

In *Urbanizing Suburbia*, edited by Tahl Kaminer, Leonard Ma and Helen Runting, 212-235. Berlin: Jovis [2023]

FROM INCLUSIVE LEGACY PROMISES TO EXCLUSIVE REALITIES: Planning, Design and Displacement in Post-Olympic East London

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INTRODUCTION

A link between the production of the elaborate stages and infrastructures required by megaevents and the displacement of the existing residents of their sites has been firmly established in the field of Urban studies. Much of the related literature presents this as the outcome of the application of neo-liberal strategies aimed at attracting private capital and market-oriented development as the means to transform de-valued and/or low-income urban areas, often involving the forced relocation of existing communities.² Much of it, however, focusses on a key period: typically, when cities prepare to host megaevents, when state-led displacements, forced evictions and demolitions pave the way for spectacular parklands and venues. There is a relative dearth of literature on displacements associated with legacy planning, design, and development in and around megaevent sites in the years after particular Games. Further, the focus of analysis has been almost exclusively on displacement associated with housing, with a more limited focus on employment and no focus on the intersections between any housing and employment-related displacement.

These lacunae in current research are addressed in this chapter, which depicts the analysis arising from longitudinal research into displacements and replacements connected to the development of London's 2012 Olympic Games and its planned 'regeneration legacy' from 2005 to 2022. We utilise the dual lenses of displacement and replacement to illuminate a process of restructuring that enabled not only the displacement of low-income residents living in affordable housing and unskilled and semi-skilled workers employed in traditional manufacturing jobs prior to the Games but also their replacement with mainly

¹ Davis is listed first to acknowledge a lead role in writing this chapter. However, the division of labour in research and editing has been 50:50.

² As key examples worldwide, see: Raquel Rolnik, *Urban Warfare: Housing Under the Empire of Finance* (London: Verso, 2019); Jules Boykoff, *Celebration Capitalism and the Olympic Games* (London: Routledge, 2014); Andrew Zimbalist, *Rio 2016 : Olympic Myths, Hard Realities* (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 2017); Adam Elliott-Cooper, Phil Hubbard, and Loretta Lees, "Moving beyond Marcuse: Gentrification, displacement and the violence of un-homing," *Progress in Human Geography* 44, no. 3 (2020): 492–509, DOI: 10.1177/0309132519830511; Gabriel Silvestre and Nelma Gusmão de Oliveira, "The revanchist logic of mega-events: community displacement in Rio de Janeiro's West End," *Visual Studies*, 27 no. 2 (2012): 204-210, DOI: 10.1080/1472586X.2012.677506; Claudio M. Rocha and Zixuan Xiao, "Sport Mega-Events and Displacement of Host Community Residents: A Systematic Review," *Front Sports Act Living* 7 no. 3 (2022) DOI: 10.3389/fspor.2021.805567.

In *Urbanizing Suburbia*, edited by Tahl Kaminer, Leonard Ma and Helen Runting, 212-235. Berlin: Jovis [2023]

market housing and employment opportunities targeted at professional groups from outside of the area in the post-Games period. This has occurred despite a clear and laudable policy commitment to regenerate ‘an entire community for the direct benefit of everyone that lives there.’³ We argue that these changes have been enabled by a set of policy assumptions, planning policies and urban designs that have enabled a process of gentrification to unfold in the context of Olympic legacy development. We argue that focusing on housing and employment together is crucial given not only the existence of important historical connections between traditional manufacturing jobs and low-income residents in east London but that both have been the focus of regeneration plans for a post-industrial east London since the days of the Olympic bid.

Through the chapter, we will reveal displacement as a process unfolding through three main stages in the planned urban transformations with which London’s Olympic Park (hereafter, the Park) has been associated. Through our analysis, we draw on the concepts of displacement first established by Peter Marcuse to characterise different forms of displacement involving different interactions between the state and markets, along with insights from gentrification studies.⁴ First, we show, is the period between 2005 and 2007 when ‘direct displacement’ emerged as a feature of land assembly and a planning process predicated on tabula rasa redevelopment. Second is a period between 2007 and 2012 when indirect ‘exclusionary displacement’ processes became embedded in regeneration plans and policies. The third stage extends from 2016 to 2022 denoting the gradual materialisation of legacy development and the emergence of major issues of affordability that are the outcome of a combination of regeneration plans, policies and market forces that exacerbate exclusionary displacement dynamics and shape patterns of population change.

DISPLACEMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT, 2005-7 – NEW OPPORTUNITIES OR JUST A FAMILIAR TALE OF EVICTION?

In 2004, the site designated for the 2012 Games in London’s Lower Lea Valley was largely an employment zone at the cusp of four London Boroughs (Figure 1). Across its 266 hectares, 284 businesses were accommodated, largely SMEs, employing in the order of 5,000 people within a total floor space estimated at around 330,000 sqm.⁵ Businesses, without exception, fell into commercial and industrial categories of use as defined by the

³ London 2012, London Olympics Candidature File, Volume 1 (London: London 2012, 2004).

⁴ Peter Marcuse, "Gentrification, Abandonment, and Displacement: Connections, Causes, and Policy Responses in New York City," *Journal of Urban and Contemporary Law* 195 (1985).

⁵ London Development Agency, *Relocation Strategy: Lower Lea Valley Olympic and Legacy Planning Applications (Appendix 6 to the Environment Statement)*, London Development Agency (London, 2004), 4.

Post-print book chapter

In *Urbanizing Suburbia*, edited by Tahl Kaminer, Leonard Ma and Helen Runting, 212-235. Berlin: Jovis [2023]

1987 Town and Country Planning Order - B1c (Business: light Industrial), B2 (General Industrial) and B8 (Distribution or Storage). Viewed at a finer scale of resolution, these use categories comprised a rich mix including manufacturers of clothing and textiles, food, theatre sets, furniture, glass, concrete, and metal fabrication. There were also waste management and recycling firms, printers, motor vehicle repairers and second-hand vehicle parts merchants, bus depots and garages and wholesale suppliers of foods from all over the world.⁶

[Insert Figure 1: The Olympic site in the Lower Lea Valley (note the pale grey describes the Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area which the site, in dark grey, formed part of)]

These activities were and remain important to many different aspects of London's life and metabolism — from its waste removal to its markets for fine food, its international restaurants, and its cultural industries. The origins of their concentration in the Lea Valley lies, however, in the 19th century when the area, which is close to London's docks, industrialised. Between the nineteenth century and 2005, the profile of industries evolved continually, the fortunes of firms affected by changing commodity markets and manufacturing processes as well as by broad geo-political forces. Reflecting this churn, most of the firms active on the site in 2005 had arrived from the early 1990s onwards. They reflected the diversity and, to an extent, the regeneration, of East London's manufacturing base in the wake of the decline of earlier industries.⁷ They relied on the relative cheapness (by London standards) yet centrality of the site, with tenants paying in the order of £5 per square foot per annum for basic industrial premises and investors benefiting from industrial land values (one eighth of residential). The employment opportunities which they provided were, typically, for unskilled and semi-skilled workers.

There is a clear historical relationship between local employment and housing in the Lower Lea Valley, with typically private though working-class housing springing up along the fringes of the Lea Valley concurrently with industrialisation. The Olympic site itself had little housing before the 1960s though, largely owing to unfavourable ground conditions, flood risk and the proximity of industry. In the 1960s, the Carpenters Estate adjacent to the site,

⁶ Marion Davies, Juliet Davis, and Debra Rapp, *Dispersal: Picturing Urban Change in East London* (Swindon: Historic England Publishing, 2017).

⁷ Gavin Poynter, "Manufacturing in East London," in *Rising in the East: The Regeneration of East London*, ed. Tim Butler and M Rustin (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1996).

Post-print book chapter

In *Urbanizing Suburbia*, edited by Tahl Kaminer, Leonard Ma and Helen Runting, 212-235. Berlin: Jovis [2023]

was built to ensure a supply of high- quality low-cost housing for those working in manufacturing industries in the area at that time.

Lower land values within the site, which lies at several borough boundaries, by comparison to residential areas and borough centres meant that, by 2005 there was an eclectic mix of residential land uses on the site, providing an opportunity for low-cost housing in a city that was becoming increasingly becoming unaffordable. This included student accommodation and two permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites. One Travellers site was based in Hackney and was home to 20 Irish Traveller Families who had lived there since 1993 and the other site was based in Newham, where 15 English Romany Families had lived since 1972. The site also included Europe's second largest housing cooperative. Clays Lane Housing Cooperative was designed and developed in 1984 to provided 452 tenancies for single people. Housing here was genuinely affordable with rents set at around £200.00 per calendar month. There were longstanding residents living there in 2005 and the area was imbued with a strong sense of community.⁸

The direct displacement of these businesses and residents to make way for the Games was led by the London Development Agency through a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) aligned to a comprehensive redevelopment strategy. The aim was, not just to free up land for a suite of sporting venues, but to more radically reorder land uses in east London, closing the 'edgy' seam which the Lea Valley formed between inner and outer East London with high-density, mixed-use development and relegating industry, seen as incompatible with housing and no longer as a route to local prosperity, closer to the periphery of Greater London.⁹ These activities were viewed by LDA leaders and by the GLA as imperative for the site to 'realise its full regeneration potential', offering many more employment opportunities as well as homes and high-quality amenities in the future.¹⁰

And yet, numerous commentators documenting the compulsory purchase process noted the overlap between London's relocation strategy and the aggressive displacements and sometimes violent 'un-homing' of working-class and/or precarious populations observed in other mega event host cities.¹¹ These, after all, have often focussed on poor and deprived areas, using these as a justification for radical, top-down intervention. Key observations included that this state-led direct displacement process was underpinned by a

⁸ Libby Porter et al., "Planning displacement: The real legacy of major sporting events," *Planning Theory & Practice* 10, no. 3 (2009).

⁹ Oliver Pohlisch, "Edgelands and London 2012: The Case of the Lower Lea Valley," in *The London Olympics and Urban Development: The Mega-Event City*, ed. Gavin Poynter, Valerie Viehoff, and Yang Li (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015).

¹⁰ London Development Agency, *Relocation Strategy: Lower Lea Valley Olympic and Legacy Planning Applications (Appendix 6 to the Environment Statement)* (London: London Development Agency, 2004).

¹¹ Elliott-Cooper, Hubbard, and Lees, "Moving beyond Marcuse: Gentrification, displacement and the violence of un-homing.,"; Boykoff, *Celebration Capitalism and the Olympic Games*.

Post-print book chapter

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‘wasteland’ narrative that served within official accounts of regeneration benefits and promises to conceal or ignore the true variety of SMEs occupying the site, the attachment to place and dependency on the warmth and care that residents experienced in their communities and other qualities of the site.¹² Also noted were: the lack of opportunity for landowning stakeholders to participate in the process and benefit from an uplift in values connected to planning for mixed-use development, and the tendency of officials to refer to the process as a negotiated relocation where many occupants experienced it as eviction.¹³ Questions were raised about the feasibility of moving such a large number of firms and the potential knock-on consequences for rental values, though the LDA had insisted that ‘similar premises at similar rents/values could be found elsewhere’ within industrially-designated land in East London.¹⁴ The relocation process, further, was far from straightforward resulting in adverse consequences for both residents and employers, who were forced to make compromised decisions within an accelerated timeframe because of the need to clear the site.¹⁵ A significant consequence of this was that some firms were not able to recover, closing shortly after moving. In turn, though many residents were satisfactorily resettled, the aspirations of a significant proportion who expressed a desire to retain the cooperative element and move as a group was not realised, housing costs increased and an important source of community led housing was lost.¹⁶

IMAGINING THE LANDSCAPE OF CHANGE – AN EMERGING URBAN TOPOGRAPHY OF REPLACEMENT, 2008-2012

We now turn to explore the evolution and key principles underpinning plans for replacement housing and employment on the Park in the post-Games period. This evolution begins with the earliest masterplans for the Games at the time of the Bid in 2003-4. These established the key spatial principles of an Olympic Park that would transform after the Games into a set of compact urban neighbourhoods gathered around a grand public space. However, it was the Legacy Masterplan Framework (LMF), launched in 2008, just as the

¹² Mike Raco and Emma Tunney, “Visibilities and Invisibilities in Urban Development: Small Business Communities and the London Olympics 2012,” *Urban Studies*, 47, no. 10 (2009): 2069–2091, DOI:[10.1177/0042098009357351](https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098009357351); Penny Bernstock, *Olympic Housing: A Critical Review of London 2012's Legacy* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014).

¹³ Davies, Davis, and Rapp, *Dispersal: Picturing Urban Change in East London*. Paul Watt, "This pain of moving, moving, moving:" evictions, displacement and logics of expulsion in London," *L'Année sociologique* 68 (2018).

¹⁴ London Development Agency, *Relocation Strategy: Lower Lea Valley Olympic and Legacy Planning Applications* (Appendix 6 to the Environment Statement).

¹⁵ Penny Bernstock, *Olympic Housing: A Critical Review of London 2012's Legacy*. Davies, Davis, and Rapp, *Dispersal: Picturing Urban Change in East London*. Paul Watt, "This pain of moving, moving, moving:" evictions, displacement and logics of expulsion in London"

¹⁶ Porter et al., "Planning displacement: The real legacy of major sporting events."

In *Urbanizing Suburbia*, edited by Tahl Kaminer, Leonard Ma and Helen Runting, 212-235. Berlin: Jovis [2023]

relocation of former occupants was completing, that established a range and balance of land-uses, densities and tenures in detail, describing in the process the objectives and goals underpinning these strategies in terms of regeneration. The LMF included detailed spatial proposals for six neighbourhoods and a socio-economic strategy for housing, employment and social infrastructure that drew on a wide array of data including legacy promises, planning and housing policies, population surveys and analyses of deprivation.

It responded to 'five legacy promises' formulated by London Mayor Ken Livingstone, which established the goals of providing a significant uplift in housing and employment opportunities through the site's transformation.¹⁷ It also responded to the London Plan 2004, which set out an aspiration of 50 per cent affordable housing on all new developments. Thus, 'around 9000' homes within the site boundaries were to be accommodated, 35-50 per cent of which would be 'affordable' (with a 60 per cent social rented: 40 per cent intermediate housing split), significantly more than the site had previously accommodated. In turn, 9,400 employment opportunities were anticipated, almost doubling pre-2007 on-site jobs.¹⁸

All development would be clustered within mixed-use, mixed tenure neighbourhoods, aiming to transform a sense of containment and isolation characterising earlier settlement. Low-density development (the site's old one-two storey industrial units) and its populations of low-income residents and industrial workers would be replaced by the sort of compact, walkable, mixed-tenure urbanism that was idealised as the essence of sustainability in the context of the Labour government's 'Urban Renaissance' agenda.¹⁹

The LMF was to be short lived, however. With Livingstone replaced at the end of 2008 by Boris Johnson as the new Conservative Mayor of London and a new Conservative Government in Westminster in 2010, the masterplan was relaunched as the Legacy Communities Scheme (LCS) under the new leadership of a development corporation in place of the LDA. Targets for both anticipated homes and employment opportunities within the planned new neighbourhoods were slashed in 2011. Thus, the LCS anticipated 'around 6,400' homes in total in five new neighbourhoods with affordable housing targets set as 35 per cent (subject to viability and now with an established minimum of 20 per cent affordability across the site and a split of just 30 per cent social rented: 40 per cent intermediate: 30 per cent in what was then the newly introduced 'affordable rent' category that linked rental costs to market values rather than incomes. 8,000 jobs were now

¹⁷ Mayor of London, *Five Legacy Commitments* (London: Greater London Authority, 2008).

¹⁸ London Development Agency, *The Legacy Masterplan Framework [Output C]* (London: London Development Agency, 2009).

¹⁹ Claire Colomb, "Unpacking New Labour's 'Urban Renaissance' agenda: Towards a Socially Sustainable Reurbanization of British Cities?," *Planning Practice & Research* 22, no. 1 (2007): 1-24, DOI:10.1080/02697450701455249

In *Urbanizing Suburbia*, edited by Tahl Kaminer, Leonard Ma and Helen Runting, 212-235. Berlin: Jovis [2023]

anticipated to replace the 5,300 lost. The declining commitment to affordable housing was motivated by four factors that included austerity, the need to repay public debts and maximise land value and an ongoing belief that the legacy boroughs needed more private housing to balance out the historic predominance of social housing at the fringes of the Park, and a new predilection stemming from the new Mayor for less high density, less 'European' models of urban form.²⁰ This said, a focus on clustered development, the formation of five neighbourhoods, mixed-use urban form integrating housing and employment uses in a variety of ways and the idea of sustainable walkability between different land uses persisted as urban design principles in the LCS (Figure 2).

[Insert Figure 2: Legacy Communities]

The anticipated profile of replacement employment uses also remained constant between the LMF and LCS. While on the one hand employment strategies articulate the aim to cultivate a diverse a range of economic sectors to align at least some of the future job opportunities with legacy borough resident populations' skillsets and qualifications, the overall direction marks a dramatic shift in the balance of employment uses from a predominance of light industry, manufacturing, transport and storage (use classes B1c/ B2/ B8) to employment in such areas as retail, 'banking, finance and insurance' and 'public administration, education and health' (which are Planning use-classes A2-B1a/b). These are seen as higher-value jobs associated with higher levels of prosperity.²¹ This range of jobs would clearly relate to a diversity of incomes, raising questions of the possible correspondence between workers' incomes and residential inhabitants of the Park.

A sense of inevitability is communicated by the plans; they read as rational responses to an inexorable shift in the pattern of London's post-industrial economic transformation to become a global city centred on professional and financial services. It is notably a shift from blue-collar jobs to white collar ones, suggesting an overall reduction in the sorts of opportunities that would have been available to working-class people living in either social or affordable market housing in the legacy boroughs and an accompanying escalation in demand for middle-class populations with advanced qualifications. It may be assumed that, to the extent that it would be an incoming population to whom new employment opportunities were made available, it would be to these groups that the new market housing would appeal. For existing local populations characterised by lower levels of skill

²⁰ Juliet Davis, "Futurescapes of urban regeneration: ten years of design for the unfolding urban legacy of London's Olympic Games, 2008–2018," *Planning Perspectives* 34, no. 5 (2019).

²¹ See, for example: London Development Agency, *The Legacy Masterplan Framework [Output C]* 249, 50.

Post-print book chapter

In *Urbanizing Suburbia*, edited by Tahl Kaminer, Leonard Ma and Helen Runting, 212-235. Berlin: Jovis [2023]

and pay, the LCS highlights the importance of education infrastructure within the Park to 'reduce disadvantage and to enable residents to access both work and better-paid work' and to ensure that young people resident in the legacy boroughs are able to access aspirational jobs on the Park.²² However, the prospect issues of housing affordability raises questions of given the dependence of low-income families on affordable housing within the catchment areas of the new schools. In addition, of course, what is implied in the plans is re-skilling over a generation rather than in the timeframe of redeveloping (and replacing all the users of) the Olympic Park.

The kinds of urban forms, approaches to tenure, social mix and employment strategies outlined here have all been associated with processes and theories of gentrification and displacement. The compact, walkable urbanism first emerging under the progressive banner of the 'Urban Renaissance' has been seen to constitute a 'gentrification aesthetic'²³ of new-build architecture on brownfield sites as well as a symbol of the re-colonisation of the inner city by the middle classes in the wake of their post-War flight to suburbia, and consequent direct/ indirect displacement of lower-income groups.²⁴ If anything, in the LCS, this symbolism becomes more pronounced than in the LMF, with neighbourhood forms designed to emulate, through designerly visualisations, the mixed-use topography of elite neighbourhoods such as Mayfair and Belgravia. The aesthetic is also associated with indirect 'exclusionary displacement' as it is aimed at generating the desirability that would lead real estate values to rise.

The strategy of creating mixed communities promoted by planners and policymakers as a vehicle for increasing the life chances of the deprived tenants of social housing, and/or of creating chances for low-income residents to live in desirable areas has been questioned by academic commentators as a form of 'gentrification by stealth' that leads progressively to displacement.²⁵ For some scholars such as Chris Hamnett, London's changing economy can but need not necessarily involve displacement if people themselves are able to gain new skills and adapt to suit emerging employment opportunities.²⁶ However, plans to promote white-collar jobs and higher-value employment uses generally have, in recent times, come to be seen as a distinctively, workspace-related form of gentrification, often resulting in

²² Olympic Park Legacy Company, *Legacy Communities Scheme: Employment Statement*, Olympic Park Legacy Company (London, 2011).

²³ Mark Davidson and Loretta Lees, "New-Build 'Gentrification' and London's Riverside Renaissance," *Environment and Planning A* 37, no. 7 (2005): 1169-70.

²⁴ Chris Hamnett, *Unequal City: London in the Global Arena* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2003): 179.

²⁵ Gary Bridge, Tim Butler, and Loretta Lees, eds., *Mixed Communities: Gentrification By Stealth?* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2012).

²⁶ Hamnett, *Unequal City: London in the Global Arena*.

In *Urbanizing Suburbia*, edited by Tahl Kaminer, Leonard Ma and Helen Runting, 212-235. Berlin: Jovis [2023]

direct and indirect forms of small business displacement.²⁷ In the upcoming section, we looking in detail at how replacement dynamics have actually unfolded through the materialisation of legacy since 2012 and the extent to which displacement has continued to be part of them.

REALITIES OF REPLACEMENT, 2012-2022

At the time of writing, large swathes of the Olympic legacy communities anticipated by plans in the period 2004-2012 have been realised. As of June 2022, almost exactly ten years after the Olympic Games, the first neighbourhood to develop, Chobham Manor (see location in Figure 2), is close to completion. Neighbourhoods named as East Wick and Sweetwater are part complete (including the Here East complex which is a focus for industry and education), with phases 2 and 3 in development and planning permission granted for Phases 4 and 5. Plans for the Pudding Mill neighbourhood are advanced, with a contractor selected, and Stratford Waterfront is on site. Also complete are the transformations of the parklands and retained sporting venues from the Games into local, everyday amenities. Urban designs for each neighbourhood have been developed within the parameters established by the LCS (which was awarded outline planning permission in 2012), with each neighbourhood or planning delivery zone becoming the focus of a new zonal masterplan which was required to demonstrate compliance with it in development. In this section, we consider replacement largely by recourse to the following forms of data: planning and urban design strategies, official monitoring and performance reports, and some broader data around costs and property values.

Part of the planning process since 2012 has been the creation of new planning policy by the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) which was incorporated as a planning authority at its establishment. In 2012, again, the LLDC produced its first 'Local Plan' which established strategic policies for land in the Olympic Park – the area covered by the LCS – but also for larger expanses of Olympic fringe territory. The most recent 'Local Plan' was produced in 2020.

Apparent from this is that the idea of creating dense, mixed-use, mixed-tenure neighbourhoods has survived from the earliest masterplans to delivery, with walkable proximity between 'Live' and Work' at the heart of the LLDC's vision of sustainable place

²⁷ Jessica Ferm, "Preventing the displacement of small businesses through commercial gentrification: are affordable workspace policies the solution?," *Planning Practice & Research* 31, no. 4 (2016): 402-419, DOI: 10.1080/02697459.2016.1198546

In *Urbanizing Suburbia*, edited by Tahl Kaminer, Leonard Ma and Helen Runting, 212-235. Berlin: Jovis [2023]

and communities.²⁸ The Park is positioned in the Local Plan 2020 as a magnet for ‘high quality businesses and employers’ offering ‘quality jobs,’ as an exciting centre of ‘cross-sector innovation’ and as a dynamic focus for the economic growth required in east London to advance prosperity. High-quality jobs across a range of leading-edge sectors of the economy have remained the vision for replacing those older jobs linked to deprivation, supposedly outmoded industry, and low skill at the turn of the millennium.

Looking at this at a finer scale of resolution, while the neighbourhoods are all planned to be highly mixed, different amounts and proportions of various land uses are included in each, the aim being to mould subtly distinct characters of place. The LCS neighbourhoods as a whole look set to deliver less housing than anticipated – i.e., around 5,200 homes in different sizes and tenures (excluding 1,800 student rooms linked to university-led development). They are likely to deliver around 132,679 square metres of floorspace related to B use classes (business, industry, distribution or storage), a figure representing only around 40 per cent of the B use class floorspace available across the site prior to 2007. Employment space also now includes significant areas of A use class workspace (retail, food and drink, financial and professional services) D use class (education and other social infrastructure, leisure) and sui generis (such as theatres which fall outside the other categories) revealing a policy of post-industrial economic diversification. Since the production of the LCS in 2012, the idea of a cultural and educational quarter has emerged and led to a complete revisioning of the Stratford Waterfront neighbourhood. This is now a focus for the development of cultural and educational (use classes D and sui generis) institutions including the BBC, the V & A, Sadler’s Wells, the London College of Fashion and University College London (UCL) which have taken the place of residential uses previously planned. While the development of cultural and education infrastructure has become an important theme in regeneration, connected at least in part to the idea of creating broad public benefit, the loss of housing also raises questions of the LLDC’s priorities in the context of London’s housing crisis, ongoing issues of deprivation in the legacy host boroughs, precarity and high levels of demand for affordable workspace.

Table 1 provides an overview of residential development on the first four neighbourhoods on the Park and suggests that, despite drops in housing provision since the LMF/LCS, there is clearly much more housing today than on the pre-Olympic site (see section 1 above). The mix of tenures, broadly, coheres with the LLDC’s vision of ‘mixed communities,’ encompassing a range of house sizes and tenures. However, issues of

²⁸ London Legacy Development Corporation, *Legacy Development Corporation Local Plan 2020-2036, adopted July 2020* (London: LLDC, 2020).

In *Urbanizing Suburbia*, edited by Tahl Kaminer, Leonard Ma and Helen Runting, 212-235. Berlin: Jovis [2023]

affordability pertain to much of it, echoing Watt and Bernstock’s analysis of the East Village (former Athlete’s Village) in 2017.²⁹

| Neighbourhood | Total number of units | Number and percentage of market units | Number and percentage of affordable units | Quasi-Affordable (Shared ownership units) | Genuinely Affordable Units |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|----------------------------|
| Chobham Manor | 859 | 556(65%) | 303(35%) | 98 | 205 |
| East Wick and Sweetwater | 1844 | 1226(66%) | 618(34%) | 191 | 427 |
| Stratford Waterfront | 600 | 390(65%) | 210(35%) | 210 | 0 |
| Total | 3303 | 2172(66%) | 1131(34%) | 499(44%) | 632(56%) |

Table 1: Housing provision in the first four neighbourhoods³⁰

The table shows that most housing built in these four neighbourhoods is market housing (66%). Affordable housing comprises (34%) of all housing. The figures reflect modifications to Chobham Manor, Eastwick and Sweetwater following local campaigns and a commitment from Mayor Khan to provide more affordable housing than had been indicated in zonal masterplans. For example, Chobham Manor was initially to have included just 28% affordable housing, while levels of affordable housing at East Wick and Sweetwater were reduced in 2013 from 43% and 48% respectively to 30% in 2013 and increased back up to 34% in 2020.

Affordable housing is divided into two main categories. The first is labelled as ‘quasi-affordable’ because, as we demonstrate below, although it meets the statutory policy definition of an affordable housing product, it is not affordable to residents living in the legacy boroughs. The second category labelled as ‘genuinely’ affordable housing because, here, costs are capped to ensure that rents are affordable to local residents.

Table 2 below provides an analysis of incomes for three of the four legacy boroughs (data was not available for Waltham Forest) and sets these against the cost of one-bedroom and two-bedroom shared ownership properties at Chobham Manor. It shows that the income requirements for these homes are above both mean and upper quartiles incomes in

²⁹ Paul Watt and Penny Bernstock, "Legacy for whom? Housing in post-Olympic East London," in *London 2012 and the Post-Olympics City: A Hollow Legacy?*, ed. Phil Cohen and Paul Watt (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

³⁰ London Legacy Development Corporation, *LLDC Annual Planning Monitoring Report and Infrastructure Statement 2021/2022* (London, LLDC, 2022).

In *Urbanizing Suburbia*, edited by Tahl Kaminer, Leonard Ma and Helen Runting, 212-235. Berlin: Jovis [2023]

the boroughs. Clearly, then, this type of affordable housing would not be accessible to the majority of households. These issues are also present at East Wick and Sweetwater where a minimum household income of £69k is required to purchase a share a two- bedroom property with a total market value of £620k. Paradoxically, then, while it is generally assumed that affordable housing reflects a policy of ‘anti-displacement’, this quasi-affordable housing stands to exacerbate exclusionary displacement patterns. When combined with market housing it becomes clear that 81 per cent of all housing built in these neighbourhoods is unaffordable.³¹

| Legacy borough | Mean Household Income | Upper Quartile household income | Income requirement for quasi-affordable shared ownership housing at Chobham Manor |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Newham | £36,584 | £48,780 | 1 bed = £58k 2-bed = £69k |
| Tower Hamlets | £41,104 | £53,349 | |
| Hackney | £38,018 | £50,649 | |
| Average legacy boroughs | £36,568 | £50,649 | |

Table 2: Income and affordability – Quasi Affordable shared ownership housing³²

Differentials between incomes and house prices are even more accentuated in private market housing both for rent and sale. Across the Park, market rental values have been rising. The development Manhattan Loft Gardens has recently launched with 1-bedroom rental apartments starting at £3,000 and increasing to £7,500 and above for two-bedroom luxury apartments. A two-bed flat at Chobham Manor is being marketed for £600,000, In August 2022 while 3- and 4-bedroom houses were being marketed at around £1 million. According to data from the Office for National Statistics, median house prices in the small census areas intersecting the Park are in the region of £600,000, around fifteen times the mean incomes indicated in Table 2, and these prices exert a strong exclusionary displacement effect.

Of course, this is not just an issue for the Olympic Park – property values in the host boroughs have risen by as much as 425% in specific postcodes since 2005, and escalating

³² London Legacy Development Corporation, *LLDC Annual Planning Monitoring Report and Infrastructure Statement 2021/2022*.

In *Urbanizing Suburbia*, edited by Tahl Kaminer, Leonard Ma and Helen Runting, 212-235. Berlin: Jovis [2023]

property values in London constitute a key dimension of the housing crisis.³¹ The wider significance of this is not just a matter of whether and the extent to which current housing statistics align with legacy promises dating back to the Bid, though this is important, but that the gulf between the incomes and housing needs of legacy borough residents and the type of being housing built in these neighbourhoods has been ever growing. Newham, for example, has the second highest number of children living in poverty in England and most children living in what is described as ‘absolute low-income households’ are members of ‘working families.’³³ Legacy boroughs have some of the highest levels of housing need in England. Numbers of people on the local waiting lists for housing range from 8,379 in (Waltham Forest) to 27, 635 in Newham, with many thousands living in unsanitary and/or overcrowded conditions. As Watt and Bernstock have shown, these figures have been on the rise since 2012.³⁴ The lack of housing means that growing number of households are placed in temporary accommodation, both inside and outside of the legacy boroughs. In 2018, Newham placed more households out of borough than any other borough in England.

Issues of housing affordability have a bearing, in a range of ways, on the capacity of the Legacy Corporation agenda to genuinely reverse ‘local trends of unemployment and lower educational attainment, earnings and life expectancy’ through the planned employment-related development described above.³⁵ As illustrated in Table 3 below, more than 13,000 end-use employment opportunities look set to be created through legacy development, with many more related to the construction of legacy parklands, venues and communities – many more than anticipated. This excludes the large numbers of jobs expected in neighbouring developments in Stratford – Stratford City and the International Quarter. The employment cluster of Here East alone (a focus for B-class uses) provides the same sort of figure for jobs as the whole site provided in 2005, now within more compact and environmentally sustainable development.

A key strand of the LLDC’s current (2020) planning policy related to employment space is the promotion of workspaces that meet the needs of a range of businesses, from new business start-ups and micro-businesses to larger, established companies. In the development of the site, this is reflected in the provision of different sized units, but also the provision of supportive infrastructure in the form of incubator, accelerator and co-working space. At Here East, for example, Plexal offers co-working space including hot-desking arrangements and offices, along with meeting rooms, equipment and technology to

33 Dave Hill, Newham: “A profile of poverty as cost of living pressures grow,” in *On London For the Good City*, 14 September 2022 < <https://www.onlondon.co.uk/newham-a-profile-of-poverty-as-cost-of-living-pressures-grow/> > accessed October 2022.

34 Watt and Bernstock, “Legacy for whom? Housing in post-Olympic East London.”

35 London Legacy Development Corporation, *Legacy Development Corporation Local Plan 2020-2036, adopted July 2020, Section 4: Developing Business Growth, Jobs, Higher Education and Training*.

Post-print book chapter

In *Urbanizing Suburbia*, edited by Tahl Kaminer, Leonard Ma and Helen Runting, 212-235. Berlin: Jovis [2023]

a membership comprised of start-ups and SMEs. Hence, it is conceived as an intermediary between the two universities occupying space at Here East (Loughborough University and UCL) and enterprise. Within the former industrial areas just outside the Park, the LLDC has employed and subsequently promoted the expansion through new development of models of live-work emergent within the creative communities of Hackney Wick and Fish Island.³⁶ Both initiatives suggest a desire to accommodate enterprise and innovation at all stages of development rather than merely focussing on established firms.

| | ESTIMATED 2020 |
|---|----------------|
| LEGACY COMMUNITIES SCHEME (INCLUDING STRATFORD WATERFRONT) | 8,000 |
| PRESS AND BROADCASTING CENTRE (HERE EAST CLUSTER) | 5,300 |
| STADIUM/VENUES | 254 |
| | 13,300 |

Table 3: Estimated jobs on the Olympic Park (Source: London Legacy Development Corporation)

However, the affordability of workspaces, particularly in the B use class categories, and in new building, has rapidly become an issue on and at the fringes the Park as elsewhere in London. In Hackney Wick and Fish Island, rising rents have been leading to the indirect or exclusionary displacement of artists and other creative, home-grown organisations, and to these areas being recognised as centres of ‘commercial gentrification’.³⁷ On the Park, high costs risk excluding the very sorts of younger start-up firms with bright ideas but typically low levels of capital that the LLDC has sought to attract. The result is a policy initiative, set out within the Local Plan, to create subsidised affordable workspace. According to the LLDC, this is required to be designed as flexible space and defined by rental values that are ‘up to 75 per cent of historic market rent for the previous year for the equivalent floorspace in the same area for an equivalent B Class Use.’³⁸ In addition, since 2012, approximately 22,500 square metres of affordable workspace has been permitted in the area over which the Development Corporation has planning powers.

³⁶ Aecom / We Made That, *LLDC Employment Space Study*, Aecom (London: Aecom, 2015).

³⁷ Francesca Weber-Newth, Sebastian Schlüter and Ilse Helbrecht, London 2012: ‘Legacy’ as a Trojan Horse. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 16, no. 4 (2017): 713–739.

³⁸ London Legacy Development Corporation, *Legacy Development Corporation Local Plan 2020-2036, adopted July 2020*.

Post-print book chapter

In *Urbanizing Suburbia*, edited by Tahl Kaminer, Leonard Ma and Helen Runting, 212-235. Berlin: Jovis [2023]

Notably however, only two small areas fall within the actual Park rather than the wider territory the LLDC controls. The rest exists at the fringes of the Park where the LLDC has been endeavouring to protect existing pockets of historic affordability for artists and makers. Of the areas in the Park, one is designated as an interim use.³⁹ The other falls within Here East. Named the 'Trampery on the Gantry,' this latter area comprises a sliver of studio space of around 1,000 square metres in total, just 0.89 per cent of the net lettable area of Here East and offered at the required 75 per cent of historic market rent (which works out at approximately £40 per square foot per annum). At Here East, floorspace rents are £25 - £49.50 per square foot per annum, close to the average for Grade A office space in Stratford in 2022 (£40-45) though still some way below Grade A or Grade B office space prices for areas such as Kings Cross and the City of London.⁴⁰ The significance of this is that Here East is a Strategic Industrial location and, elsewhere in East London, these spaces more commonly attract £10.50–13 square foot per annum. In Plexal, the arrangement is different as members pay a monthly rent for hot desking (£240 per month per person) or a tiny office (£1,375 per month) along with a set of membership benefits. For comparison, however, the most affordable hotdesking arrangements in the capital are around a quarter of that price at £60 per month; this is elite co-working, ostensibly inclusive because it offers different pricing options, but still high-end and hence exclusive, much as Karin Fast has found in wider research on platformed workspaces.⁴¹

The types of jobs emerging and projected on the Park are, as a result of the sheer range of land uses and types of spaces highly varied, encompassing unskilled and semi-skilled jobs at former venues such as the Stadium and Aquatics Centre, in retail and in ancillary or service roles at the Cultural and Education Quarter, and highly skilled jobs at Here East and the Cultural and Education Quarter. The LLDC and Here East have both developed systems of reporting on access to employment opportunities, though the LLDC has only focussed on venues, construction, and estates to date. None of the existing data indicates whether or how many people working on the Park also live there, or how long people have lived there in order to differentiate long-standing legacy borough residents from those who have moved into these areas more recently. What is available suggests a varied picture of employment from within and outside the legacy boroughs. Within the Copper Box Arena and London Aquatics Centre, for example, 70 per cent workforce are said to be legacy borough residents, while at Here East it was 30 per cent in 2018. At Here East too there have been indications that workers are predominantly white, strongly contrasting

39 London Legacy Development Corporation, CORPORATE PERFORMANCE (JAN–MAR 2022: QUARTER 4), London Legacy Development Corporation (Stratford, London, 2022), 102-3; London Legacy Development Corporation, Legacy Development Corporation Local Plan 2020-2036, adopted July 2020.

⁴⁰ Oktra, *London Office Rent Report, 2022* (London: Oktra Ltd., 2022).

⁴¹ Karin Fast, "Who Has the Right to the Coworking Space? Reframing Platformed Workspaces as Elite Territory in the Geomeia City. *Space and Culture*, 0 (2022), DOI: 10.1177/12063312221090429

In *Urbanizing Suburbia*, edited by Tahl Kaminer, Leonard Ma and Helen Runting, 212-235. Berlin: Jovis [2023]

with the profile of workers in 2005, though we gather this picture is changing.⁴² Many jobs at Here East, whether in housing, design, research or advanced manufacturing are likely to require a high level of skill and will therefore draw on highly competitive national and international labour markets, while unskilled jobs at the venues, in retail and in administration are likely to draw on local labour markets.

Though all employers are required to pay the London Living Wage as a minimum, the housing data above suggests we can assume that those working in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs, whether in venues, higher education institutions or cultural centres, and indeed many skilled and professional workers, will currently have a very limited potential to access housing in the new neighbourhoods. Only those recruited to jobs with incomes in the top 10 per cent of all earners in the UK (more than £60,000 per annum) are likely to be able to purchase or rent housing on the open market or in the quasi-affordable housing sector. Research by the London Prosperity Board, further, indicates that, among those able to access housing, issues of 'real household disposable income' exist in the Park, as housing costs consume take-home pay. Currently, we anticipate that the employment pattern will be increasingly similar to the pattern that has evolved in Tower Hamlets since the development of the Docklands, characterised by economic polarisation between those living in the borough and those working in the borough.

The exclusivity of the Park has a bearing on the LLDC's strategies and measures to link younger residents from long-standing east London and underprivileged backgrounds to employment opportunities too. In planning and design terms, the most tangible evidence of this is the development of state-funded schools within the fabric of each of the neighbourhoods, all framed with a mission to skill the next generation. As the neighbourhoods are exclusive though, those most in need may well not benefit from these facilities and the opportunities they tap into. Other schemes include Build East, a Construction Training Centre formed through a partnership of building contractors on the park to promote a collaborative approach to skills training, apprenticeship recruitment and pay rates. Another, the Good Growth Hub (GGH), is designed to be a focal point for local people seeking Park-based careers, particularly in the cultural, creative, fashion and technology sectors, and for employers looking to recruit 'local talent'. It offers information, advice, and guidance to local people and supports businesses to adopt inclusive working practices. In turn, the Shared Training and Employment Programme (STEP) scheme links local young people to placements in a range of employment settings across the Park.

Laudable and ground-breaking as these initiatives may be, the number of beneficiaries per annum, however, would appear to be small, with a mere 10 young people involved in the STEP 12-month placements in 2021/22 and 35 apprenticeship starts in 2021-22 in

⁴² This is based on an email exchange in August 2022 with a Here East manager.

Post-print book chapter

In *Urbanizing Suburbia*, edited by Tahl Kaminer, Leonard Ma and Helen Runting, 212-235. Berlin: Jovis [2023]

construction. In other words, as for housing, 'anti-displacement' strategies such as these fail to counteract the forces of urban changes producing exclusion.

Overall, our analysis suggests that the LLDC is cautious when it acknowledges that the 'without careful attention, there is a risk that [regeneration] could create a place which is quite simply out of the reach of the people who have always lived here.'

DISCUSSION

This chapter has offered a detailed insight into displacement and replacement on London's QEOP. Over time, low-income communities living and working in the Olympic site and the wider host boroughs have been replaced with an exclusive housing offer linked to employment for privileged, professional, highly skilled workers. Despite Mayor Ken Livingstone's commitment to regenerate the area for the benefit of everyone that lives there, then, the key beneficiaries are affluent groups who have the requisite level of skills to compete for highly competitive jobs and to access exclusive housing. Planning and design have played crucial roles in displacement and replacement, offering an imagined future that would depend on redevelopment, and a relationship between housing and employment that is by definition exclusionary, in spite of an inclusive rhetoric.

Displacement has been identified as a key feature of mega events. However, in the case of London, a narrative was developed by policy makers that this would be insignificant long-term by comparison to the benefits that would follow in terms of new jobs and housing within a higher density, compact, mixed-use urban environment. As we have demonstrated, however, from the outset, the overall policy and planning direction could be seen as a kind of 'state-led gentrification'⁴³ of former industrial land at the lucrative cusp of the inner city, resulting in the development of exclusive market housing under the guise of 'mixed communities' and an employment strategy aimed at attracting highly skilled jobs that would inevitably draw on national and international labour markets to place the site at the cutting edge of innovation, rather than local ones. Over time, the Olympic legacy planning and development process has been associated with different stages of direct and indirect displacement which have been countered largely ineffectively with limited anti-displacement measures.

Overall, the chapter demonstrates that the hosting of a mega event in London has enabled a process of long-term socio-spatial restructuring that reflects continuity rather than change with other host cities. For policy makers seeking to address deprivation and regenerate low-income neighbourhoods for the benefit of existing communities, there is an urgent need for different approaches to the planning, financing, governance and marketing

⁴³ Mark Davidson and Loretta Lees, "New-Build 'Gentrification' and London's Riverside Renaissance."

Post-print book chapter

In *Urbanizing Suburbia*, edited by Tahl Kaminer, Leonard Ma and Helen Runting, 212-235. Berlin: Jovis [2023]

of development to genuinely be able to focus on local requirements for housing and employment in regeneration areas, and to genuinely address them.