The official regeneration magazine of Southwark Council

Issue six

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New life at St Mary’s
St Mary’s Churchyard in Elephant and Castle is getting a new lease of life as a family-friendly park, thanks to a £1.35 million grant from the London Development Agency. Redevelopment of the derelict space will include the installation of a new playground, seating and planted areas with easily accessible entrances.

The project will provide a much-needed green open space in the area, kick-starting the first phase of the Elephant and Castle’s development. It is hoped the park will be ready for action by the end of this year.

Beetham begins
The proposed Beetham tower at One Blackfriars Road was given the green light by Southwark Council’s planning department in July, perhaps heralding a new era of tall buildings in this area of London. The stunning design had faced some opposition to its height, so architect Ian Simpson reduced it from 68 floors to 52.

Described by Beetham chairman Hugh Frost as a ‘gateway to Southwark’, the 77,000sq m mixed-use glass tower will include 64 high-quality apartments on the top floors, a 261-room luxury hotel with spa, bars and restaurants (to be run by Jumeirah), and a five-storey public viewing gallery at the top of the building with vistas across London.

The development will also feature a six-storey affordable housing block on an adjacent site.

The tower is set to open in 2011, in time for the Olympic Games.

Open doors
Members of the public were invited to explore some of the borough’s finest architectural gems during London’s annual Open House extravaganza in September. The list of buildings that opened their doors to inquisitive visitors in Southwark included Palestra (above), the Dome reading room at the Imperial War Museum, Dulwich College, 15 and a half Consort Road, Unicorn Theatre, More London and City Hall.
Southwark Council is naturally pleased the mayor is planning to go ahead with the southern section of the project regardless.

The proposed tram system will dramatically improve public transport links in Southwark, cutting the journey time from the Aylesbury Estate to Waterloo to just 14 minutes. Funding for the project is still unconfirmed.

Ken Livingstone has asked Transport for London to investigate the option of implementing the southern section first, with northern sections connecting Euston and Camden with Waterloo built at a later date. The change of plan is due to a lack of support for the scheme in boroughs north of the Thames.

The results of extensive public consultation on the proposed route options for the Cross River Tram have now been published. According to Chris Patterson of Transport for London, the general response from Southwark residents has been positive and it is hoped a single preferred route will be announced by the end of the year, working towards a public inquiry in 2008.

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The striking building, which has a small footprint but extends outwards with each of its four storeys, will provide 2,485sq m of space to accommodate not only books and DVDs but also a café and performance space for young musicians. The cutting-edge design is popular with local residents, 95% of whom are in favour of the new facility, which is billed as being ‘more than just a library’ and will be delivered in the first phase of BL Canada Quay’s scheme for Canada Water’s regeneration opening in 2010 (see p14).
Elephant and Castle regeneration
It’s happening now

Since 2003, Southwark Council has been leading on the comprehensive regeneration of Elephant and Castle. Much has already been achieved, with over 1,200 homes under construction and £400 million of building work underway.

Now, Southwark Council is delighted to announce the appointment of our commercial partner, Lend Lease, who together with its partners First Base and Oakmayne Properties will work with the council and community to transform this remarkable quarter of central London.
gether

be it happen
Shaping Southwark: what makes it so special

With its central, riverfront location, excellent transport links, strong history and communities, some of the UK’s finest cultural attractions and a local authority driving a £4 billion regeneration programme, the London Borough of Southwark is arguably the most exciting development location in the country. And its world-famous cultural attractions are a crucial element of the mix. It’s home to Tate Modern, Shakespeare’s Globe, Peckham Library and Borough Market as well as many other museums, theatres and arts organisations.

Stretching southwards from the bank of the Thames to East Dulwich, it boasts some of the country’s most ambitious regeneration schemes – Elephant and Castle, Bermondsey Spa, the Aylesbury Estate and Canada Water – that are transforming entire areas and thousands of lives.

All this means the borough is also home to many new and planned landmark schemes from private investors excited by the opportunities on offer: the 280,000sq m More London, that has created a new business quarter on former wasteland; Sellar Properties’ forthcoming London Bridge Tower, to be among Europe’s tallest and most striking; Will Alsop’s Palestra building, now open for business; the new Architecture Foundation HQ, marking the first Zaha Hadid designed building in the capital; and the £500 million of mixed-use schemes springing up at Elephant and Castle.

Southwark wasn’t always brimming with such promise, as the very institutions that put it on the map acknowledge. “The northern part of the borough was an area of very considerable deprivation and neglect,” says Nicholas Serota, director of the Tate. “When we first suggested making Bankside power station, as it was then, into a great museum of modern art everyone said ‘where is it?’ But now, with almost four million visitors, that iconic chimney marks one of the most visited sites in the country (see page 40 for more on plans for the gallery).

It’s a similar story along at the Globe, which opened in 1997. “This is actually where Shakespeare’s original theatre was – right beside the river, opposite St Paul’s Cathedral,” explains the
This picture
The recently completed Palestra, designed by Will Alsop
Globe’s director of exhibitions David Marshall. “When we started building here it was just a series of derelict warehouses, so it was a brave move.”

And as Borough Market trader Peter Gott says: “When we first came here nine years ago there were no local shops selling food – it was almost a desert.”

So why was Southwark in such poor shape to begin with? The heavy industries along the river that once provided local employment had died out by the 1980s. And as Stephen McDonald, Southwark Council’s strategic director major projects, points out: “Historically, this has been a poor area, traditionally attracting first-generation immigrants. Moving out has always been one of the main measures of success, a trend we are addressing with regeneration.”

He also highlights the poorly designed housing estates of the 1960s, with the great concrete monoliths in Peckham, Elephant and Castle and the infamous Aylesbury Estate breeding deprivation and crime. In Peckham, the notorious five estates have been demolished and replaced with modern low-level homes built to traditional street patterns. As a result, the two thirds of residents who had wanted to leave the area before the redevelopment decided they actually wanted to stay.

Similar programmes of demolition and re-creation are now under way. At Elephant and Castle, the Heygate Estate is being replaced by homes across 17 individual architecturally designed sites, while the Aylesbury is also facing the wrecker’s ball in favour of new modern units (see page 22).

“It was clear by the 1990s that Southwark had to change, to rebrand, and really be proactive in making things happen,” says McDonald. The council, which has been using its own land to lead the transformation of the borough has put its money where its mouth is.

Alongside glamorous additions to the South Bank came plans to place a real emphasis on new community facilities. The Stirling Prize-winning Peckham Library is one such success story. “You have to give people things to feel proud of,” says Russell Profitt, head of the Peckham Programme and social renewal. “So it’s not just a library, it’s an inspirational library. We get visitors from around the world all the time, and the local community loves it.”

At both the Bermondsey Spa and the Canada Water regeneration schemes, public amenities – a new park and youth centre in the former and a multi-purpose library in the latter – are (or will be) the first elements to be completed. At Elephant and Castle too, the council led the regeneration itself for five years (before appointing Lend Lease as commercial partner in July) to absolutely ensure that local people’s interests will be best served by the proposed changes to the area.

While great strides have been made, there’s still a long way to go. Forty per cent of the borough is under current or planned regeneration schemes and there could be yet more in the future. For McDonald, tackling high rates of local unemployment is one issue that he would like to see progress on, while the “succeed and stay” motto, vocalising the desire to attract and retain residents, has become something of a mantra.

Hopefully it will become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The Southwark regeneration journey – so far – has been characterised by the domino effect of development, with Tate Modern as arguably the catalyst for immeasurable amounts of change.

As Marshall says: “We have the ability to use Southwark as a shop window for the whole of London and to showcase what is best of British in this borough.”

And even the professionals admit the borough is surpassing expectations. Irvine Sellar – whose company is pioneering London Bridge Tower, aka the Shard of Glass – says of the area and the potential it gives to his development: “Obviously we look for this when searching for investment opportunities, but we didn’t think it would be so dynamic and dramatic as this.”
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“A critical milestone for this regeneration” is David Taylor’s verdict on the recent planning decision to approve Canada Water’s striking new library.

The chairman of developer British Land Canada Quays has got it just right. As one of the first elements of the Rotherhithe peninsula regeneration to be taken forward, the library encapsulates both the ambitious design values of the 162,000sq m mixed-use scheme, and mirrors its social aspirations. Opening in 2010 it will provide a new focus for the area, something Southwark Council’s head of culture, libraries and learning Adrian Whittle is well aware of. “This is set to become the nucleus of Canada Water’s regeneration, a truly interactive community resource,” he says. “Local people are really enthused and we are listening and responding to their ideas.”

Described by its leading architect creator Piers Gough as “a magic, extraordinary, unashamedly magnificent public facility”, the 2,500sq m library is cutting edge – inside and out. Clad with aluminium, the angular building will sit within Deal Porter Plaza, a new public square overlooking Canada Water Basin. The plaza is set to cater to a range of activities with a café, space for events and markets, public art and cycle parking. With entrances to Canada Water underground station, it will also become a major new thoroughfare.

Back at the library, it will be a truly 21st-century experience. As well as book and DVD lending, it will offer exhibition and performance space, café, access for community groups, fitness classes, homework clubs, free internet access, story telling and opportunities for education and training.

As Gough puts it, it’s ‘much more than just a library’, and certainly more dynamic than the traditional scene of hushed tones and fearsome librarians. “Absolutely,” says Whittle, who jointly led much of the overwhelmingly successful public consultation alongside BL Canada Quays. “This is all about increasing accessibility to community, cultural and learning services.”

The local population has been involved since the outset, which would seem to have paid dividends: in a recent poll 95% of those surveyed supported both the design and vision behind the library. “This library is the greatest thing to happen to this community,” says Barry Duckett, chairman of the Canada Estate Tenants and Residents Association. “It’s a facility that’s desperately needed for our kids – a lot of local families can’t afford computers and it’s somewhere they can study and make music in the performance and rehearsal space.” After three long years of planning and consultation, this is just the type of response that Southwark Council and BL Canada Quays have been hoping for. The first OJEU notice has been posted for the delivery of the library – a move that’s already creating significant interest.

But the benefits to the local area don’t end with the library. A £10 million section 106 agreement was signed in May covering new and improved infrastructure, affordable housing, a community space with play facilities, new school places, health amenities, CCTV, renewable energy technology and 1,500 construction jobs.

Tim Thompson, Southwark Council’s project director, says: “This will have a huge impact. By paving the way for extensive community development, it ensures that the future Canada Water will be so much more than just new homes and shops.”

As well as the library, the first phases of the £1 billion regeneration are likely to include more than 800 homes, offices, retail units and business space for small and start-up companies. BL Canada Quays now has detailed planning approval for Deal Porter Plaza, and has agreed an implementation strategy with Southwark Council for the early development sites.

Southwark Council is also gearing up to start a wider area action planning process that will seek to create new opportunities for the area.

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Canada Water at a glance:

Where: On the Rotherhithe peninsula to the north east of Southwark.

What: Almost 3,000 new homes including affordable and family housing, nearly 10,000sq m of shops and leisure and more than 9,000sq m of office and live-work space, a new library and a high-quality, connected public realm.

When: The first phases, including the library, will be delivered by 2010. The overall regeneration of the entire masterplan area is likely to take at least a decade.

Why: With vacant land and fantastic public transport links, this is one of central London’s last great undeveloped areas.
Despite occupying one of the hippest addresses in the capital, apart from its world-famous weekly antiques market Bermondsey Square was largely unused. That is, until the development of a £35 million regeneration scheme led by Southwark Council and Igloo Regeneration.

Scheduled for completion in spring 2008, the 13,940sq m mixed-use development will offer 76 apartments set in eight and 10-storey residential blocks, a 100-bed boutique hotel, community cinema, restaurant and wine bar, local supermarket, retail units and a range of office accommodation. As well as the studio, one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments for sale at Bermondsey Square, around 20 affordable homes are also being developed on nearby Tower Bridge Road for completion in 2009.

As its name suggests, the complex will be set around a rejuvenated public square with space for 200 market stalls. Antiques trading will continue, as it has since Prince Albert founded the market in 1855, with scope for other markets in the future, as well as community events, exhibitions and open-air film shows.

Southwark Council’s strategic director of regeneration and neighbourhoods Paul Evans believes Bermondsey Square will add to the many attractions of the area, notably on eclectic Bermondsey Street with its boutiques, cafés and Zandra Rhodes’ Fashion and Textile Museum. “The square brings another cultural facility to this growing and exciting part of the borough,” he says. “Providing a new home for the antiques market was our key priority, and we believe it will benefit from being among a new residential quarter.”

Rob Knight, national construction director at Igloo, says the response from the market has been phenomenal, and that Igloo has “a list of over 600 parties interested in buying homes, despite having not started marketing yet”.

The addition of Bermondsey Square to what Knight dubs “the best village in London” has been a painstaking process. It sits above the 10th-century Bermondsey Abbey, so extensive archaeological investigations had to take place before building work could begin. The remains of the ancient monument will be on display under a glass floor in one of the retail units.

Back in the present day, Knight is full of praise for Southwark Council and the London Development Agency, which understood and encouraged Igloo’s aspirations. Soon, the public will get a chance to decide if they agree.
project focus: Bermondsey Spa
The statistics speak for themselves: 2,000 new homes (35%+ affordable), 26,000sq m of re-landscaped space, new healthcare and community facilities, and a micro neighbourhood for retail, leisure and business. At 200,000sq m and 20 development sites, Bermondsey Spa is an ambitious regeneration project.

But it’s progressing apace. For a start, residents moved into the inaugural 73-home Artesian Building earlier this year. With 42% reserved as affordable housing and for key workers, and the rest snapped up by private purchasers, the architecturally daring scheme is a microcosm of what Southwark Council and its partners are aiming to achieve all over Bermondsey Spa.

There’s plenty more where that came from: the 300-unit St James Square scheme, for example, due to welcome inhabitants next spring. Designed by Levitt Bernstein with Hyde Housing, it’s part of five linked sites that will eventually deliver 644 homes.

“Most of the people buying at Bermondsey Spa are first-time buyers looking for a place that is central to the City and West End and close to the tube,” says Hyde Housing’s sales director Adrian Grover. “They’re attracted to Bermondsey because this area is part of the wider regeneration zone, bringing trendy new homes at attractive prices, near good amenities like galleries, bars and restaurants.” Construction of the next phase of a further 140 homes is under way.

Tim Thompson, Southwark Council’s project director, explains that with 20 development sites, Bermondsey Spa is experiencing all stages of the regeneration chain. “At Site G there’ll be 35 homes plus shops – we’re working on a design approach just now,” he says. “Site T, the old neighbourhood housing office, will become 60 new homes and a restaurant, and Site J by Blueprint Homes, providing a new premises for Little Acorns Nursery and 49 residential units, should be complete next year.”

At the heart of the whole Bermondsey Spa scheme is the 36,425sq m Site C. The design, by Glenn Howells architects, draws on Bermondsey’s industrial past by creating a high-density neighbourhood. Business, retail and community uses will co-exist within a network of streets and public spaces, along with 600 homes. Southwark Council is currently agreeing a disposal strategy and detailed design code for the public realm before marketing any plots.

Bermondsey Spa is due for completion by 2011, but already the local community is enjoying the benefits. A £2 million refurbishment of Spa Park was the first element to open last year, complete with a facility for pre-school and school-aged children. The next phase of the...
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Salmon Youth Centre’s £10 million transformation will open in January. Alongside the sports hall already in use will be a theatre, dance/rehearsal studio and a music/multimedia studio. Training features heavily too, with IT suites and arts and crafts rooms expected by the time the centre is complete in 2009.

Bermondsey Spa is also providing new healthcare centres, nurseries, community facilities, shops and leisure amenities. “It’s important that services for local people are delivered at an early stage,” says Thompson. “Regeneration can be disruptive, so visible signs of progress are crucial.” The state-of-the-art City of London Academy is one new addition to the community that’s certainly been warmly received. “We wanted a school that could provide real aspirational change for the kids in the area. It was crucial to encourage the construction of family homes.”

Just a mile from the City, Bermondsey is finally capitalising on its location, with its impressive regeneration programme turning it into one of the country’s most exciting neighbourhoods.

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**Bermondsey Spa at a glance:**

**Where:** A short stroll from the City and Bankside, just east of London Bridge.

**What:** 2,000 new homes, including affordable and family housing, 26,000sq m of re-landscaped space, new healthcare and community facilities, retail and a new micro neighbourhood with a mix of uses.

**When:** First residents have arrived but overall completion is scheduled for 2011.

**Why:** Bermondsey has suffered socio-economic problems since the loss of traditional employment.

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**Abi’s story**
Abi Kamara (above) moved into the Artesian building from nearby George Tingle House, to be demolished as part of the plans. “Bermondsey’s changed,” she says. “Years ago, people didn’t get on with each other, but now everybody mixes and there’s a better atmosphere. “I’m very happy in the Artesian, especially with the balcony off my bedroom. Regeneration is improving the area. People feel at home because they have space and security. Before, at George Tingle, some people would make a mess, but here they talk to each other. My home is beautiful and I want to maintain it. My neighbours are the same – there’s a sense of pride now. Moving here has made me value what I have in life and built my confidence. I feel proud to welcome anyone into my home.”

**Joe’s story**
Last November, Joe joined the trainee management programme at construction company Rooff, which works on a number of local projects. “I’m working in the surveying office at the moment,” he says. “I’m enjoying learning new things and going on site.”

“I’ve lived in Bermondsey all my life and have seen lots of changes, all for the better. I’d love to work on a local site. It would be a chance to put something back for being given this opportunity. One day I’d like to tell my kids: ‘I helped to build that.’”

Rooff has also just employed Jack, another local lad, on the programme. “These opportunities are a response to the regeneration in the area, and a sign of our commitment to the process,” says Steve Drury, director of Rooff.
Cynics, perhaps understandably, said it would never happen. Plans for this spectacular regeneration have already travelled a long (and sometimes) painful journey – and that’s without a stone being laid. But with demolition on the way and show homes on display, residents of the much-maligned Aylesbury Estate can no longer be in any doubt that real change is actually coming… and soon.

This summer, Southwark Council granted outline approval to the first phase of the 285,000sq m scheme. Designed by Levitt Bernstein it will include 260 homes and a new Aylesbury Resource Centre providing expanded health and social care services.

The aim of the architect is to ‘introduce a finer-grained pattern of circulation’ by ‘reinstating pre-existing routes with the careful design of connected, usable public spaces’. A green route is set to run through the site, linking a new urban square in the north (which will house a relocated street market), a new park, and a new entrance to Burgess Park in the south.

People living on the Aylesbury recently had the chance to view their prospective abodes when a full-sized show home was unveiled to the public. Over the three weeks of the exhibition, the 70sq m, two-bedroom property was displayed with its movable partition walls in various configurations, to demonstrate different versions of the living space.

The designs received a largely positive response from would-be residents, with such glowing comments as “Captivating and authentic… it gives a good feeling of what’s to come… I feel at home already ” or “good-size rooms, well laid out, it’s gorgeous”.

This positive reaction is echoed by Stephen McDonald, Southwark Council’s strategic director major projects: “One of the best things about
the Aylesbury is the internal space standards. People said they want spacious homes and we have taken that on board.”

**Work will begin next autumn** – Southwark Council is in the process of choosing development partners now – once residents living in this section of the estate have been rehoused into either a new housing association home nearby or an existing council property. To this end, the council’s referencing team is going door to door to gather information such as the number of bedrooms required, or the age and sex of family members, and to answer any questions on the process. Having completed valuations, it is also starting to buy back properties from leaseholders in these blocks, while some commercial leaseholders have already been moved.

And all that’s just one small part of the massive logistical exercise involved in the ambitious task of transforming this housing estate into a new mixed-use, mixed-tenure community. The existing 2,700 homes will be demolished to make way for 4,900 new properties for rent, sale or shared ownership and a host of community and leisure facilities.

Currently characterised by grey walkways and concrete apartment blocks, the Aylesbury Estate is home to 7,500 people. A favourite hangout of urban filmmakers and politicians lambasting urban subculture, the estate seems to have become the poster boy for everything that’s wrong with inner-city Britain.

But is this dubious honour justified? “The Aylesbury’s notoriety is tricky. Reputations are easy to acquire but difficult to shake,” says Aylesbury regeneration director for Southwark Council, Martin Smith. “In many ways the estate’s an easy target. There are social problems here, there’s no denying that, but we’ve made headway with these in recent years.”

He’s referring to some pretty impressive progress: tripling the number of GCSE students gaining five exam passes, halving the fear of crime and addressing unemployment. But rebuilding the Aylesbury isn’t simply a response to the remaining social woes. The homes themselves need to be replaced.

Six years ago, residents rejected a possible stock transfer to a registered social landlord in favour of a refurbishment programme. It began, only to discover structural defects, replacement heating system and decent homes costs totalling £350 million (£146,000 per home) – substantially more than the cost of rebuilding the whole estate.

In September 2005, the council’s executive committee voted to demolish the estate and build the Aylesbury again from scratch. Two years on – and determined not to repeat design mistakes made four decades ago – it appointed Urban Initiatives to develop a masterplan for the estate’s regeneration.

This process is now well under way. Consultation with the local community is ongoing and this autumn saw a public event unveiling ‘the issues and options’ or, in other words, the progress so far. An area action plan should be complete next June. So what exactly are local residents hoping to see? “They have been pretty clear all along,” says Smith. “People living on the Aylesbury want improved local facilities, green open spaces and better transport links. But most of all, they want top-quality, modern homes – and that is what we intend to deliver.”

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**Aylesbury at a glance:**

**Where:** Between Elephant and Castle and Camberwell Green to the east of Walworth Road.

**What:** Replacing 2,700 existing homes with 2,200 homes for rent under housing association control and around 2,700 homes for sale or shared ownership. Community and public amenities will be improved, commercial facilities added, green space enhanced and transport links bolstered.

**When:** Construction work will begin next year on the first phase, which includes 260 homes and a new resource centre. The overall regeneration of the 285,000sq m estate is likely to take at least a decade.

**Why:** A refurbishment programme which began in 2001 found structural defects in the buildings. Repairing them was estimated to be significantly more expensive than the rebuild cost.
Youth crime, gun-related violence and a seeming escalation in gang culture have dominated headlines in recent months. But Peckham, with the dubious honour of being forerunner in the fight against these social problems, has long been working hard to address them, and that includes its regeneration programme.

Over the past decade, great strides have been made in transforming the area: the notorious five estates have been demolished, the public square and famous library created, social programmes established to promote education and employment, and plans established to overhaul the shopping and recreation offer.

“There’s been a lot of talk, especially in Peckham, about young people having nothing to do. That’s something we are working hard on,” says Russell Profitt, head of Southwark Council’s Peckham Programme. Now, next to the existing leisure centre and library a multi-user games area (MUGA) is planned, to provide extra sports facilities, which should be ready within the next 18 months. The nearby Central Venture Park is another new venue for youngsters, as is the recently opened Safe Studios, in the basement of Safe House, which will become an incubator for performing talent.

Meanwhile, an area action plan (AAP) is going out for public consultation this autumn. On the agenda is a redesign of the Rye Lane shopping area, further improvements to Peckham Square and the rundown high street and more integrated transport provision. The council hopes that a new tram line between Peckham and Camden and the extension of the East London underground line will be the linchpins of a future travel network.

The AAP builds on the early stages of the neighbourhood’s regeneration which delivered 2,000 new council, private and housing association homes. At least the same number again could be created by 2015, on a number of sites earmarked for redevelopment, and existing property is set to be improved. Following a successful scheme in the Bellenden enclave, more housing renewal is expected (pages 50 to 53) over the coming years.

Peckham at a glance:

Where: To the south of the borough past Walworth and Camberwell.

What: Improvements to housing, the public realm and public and leisure amenities are ongoing. The next phase will see an area action plan developed.

When: Progress will come in stages over the next decade. It is hoped that improved transport links such as the tram and East London line extension will be complete around 2012.

Why: Peckham has long suffered deprivation, and the resulting social problems have prevented the area from fulfilling its potential.
Below: A Peckham resident, the newly opened Safe Studios and Peckham High Street.
Urban Initiatives was appointed in February 2007 to develop an Area Action Plan for the Aylesbury and Burgess Park area, and lead the masterplanning work for the re-development of the Aylesbury Estate. In addition, new private homes will be built to cross-subsidise the social housing. This raises the issue of how to deliver higher density and high quality homes, whilst still achieving the key objectives of place making, delivery and sustainable development.

The challenge is to enable the delivery of the comprehensive regeneration of the area whilst ensuring the highest quality of design and sustainability, and creating a mixed-use, mixed tenure community that achieves good living environments throughout.

This high profile estate has been masterplanned before. As a result, the team had to overcome significant consultation fatigue using a number of innovative techniques including the establishment of a Neighbourhood Team, devising a Neighbourhood Game, and a series of ongoing exhibitions that have allowed local residents to be involved in the emerging masterplan.

The Neighbourhood Team, comprising Aylesbury Estate residents and organisations in the area, recently went on trips to Glasgow, Dublin, Amsterdam and Paris. These trips visited a wide range of types of homes, and demonstrated that higher densities can be achieved with well designed streets and places. The Neighbourhood Game was played on a board representing the Aylesbury area and allowed people to see the implications of placing different densities of developments across the estate.
Urban Initiatives was appointed in February 2007 to develop an Area Action Plan for the Aylesbury and Burgess Park area, and lead the masterplanning work for the redevelopment of the Aylesbury Estate. In addition, new private homes will be built to cross-subsidise the social housing. This raises the issue of how to deliver higher density and high quality homes, whilst still achieving the key objectives of place making, delivery and sustainable development. The challenge is to enable the delivery of the comprehensive regeneration of the area whilst ensuring the highest quality of design and sustainability, and creating a mixed-use, mixed tenure community that achieves good living environments throughout.

This high profile estate has been masterplanned before. As a result, the team had to overcome significant consultation fatigue using a number of innovative techniques including the establishment of a Neighbourhood Team, devising a Neighbourhood Game, and a series of ongoing exhibitions that have allowed local residents to be involved in the emerging masterplan.

The Neighbourhood Team, comprising Aylesbury Estate residents and organisations in the area, recently went on trips to Glasgow, Dublin, Amsterdam and Paris. These trips visited a wide range of types of homes, and demonstrated that higher densities can be achieved with well designed streets and places. The Neighbourhood Game was played on a board representing the Aylesbury area and allowed people to see the implications of placing different densities of developments across the Aylesbury Estate. By including the Neighbourhood Team throughout the process, we have been able to engage them with the complexity of the main challenges and build on their understanding of wider regeneration issues.

The distribution of densities of homes will achieve a variety of housing solutions from town houses to apartment blocks and some taller buildings. This approach raises the standard of urban housing, and offers the opportunity to consider the inclusion of family homes with gardens. This cannot compromise the place making objectives that highlight the need for better homes - a high quality residential neighbourhood; public life - better and safer streets, squares and parks; connections - improved transport links; and, community - enhanced social and economic opportunities. These objectives are contained in the Neighbourhood Charter – the Neighbourhood Team’s statement of intent published as the first step in the community engagement process.

The establishment of an Architects Panel of seven leading housing design practices: Macreanor Lavington, Alford Hall Monaghan Morris, Glenn Howells Architects, Hawkins Brown Architects, Burrell Foley Fischer, de Rijke Marsh Morgan and Patel Taylor, means both the masterplan and housing solutions are tested in detail.

Through these parallel strategies, we are confident that the Aylesbury area can be transformed to become a place that will benefit for generations to come.

Urban Initiatives commission also includes:

- An open spaces strategy, including landscape design of Burgess Park
- A social and community infrastructure strategy with a comprehensive approach to shopping, employment, schools, healthcare and community facilities
- A transport and movement strategy that will involve the development of a major multi-modal transport model
- A business and delivery plan to include a fully modelled business case
- A full Sustainability Appraisal
- Planning guidance for the South West Corner of the estate

Urban Initiatives
project focus:
Elephant & Castle
Elephant chooses commercial partner

It’s been a complex and exceedingly thorough process, but Southwark Council’s two-year search is finally over. And the winner of the commercial partner for Elephant and Castle’s £1.5 billion regeneration is...Lend Lease, in collaboration with First Base and Oakmayne Properties.

Southwark Council’s strategic director of major projects Stephen McDonald is certain that the old adage ‘good things come to those who wait’ will ring true. "We believe that Lend Lease can bring the finance, resources and experience to deliver and add value to the regeneration of the area," he says of the company which is also building the athletes’ village for the London 2012 Olympics.

The task ahead is huge: manage a 688,000sq m central London masterplan covering 6,600 new homes, 75,000sq m of retail, the demolition of existing residential and retail accommodation, the reconfiguration of traffic systems, transformation of the public realm and liaison with numerous private developers constructing schemes worth around £500 million. And they’re only some of the elements involved in turning Elephant and Castle from a testament to 1960s architectural mistakes into the capital’s hottest destination.

As McDonald says: "We’re very conscious that we’ve been talking about the need to regenerate Elephant and Castle for a long time, and it’s paramount that we get on and show people we’re serious.”

Plans to transform the Elephant have been mooted for some time. In 2002, previous proposals fell apart when developer Southwark Land Regeneration and Southwark Council failed to agree on commercial and financial terms. It was back to the drawing board, with former Elephant and Castle development director Chris Horn observing “there could be no more false starts”. Thankfully, there haven’t been. After working with a multi-disciplinary team of experts, led first by Norman Foster and later by Make architects, the council produced a development framework, endorsed in February 2004, detailing exactly what it hoped to create at the Elephant and, crucially, how that would be delivered. “The council knew it could not embark on this project without being absolutely clear about what we want and what we expect from others,” says Horn.

Make’s plan offered a holistic approach to regeneration. At its heart was reconnection, providing alternatives to the busy road network, pedestrian subways and maze-like housing estates that currently damage the area’s cohesion.

The resulting procurement process saw seven developers shortlisted, a number that was then reduced to three, then two and finally one, when Lend Lease emerged victorious in July 2007. It’s no surprise then that the company is ready to get to work immediately, but this certainly won’t be at the expense of engaging local people. "Lively and ongoing dialogue with the public is fundamental to regeneration – otherwise we’d just call it redevelopment,” says Lend Lease Europe chairman Nigel Hugill. “Equally important to physical change is a less visible transformation: the creation of new opportunities to learn and acquire skills, to access employment, to start or expand businesses and benefit from the renaissance of the area.”

Hugill says that Lend Lease intends to be faithful to the vision developed by the council and will work with a variety of practices to draw up a detailed blueprint. "We were never about ripping up the Ken Shuttleworth [head of Make] masterplan,” he says. "It started with the key presumption that you have to put back the Georgian grid, which existed before redevelopment in the 1960s. By bringing together designers from established and emerging practices, we aim to introduce further diversity as we develop the plans.

"The best neighbourhoods have evolved over time, with a number of hands playing a part in their creation. In this way a diversity of buildings is developed, adding a richness and permeability that was not achieved in the repetitive blocks of the Heygate Estate or the shopping centre.” These two oft-derided symbols of present-day Elephant and Castle will no longer exist once regeneration is complete in 2014, replaced by 1,000 new homes across 17 individually designed sites. To ensure the highest standards, Southwark Council ditched the design-and-build formula which has spawned so many uninspiring residences by separating the housing and architectural procurement processes.

Instead, selected architects formed a competition panel to bid to create the new homes, and only then were they matched with a housing association partner. Philosopher and author of the best-selling book ‘The Architecture of Happiness’ Alain de Botton says the council’s approach is “clearly the way forward. Developers should be forced to work with good architects.”

Those designing the homes certainly agree. "We were attracted to the emphasis Southwark Council places on design quality,” says Joseph Marinescu of Metaphorm
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Architecture and Design. “They have set architects and housing associations on an equal footing rather than following the traditional hierarchy.”

The shopping centre, will also make way for progress. A new town centre is to be created with a mix of high street, independent and market retailers. The area is currently dominated by traffic, with pedestrians forced to navigate roads via a subway system. The new-look Elephant places the pedestrian firmly at its heart with shopping and leisure based around public squares and a car-free main boulevard.

So what happens now? Well, Southwark Council and Lend Lease aim to complete a development agreement. Work is also under way on a planning application for the entire regeneration area for submission during 2008.

However, change is continuing apace. Cranes now mark the Elephant skyline, with 1,200 new homes under construction and 500 more planned. South Bank University is building a new faculty on Keyworth Street and St Mary’s Churchyard is undergoing a facelift. With a six-screen cinema being built on New Kent Road and the Southwark Playhouse due to move into the old London Park Hotel site the Elephant has definitely taken flight. It might have taken a lot of planning, but in this case good things really are coming to those who have waited.

**The Elephant story:**

**March 2002**
Regeneration plans collapse after Southwark Council and development partner Southwark Land Regeneration fail to reach an agreement.

**May 2002**
Southwark Council’s executive committee renews commitment to the regeneration of Elephant and Castle.

**June 2003**
Draft development framework published for public consultation.

**February 2004**
Development framework adopted by Southwark Council’s executive committee after winning support from 80% of local people.

**June 2004**
Make architects appointed to perfect the framework, ready for release to the commercial sector.

**March 2005**
Start of official European procurement process for the main commercial development partner.

**August 2005**
Two housing association consortia selected to build replacement housing for Heygate residents.

**Autumn 2006**
Heygate residents move into Wansey Street, the first of 17 social housing sites to be complete.

**November 2006**
Elephant and Castle Ecopod installed.

**January 2007**
Major exhibition showcasing the work of Southwark Council so far.

**July 2007**
Lend Lease (with First Base and Oakmayne Properties) selected as commercial development partner.

**July 2007**
St Mary’s Churchyard improvements commence.

**September 2007**
Richard Rogers’ residential tower and new theatre wins planning approval.

**End 2007**
Plans approved for the removal of Southern roundabout.

**2008-2009**
Heygate Estate tenants relocated to new housing, followed by phased demolition of the estate.

**2009-2010**
Development begins on the southern part of the regeneration area, including Walworth Road extension, energy centres and Heygate Boulevard.

**2010 onwards**
Demolition of Elephant and Castle shopping centre. New Civic Square built, shopping centre and Heygate Estate site redeveloped.

**2014**
Regeneration of Elephant and Castle complete.
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Above
Siobhan Davies Dance Company and London Philharmonic Orchestra, both part of this year’s Elefest

It is sponsored by Multiplex, Lend Lease, First Base, Oakmayne, Southwark Council, Film London and the UK Film Council

project focus: Elephant & Castle

Celebrating culture and change in the Castle

“People see a horrible shopping centre and a horrible housing estate, but not what’s behind it,” says Rob Wray, Walworth native, and creator of the Elefest arts festival, which had just completed a successful fifth year as Southwark went to press.

Managed by the New Elephant Open Network (NEON), the free nine-day event brings together local organisations and arts bodies across a range of venues around Elephant and Castle. When it began in 2003, Elefest was a showcase for locally made films. Since then it has grown and offers music, dance, workshops, talks, and videos, alongside classic and new films from around the world.

Highlights included performances by Philharmonic Orchestra musicians and the Heard, a 50-strong contemporary choir. Also new for 2007 were outdoor stages and what was being billed as the world’s first solar-powered cinema tent.

“Elefest is really special because it celebrates one of the most maltreated and misunderstood neighbourhoods in London. The regeneration aims to turn Elephant and Castle into a cultural quarter. This won’t just happen – it needs to be harnessed,” says Wray.

As Amanda Moss, director of local arts organisation Corsica Studios, puts it: “The festival has the potential to alter people’s perceptions of the area.” Wray agrees. “In the long term, having a free large-scale arts festival will help challenge the stereotypes people have and attract people who wouldn’t normally come south to do so,” he says.

Elefest represents the type of holistic regeneration that Southwark Council is aiming to create in the area. “People often think that redevelopment is just about the physical buildings, but that couldn’t be further from the truth,” says former Elephant and Castle regeneration director Chris Horn.

“Local people, art, creativity and diverse cultures will ultimately play a vital role in shaping the place that Elephant and Castle will become and Elefest has the potential to be a catalyst for all of this.” It’s a guaranteed great week, if you missed it this year make sure you catch it in 2008.
Developers queue up to join Elephant’s upward journey

Elephant and Castle’s 688,000sq m, £1.5 billion regeneration proposals boast some pretty impressive targets: 6,600 new homes, 4,000 jobs, 75,000sq m of retail space, carbon neutrality, a new academy and a library – not to mention a host of leisure attractions and public spaces. But perhaps the best measure of its ambitions has been the stampede of developers. Around £500 million of private investment – a figure completely unimaginable just a few years ago – is pouring in to Elephant and Castle. Here, we spotlight just some of the future, in progress and completed schemes:

**Newington (provisional name)**
**What:** A 43-storey octagonal tower around a new public square, this development will have about 470 apartments, with many as key worker housing. There are also plans for a communal roof garden and 500 cycle spaces. The scheme boasts a theatrical element too: it will provide a new home to the Southwark Playhouse.
**Status:** By the end of 2007
**Where:** Old London Park Hotel site, off Newington Butts
**Worth:** Circa £100 million
**Developer:** First Base
**Architect:** Rogers Stirk Harbour & Partners (formerly Richard Rogers Partnership)

**Printworks**
**What:** A nine-storey, mixed-use building with 168 flats and a number of small business units at ground level.

**Oakmayne Plaza**
**What:** A mixed-use scheme of three landmark towers ranging from 12 to 21 storeys. It will also contain a 214-room hotel, six-screen arts cinema, 219 homes, restaurants and shops, spilling out on to a bustling market square. Twenty retail units will be available to existing businesses trading in Elephant.
**Status:** Work began on site in February and Oakmayne Plaza is due for completion in 2009
**Where:** New Kent Road
**Worth:** £100 million
**Size:** 45,000sq m
**Developer:** Oakmayne Properties
**Architect:** PKS Architects

**Project focus:**
**Elephant & Castle**
Strata Tower
What: A 147m-tall tower boasting 408 homes, of which 30% will be affordable. The development also contains a pavilion containing some commercial space.
Status: Work began on site in February and Strata Tower is due for completion in 2009
Where: At the top of Walworth Road
Worth: £100 million
Size: 36,000sq m
Developer: Multiplex in partnership with Espalier
Architect: Hamilton Architects

South Central East and West
What: Eighty homes, apartments, penthouses, live-work units and social housing within two colourful buildings. South Central West features 185 flats, 17 live-work units and 15 work units across three buildings.

Status: South Central East was completed in February 2006. South Central West was finished in July this year
Where: Steedman Street and Crampton Street
Worth: £75 million
Developer: Oakmayne Properties
Architect: Piers Gough (East) and Space Craft (West)

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South Bank University
What: The university is in the midst of an extensive expansion and refurbishment scheme. Keyworth II, just one of its projects, will feature state-of-the-art teaching, building and training amenities for teachers, nurses and social care professionals. It will also provide cutting-edge facilities for sports sciences, which are likely to play a key role in the London 2012 Olympics.
Status: On site
Where: Various locations around Elephant and Castle
Worth: Total £47 million
Developer: Various
Architect: Various/Nicholas Grimshaw is designing Keyworth II

Vantage
What: A 15-storey tower containing 68 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments.
Status: On site and due for completion by the end of 2008
Where: Vantage will be part of Metro Central Heights
Developer: St George
Architect: Broadway Malyan
Looking for a new pad close to London’s cultural quarter? Step this way. Nestling behind Tate Modern, this scheme is but a stone’s throw from both Bankside and the South Bank.

Coming to a window near you: Bankside 4

GC Bankside – a joint venture of Clan Real Estate and Grosvenor – won approval for the Holland Street development in June. And, spread across five colourful buildings, set to range from five to 24 storeys, 30% of the 229 Richard Rogers designed homes will be affordable.

The journey to planning permission has been unusual. GC Bankside recently bought a nearby site on Hopton Street owned by developer Meyer Bergman and earmarked as a potential location for a 5,500sq m high-rise scheme. As part of its planning application for Bankside 4, GC Bankside promised that if it were given the green light it would scrap plans for the Hopton Street Tower, and turn it into publicly accessible open space instead.

“This is an innovative deal,” comments Alasdair Nicholls, chief executive of Clan Real Estate. What’s more, it’s drawn support from locals.

David Lough, chairman of Bankside Residents for Appropriate Development says: “Having campaigned vigorously against the Hopton Street Tower, we welcome the proposed scheme. An increase in open space is a major victory for residents in Bankside.”

Right
Bankside 4,
designed by
Richard Rogers
Are you changing Southwark?

Is your company working on any of Southwark’s regeneration or development schemes?
With all the regeneration work going on in London, and Southwark itself, it is not surprising that the construction industry is one of the capital’s largest employers. However, this very boom has exposed the fact that the city hasn’t got enough skilled construction workers to go round, something Southwark Council’s Building London Creating Futures (BLCF) programme aims to solve.

By providing customised construction training and support for local people in partnership with construction companies, the scheme simultaneously addresses the issues of the city-wide labour shortage and local unemployment. Since it started in 2000, more than 300 people have found work through the BLCF programme. But it is not just about getting a job. Gordon Mole, project manager at Southwark Council, explains: “We want people to get a job they find fulfilling and will want to stay in, which is why we offer mentoring and post employment training.”

The BLCF programme specifically targets the long-term unemployed, but is also keen to engage young people and the over-50s. All students benefit from one-to-one advice on CV writing and interview techniques, together with access to basic skills and NVQ-level qualifications.

It also aims to open the traditionally white male construction industry to women, lone parents and ethnic minorities. It’s working: although the scheme has only been running for seven years, ethnic minorities already comprise over 50% of employees on some sites in the scheme, while the number of female employees is 10-15% higher than the industry average. What’s more, a good proportion of BLCF’s workplace coordinators, employed by construction companies, are female.

Building relationships with contractors is an important element of the programme. Mole says: “The companies who got involved at the start took a real leap of faith, but word soon spread and we have had a very high level of interest. Regeneration provided the spur to get this project off the ground and offers an opportunity to foster real change within Southwark’s unemployed community and the construction industry.”

Mole is proud of the project’s high retention rate and is optimistic for the future of the scheme. “BLCF creates a positive change in the community and is an important addition to any major project. The scheme has had a very clear, positive impact.”
Below:
The Design Museum, Cuming Museum, and plans for the Tate Modern's turbine hall.
Us Brits love our museums. Nationwide, we make more than 100 million visits each year, more than to all the country’s live sporting events combined, with 37% of adult residents, or 17 million people, visiting museums and galleries at least once. This is the highest proportion of population in Europe.

Naturally, this has a huge impact on the national and local economy, considering that national museums have an overall turnover of £715 million, comparable to the annual box office takings of the country’s theatres.

In London alone, 40 million visits were made to London’s 141 museums in 2003-04. One of the most popular, in both the country and Southwark, is the Tate Modern, converted in 2000 from the redundant Bankside power station to house the Tate’s collection of modern art. In its first year, it generated £100 million worth of economic activity, and 3,000 new jobs. Since it opened, it has been visited by more than 25 million people, and is now the third most visited tourist attraction in Britain.

Physically, the Tate Modern has transformed that part of Southwark, connecting the river to the hinterland beyond, and the concurrent building of the Millennium Bridge has connected the north and south banks of the Thames. As the anchor attraction on this part of the South Bank, it has drawn attention and people to a previously undiscovered and undeveloped area of London.

But it’s not just national museums like the Tate. Museums, along with libraries and archives, are a critical part of local infrastructure, contributing to a high-quality built environment, preservation of civic space and renewal of the public realm.

They also set new standards in the design of the built environment, whether as ‘flagships’ for major new developments or ‘chess pieces’ in local renewal schemes. Recent renovations and additions to non-national museums in Southwark – such as Dulwich Picture Gallery – by architects of international standing have enhanced the built environment, raised design standards and attracted more visitors. And of course the Design Museum, converted from a 1930s riverside warehouse, led the way in regenerating that part of the Thames.

Away from the physical aspects of regeneration, museums are also a vital community resource, particularly for education, and especially in deprived areas. National museums hold more than a million educational sessions a year, and a quarter of all visits are made by children. Eighty per cent of parents believe museums are a very important resource for educating their children.

Educational projects range in scale from the Tate’s 400,000 visitors-a-year programme to the Livesey Museum for Children in east Peckham, an interactive children’s museum. Traditionally, museums had decided their own educational programmes, but a project run by the South Bank and Bankside Cultural Quarter (covering a triangle from Waterloo Bridge to the Design Museum, and down to Elephant and Castle) is encouraging education programmes based on researched needs of children. It is funded by the government initiative, Invest to Save.

As Howard Barnes, Southwark Council’s head of culture, says: “We want every young person to have some sort of cultural engagement with one of the museums, and are working with education departments to make sure their programmes actually have a bearing on attainment. We’re trying to take a global, not individual, approach.

“We’re always keen to attract a new cultural facility into the area, but only those with educational programmes the community can engage with. We’re aware that they’re clustering around the Bankside area, so are trying to encourage cultural venues to relocate elsewhere. For example, a big part of Elephant and Castle’s regeneration will involve theatres, galleries and enhanced museums, and maybe ‘branches’ of bigger, central London institutions.”

Museums have other deeply rooted community connections, are great sources of local pride, and foster a unique sense of belonging. This is especially true of smaller museums, of which Southwark has many. The 100-year-old Cuming Museum displays Southwark’s history via a variety of hands-on activities for younger visitors, as well as a lively temporary exhibition programme. One recent exhibition, ‘Life in the Elephant 1948 and 2005’, showed photographs by post-war resident Bert Hardy alongside those of current residents, juxtaposing black-and-white images of horse markets and bomb-sites with images of the Heygate Estate, captured by young people just before its transformation in the area’s forthcoming regeneration.

As Paul Evans, Southwark Council’s head of regeneration and neighbourhood puts it: “The Cuming Museum is capturing the process of regeneration, involving local people in the changes that are happening around them, and giving the sense that change isn’t just something that’s happening now – the area has been in flux for a long time.”

With more direct economic impact, museums and galleries also make a considerable contribution to employment, with 13,700 working...
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in London’s museums, libraries and archives in 2003 (7,400 in museums alone), with 70% of those jobs full-time. Schemes such as Southwark’s stArt project based at the Tate are encouraging the employment of local people in cultural initiatives by both preparing individuals and raising their skills, and by encouraging employers to see the qualities local people can offer. “Such initiatives,” says Paul Evans, “ensure that museums and galleries are economically connected to the rest of the borough.”

They can also act as agents of social and ethnic inclusion. Tate Modern took part in Karrot – a Southwark Police Partnership team to combat youth crime, truancy and school exclusions – by running a fashion project. Young people worked with leading designers to create their own collections, while others took part in workshops in photography, choreography, journalism, music and related subjects, all working towards the final event.

Held at Tate Modern in September 2003, the Karrot Fashion Fair was so successful that the scheme was rolled out as a national programme. And the Cuming Museum is part of the council’s initiative to try and reach groups who don’t traditionally visit museums. Says Barnes: “To reach groups such as black and minority ethnic young people, the offer has to be pertinent, and specific groups targeted. The Cuming Museum is doing great work with its project with pregnant teenagers and young new mums.”

The last word goes to Paul Evans. “Of all the cultural attractions in the borough, the Tate is by far the largest, but all our museums and galleries, large and small, improve an area in countless ways. And, ultimately, change the perception of the area they’re in: compare the impression of the environs of the bustling, transformed Bankside, with the desolate surroundings of Battersea Power Station up the river.”

### SOME OF SOUTHWARK’S MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

**FASHION AND TEXTILE MUSEUM**
Bermondsey Street SE1
The UK’s first museum dedicated to contemporary fashion and textiles.
www.fmlondon.org

**IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM**
Lambeth Road SE1
Examining the role of Britain and the Commonwealth in conflicts since 1914.
www.iwm.org.uk

**CUMING MUSEUM**
Walworth Road SE17
A collection of items from Southwark’s history – from the Romans to the present day.
www.southwark.gov.uk/CumingMuseum/

**DESIGN MUSEUM**
Shad Thames SE1
Dedicated to contemporary design, in converted warehouse.
www.designmuseum.org

**THE CLINK MUSEUM**
Clink Street SE1
Tells the story of the Clink prison.
www.clink.co.uk

**OLD OPERATING THEATRE MUSEUM AND HERB GARRET**
St Thomas Street SE1
Illustrating the history of medicine at St Thomas’ and Guy’s hospitals, in a historic setting.
www.thegarret.org.uk

**NATURE PARK AND PUMPHOUSE MUSEUM**
Rotherhithe, Bermondsey SE16
Showcases the history of the dockyards and wharfs.

**LIVESEY MUSEUM FOR CHILDREN**
682 Old Kent Road SE15
Runs a series of workshops, educational activities and under 5s sessions.
www.southwark.gov.uk/DiscoverSouthwark/Museums/TheLiveseyMuseum/

**VINOPOLIS**
1 Bank End, London Bridge SE1
The history and art of winemaking, set in railway arches.
www.vinopolis.co.uk

**TOWER BRIDGE EXHIBITION**
Tower Bridge SE1
An introduction to the colourful history and construction of one of London’s most famous landmarks.
www.towerbridge.org.uk

**THE LONDON DUNGEON**
28-24 Tooley Street SE1
Dedicated to the more gruesome side of European history.
www.thedungeons.com

**DULWICH PICTURE GALLERY**
Gallery Road SE21
One of the oldest art collections in Britain.
www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk

**LONDON COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATIONS**
Elephant and Castle SE1
Gallery and exhibition spaces with year-round community access.
www.lcc.arts.ac.uk

**BANKSIDE GALLERY**
Hopton Street SE1
Changing exhibitions of contemporary watercolours.
www.banksidegallery.com

**THE GALLERY AT OXO**
Bargehouse Street SE1
Changing exhibition of contemporary art and design.
www.oxtower.co.uk

**TATE MODERN**
25 Summer Street SE1
Home of Britain’s paramount collection of modern and contemporary art.
www.tate.org.uk/modern/
As plans develop for the extension to the phenomenally successful Tate Modern, we ask Alex Beard, the gallery’s deputy director, about its pivotal role in the borough.

What will the extension comprise, and how will it help the community? The extension is being driven by three factors. Firstly, the extraordinary success of the museum. By this stage we thought we’d be doing well if we reached one million visitors. But last year we reached five million, and the average has been four million since we opened. So we’ve got to respond to this huge public demand for the building. Secondly, artists’ practice is changing, and using a wider range of media, such as performance and film. The extension gives us the opportunity to create galleries suitable for the art of the 21st century. And thirdly, the MySpace generation of gallery-goers want to engage more deeply in what’s on display and explore in greater depth what’s behind the arts. Our new facilities will be all about participation and engagement rather than a one-way communication. 

How will the new improved Tate Modern affect the physical neighbourhood? Museums are changing from being
citadels within the city to being actually part of the city, integrated into the fabric. Tate Modern has always been accessible. You don’t walk up steps: you go down a ramp. And its turbine hall is a semi-public space.

The next stage will extend and strengthen that aspect. People will flow through the heart of the museum 12 hours a day from the Millennium Bridge, through the Turbine Hall, through the extension and into a newly created square, a very high-quality new public space for the borough. This will further open up north Southwark, and down to the Elephant and Castle beyond.

It will build on the sense of the Tate being both an international institution and part of its locality.

What about initiatives for local people? Absolutely. They’ll build on what we’ve done to date. The first dedicated role appointed to Tate Modern right at the beginning was a community officer who works with the local community to develop a sense of the museum being part of Southwark. We want to reinforce this theme through our programme and facilities, and by improving the public realm and landscape, for local residents and business.

What has been done so far? This patch of north Southwark was a forgotten quarter before we came. The power station was isolated, the riverside walkway under-used, and it was inaccessible, so on a basic physical level it has helped to open the river to Southwark, and to bring into public use an extraordinary part of central London that was unknown and derelict.

Secondly, there is huge local pride in having a great national institution on the doorstep.

And on a micro level, we were delighted this June to open the community garden, which the local community has been working on for nine years. It’s a wonderful place, which brings a different flavour to the landscape, and offers a place of refuge, contemplation and enjoyment. It’s a bit of space for the community to develop on its own terms. On the business front we’ve also been instrumental in setting up the Better Bankside business improvement district, which has made the difference in how that area of north Southwark is looked after. One of the things we’re really proud of is our place in the community.

Why did Tate Modern decide to come here in the first place? When I joined Tate 13 years ago, my first task was to research where we should build the Tate Gallery of Modern Art, as we were then calling it. We chose Bankside for the sense that the building itself was a marvellous opportunity for an architect to create a museum, and that here was a part of London that was mute and neglected and could be brought back into the public eye for the benefit of the local community, the museum, visitors and for London. Since then this part of the borough has seen amazing change, with the Globe theatre opening, the Millennium Bridge, the opening up of the river walkway...

What makes Southwark such a special place? The way it has developed but still retained its character. There’s Borough Market, the Clink, and the very distinctive street grain, intimate and fractured, which acts as a beautiful counterpoint to the rather grand experience of walking by the Thames.

It has a wonderful mix of spaces and mix of qualities.

What next for the Tate, and the borough? We want to continue to explore the potential of existing galleries while building the extension, and keep improving the public spaces. Through further involvement with Urban Spaces Trust (which worked on the community garden) and the BID we want to develop a language through which other developers and councils can improve the public realm in the immediate locality and further south towards the Elephant. It’s going to be great to see the Elephant and Castle being regenerated and for that triangle from London Bridge, Blackfriars, and down to the Elephant being developed over the next 10-15 years, building on what’s happened to date, without losing those special qualities: varieties of scale, street pattern, and huge variety of public and social places.

And for you? My dream is to retire to Southwark. It is a remarkable place. Being part of its rejuvenation is a great joy.
How do you educate children who know more about technology than their teachers? What skills will young people need to get their first jobs in the global economy? What kind of building will encourage them to learn, if, in a virtual world, we even need physical classrooms any more? Do the kids have to come in to school at set hours, or can they learn online at any time? These are just some of the questions teachers and Southwark Council are asking as they pursue one of the most ambitious educational projects ever undertaken in Britain.

Southwark is one of the first UK authorities to gain national funding to transform its secondary schools. Some work has already been done, such as the Charter School and Kingsdale Foundation School, both refurbished with national ‘quick win’ funding. But there are schools that haven’t received any funding for a while, and some of those are in some of the most deprived areas of the UK.

Fifteen of Southwark’s 21 wards are within the most deprived 10% in England, social exclusion and deprivation are affecting people from all racial and cultural backgrounds; and the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals in Southwark is 34%, compared to a national average of 16%.

Southwark Schools for the Future (SSF) will spend more than £220 million by 2014 to ensure its secondary schools can give the best possible education to Southwark’s children, and, they hope, end this deprivation. Good schools can both provide a way out of poverty, and encourage families to stay in the borough, triggering a trickle-down effect of stability, prosperity and opportunity for all. SSF will enable Southwark to give its young people a truly 21st-century learning experience.

Among the first of the 12 secondary schools to go ahead is St Michael’s RC School in Bermondsey, which will get a new building. Two brand-new schools are also planned for Rotherhithe and on the Aylesbury Estate — including an energy-efficient eco-school with a environmentally focused curriculum. The plan is for the first secondary schools to open in 2010, with the brand new schools opening in 2013.

SSF is not just about secondary schools: three primary schools are being rebuilt, and a number of academies and children’s centres are planned across the borough. Some schools will be refurbished, and some rebuilt, depending on how much work they need to give pupils a 21st century education. But there are hopes that some, like Tuke School, whose pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties (many cannot move around easily without help), will be given a new building on a new site, as part of a plan to improve the provision of special education in Southwark for the better.

Much thought is being given as to what sort of educational experience these refurbished and rebuilt schools should provide. Already decided is a spend of £11 million on ICT (information and communication technology) to give pupils the skills they’ll need for modern offices and modern jobs. Classrooms will be rebuilt or upgraded to provide flexible, even attractive, learning environments that teachers want to teach in and pupils want to learn in – no more ink-stained wooden desks and wintry corridors.

But while material improvements are a large part of the scheme, SSF is about more than just fixing leaking roofs. Just as important is what happens under them: the scheme will transform how teachers teach and learners learn, with every school to benefit.

Consultation is a major part of all this crystal-ball gazing, and there’s a real determination that internal changes within schools are as dramatic as the architects’ plans for the buildings. The programme is looking at what the learner of the future is going to be like and what they’re likely to need. Secondary school teachers have already started looking at ideas such as virtual teaching, pupils coming in at different times of the day, and a Southwark network of schools – anything that
Elephant and Castle

Schools for the future
Indoor Swimming Pool in College Vizcaya, Spain
offers pupils a better way to learn. Parents and the pupils themselves will also play important roles in working out what they want from their schools.

And it’s not just pupils who are expected to make use of these new facilities – it is hoped that they will also be a resource for the local community. Halls could be used for yoga or amateur dramatics, computing facilities will be made available for all, and at nights and weekends the schools can be turned over to local residents without compromising security.

So how is the council putting this grand plan into action? With some projects already complete, work is in progress on three primary schools, other children’s centres and some academies. The council will form a local education partnership (LEP) with a building consortium for the remaining secondary schools, to ensure the money is used efficiently and effectively, and that design quality isn’t compromised.

Sara Browning, Southwark Council’s project director of Southwark Schools for the Future, is pleased with progress. “Southwark has an exciting future ahead,” she says. “The council has embarked on one of the largest regeneration projects in Europe, which will transform the borough. Education has a vital role to play in providing safe and sustainable neighbourhoods, so we are building new and better schools for the young people of Southwark.

“We want Southwark to be a place where good quality education and children’s services support families and communities, who choose to live, work and learn here.

“The SSF programme is the biggest investment in Southwark schools for 50 years and all of our pupils are set to benefit enormously. Improving the physical environment of our schools and providing the most up-to-date technology and resources will make schools stimulating, safe and successful learning environments. This will give our students the best opportunity to study and learn and an education experience worthy of the 21st century.”

While education is obviously important for those up to 19 years old, and families with children, this level of investment in schools will help bring about social and economic change as never seen before. SSF promises to bring some amazing changes to the borough. And it looks like going back to school is going to get a whole lot more fun!
Coming up

In the next issue of Southwark we’ll be:

- Finding out about the latest housing renewal strategy
- Meeting more of the residents choosing to live in the borough’s regeneration areas
- Asking whether regeneration can be environmentally friendly
- Having a chat with Elephant and Castle’s commercial development partner
- Finding out more about Southwark as a business destination
- And, of course, providing an update on all of the major regeneration schemes.

Above
The Amelia Street redevelopment in Elephant & Castle
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