaurant over the years, rather than new audiences and locals.

Visibility is a problem for businesses and organisations in the Royal Docks, and as more and more homes are being built a strategy to highlight and feature what is available could help to increase footfall from residents and visitors. In order to increase footfall to the restaurant, and to other businesses in the area, Cyrus and Pervin would like to see improvements made to wayfinding, such as interventions like a map at Gallions Reach DLR station highlighting businesses, amenities and attractions within walking distance from the station, plus wayfinding arrows to direct people to key businesses, institutions and attractions.

Cyrus and Pervin are aware that enriching and diversifying the ‘offer’ at Albert Basin is key to enhancing its appeal. They are currently in conversation with the Well Bean Co. and Bow Arts, together hoping to start a market in the square outside the Impound Station.

Cyrus and Pervin see Cafe Spice Namaste as the flagship of their operation, and plan to use its prep kitchen to serve their other locations, which include a neighbourhood restaurant in Buckhurst Hill and locations at two Hilton hotels in Greater London. The couple have also taken on more space next door to the main restaurant in order to open a professional training school, with their landlord offering them a reduced rent while the unit is made functional. While rent is reduced, business rates still remain high and Cyrus feels more support could be offered to help new businesses take off.

“The area is difficult to do business in, simply because you need more foot traffic. There is a lot still to be done to create a buzz about the place.”

Sam Redford Venue Manager LoveOpenWater Swimming

LoveOpenWater (LOW) is an open water venue located at the western edge of Royal Victoria Dock. The organisation draws many people from across London at various skill levels from complete beginners to athletes training for triathlons and marathons. The team are committed to involving as many people as possible in becoming confident and safe in water. Although open water swimming has always been a popular leisure activity at this site, it was during lockdown restrictions that the activity really took off after the temporary closure of all indoor and outdoor swimming pools.

“Someone commented online that getting slots at LoveOpenWater in lockdown was like trying to get toilet paper at the beginning of the pandemic.”



Royal Victoria Dock, 2014
Use Class F2(c)

Activity/sector
Sports

Facilities
Showers, staff toilets,
small office

Employees
22

Networks
Good Vibes, The Oiler Bar,
Wake Up Docklands, The
Good Hotel, RoDMA



“A lot of people come down and say that they never knew Love Open Water was here, and that extends to the whole of the Royal Docks. It is quite undiscovered as a place.”

Out of the 22 staff members at LOW, five, including Sam, are trained as coaches and offer classes to the open water swimming community. Sam has worked at LOW for the past two years, and before this, he had been a user of the LOW facilities for eight years, training for various events and marathons alongside his sister.

The Royal Docks gives LOW and its users the chance to connect with many other businesses in the area, encouraging their community to make use of adjacent amenities and companies. For example the Oiler Bar next door offers swimmers ten percent off food and drinks after a swim; the Good Vibes coffee bar at Expressway offers coffee on a cold day; Wakeup Docklands offers sports that aren't on offer at LOW; and the nearby Good Hotel works with LOW to offer more secure changing facilities for those who are not comfortable changing on the dockside; LOW have limited facilities at the dock edge, and no dedicated changing facilities, so swimmers typically use the dockside and open air pier to get changed and relax before and after their swim sessions.

Water is of course, a big part of the Royal Docks' identity. Sam feels that it's important to get communities familiar and comfortable with the water and LOW has future ambitions to work with schools to get people engaging with the water from a young age. There are also ambitions to activate the triangle of water under the cable cars for beginners lessons as the water here tends to be calmer. As the organisation grows, and with the arrival of City Hall, there is an increasing need, recognised by LOW and by other key organisations like RoDMA, that the facilities available should be tidied up and enhanced, providing secure and comfortable facilities as well as attracting wider audiences to LOW's offer.

Christopher Mike Neda Dana-Haeri Gemma Murphy Members Art in the Docks

Art in the Docks is a collective of Bow Arts tenants, all of whom share the common goal of raising the profile of creative industry careers and making the art world more accessible to a wider range of people. The collective emerged in 2020 during lockdown restrictions, when housing association Notting Hill Genesis allowed the group to occupy an empty retail unit on the edge of Albert Basin. Each artist would take up a short term residency, to create and display their work to audiences passing the unit whilst on their daily lockdown walks.

“Art and culture is largely perceived to be elitist and something that belongs to other people and does not include people here... so we have set about making art and culture accessible to ordinary people.”



**Royal Albert, 2020
Use Class f1(b)**

Activity/sector
Art Gallery/Community
Space

Facilities
Artist Studio and Gallery
Space

Networks
Bow Arts, Notting Hill
Genesis, Royal Docks
Team, UEL

“The area has changed a lot since I got here in 2017 and so has the social dynamic with executive homes, social, and affordable housing all being built in close proximity to each other.”

The space that the collective occupies has been provided temporarily by Notting Hill Genesis as a ‘meanwhile use’ programme, with any bills and service charges being paid by Bow Arts. Notting Hill Genesis is a charity and reinvests any profit made from private house and leasing units back into social housing. This raises the risk that Art in the Docks could lose their space at any time, offering the collective little security to plan for the future. In order to progress as an organisation and continue thriving in the Royal Docks, Art in the Docks needs more security in their space as well as better exposure to schools, universities, and businesses across London.

Art in the Docks works closely with primary and secondary schools and offers work experience to students at university, especially with the nearby University of East London. Art in the Docks invites industry professionals including fine artists, graphic designers, photographers, filmmakers and architects to come and run workshops with selected groups of students from various schools in Newham and east London. Every school that takes part in a workshop has the opportunity to attend all future exhibitions put on by Art in the Docks to increase their exposure to the industry. This also provides an opportunity for artists to practice talking about their work in a way that is accessible to people who have not otherwise been exposed to this kind of work.

Despite the nature of their lease, Art in the Docks has ambitions to start working more closely with students at UEL to help them deliver workshops to school groups in order to make them more relatable. The collective also aims to make connections with creative industries in the Royal Docks to build pathways into placements, work experience, internships and apprenticeships for both school and university students.



“Bow Arts is very supportive of what we do and of our principles and values, it is because of their relationship with Notting Hill Genesis that we were given the space that we have today.”

Dale Gibson

Founder

Bermondsey Street Bees

Gallions Reach & Silvertown Quays, 2018

Activity/sector

Food Production and distribution

Facilities

Beehives, open space

Employees

3

Networks

Royal Docks Team

Dale Gibson and Sarah Wyndham Lewis started Bermondsey Street Bees in 2007 as a sustainable beekeeping consultancy that supplies raw honey to the high end hospitality industry. Dale and Sarah's main aim is to keep beekeeping sustainable and humane. With London's rapidly growing development there are fewer and fewer resources available for bees to pollinate, this has caused an unsustainable population of bees.



“The Royal Docks is a great example of repurposing something that is no longer fit for purpose... we need to be adaptable and versatile, repurposing existing infrastructure for the modern day and be an example for the rest of the world.”

Over the years Bermondsey Street Bees have worked at various locations across London including Potters Field Park, Lambeth Palace and most recently, since 2018, the Royal Docks. Dale and Sarah have been working with property developers and with the Royal Docks Team to secure sites for meanwhile use – and so far have occupied around 115 hectares of land across different sites in Gallions Reach and Silvertown Quays.

Aside from their work populating meanwhile use sites with beehives, Bermondsey Street Bees works with developers, businesses, councils, the government, and charities to create best practice guides on how to keep honeybees and other pollinators in the city. Dale and Sarah believe that this can begin with populating the city, including new developments, with planting for the growing population of honey bees in London.

Dale and Sarah feel that central London is becoming quite oppressive and restrictive, and in contrast they enjoy the relative freedom and autonomy provided by the Royal Docks. They have ambitions to continue reconnecting city dwellers back to nature and hope that their work will teach people how to be more conscious of their surrounding environment and how, in a world of rapid development, nature can still exist.

Transport links

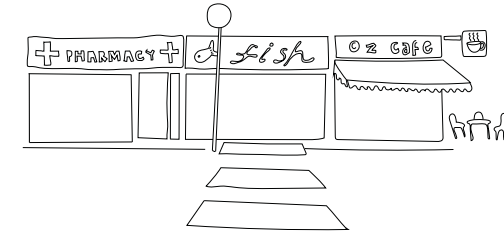
There was a general sense that being in the Royal Docks means being well-connected to the city and wider region. Road links are relatively good, and public transport is in place, albeit perhaps a bit complex. There are strong nearby centres to benefit from, chief among them Canary Wharf, and there is a general sense that the Royal Docks is 'not as far out as people think'. The proximity of London City Airport is generally considered a positive for connectivity reasons.

Networking and relationships

Spatially, the scale of the area can lead to a feeling of isolation from other economic activity. This makes the emergence of 'hubs' like the University or Expressway especially invaluable as they create important networks and clusters. Some networks in the area are considered quite strong (e.g. creative industries), others quite dispersed and isolated (e.g. financial services). The University of East London is often spoken of as a key hub and resource for diverse businesses, and has played a role in the creation of many of them.

Training

Many businesses discussed a desire to provide internships, apprenticeships and training opportunities, and to collaborate with local schools and colleges. Help and support to do this would be appreciated.



Business support and affordability

It is generally thought that there is a lack of networking and support for businesses in the area, though it is unclear if this merely aligns with the wider city and region. Royal Docks businesses have to try hard to attract good employees from the 'inner city'. Many businesses, especially in the creative industries, feel quite fragile in their spaces as their needs are specific and hard to achieve in contemporary London. Many businesses arrived in the Royal Docks as a result of clearances in the run-up to the London 2012 Olympic Games, and they fear that other waves of regeneration threaten their presence in the Royal Docks too, including concerns around affordability.

Identity: the Royal Docks as a place

There is excitement about the changes that are evident – and coming – to the Royal Docks, including the arrival of City Hall. But there are also understandable fears that changes to the Royal Docks may push established businesses out, especially those that need large, industrial-sized spaces at an affordable rate. Similarly, whilst greater residential numbers and leisure amenities are generally welcomed, some businesses noted that more could be done to provide for worker populations and incentivise people to choose to work in the Royal Docks over other parts of London.

Environmental responsibility

Becoming carbon neutral and environmentally responsible is now a main thread in the everyday operations of the majority of businesses in the Royal Docks. In the context of the climate emergency this feels like an untapped potential to provide greater support in this direction and boost businesses' capacity and potential.

Case study themes and observations

Themes, clusters & networks

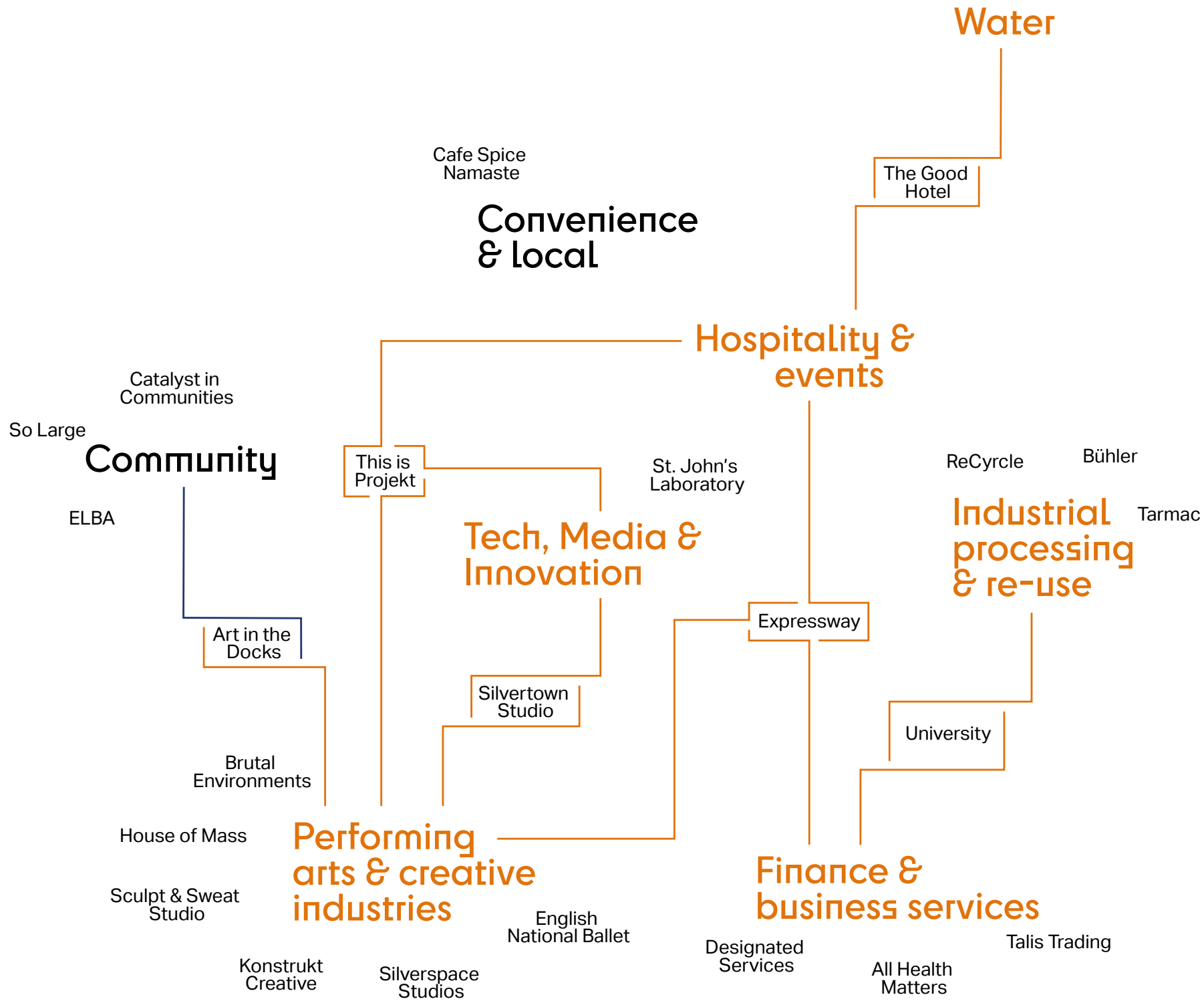
Love Open Water Swimming

Themes

Using the wider audit and Case studies as data, the themes in this diagram have been identified as current sector themes across the Royal Docks study area. Themes have been identified wherever there appears to be multiple organisations operating in related fields, and in situations where their economic activity appears to be stable or growing.

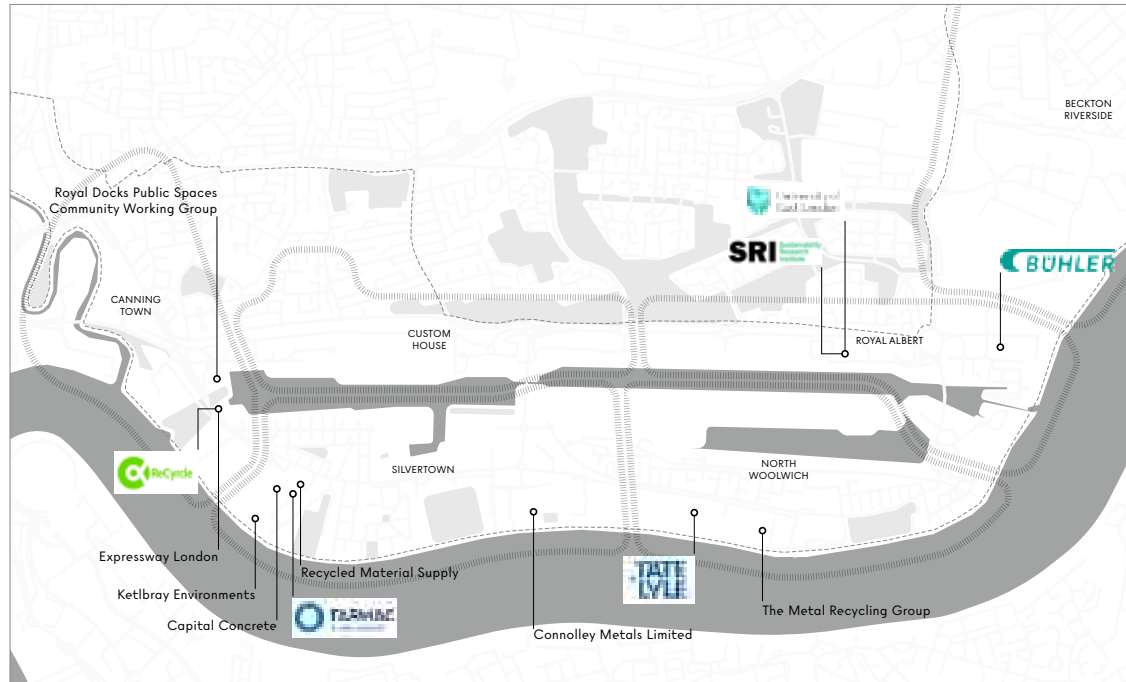
The themes marked in orange are those that, as of March 2022, relate strongly to sectors previously identified by the Royal Docks team for support.

These themes have been drawn from across the Royal Docks area. They do not necessarily indicate that the individual organisations are aware of each other, or that they benefit from their proximity, and so on. So, from these themes we have also developed lists of clusters, economic activity physically clustered in a place, and networks, economic activity that is networked across the Royal Docks area and beyond.



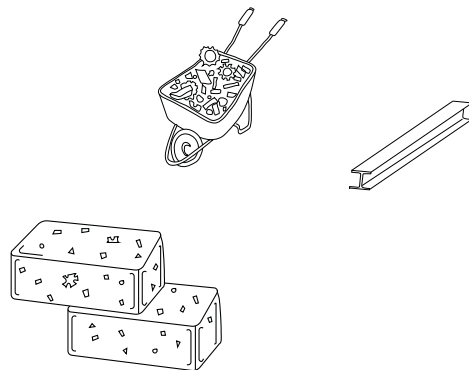
Clusters

There is not a strong and complex clustering of businesses in the Royal Docks compared, for example, to clusterings of creative businesses in Shoreditch. Nevertheless, four spatially-close clusters have been identified:



Industrial Processing & Reuse/Construction

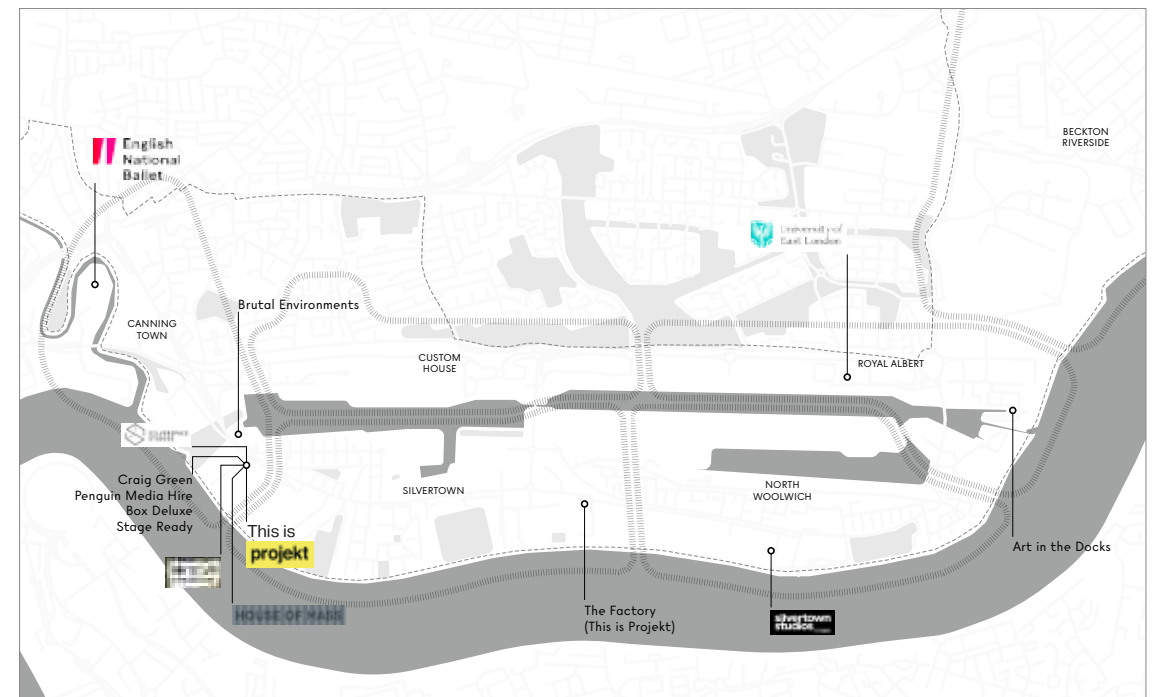
This tends, not unsurprisingly, to be clustered on and around established industrial sites including Strategic Industrial Land, and with direct connections to the North Woolwich Road. Though industrial usage of the river has declined in recent decades, some industries continue to use the Thames for logistics.

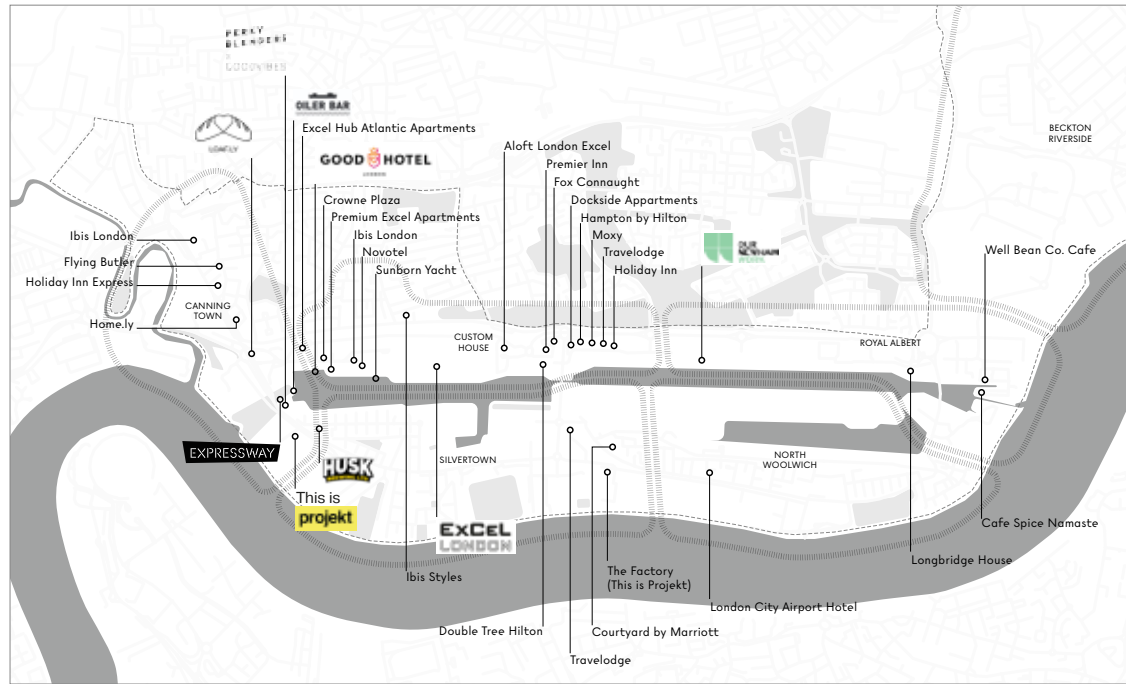


Performing Arts & Creative Industries

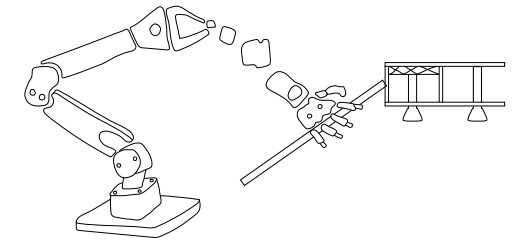
This, and indeed cultural activity more widely, tends to be clustered to the west of the Royal Docks, focussed upon Royal Victoria Dock and on particular workspaces like Expressway and the Silver Building. The opening of the Factory Project promises to expand this cluster eastwards. A secondary clustering of individual creative activity can be found at Royal Albert Basin, chiefly the Bow Arts project there, and this relates physically to the adjacent UEL which offers multiple creative industries courses. The recent arrival of anchor institution the English National Ballet, west of the Royal Docks, is likely to reinforce this clustering, and potentially also the presence of City Hall.

Space in which culture is made, particularly fabrication and production space, is naturally clustered in post-industrial, large-footprint spaces. Protecting spaces of industry, balanced with ensuring the provision of spaces for cultural production, is imperative in protecting the production of culture in this location. This is why the promise of the Factory Project is so important to the Royal Docks.





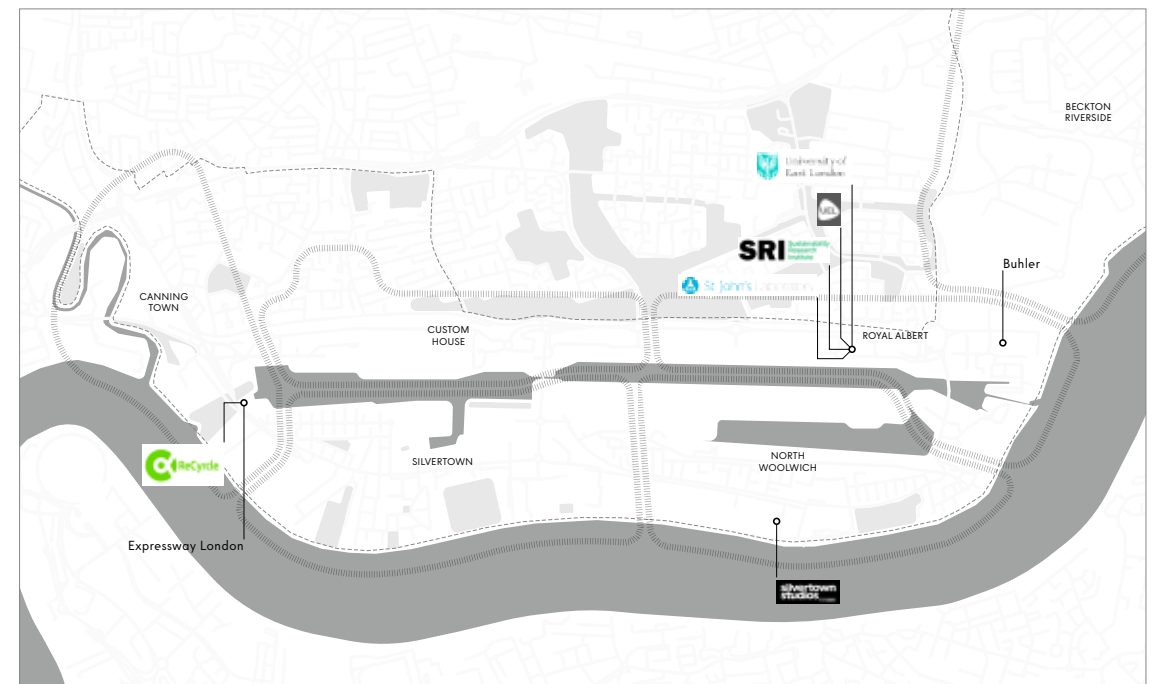
Tech, Media & Innovation + Finance/Business Services

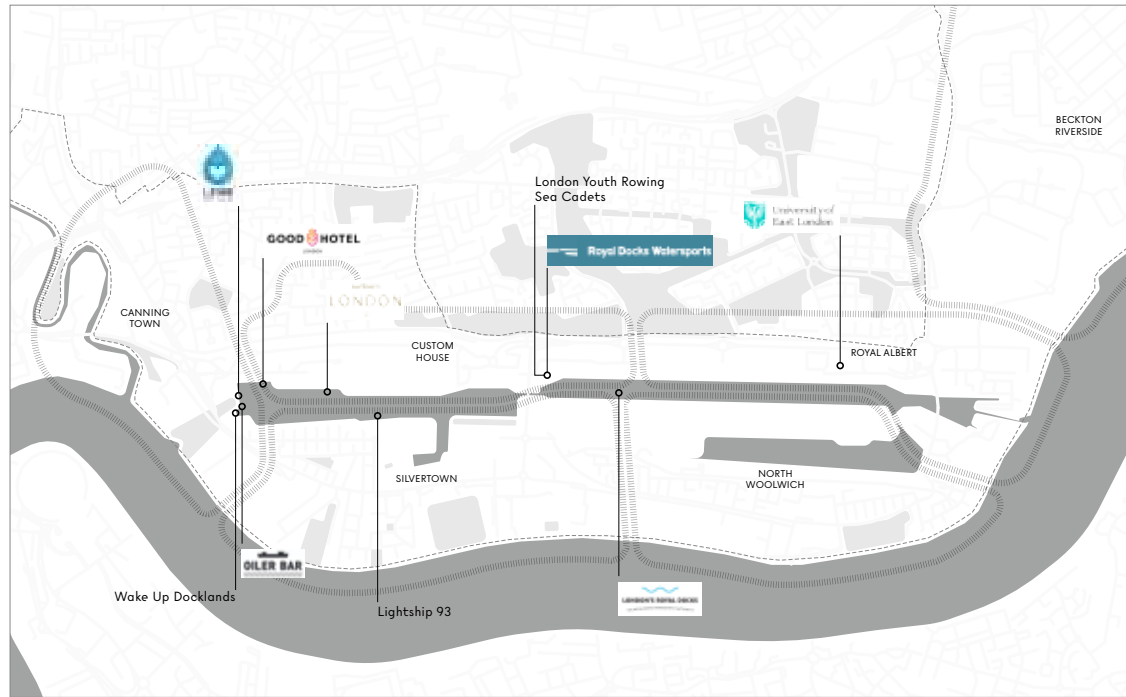


Both of these sector themes cluster somewhat around (and in!) Expressway and UEL. As this cluster develops there is a need to consider the role that workspace landlords and lease-holders play in facilitating and sustaining business and industry in the Royal Docks. Affordability of workspace is a draw for businesses in this cluster.

Hospitality & Events

Vital anchor organisations ExCeL London and London City Airport are the focus for much activity in this theme, with uses and economic activity dominated by their presence in the immediate area. On particular event days this can strongly dominate the local area including public transport connections.





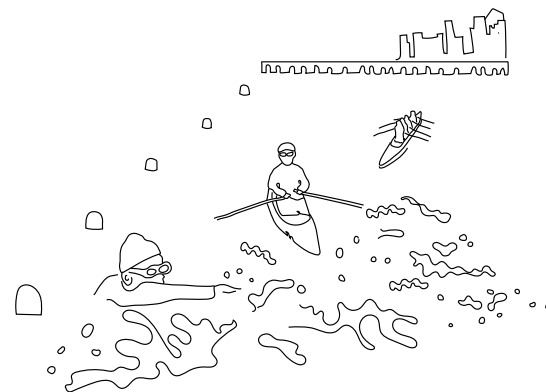
Networks

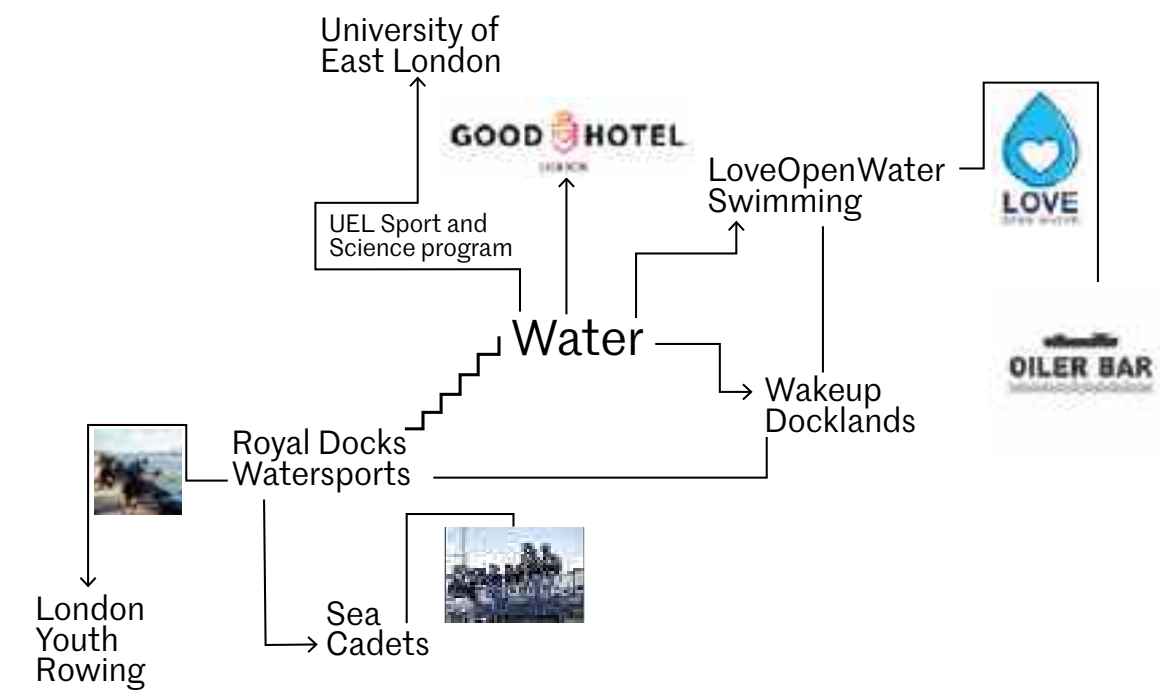
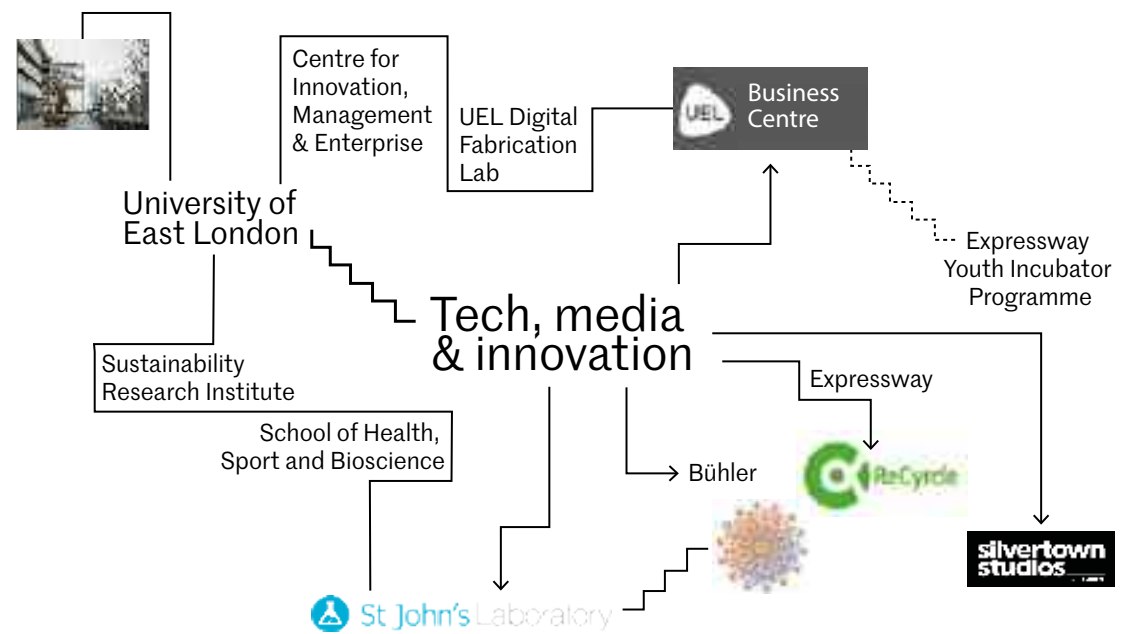
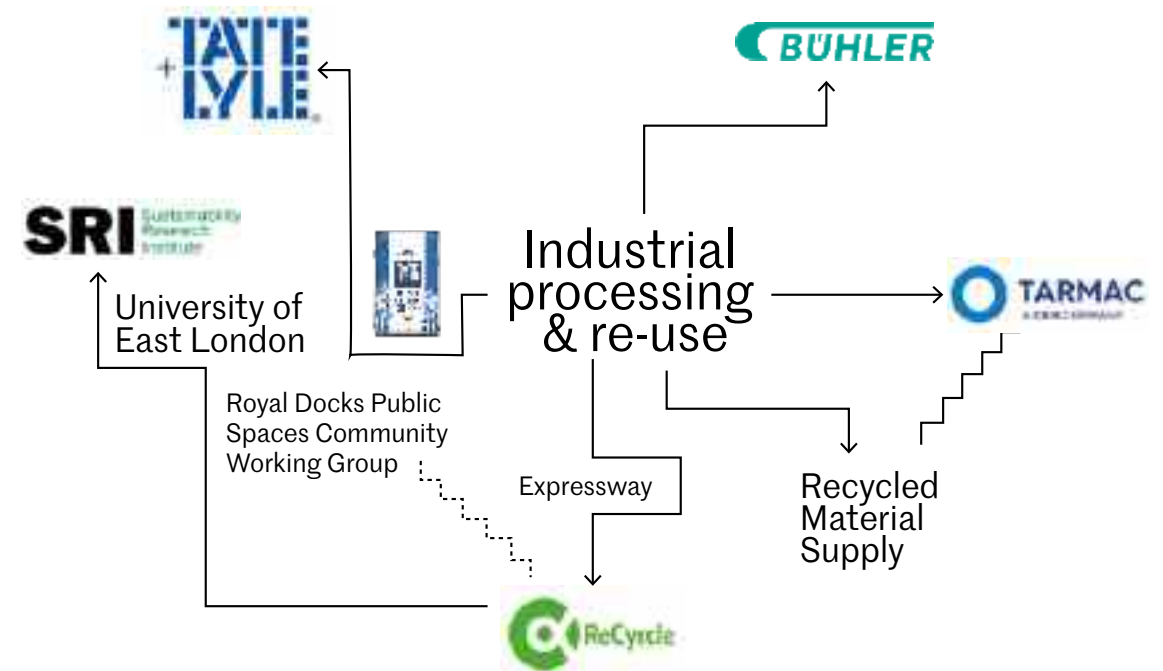
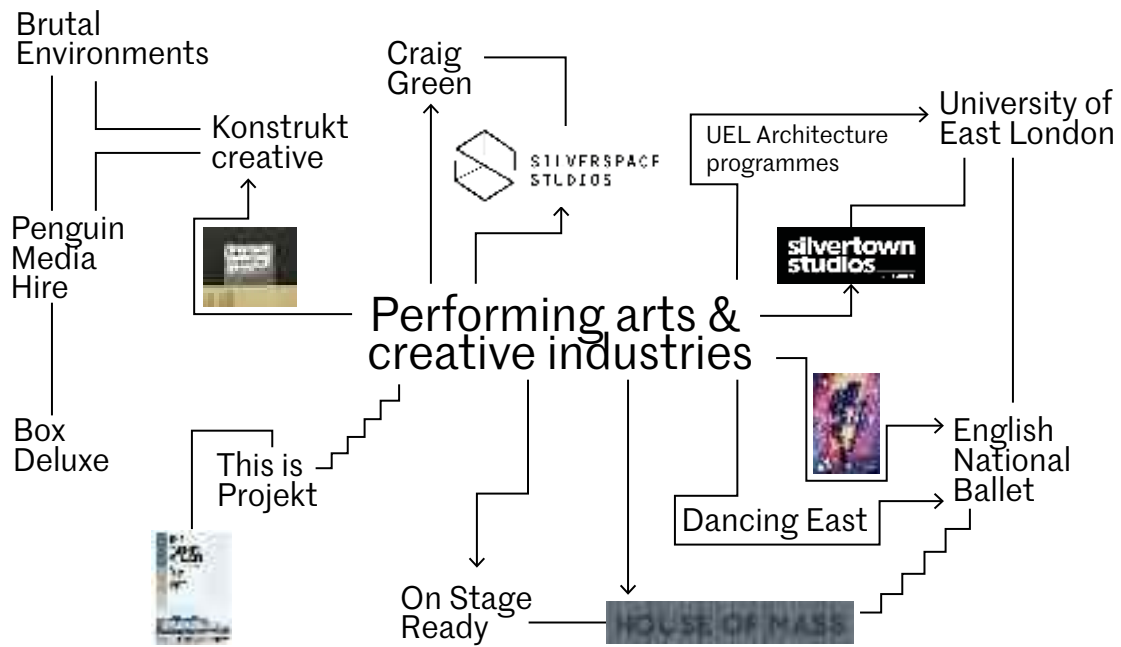
Throughout the Royal Docks, businesses have created networks that exist in either more formal, transactional, relationships for the purposes of supply chains or more informal relationships for the purposes of supporting, networking and collaboration. These have been diagrammed as follows:

- Hospitality & Events
- Performing Arts & Creative Industries
- Tech, Media & Innovation
- Industrial Processing & Reuse
- Water

Water

Water-based sport and leisure is a highly visible part of the life and character of the Royal Docks, though delivered by a relatively small number of businesses. There are two focuses of activity at the western end of Royal Victoria Dock, where a number of businesses literally cluster together at the water edge, and at the Royal Albert Dock Trust.





Opportunities & recommendations

Opportunities

The following economic activity themes are present in the Royal Docks but were not explicitly identified as sectors targeted for support by the Royal Docks team as of March 2022. Consideration should be given as to whether these themes might require further attention to review potential support and the resultant impacts on the Royal Docks:

- Community
- Convenience & Local
- Water

There are many large, messy construction processes happening in the Royal Docks, thanks in part to retained Strategic Industrial Land. This is likely to remain for the foreseeable future, therefore support to make these processes as zero-carbon, green, innovative and clean will be invaluable to the quality of life of residents and workers, leading to a reputation for construction innovation. This innovation could be used to push the delivery of new development in the Royal Docks closer to being carbon neutral.

The strong appetite for green innovation, including in a marine/water context, is a great opportunity given the uniqueness of the Royal Docks as a place with ready access to large water bodies.

Water for leisure activity is a strong theme and the presence of water is central to most places throughout the Royal Docks. Use of the water is currently aimed at experienced, highly-skilled and professional users for leisure activities. An expanded sector that reaches families, amateurs and other skill-levels would likely prove attractive to new and existing residents as well as being a draw for potential employees considering relocating to the Royal Docks.

There is a growing amount of good quality food being produced and prepared in the Royal Docks, though this is often somewhat removed from the established hospitality industry centred around ExCeL. There is an opportunity to better connect local producers with customers, both in the docks and internationally, also improving the appeal of the area to prospective employees and employers.

Recommendations

The Royal Docks is home to a number of creative businesses that require large-scale affordable space, among them production studios and fabricators. This sector is precarious in London and easily damaged by development programmes. The Royal Docks could, however, be a perfect long-term home for this sort of economic activity and work should be done to support it in the long-term.

Attention might be paid to providing 'move-on' space for businesses to grow, noting a current lack of units of around 1,200m².

Cultural programming and commissioning in the Royal Docks should make more use of the strong local sector of creative fabricators and producers. There are networks of activity in this sector but they could be strengthened through deliberate commissions and collaborations.

There is a strong desire across the board for greater support and networking opportunities; the limited nature of this at present is partly a factor of the spaced-out physical fabric of the Docks but this makes the importance of building communities all the greater.

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Produced by DK-CM for the Royal Docks team.

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Gilbert Leung

With thanks to Royal Docks team members who contributed during the process – Paul Creed, Matt Davies, Rosie Hardicker and Andrew McVitty.

Compiled in September 2022

Appendix: Business audit

Type of business (1030):

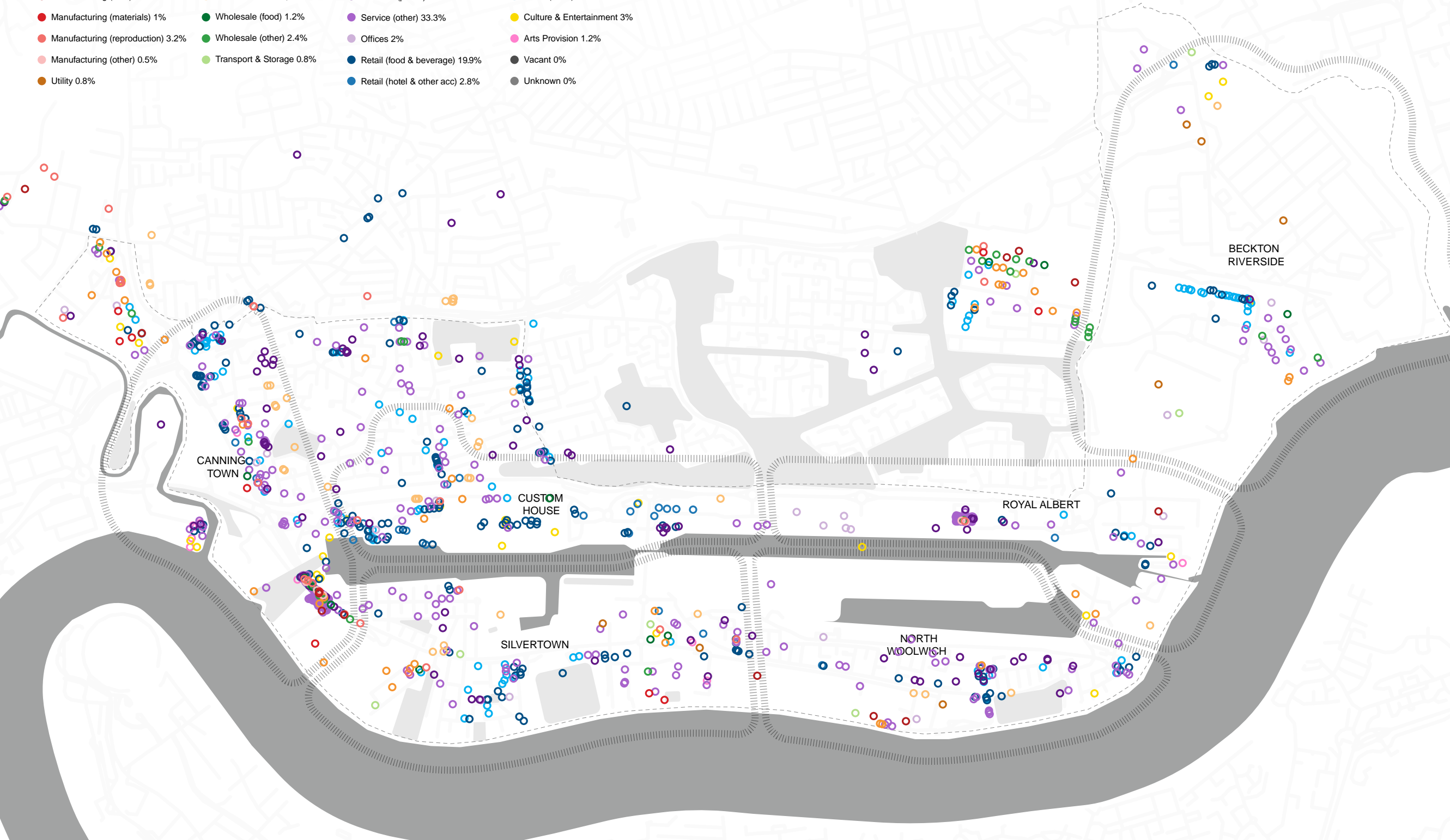
Industrial (18.4%)

- Manufacturing (food) 1.2%
- Manufacturing (materials) 1%
- Manufacturing (reproduction) 3.2%
- Manufacturing (other) 0.5%
- Utility 0.8%

- Construction 3.9%
- Vehicle Sale & Repair 3.7%
- Wholesale (food) 1.2%
- Wholesale (other) 2.4%
- Transport & Storage 0.8%

Services (81.6%)

- Services (public) 9%
- Service (other) 33.3%
- Offices 2%
- Retail (food & beverage) 19.9%
- Retail (hotel & other acc) 2.8%
- Retail (product & services) 10.3%
- Retail (other) 0%
- Culture & Entertainment 3%
- Arts Provision 1.2%
- Vacant 0%
- Unknown 0%



Every business in the audit

Type of business

Services:

- Retail (food & beverage) 19.9%
- Retail (hotel & other acc) 2.8%
- Retail (product & services) 10.3%
- Retail (other) 0%



Type of business

Services:

- Culture & Entertainment 3%
- Arts Provision 1.2%



Type of business

Services:

- Services (public) 9%
- Service (other) 33.3%
- Offices 2%



Type of business

Industrial

- Vehicle Sale & Repair 3.7%
- Transport & Storage 0.8%



CANNING TOWN

CUSTOM HOUSE

ROYAL ALBERT

SILVERTOWN

NORTH WOOLWICH

BECKTON RIVERSIDE

Type of business

Industrial

- Wholesale (food) 1.2%
- Wholesale (other) 2.4%



Type of business

Industrial

- Manufacturing (food) 1.2%
- Manufacturing (materials) 1%
- Manufacturing (reproduction) 3.2%
- Manufacturing (other) 0.5%
- Utility 0.8%
- Construction 3.9%



Getting involved

Working collaboratively with local businesses, partners, communities and stakeholders is at the heart of our approach.

For more information or to find out how to get involved, please get in touch.

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DK-CM

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