



London's Large-scale Offer Community Benefits

The Tate Modern Collection, housing modern and contemporary art, is connected to central London by the Millennium Bridge over the River Thames.

(L) Randy Gragg
(R) Etty Padmodipoetro

Randy Gragg

The sound of electricity hums deep inside the Tate Modern, the power plant turned art sanctuary on the south bank of London's River Thames. Despite the 4 million visitors per year now streaming inside since the galleries opened in 2000, the switching plant is still generating 2 megawatts of power for its neighborhood, making the Tate one of the most unusual mixed-use urban redevelopments ever concocted.

But an even more far-reaching hum is reverberating all around the Tate—that of regeneration. Connected to central London by the arching spine of Lord Norman Foster's Millennium Bridge and further magnetized by the whirling mega-folly of the London Eye Ferris wheel nearby, the Tate has catalyzed well over \$200 million worth of other redevelopments to the area. Yet, even as it joins other high-end arts institutions in the "Bilbao effect" of high art sparking higher-end gentrification, the Tate is working hard to nurture an economically and ethnically diverse live/work/play urban neighborhood.

"We've had impacts," says Donald Hyslop, head of education for the Tate and coordinator of its community initiatives. "We attract 4 million visitors a year, and 12 million now move between the Tate and the London Eye. The question for us became, 'How do we spread that wealth?'"

Such models of urban regeneration lured the 2006 Loeb Fellows from Harvard University's Graduate School of Design to London for their annual study trip abroad, cosponsored by the Lincoln Institute. Aided by Jody Tableporter's connections as the former director of regeneration for London Mayor Ken Livingston, the group gained a first-hand look at the leaps, stumbles, and lessons to be learned from one of the world's most rapidly redeveloping cities.

"London has proven the relationship between transportation planning and economic growth," observed Luis Siqueiros, a planner who has worked in Juarez/El Paso, Guadalajara, and other Mexican cities. "They are mixing all kinds of activities together in their buildings. In North America, we talk about these things a lot, but they are showing us how to do it and why."

The Beginnings of London's Regeneration

The story of London's regeneration is long and complicated. It begins in the Thatcher years with a bold refocusing of government aid to cities that created urban redevelopment agencies and enterprise zones to assemble land and better focus new development and transportation infrastructure projects. The most conspicuous early success was Canary Wharf, the sleek, steel-and-glass commercial new town that became the first major project in the Royal Docklands, and in the Thatcher government's vision for a larger, regional corridor of redevelopment, dubbed the Thames Gateway, stretching all the way to the North Sea.

Despite the misfortunes of Canary Wharf's original developer, Olympia & York, the larger

While Margaret Thatcher's free-market programs—particularly the release of huge tracts of government-owned land for redevelopment—broke a long freeze on urban redevelopment, subsequent Labor Party policies have guided recent successes. In the 1980s, forecasts of 4 million new households by 2020 led John Major's government to create the Urban Task Force overseen by architect Richard Rogers. The resulting 2000 Urban White Paper made urban renaissance official national policy.

The reverberations have been widespread, stretching from Leeds to Norwich, but the epicenter is London. Projects like Canary Wharf and the Tate established momentum that gained further steam with the city's election of its first mayor,

The Royal Victoria Dock Bridge provides access to the Silver-town Quays in the Royal Docklands redevelopment area.

Etty Padmodipoetro

The red circled C painted on the street indicates an area subject to congestion pricing.

Etty Padmodipoetro

Regeneration Projects



Docklands redevelopment agency and enterprise zone resulted in the Jubilee Line tube extension and the first phase of the Docklands light rail line. Today, with more than 100,000 workers, Canary Wharf is competing with downtown London to be the center of the financial services sector, decidedly shifting the momentum of the city's growth to the east.



Ken Livingston, to set policy for the metropolitan region's 24 boroughs. Livingston has unleashed a panoply of internationally attention-getting initiatives, from the much-lauded "congestion pricing" of automobiles traveling into the core to a series of bold, new buildings and public spaces by top-rung architects like Rogers and Norman Foster. Now, with the Olympics scheduled for 2012,

London has succeeded Barcelona as the “It girl” of European cities, while luring other English cities onto the dance floor.

“Having an architect like Richard Rogers involved in the destiny of cities was a major force,” Tableporter says. “His work with the Urban White Paper spawned a whole batch of English cities that all of a sudden are attuned to design standards and urban principles via master planning.”

But for all the excitement and the dozens of major projects underway, the Loeb Fellows agreed that London's growth will live or die in the details. As Jair Lynch, a developer from Washington, DC, put it, “The question is, can they give these new places soul.”

Guiding Land Use Principles

While far more modest than some of the huge redevelopments that have been and are being completed, the Tate Modern offered the kind of careful instrumentality that attracted the Loeb Fellows, by both seeding major new development in the long-dormant south bank and spreading the benefits to the existing community.

Under Hyslop's guidance, the Tate joined a national pilot program to create one of England's first Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). This initiative developed an employment training program called START, helping to bring more than 40 percent of the museum's employees from the nearby, and historically downtrodden, South London districts. It started a new community group now boasting 450 members who wanted more open space, meeting places, and a movie theater. Their efforts moved the Tate to open up rooms for public use, develop a community garden, and host a new neighborhood film club.

“The Tate is trying to create a dual function for an arts institution,” noted Lisa Richmond. A long-time arts administrator and activist who has worked on community development projects for the Atlanta Olympics and the Seattle Arts Commission, Richmond says most major U.S. cultural institutions focus solely on audience development. “On the one hand, the Tate has a major global impact, representing the U.K. to the world, but it is also taking responsibility for its immediate community,” she observed. “I don't know of any U.S. arts institution trying anything like it.”

By combining a major attraction, top-notch architecture, public space, and transportation infrastructure, the Tate became an early standard

setter. But, it is rapidly gaining many potential equals, from the centrally located King's Cross, where a new Channel Tunnel station designed by Norman Foster is triggering a 50-acre redevelopment with 1,800 new homes plus retail and commercial uses, to the outlying Wembley Stadium, the building and master plan designed by Rogers, including a plaza and grand boulevard lined with shops, bars, and restaurants, as well as 4,200 homes.

The primacy of the pedestrian is another common denominator. With Michael Jones, a director at Foster and Partners, the Loeb Fellows toured the newly renovated British Museum. There, the breathtaking glass roof—gently domed in a Fibonacci sequence of diamond-patterned steel structure—covering the 2½-acre Queen Elizabeth II courtyard has garnered all the headlines. But the restoration of the museum's forecourt—ripped out in the 1960s for a road—has transformed the area into a new magnet for lunching, lounging, and strolling tourists and locals alike.

Nearby, Jones pointed out the similarly transformed Trafalgar Square. This traffic-choked cameo player has set the scene of “busy London” in so many movies. But it is now costarring in Livingston's remake of the city through a “World Squares for All” campaign that will link Trafalgar with Westminster Abbey and Parliament Square as a major pedestrian corridor.

“For too long London's public realm has been neglected and ignored,” Livingston said in a 2005 speech, as he unveiled plans to build 100 new public spaces for the Olympics. “Now we have an opportunity to get things right by rebalancing the spaces of the city for people and cars. I believe that the street is the lifeblood of city life.”

The Loeb Fellows also saw some of the method behind Livingston's Midas touch in the work of Space Syntax, a dynamic new studio pioneering techniques of measuring and shaping traffic—both on wheels and on foot. Growing out of research at University College London by Professor Bill Hillier in the 1970s, and now a four-year-old company with offices in Sydney, Tokyo, Brussels, and South Africa, Space Syntax has developed new software to algorithmically model impacts on congestion and movement. It is based on a simple principle: people's urge to take the shortest route.

In early studies of the potential impact of the Millennium Bridge, for instance, the city's planners guessed it would be crossed by 2 million pedestrians annually. Space Syntax's formulas predicted at



least 4.4 million, but already more than 9 million are crossing the bridge each year. Jones added that similar studies eased planners' minds about the benefits and impacts of removing streets at the British Museum and Trafalgar Square.

"Space Syntax is using the traffic engineer's language for the urban designer's goals," noted Ety Padmodipoetro, a Boston urban designer who designed several key open spaces for the Big Dig highway project. "In the United States, we could learn a lot from how they have harvested academic research for use in the profession."

Challenges to Redevelopment Goals

Such innovations, however, only mitigate some of the risks in London's bold experiments in regeneration. So far, London's greatest successes have been catalytic projects within the existing city fabric that humanize the public realm while generating new developments that attract new residents and jobs. On the horizon are dozens of larger-scale projects that will determine whether London's mastery of regeneration is a moment or an era. Some are widely considered to be mirages, like the Battersea Power Station, where an all-star cast of designers—Cecil Balmond, Nicholas Grimshaw, Ron Arad, and Kathryn Gustafson among them—has teamed up for a Tate-like power station to arts remodel as part of a proposed \$1.5 billion transformation of 40 acres into hotels, offices, retail spaces, and flats. But other projects, like the soon-to-break-ground Silvertown Quays, teeter precariously in the gusts of London's transformation.

Land Ownership

As the Loeb Fellows learned from Timothy Britain-Catlin, a historian and lecturer at the Architectural Association, enormous swaths of London's land base are owned by a small number of families who first gained control when King Henry VIII abolished church land ownership, handing the land over to his cronies whose descendants, like the Duke of Marlborough, still control it. In short, most of central London's land is leased rather than sold. Most of these areas are also protected under the city's strict historic preservation policies. With Livingston's hopes of building 120,000 new units of housing in the next 10 years, the success of projects like Silvertown Quays—outside the core, on government-owned land less bound by historic codes and neighborhood NIMBYs—is essential.

Partnering with the Government

But "developing in London is not for the faint-hearted," even in partnership with the government, according to James Alexander of KUD International, the company codeveloping Silvertown Quays. Borrowing a page from its successful playbook in the United States, in which it has partnered with local governments to build aquariums and stadiums, KUD is working with the Docklands Redevelopment Agency to transform the now largely empty 60-acre Quays site. At the center will be the Terry Farrell-designed Biota!, Europe's largest aquarium, along with 5,000 units of housing, 420,000 square meters of commercial space, and 73,000 square meters of retail and leisure facilities.

"Shared streets" is the term used for redesigned streets to accommodate vehicles and people on differently textured and marked surfaces.

Ety Padmodipoetro

The Loeb Fellows got a behind-the-scenes tour of the refurbishment of Royal Festival Hall in the South Bank Centre.

Armando Carbonell

Mixed-use development is new to KUD, better known as a horizontal developer that leverages land values with large-scale infrastructure. But KUD's techniques are new to London: sharing equity with the redevelopment agency and offering a guaranteed delivery price for infrastructure and the aquarium. Even in partnership with the agency, according to

Alexander, getting to a final deal has taken four years—tracing deeds, completing archeological surveys, dealing with watchdog groups, and hopping other regulatory hurdles, not to mention negotiating against Livingston's demand for 50-percent social housing (talked down to 30 percent).

KUD's Alexander was candid about the firm's worries. It will be betting \$250 million up front on reclaiming the land and building the aquarium with no profit projected for seven years. The affordable housing goals remain aggressive, particularly with no guarantee that government grants, estimated at \$20,000 per unit in the development agreement, will come through. Project delivery also will converge with the Olympics, which is guaranteed to trigger construction inflation and capacity issues. And, with many developers following the current boom and the government's housing goals, Alexander adds, "an equal challenge will be to maintain value over time as the market inevitably drops off."

Volatile Housing Markets

Indeed, with more than 90 percent of new housing permits in London's pipeline designated for flats, a recent study, "New London," by Knight Frank estate agency predicted a softening market for flats, signs of which are already appearing. More critical, the study suggested, is an already failing market for flats in other, less robust English housing markets that have followed the London model.

Citing a range of studies showing the dramatic tilt nationwide to brownfield/flat development over greenfield/single-family houses, historian Peter Hall also expressed concern in a recent paper presented at a Lincoln Institute conference that government and private developers are failing to meet a critical market for workforce housing, particularly single-family houses for young families. Several Loeb Fellows worried about the continued focus on large-scale, Bilbao-style attractors like Biota!. "The Tate's BID model seemed potentially ground-breaking," Lisa Richmond reflected, "while the aquarium (at Silvertown Quays) felt like a disaster in the making."

Ambitious Plans for Olympic Village

On the 23rd floor of Barclay's building overlooking the sleek Canary Wharf development and the future Olympic Village beyond, Tim Daniels of the London Olympic Delivery Authority offered the Loeb Fellows an overview of what will be



Loeb Fellows, 2005–2006

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London's most ambitious attempt at regeneration. The Olympic Village dates to the Thatcher government's launch of the Thames Gateway corridor, but it is finally sprouting under Livingston's mix of go-go capitalism with a larger social agenda.

Livingston cannily separated the usual single Olympic authority into two separate agencies—one for building facilities, the other for marketing. Consequently, London is keeping one eye on the long game of what Daniels calls the “regeneration dividend.” In the short term, a new velodrome, stadium, tennis center, and the much-anticipated aquatics center by architect Zaha Hadid, along with a major new Euroline transit hub ushering in visitors from all over Europe, will anchor what will be the first village to fully integrate athletes' housing with sports facilities. The goal, Daniels says, is to have more than 50 percent of the participants within walking distance. But long after the Olympic Games close, those facilities will anchor a mixed-use neighborhood in which the bedrooms originally built for 23,000 athletes and support staff will become 4,300 units of family housing.

Numerous speed bumps lie ahead, however, ranging from the tough deals still being negotiated for land assembly with owners looking to cash in, to finding new homes for “travelers”—gypsies who under British law have the right to squat on unused land. More than 6 kilometers of rivers and canals need to be dredged and remodeled, and 40 bridges either refurbished or built anew. Since the village site is cut off from any existing neighborhood by a major freeway and rail line, at least two major 50-meter “land bridges” are being proposed to make the awkward link to nearby Stratford.

But challenges aside, “it's a great way to look at the Olympics,” noted Jair Lynch, a developer and former Olympic medalist who now sits on the U.S. Olympic Committee. “The whole thing can be taken over by the marketing people, but by splitting the authority, they can keep a strong focus beyond the event.” He and other Loeb Fellows concluded that the key for the village, along with all of London's increasingly larger, bolder efforts at regeneration, will be keeping—and, in many cases, creating—a sense of local connection. As Lynch put it, “How do you create a real sense of neighborhood at those scales?”

Closing Observations

At the end of our study tour, most Loeb Fellows felt that Donald Hyslop of the Tate Modern



offered the clearest, most hopeful, and most far-reaching aspirations for London's bold, new brand of large-scale urban neighborhood building. With architects Herzog & de Meuron adding on to their celebrated first phase with an eye-catching, high-rise annex, the Tate will move out the electrical switching station and reclaim the huge, decommissioned fuel tanks beneath the building for a new 400-seat theater, more restaurants and shops, and more spaces for flexible programming.

Hyslop says the goal will be to develop a “life-long learning center” spawning a “16-hour-a-day” corridor along the 15-minute walk between the Tate and the rapidly regenerating Elephant & Castle neighborhood. Rather than being merely a catalyst for development, the Tate hopes to be an active agent in creating a neighborhood—a transformer, if you will, rechanneling financial and social wealth throughout the community. **L**

The Hungerford Bridge features both pedestrian and rail access between Charing Cross Station and the South Bank Centre.

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