

# Dispersal

## Picturing urban change in east London

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Historic England



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# A lens on the past: reconstructing traces of an industrial edgeland

Juliet Davis

## An urban wasteland?

In the run-up to and aftermath of London's bid for the 2012 Games, the proposed site of the Olympic Park was portrayed as a kind of wasteland. The London Development Agency's (LDA) *Statement of Case* for implementing the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) sets out the following view from 2005:

The majority of the Order Lands are characterised by remnants of past uses, mixed with some recent redevelopment for industrial, office and residential purposes. Low intensity industrial activity and land uses dominate, in the form of old works, cold storage facilities, waste storage facilities, car compounds and warehouse/distribution centres. There is a significant amount of unused and underused land, including sites with derelict buildings and where fly tipping has occurred, often along the river banks and railway lines.<sup>1</sup>

No images are included in this report, but an impression of redundancy or obsolescence relating to the 'remnants of past uses' and derelict buildings is given in this passage. Recent developments within the site, it suggests, had been too piecemeal and of insufficient scale and quality to bring about significant transformation. High levels of vacancy and 'low intensity' land uses are later explained as being the results of mid-20th-century planning strategies which sought to decentralise London's industry, and also of the 'decline of heavy and processing industries' from the 1970s onwards.<sup>2</sup> Ongoing industrial uses of the site are, in turn, portrayed as traces of a dying life, of traditions that should perhaps have been extinguished long ago and that would certainly have no future in the context of regeneration.

The Planning Inspector, David Rose, advising the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry

on whether to confirm the CPO, states that 'the general character of the Lower Lea Valley' was one of 'environmental, economic and social degradation'.<sup>3</sup> This was, in his assessment, 'due to historic land use patterns, the fragmented urban structure, a high proportion of strategic utilities services, deficiencies in the provision of amenities, and limited opportunities for the local population'. These issues are seen as directly connected to the high levels of deprivation experienced by local residents around the site, which had been unable to recover from the effects of post-industrialisation. Indeed, he writes that 'wards in and adjoining the Lower Lea Valley are generally within the 10 per cent most deprived in England, with some in the 5 per cent most deprived'. He goes on to argue that 'the quality and perception of the physical environment creates a negative image which depresses land and property values, while also raising development costs, and thereby affecting the viability of redevelopment opportunities'.<sup>3</sup> He thereby suggests that addressing deprivation would depend on being able to create a more visually attractive environment, of the sort that would appeal to property investors and developers.

In the heritage-related analyses of the site conducted around the time of the CPO, the physical environment was seen as having little of architectural merit. Analysing it for Newham Council, Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd was of the view that very few buildings were of interest, let alone worthy of conservation. A cluster of buildings to the south, along Marshgate Lane, was viewed as important in the sense that, as stated in this report, it represented 'the sole remnant of a type of medium to small scale warehousing and workshops that [was] built in the area in the late Victorian and Edwardian periods'.<sup>4</sup> In a report for the LDA by Symonds Group Ltd, a complex of buildings in Hackney

*Opposite:*  
*Vestiges of another past*  
M Laurier & Sons Ltd

known as Clarnico – a sweets and chocolate factory established in the 1870s – was regarded as ‘unusually complete’ and of ‘moderate importance’.<sup>5</sup> Development from the 20th century, following the First World War, was seen to have left a minimal legacy, confined in Pre-Construct’s study to one ‘unexceptional’ factory complex (that had made talcum powder) and a better regarded modernist box factory, both once owned by the cosmetics firm Yardley.

This lack of noteworthy architecture was seen to be related to the site’s historical land use and location. Symonds Group’s report describes how ‘the marginal nature’ of the site yet ‘its location close to the metropolis and the ease with which coal would be brought up the River Lea and along the railway’ informed its development for ‘“dirty” industries and industries that needed a lot of space, but had an urban focus’ from the mid-19th century.<sup>6</sup> These industries, we are led to assume, required no more than low-grade, industrial architecture.

An important consequence of the presence of these industries was the extensive contamination of the site’s soil, down to as much as several metres below ground. Removing contaminants across the site through an extensive bio-remediation and soil-washing process was regarded by the LDA as key to the success of any long-term regeneration strategy. It would address potential investors’ anxiety about the possible costs of remediation and hence be an important development catalyst. Thus, the need to deal with this below-ground legacy of historical industrialisation became a key motivation, supported by disparaging views of the site’s above-ground heritage, for clearing away almost all traces of the site’s built past, its existing uses and the negative associations and images that went with them.

Comprehensive, rather than piecemeal, redevelopment was, in turn, seen as necessary for addressing socioeconomic deprivation. It would be facilitated by a planning process predicated on transitioning the site from its current usage and condition to higher-value residential, office and cultural programmes.<sup>7</sup> It would also require the means to overcome the ‘complexities of local governance’ resulting from the site’s location at the intersections of the four London Boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.<sup>8</sup>

It is not the place of this analysis to substantiate or otherwise disprove the veracity of these accounts, but rather to look at what is hidden

behind their representations of obsolescence, degeneration and insignificance. We need not look beyond the lists of named users in the CPO records to be able to see that, as architectural theorist Gil Doron puts it, ‘underneath the maps and outside the discourse’ there was a wide variety of occupancy of the site and its buildings, old and new, at the time of the CPO, including residential, recreational, cultural and industrial uses.<sup>9</sup> The plan of uses in Figure 1.1 is based upon these records.

It shows that most of the site’s buildings were occupied. Many buildings were in a state of disrepair, and a combination of demolition and piecemeal reconstruction had certainly led to the fracturing of the urban fabric, as first developed in the 19th century. Across the 266 hectares of the Order Lands, business activity included a variety of manufacturing industries in areas including clothing and textiles, food, printing, furniture, glass, concrete and metal fabrication (*see* Table 1 in the Appendix). Waste management and recycling firms, motor vehicle repairers and second-hand vehicle parts merchants, bus depots and garages were prominent in the landscape, but there were also creative industries including scenery builders, wholesale suppliers of foods from all over the world, construction firms and cafés. Many of the buildings were occupied by a number of different firms, resulting in processes as diverse as wig supply, bagel baking and printing occurring side by side. These processes were and are important to

#### KEY

- Residential
- Religious
- Sport
- Infrastructure (e.g. Electrical Sub-Station)
- Industry: Waste Management
- Industry: Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities
- Industry: Chemicals
- Industry: Manufacture / Distribution of Packaging Products
- Industry: Transportation and Storage
- Industry: Printing (newspapers / the media)
- Industry: Other Printing and Paper
- Industry: Vehicle Repairs / Car Parts
- Industry: Construction
- Multiple Industries/ Activities
- Industry: Arts, Entertainment, Recreation
- Industry: Food Manufacturing and Sale
- Industry: Real Estate
- Industry: Textiles and Clothing
- Charity Sector
- Public Transport: Buses
- Public Transport: Rail
- Vacant/ Derelict



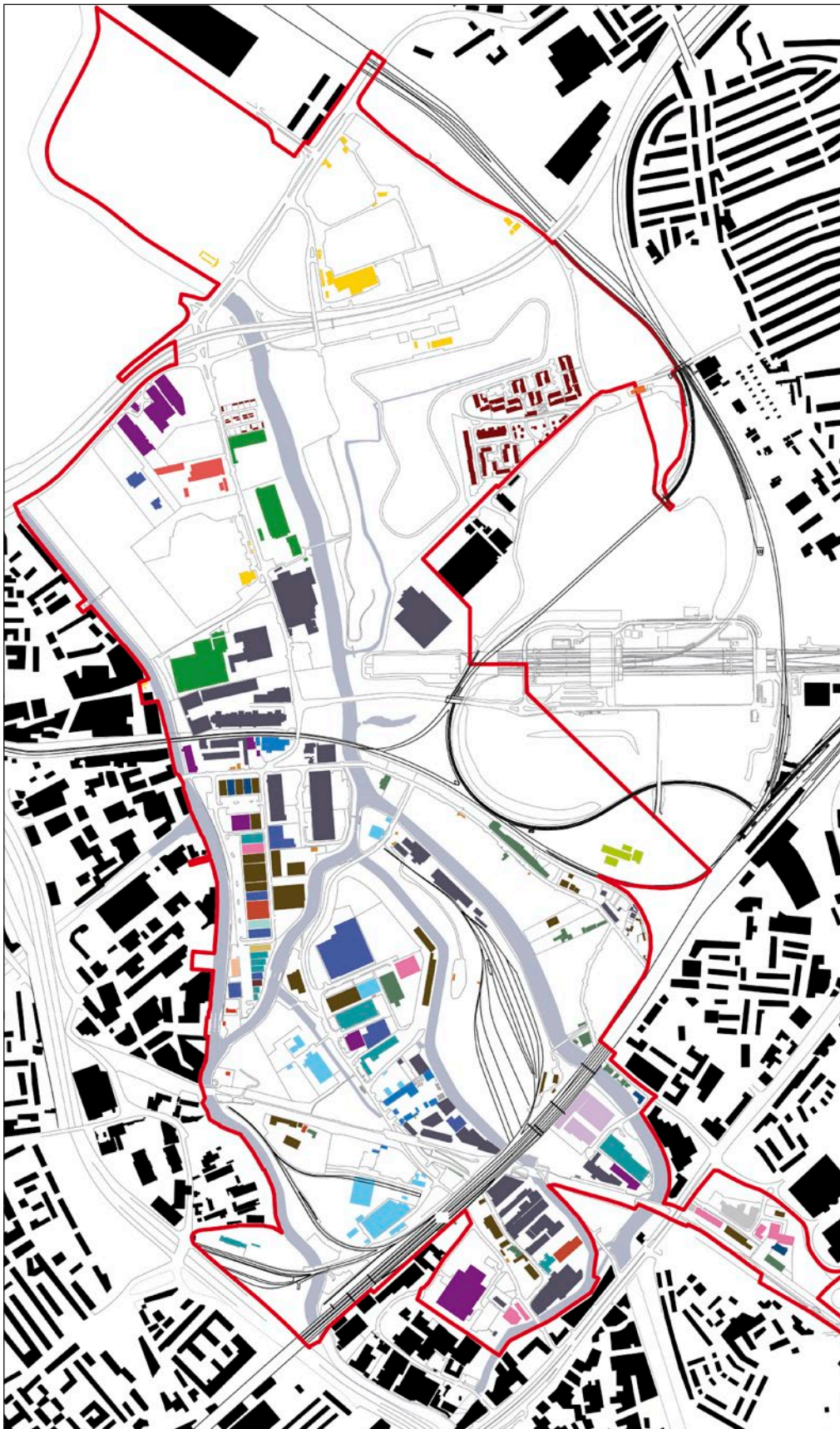


Figure 1.1  
Map showing figure  
ground and building uses of  
the site, 2006

Opposite:  
Key to Figure 1.1 map

many different aspects of London's life and metabolism – from its waste removal to its markets for fine food, its international restaurants and cultural industries. Many firms were rooted in particular ethnic communities and associated cultural practices, whether related to dress, food or social occasions, such as weddings. And yet, their location here was also revealing of the site's long-standing designation as an industrial area, as a place which could accommodate uses that would have been resisted in more central areas of the city or local boroughs.

Businesses were distributed across the site, though were more concentrated to the south and west. To the north, they became dispersed among open spaces and other uses (Figs 1.1 and 1.2). Open spaces included 100-year-old allotment gardens, a former dog-racing track converted into an informal Sunday market, a cycling-club circuit, a sports club dating from the early 20th century, landscapes of tracks from sections of disused marshall yards, and the pedestrian route along the top of Joseph Bazalgette's Northern Outfall Sewer of 1865. The spaces were shaped in the context of the Lower Lea Valley's transition from rural to urban over 150 years. Other than industry, uses of buildings across the site included a large Ghanaian Pentecostal church (the largest in Europe), co-operative housing, and gypsy and traveller pitches. As with industry, however, these uses were in effect relegated to the site, and yet by being here they nonetheless had the advantage of occupying space in the city.

## The unseen seen

It is the variety of businesses and the spatial environments of different types of work, rather than any strategic planning issues of density, connectivity or condition, that Davies and Rapp call attention to through their photographs. The *Dispersal* archive, as shown in Chapter 2, is categorised into nine business types and features 60 of the 70 companies originally photographed for the project.

The photographs provide an important visual record of the spatial and lived worlds that vanished in the process of redevelopment, offering sights that appear as though salvaged from the dramas of physical erasure and migration. Recalling literary theorist Roland Barthes' contention that 'the photograph does not necessarily say what is no longer, but only and

for certain what has been',<sup>10</sup> they present evidence of the site's inhabitation in the run-up to the CPO.

But they also suggest a quite different way of seeing and representing the site from the ones outlined above. Clearly, this is not only because they are pictures, but because they expose to public view spaces and activities that were devalued in the context of regeneration plans and that become all the more remote to everyday experience as time passes. They let us see them, and the site, quite differently, liberated from a language and a form of representation predicated on substantiating a case for radical change.

As opposed to representations of the site as derelict, ruined and abandoned, the photographs show a rich diversity of people and materiality, ways of building, and making things. They foreground precisely those spaces, people, processes and details that are otherwise 'hidden in the inner mechanisms of the ordinary and the taken for granted', to use the words of sociologists Caroline Knowles and Paul Sweetman. In so doing, they present an alternative, less condemnatory understanding of the site from that of a wasteland.<sup>11</sup> This is expressed particularly clearly in Figure 1.3, which shows sewage pipes in the foreground and a path following a tranquil river towards a bridge in the distance. Not only are different interpretations of this photograph possible, depending on whether you focus on the sewage pipes or the soft, 'natural' bank of the river, but each element in the picture is equally vital to the power of the scene as a whole. The photographs capture an invisible urbanism which was about to be conclusively disappeared through regeneration.

### KEY

- Productive Landscape
- Market
- Mixed Hard / Soft (derelict) Landscape
- Hard (derelict) Landscape
- Construction Site
- Carparks, Forecourts, Yards
- Railway Sidings (though no longer used as such)
- Roads
- Public Towpaths and Pedestrian Cycle Tracks
- Paths / Tracks on Privately Owned Land
- Public Recreational Soft Landscaping
- Soft Landscaping on Privately Owned Land
- Verges
- Trees/ Shrubbery
- Campsite
- Rivers
- Tennis Court





Figure 1.2  
Map showing open space  
uses of the site, 2006

Opposite:  
Key to Figure 1.2 map

Figure 1.3  
*River Lea Navigation and  
the Northern Outfall Sewer*



In this regard, the archive can be viewed as part of a tradition within documentary photography of exposing not just the world in its fullness but also matters of social concern.<sup>12</sup> Often this is achieved by capturing, via the technical means of framing, exposure, focus, print and reproduction, situations that may seem to have been overlooked in more dominant representations of cultural and social life. Classic examples from the history of urban photography include John Thompson's and Jacob Riis's respective representations of slum conditions in London and New York in the late 19th century, Eugène Atget's early-20th-century scenes of a Paris disappearing as a result of modernisation, and Bert Hardy's depictions of Elephant and Castle in London and Butetown in Cardiff prior to their post-Second-World-War redevelopments. Philosopher and cultural critic Walter Benjamin writes that Atget's photographs show what was 'unremarked, forgotten, cast adrift'. They draw attention not to the 'great sights' of Paris which would no doubt remain, but, as he put it, to more everyday details such as 'a long row of boot lasts; or the Paris courtyards, where from night to morning the hand-carts stand in serried ranks; or the tables after people

have finished eating and left, the dishes not yet cleared away'.<sup>13</sup> These may have been as intrinsic to Paris as its celebrated monuments, but would very possibly have been taken for granted until faced with erasure.

In a not dissimilar way, Davies' and Rapp's photographs show that industries labelled in relatively abstract terms were in fact also living concerns – 'things' that people worked for and cared about. They draw attention to the presence, textures, qualities and life rather than the death of industry in ways that remain of political significance given that the idea, if not the physical evidence, of the site as a wasteland is enduring and continues to shape regeneration discourse and agendas. They show aspects of a place that was strikingly different in appearance from the celebrated architectural landmarks and public spaces of contemporary London, but one which was also a product of planning and as much a part of the city's social and spatial fabric. In turn, the portraits of people who were already engaged in CPO negotiations when the photographs were taken draw attention to the CPO's social impacts.

They do so, it is important to add, in a manner that reflects the involvement of these



subjects. Many of the firms who were prepared to be recorded were ones that were particularly conscious that aspects of their environment or industries were under-recognised in official representations. Firms drew attention to processes, objects and spaces of value and interest to them, including historical records, artefacts or tools. Matters of concern and value for firms themselves, as well as for the photographers, are thus reflected in the pictures.

The photographs allow the viewer to see the site from the perspective of someone standing with their feet on the ground. This provides a view of what philosopher Michel de Certeau calls the 'ordinary practitioners of the city [who] live "down below"', that is, 'below the thresholds at which visibility begins' for the city planner or cartographer, when looking from above.<sup>14</sup> The site is shown close-up, the photographs generally concentrating on the immediate spatial contexts of industrial processes and working life rather than the wider landscape or streetscape. As a result, although many of the photographs provide information about the architecture of different workplaces, the set as a whole is an aggregation of partial views that provide an impression of multiple spatial qualities rather than complete urban form.

Even longer views, such as those shown in the group of images in Figures 1.4 to 1.7,

draw our attention to materiality and specificity. Figure 1.4, shot across the City Mill River, emphasises the heavy patina of walls retaining the banks of the river, with its glistening water. Beyond this horizon, the gable ends of heavily used and weathered workshops, waste materials and construction vehicles rise up in hectic combination like an impenetrable blockade beneath a mute, grey sky. Figure 1.5 emphasises the close-up detail of wild vegetation growing along the banks of the Old River Lea. At the same time, our view is drawn to detail in the distance in the form of two digger arms, part of the Riverside Works – long-necked mechanical dinosaurs of these manufactured wetlands. Figure 1.6 offers a view of part of Carpenters Road, a street that had been intensively built-up but progressively dismantled from the 1990s. Figure 1.7, in contrast, shows the texture of semi-wild landscape in close-up, concentrating on different aspects of it that were maligned, from Japanese Knotweed, to waste, to electricity pylons, to 1960s social housing at the Carpenters Estate.

The *Dispersal* archive offers an impression of diversity in terms of industrial architectural typology, style and materiality – from steely grey chemical storage cylinders to deep-plan, steel-framed and brick-lined warehouses, from a concrete aggregate plant to profiled asbestos, saw-tooth-roofed workshops, and from profiled



Figure 1.4  
View across the City Mill  
River



*Figure 1.5*  
*View down the Old River*  
*Lea towards the Clearun*  
*Waste Management*  
*Facility*



metal-clad light industrial units to containers. These structures ranged in age from Victorian to early 21st century. They reflected different levels of craftsmanship, from the fine brickwork skills evident in the Edwardian buildings of Clarnico's King's Yard to the more makeshift textures and materiality of, say, containers or rough, painted blockwork. They reflected the adaptability of these typologies, too, many of which, as discussed further in the next section, were built for

different industries historically but now brought a range of firms together under the same roofs. They also, in some cases, showed accretions of building over time, reflecting changing working conditions, the growth or decline of industries or changes in use.

The photos offer a kind of visual access to spaces that were far from vacant yet quite secluded as many of the industrial yards were gated and processes were expressed little in

*Figure 1.6*  
*Carpenters Road*





the site's streetscapes. The photographs also show us how different industries operated and manufactured products – how, in the early 21st century, a bagel, side of smoked salmon, bespoke suede jacket, belt, kebab or piece of stained glass was made, or how rolls of steel mesh or scaffolding fabric were stored and transported. They show tools and artefacts – here profiles of salmon steak, there a knife, a cut piece of sheepskin, paintbrushes hanging on a wall – and can perhaps evoke the smells of oil or fish or sweat, or the different temperatures and light qualities. There are people working but also the traces of work in heavily oiled or paint-marked concrete, vats of used dye or the paint on the trousers of a scenery-builder's leg. Social characteristics are able to be appreciated, too, such as the ethnic diversity of business owners and workers, which bore relation to the diversity of trades and reflected the multicultural communities of Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Waltham Forest.

In their focus on these visually rich aspects of work and on specific people and places, the photographs recall a much older portrayal of London – Henry Mayhew's vivid and detailed descriptions of the 'sights' of the city's markets and docks in the mid-19th century, in *London Labour and the London Poor*.<sup>15</sup> Mayhew's work has often been criticised for caricaturing those he included in his survey. But, importantly, it served to reveal people and places that were otherwise little represented.

The photographs show the conditions of work as well as the work itself. One particularly evocative example of this is in the section on textiles and clothing in Chapter 2. There is a picture of a man from the firm J G Belts Ltd, sitting at a table at the heart of a space hung with belts of different widths, colours and materials, and facing a tall pile of black vinyl ready to be cut or stitched (see p 144). The equipment and furniture are clearly organised to suit the sequence of production. The space is loft-like beneath a pitched roof, thin enough to have allowed the sound of rain and the sensation of cold from a wintry morning to penetrate from outside. This photograph and many of the others offer evidence of small firms' abilities to 'make do', as de Certeau might say, with given circumstances and conditions. We may judge these conditions, but we may perhaps, otherwise, see scope to enhance them to benefit this man, inspired by his process and materials.



At the time of the CPO, analyses of business use made much of the transience of firms, few of whom were long established on the site. In 2004, as the Olympic bid was being prepared, one report showed that 30 per cent had moved into the area within the previous three years, and a further 50 per cent had done so since 1995.<sup>16</sup> The statistics were used to suggest a general lack of robustness or resilience among firms, as well as a tendency for short-term opportunist use rather than long-term investment to shape the locale.

My own research into the ages of the businesses (using public company information data) suggests that, while firms may not have occupied the site before the late 20th or early 21st century, they often predated this as companies. Only about 30 per cent of firms were, in fact,

Figure 1.7  
View of pylons and  
containers from City Mill  
River

established between 1995 and 2004. Of the remaining 70 per cent, about half were established between 1985 and 1995. Some 9 per cent were established before the Second World War.

On the site was Bowden Glass Ltd. It had been on Marshgate Lane since the 1970s, but had first become established in Highgate as John Bowden Limited as far back as 1800, at the cusp of London's major industrial expansion. Figure 1.8 shows workers from the factory in front of a large curved glass piece in the 1930s. Though Bowden's works were made up of buildings from the 1940s to 1960s, the site had been used for manufacturing glass since the 1890s, highlighting a continuity of purpose over time.

Figure 1.8  
Staff from Bowden Glass  
Ltd in front of a large  
curved glass piece, 1930s



Another old firm was the steel-product distributor F H Brundle (*see* p 101) which was first established in 1889 and moved to the Bow Industrial Park on the site in the late 1990s. Its management history, as relayed in an interview with the firm's current owners, was one of continual adaptation across five generations of the Brundle family, to a changing economy and market for metal products in London. The story began at the little shop shown in the photograph in Figure 1.9. This was taken around 1900 outside the firm's premises in Paper Street, which was bombed in the Second World War and is located beneath today's Barbican Centre. The zinc rolls visible in front of the shop were used for lining wooden packing cases and the bag contained wire nails. F H Brundle himself is the man standing in the doorway.

Another old family firm residing on the site was H Forman & Son, which began curing Scottish salmon in Stepney Green in 1905. Via Aldgate, Ridley Road Market and the Queen's Yard in Hackney Wick, the firm moved to Marshgate Lane in 2002 (Fig 1.10). Yet another old firm, and one that in many ways characterised industrial production on the site in the early to mid-20th century, was Samuel Banner & Co Ltd (*see* p 46). Established in the major shipping centres of Liverpool, London and Glasgow in 1860, and with depots in other cities as well, this firm manufactured paint oil and turpentine, and patented 'white spirit' in 1885. In 1955 it established its depot on Marshgate Lane, which at the time was lined with manufacturers of oils, chemicals, inks and colours, brewing materials, bottles, soap, glass and glue.<sup>17</sup>

M Laurier & Sons Ltd was the firm that had been in place on the site for the longest (from 1945). It was originally founded in 1920 as a 'sack manufacturer'. Its buildings, also on Marshgate Lane, included a long structure that is visible in 1894 Ordnance Survey maps of the area. This was originally used for cocoa manufacturing, though Laurier's immediate predecessors were also sack manufacturers. Laurier's owner, Isaac Behar, showed Davies and Rapp part of a historical indenture related to the property dating from 1919 (Fig 1.11). It refers to the company Loose Ltd, which was the cocoa manufacturer, clearly also a family concern as the document relates to the inheritance of the property. Traces of industrial history or legacies of production that predated the late 20th century were highlighted by other firms too, such as the 1950s Heidelberg Platen





Figure 1.9  
F H Brundle's premises in  
Paper Street, Cripplegate,  
c 1900

printing press owned by Club Le Print Ltd (see p 183). In different ways, these reflected stories of adaptation in the context of London's transforming industrial economy.

Some of the people that Davies and Rapp encountered had known and worked on the site through the stages of its late 20th-century transformation and offered insights into its changing characteristics, appearance and life.<sup>18</sup> In interview with me, one man, for example, relayed how Carpenters Road had run blue with dye or paint in the 1950s and early 1960s, and how busy this street was when lined with colour works and engineering firms. A woman who had grown up in Stratford in the 1930s and once worked for Yardley described the smell of manufacturing which hung over the whole area, known as 'Stinky Stratford'. She also offered a personal account of the sadness and hardship felt by many local people after the collapse or relocation of industries in the 1970s.<sup>19</sup> The negative reputation of the area seemed to have been forged, from the perspectives of those who we spoke to who remembered these events, from that time rather than earlier in the 20th century,

when industry offered career prospects for many locally.

An artist who had worked at ACME studios in Carpenters Road (at Yardley's former talcum powder factory) recalled that in the late 1980s and into the 1990s visitors arrived 'in a state



Figure 1.10  
The front door of  
H Forman & Son's  
smokehouse in Ridley Road,  
Dalston, 1960s

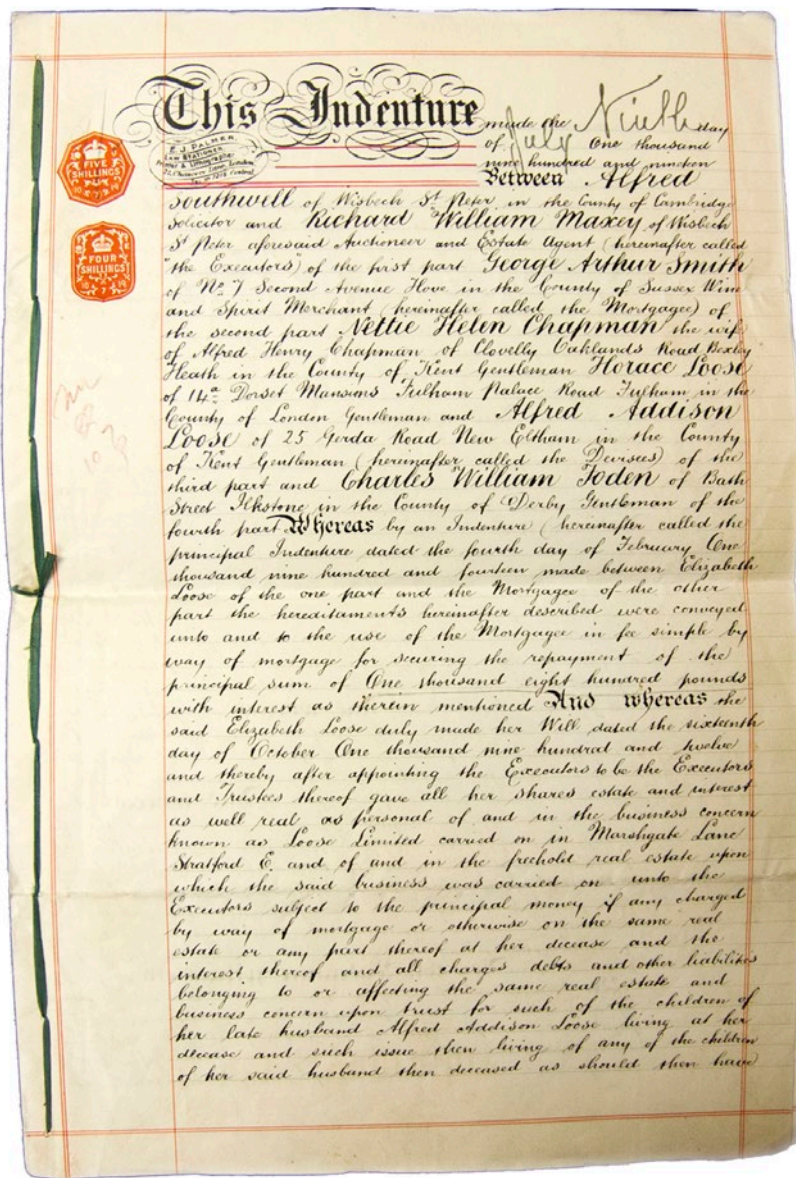


Figure 1.11  
Original 'indenture' from  
1919, shown by M Laurier  
& Sons Ltd

of shock' at what they saw of the landscape, a place of 'villainous' neighbours, 'filthy rivers' and darkened streets. And yet, it was also a 'wonderful place' where young artists such as Grayson Perry, Rachel Whiteread and many others were able to gain footholds in London and cultivate their reputations, remaking the factory in the process. At that time, most of the 19th-century fabric of Carpenters Road was still intact and it was alive, we were told, with 'dozens of firms'. It was from the 1990s that this fabric was progressively dismantled, transforming the site into a much less coherent landscape, as captured in Rapp's photograph of Carpenters Road in Figure 1.6.

By concentrating on people and their work environments, the photographs allow us to see the CPO in terms of its social and material significance. We know, in looking at them now, that much of what they make visible disappeared from this location after July 2007. In sociologists Graham Gilloch and Tim Dant's words, we see them now knowing 'the future of the past'.<sup>20</sup> And yet, the traces they provide of lost materiality can continue to help provoke questions about what was, how it came to be and what happened to those who were affected by the CPO.

Why were the buildings of such different ages and qualities? Why were firms so wide ranging? How did the area become industrial? How did the site's development fit into the broader context of the Lower Lea Valley's development? How, too, are issues of visibility and marginality reflected in historical accounts or planning strategies, helping people to understand how the site was used and structured, as well as seen, in 2007? The following section addresses these and related questions, drawing on a range of historical accounts of the site. Its aim in so doing is to discuss the historical development and regulatory processes that shaped the site over time, but also that informed how it was regarded and represented.

## Traces of the past

'The history of West Ham! Why bother about it?' These are the opening lines of *The Story of West Ham*, published in 1936 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the area's status as a borough.<sup>21</sup> In 1965, this area was incorporated, along with neighbouring East Ham, into the London Borough of Newham, which approximately 60 per cent of our site lies within. These words suggest a certain lack of visibility regarding the area historically, connected to its development and evolution at the periphery of London. Indeed, the passage goes on to say that 'West Ham is largely regarded, by people who do not stop to think or enquire, as a place of mushroom growth without having any roots in history, or traditions to uphold'.

Until 1965, the boundary between West Ham and the County of London ran along the River Lea, which long marked the separation of different territories and jurisdictions. From the ninth until the 12th century, it denoted part of the legal and ethnic Danelaw boundary between the Anglo-Saxon and the Danish Viking kingdoms



of Britain.<sup>22</sup> Following the Norman Conquest, this was transformed into a county boundary between territories still possessing the Saxon names of Essex and Middlesex but which were now administrative and legal units of England. In 1855, following the establishment of London's first city-level authority, the Metropolitan Board of Works, the river marked the eastern limit of the area over which the Board of Works had influence. On the formation of the London County Council in 1889, it marked part of the boundary of the new County of London and remained as such until the boundaries of Greater London were assigned in 1965, when the Lea became the boundary between the boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Hackney to the west, and Newham and Waltham Forest to the east. It is clear that the position of boundaries within the Lower Lea Valley played a crucial role in informing urban development both within and beyond it. As local historian Neil Fraser shows, the presence of the city boundaries led to the creation of an 'other East End' in West Ham and Leyton, with a distinct identity.<sup>23</sup>

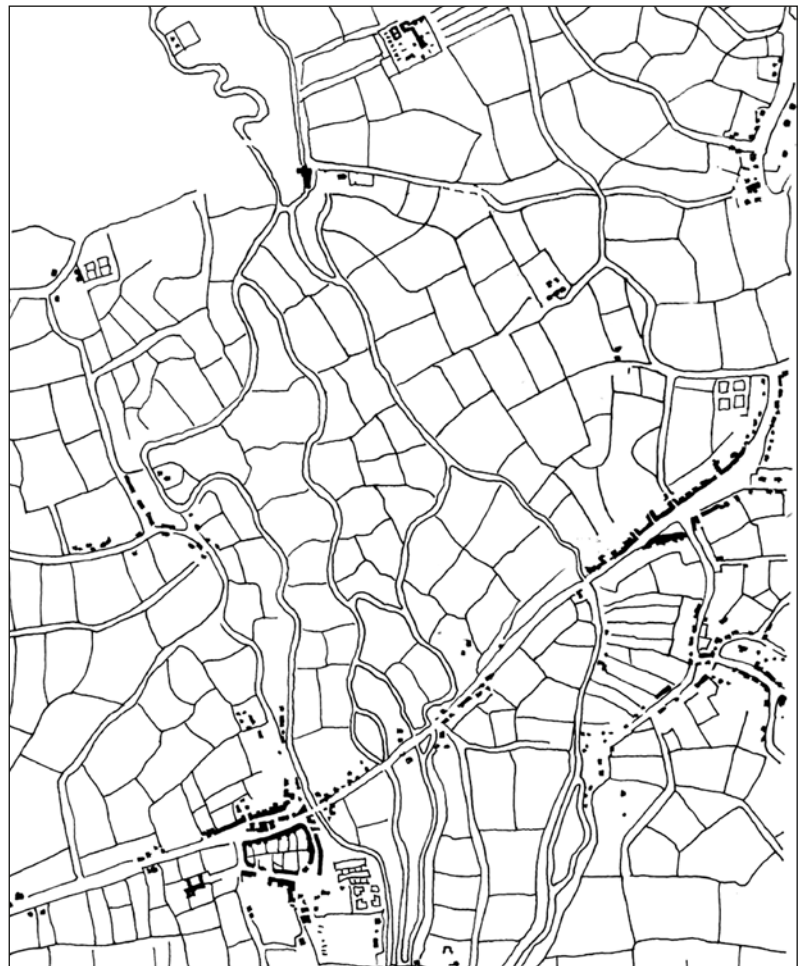
And yet, as political historian John Marriott argues in his account of the industrialisation and urbanisation of West Ham, this 'owed everything to its proximity to London'.<sup>24</sup> The growth of industry in the second half of the 19th century was encouraged, for example, by the use of new legislation such as the Metropolitan Buildings Act of 1854–1855, which covered the construction of many aspects of building in London, and the Metropolis Local Managing Act of 1855, to restrict the siting and operation of certain trades within the city.

The Metropolitan Buildings Act ruled that, within London, offensive or noxious trades, 'that is to say, blood-boiler, bone-boiler, fell-monger, slaughterer of cattle, sheep or horses, soap boiler, tallow-melter, tripe-boiler' and the like could not be established within 50 feet of a dwelling or 40 feet of a public way.<sup>25</sup> Such industries were attracted east to the Lower Lea Valley, over the border, where this rule did not apply. Here sites were also cheaper and more readily available. Industries were able to make use of water from the Lea for their industrial processes and waste disposal, and they were also close to rail infrastructure and to the growing docks in Silvertown, where seaborne coal arrived. Marriott highlights the opportunities these factors afforded for industries that tended to be tied to the demands of the massive consumer centre of the metropolis and thus that benefited from

proximity to it as well as from decentralisation.<sup>26</sup> Certainly, they shaped the processes and patterns of development during the 19th century and beyond.

Mills at Leyton, Stratford and Bromley are visible on John Rocque's *Map of London and Environs* of 1745, originating in the Middle Ages when they were associated with monastic institutions (Fig 1.12). In the 1820s and 1830s, such industries as breweries, dye works and calico textile printers settled in Bromley-by-Bow and Stratford, which were small, relatively distinct settlements close to rivers. By the 1870s, industry was much more extensive; a further surge of development along the River Lea's tributaries to the north and south of Stratford High Street and along the west bank of the Lea Navigation up to Hackney Wick occurred by the 1890s. Industries within the site in the early 1890s were fairly diverse, including chemical works, fur dressing and dyeing, soap, candles, tallow, oil works, bone works, a distillery, match

Figure 1.12  
Map of the site, based on  
John Rocque's Map of  
London and Environs  
of 1745





works and colour works. They were, however, generally smelly trades, with many dealing with animal derivatives of one kind or another (Figs 1.13 and 1.14). There was also a large engineering works and a cooperage.

These industries were relatively small scale by comparison to industrial development in the Lower Lea Valley that was closer to the Thames. By the early 1890s, this included gas works, iron works, and shipbuilding yards employing hundreds to thousands of people. To the east of our site, industry was also large scale, dominated by the huge Great Eastern Locomotive Works which employed as many as 7,000 people in train building operations by 1900. Its complex network of sidings and tracks bulged towards the marshes between Stratford and Hackney Wick. This industry was spurred by many of the same factors, particularly the rapid development of the railway network and the opening of the Victoria Dock in 1855, themselves also large employers. Against the eastern fringe of the Lea Valley, the urbanisation of West Ham proceeded rapidly, too, with the population growing from 19,000 in 1851 to 267,308 in 1901, creating an extensive London periphery of typically cheap housing.

Issues associated with this urbanisation process or at least with certain areas within it, were raised as early as 1857 by University College London Professor of English Literature Henry Morley in an article entitled 'Londoners over the border'.<sup>27</sup> Morley highlighted how the drawing of the boundary of London at the River Lea not only encouraged peripheral urban expansion, but allowed development to proceed which was particularly poorly regulated with regard to issues of sanitation and public health. He offers an image of the industrialising landscape, too, in transition from rural to urban, within which the 'tall smoking chimneys' of new industry appear to puncture and break up the remnants of picturesque rural scenes and the agrarian social order. The piece offers a characteristically Victorian perspective on the failures of government to address sources of poverty and degradation, laced with rural nostalgia, leading to the Lower Lea Valley being considered an 'outcast' of the city.

However, his interpretation of the effects of industrialisation on the landscape resonates with that of the contemporary environmental geographer Jim Clifford in his analysis of West Ham's evolution from a 'rural fringe' of low-lying land at the edges of landed estates in the 18th century

to a largely unplanned 'urban periphery' in the 20th century. The capitalist industrialisation process, he argues, led to the progressive exploitation and degradation of the environment, helping to create conditions of social deprivation that lasted into the 21st century.<sup>28</sup>

Social reformer Charles Booth also drew attention to issues associated with the capitalist mode of production when he visited the site in 1893. Focusing on conditions of labour and employment at the Crown Chemical Works (which was on Marshgate Lane opposite the site of Bowden's glass works), he wrote in his notebook:

The furnace was in an open shed, simply roofed over but nevertheless when the door was opened either to rake out the stuff or for some other reasons, very pungent fumes came out and for a few moments at least this man was compelled to inhale them to some degree.<sup>29</sup>

He also describes a worker here as saying that 'he was 45! [though] he already looked much grizzled so that he looked over 50'.<sup>30</sup> At Messrs Hemmingway and Co, manufacturers of colours and insecticide, also based on Marshgate Lane, he notes that employees worked with dangerous chemicals on a daily basis. Exposure to the 'oxide of iron' used in making red pigment was associated with respiratory conditions and fever, while the insecticide known as 'London Purple' or 'blue' (and 'exported to America to kill potato bug') contained arsenic, which carried a variety of severe health risks. Booth described the air of the factory as being laden 'with particles [which] are injurious unless care is taken' as a result of inadequate containment or ventilation.<sup>31</sup> In his London-wide analysis of 'Sundry Manufactures' (that characterised much of the site) he drew attention to issues of low skill, low pay and casual labour resulting from seasonal fluctuations in demand and low levels of unionisation.<sup>32</sup> These issues were reflected in the poverty shown by Booth to exist in residential areas such as Hackney Wick, though Stratford and Leyton to the east tended to be better off areas.

While accounts of poverty and environmental degradation serve to develop understandings of the harsh conditions at the margins of 19th-century London they can also mask other aspects of the past. They can lend credence to simplistic representations of the site as a wasteland at the time of the CPO, as a place of endemic poverty,



*Figure 1.13*  
*G Rice's fur dressing and dyeing works, 1910. The machines are for extracting broken hairs from the animal skins.*



*Figure 1.14*  
*G Rice's fur dressing and dyeing works, 1910. This was the women's work room.*

ill health and persistent dirt and disorder that needed to be cleared away.

Writing in 2010, historian Jim Lewis draws attention to entrepreneurialism and innovation as important, underdeveloped themes in the historiography of the wider Lea Valley, particularly in recent times.<sup>33</sup> Hackney Wick, just to the west of the site, was where Achille Serre Ltd (1896 to 1928) invented the technique of

dry cleaning, where Capel, Carless and Leonard (1872 to 1965) invented and produced petroleum, and where Alexander Parkes' first plastics, or 'Parkesine', were manufactured (1866 to 1874). Here, too, in 1872 Clarke, Nickolls & Coombs Ltd was born, later known as Clarnico, one of the UK's largest confectionary businesses, first manufacturing candied peel and later fondants, marmalade, jams, jellies, lozenges and

chocolates. The opportunities offered by the site in the late 19th century led to creativity and invention, not just pollution and exploitation. Many of these firms were successful over many years, reaching markets in London and around the world, making products of everyday consumption (from candles to wallpaper paste) and employing hundreds of people locally. Clarnico, for example, employed 1,249 people by 1891 and, by the early years of the 20th century, in the order of 2,000.

In the contexts of Olympic redevelopment and post-Olympic development pressure on the fringes of the site, such arguments have often been reinforced by local individuals and groups campaigning to preserve industrial buildings, and asking for their own creative and innovative (re)uses of them to be protected through local policy and planning. The local historian Tom Ridge, for example, has long drawn attention to the architectural quality and historical importance of 19th-century factory buildings in Hackney Wick and neighbouring Fish Island while campaign groups such as Save Hackney Wick have drawn attention to the continuity of creative and making skills in the area. These include Clarnico's Queen's Yard and Wallis Road Yard in Hackney Wick, built in the 1890s, and the Edwardian King's Yard, developed across the canal between 1903 and 1908 (Figs 1.15 and 1.16). The King's Yard, which lies within the site, was still largely intact in 2006, though it has since been partially redeveloped. It included a Starch Department (which fronted the canal), Preserving Department, Lozenge Department, Peel Shed, boiler house, stables and warehouse. The roofs of the Preserving and Lozenge departments were supported by lattice-braced 'Belfast trusses', introduced in London in the early 1900s. The King's Yard's uses in 2006 are described in Chapter 2.

While the accounts of Morley and Booth described above emphasise the presence of noxious industries on the site and issues of social and environmental exploitation, the historian Duncan Lucas, writing in 1902, offers a quite different angle on the site's legacies through his account of Clarnico as an organisation at the turn of the 20th century:

Step into this building by the railway where the workers are a hundred strong. Some are boiling sugar in great pans; some are kneading a thick, jellylike, transparent substance that we have never seen before. It is sugar

and water. One woman is especially vigorous, and we admire her biceps. Presently she flings her jelly on to an iron peg and proceeds to pull it about with the strength of a Sandow. In two or three minutes it resembles a beautiful skein of silk. Later on it will go through a rolling machine, from which it will emerge a delicious sweetmeat.<sup>34</sup>

While much could be said about the male gaze in this account, it nonetheless offers an image of skill and resilience in the figure of the working-class woman which contrasts with Booth's 'grizzled' man from the 1890s. Lucas also draws attention to Clarnico's ethos as an employer, its attention to industrial working conditions and sense of responsibility to employees that extended beyond working hours, which also contrasts with Booth's emphasis on more mercenary attitudes.

As early as 1890, the firm's directors established a non-contributory pension scheme and profit-sharing scheme to give regular staff a share in the firm's wealth. At the turn of the century, they created a scheme to allow employees a sick-pay entitlement and introduced a system of burial grants and marriage grants. Clarnico is known to have encouraged its workforce, which was more than 50 per cent female, to become organised into unions. It is also remembered for the role it played in thwarting the nearby firm Bryant and May's case during the famous match girls' strike of 1888. The politically liberal approach which underpinned these actions was reflected in the provision of ancillary spaces, such as a staff dining room and the Clarnico workers' cottages, and is still visible in the quality and architecture of remaining factory buildings with their high ceilings and generous windows. It is part of a wider history of reform and intervention in industrial working conditions and in working-class people's rights in London and the UK.

Another aspect of the site's history which has received relatively little attention is its 20th-century development and evolution. This of course is crucial in explaining the hybridity of the landscape at the time of the CPO. According to the planner and historian Peter Hall in his 1962 book *The Industries of London since 1861*, the opportunities which the Lea Valley offered to industries of the later 19th century, namely ready access to markets, labour supply and cheap land, continued to inform its development well into the 20th century. By 1920, although the



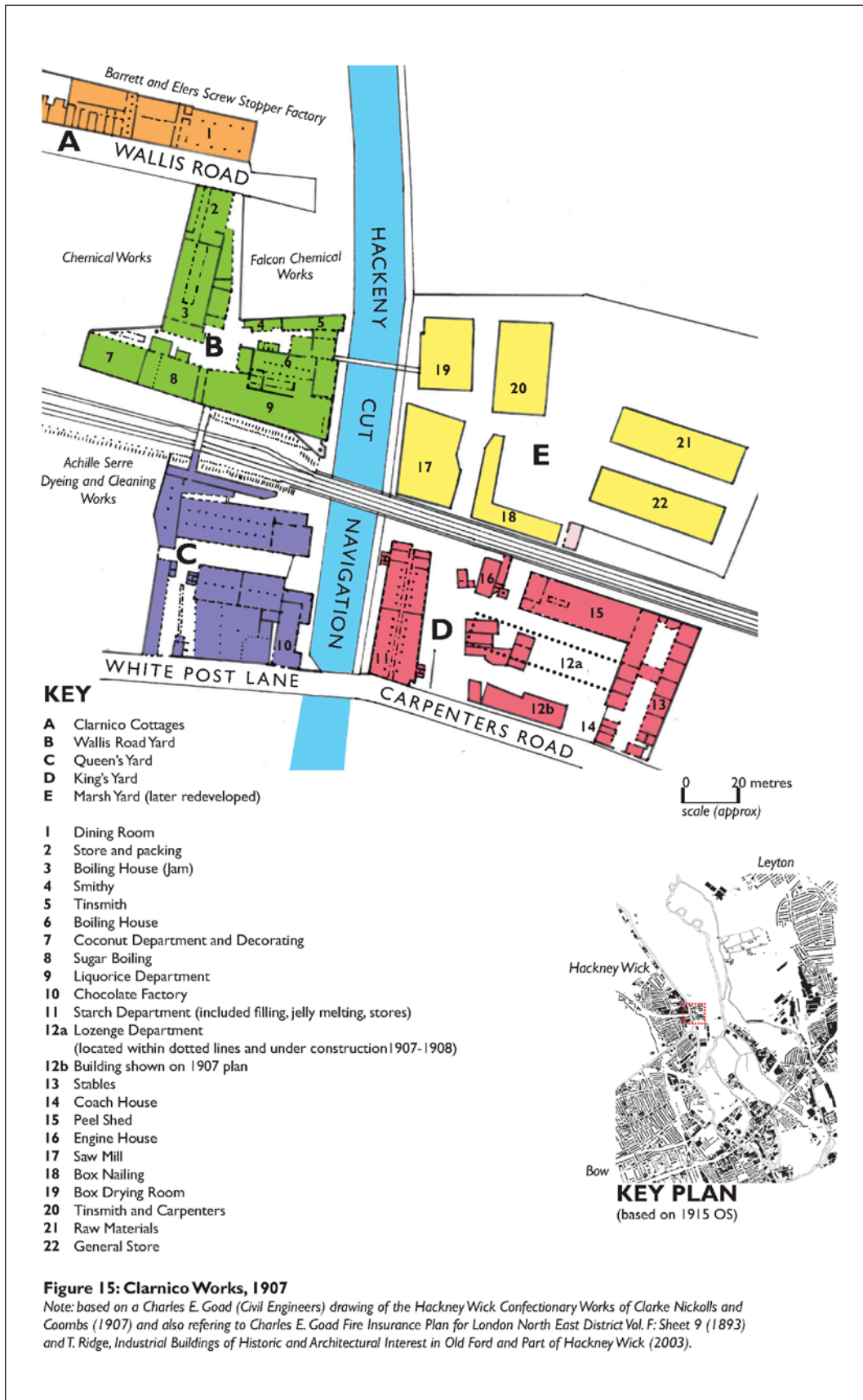


Figure 1.15  
Clarnico Works, based on a drawing titled 'Clarke, Nickolls and Coombs Ltd, Hackney Wick Confectionary Works' by the office of Charles E Goad, 1907

Figure 1.16  
These images, top and  
bottom, are of manu-  
facturing processes at  
Clarnico, 1907.





pattern of industrial development across the site reflected continuity from the 1890s – with large tracts of open marsh still visible – areas such as Carpenters Road had generally become more densely built up as new firms arrived and others noticeably expanded. This density is indicated in Figure 1.17, which shows the accretive urban grain of Carpenters Road in 1921. There was also new development, such as along the east side of the Hackney Cut Navigation (Fig 1.18) and to the north-east, where the Temple Mills wagon works and marshalling yards expanded towards the marshes.

By the 1920s, the range of industries reflected a combination of continuity and change from the 1890s. This occurred as the many established firms remained in the area but also as the site and the Lea Valley more generally ‘represented the natural line of expansion for firms [already situated] in the Victorian belt of London’, offering more space at a lower cost.<sup>35</sup> The result was that though noxious industry, including manufactures of chemicals, oil, colours, print inks, soap, tallow, candles, cattle dealers and fat contractors still predominated, there were also more engineering firms, timber yards, packaging and food-related businesses. Figure 1.19 shows the

interior of T H Harris & Sons’ soap, bone and tallow works – an established firm that clearly expanded and survived well into the 20th century. Figure 1.20 shows part of the interior of Yardley’s factory on Carpenters Road. Yardley moved to the area in 1905, and soon expanded.

This process and pattern of gradual transformation continued throughout the interwar period. Firms that departed included some of the chemical industries, and those now outmoded by new technologies, such as candle manufacturing. The growth of printing ink manufacturing, along with printing and publishing, reflected the expansion of managerial and administrative functions in the City and also decentralisation trends in the printing industry.<sup>36</sup> Arrivals from the late 1930s to the 1950s also included firms setting up to the north of the site, which had hitherto been undeveloped. This included furniture, shoe and clothing businesses, which were important ‘old’ industries of east London in Hall’s analysis. The arrival of furniture firms reflected patterns of wider decentralisation out of cramped workshops in the East End, though clothing and footwear generally remained rooted here.<sup>37</sup> The modernist Yardley Box Factory constructed on Warton Road in 1937 was indicative

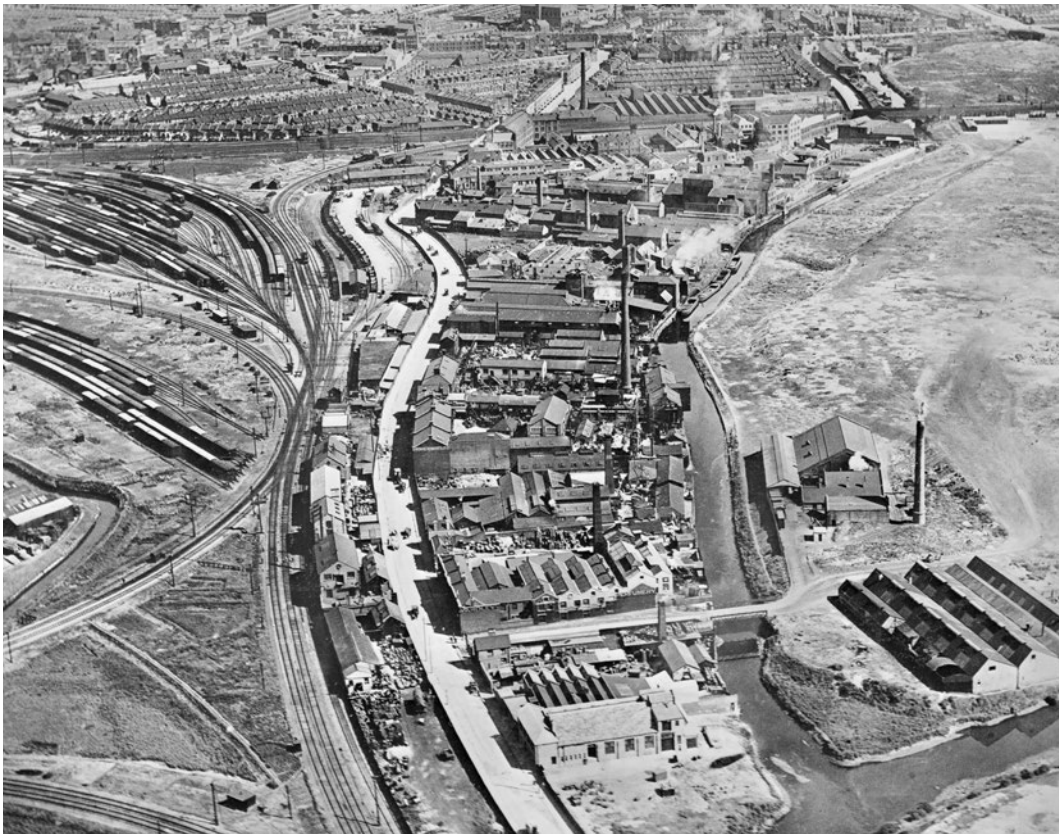


Figure 1.17  
Carpenters Road and  
environs, Stratford, 1921



Figure 1.18  
*The Clarnico Works,  
Hackney Wick, 1921*

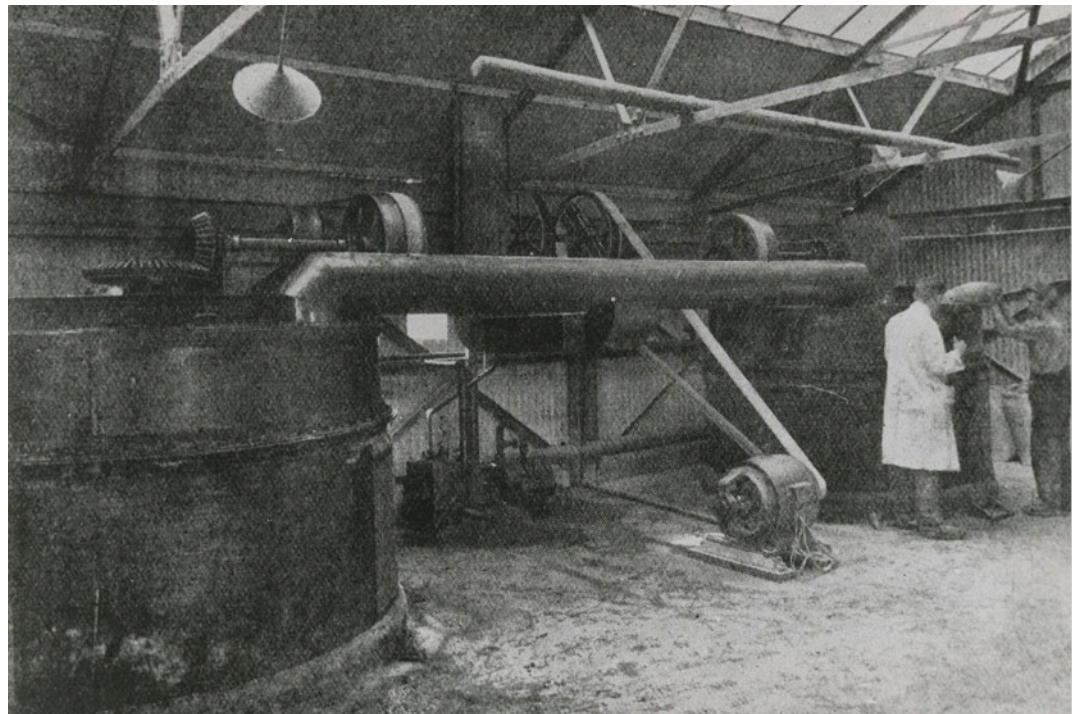


Figure 1.19  
*T H Harris & Sons' Tallow  
Treating Plant, 1927*





of the expansion of the sacking and packaging industry for manufactured goods.

The interwar years also marked the beginning of a new era of state-led improvement that impacted particularly on the waterways passing through the site and that sought to address public health issues. This came about as the tributaries of the River Lea, along which industries were distributed, became silted up and progressively more polluted, increasing flood risks and posing 'a serious menace to health' according to D McDougall, writing in the 1930s.<sup>38</sup> Following the passing of the River Lea (Flood Relief) Bill of 1930, works were carried out to widen, dredge and even divert parts of the courses of these rivers.<sup>39</sup> These also included the construction of new bridge and concrete walling to the sides of all waterways, except parts of the Old River Lea itself, and were complete by 1935 (Fig 1.21). Under the same legislation, road widening works were carried out to Stratford High Street along the site's southern edge between 1932 and 1939. Thus, while the site was

shaped by continuing capitalist logics and there was clearly a great deal of pride in the strength of the manufacturing industry in West Ham locally, interventions also reflected an increasing desire to temper the effects of industrialisation through public investment. These works of civil engineering, legacies of local government intervention, are still visible today.

Patterns of industrial change, including the decentralisation of some industries in the interwar period, informed the strategy developed by regional planner Patrick Abercrombie for London's post-War future. In his *Greater London Plan* of 1944, the beginnings of a way of viewing industry in the Lea Valley as historical and residual rather than strategic for London and of endeavouring to absorb unruly 'London over the border' into the main body of the metropolis are apparent. Abercrombie here acknowledges the importance of industry in east London from the perspective of employment, but clearly looks to its relocation closer to the border of the area designated to become Greater London. He advocates

Figure 1.20  
Yardley's Talcum Powder  
Filling Department, 1927



Figure 1.21  
View showing industrial  
development between  
the curve of Carpenters  
Road and Waterworks  
River, and concrete walling  
to the edges of the  
waterways, 1948



a ban on 'new industry and the expansion of existing concerns within the Region', and argues for the greening of the Lea Valley and the dispersal of noxious industries 'as in the West Ham district' to where, he argues, they would have less impact on Londoners' quality of life.<sup>40</sup> The approach is summed up in his 'Lee Valley' plan, within the broader *Greater London Plan*, which proposes that industry would be contained within particular areas while public open spaces would be enhanced and connected to form a 'green wedge' of amenities. These spaces would, in turn, help to bind the urban areas to either side of the valley, which would now all lie within Greater London. The plan reflects the valley's historical hybridity in juxtaposing green space and industry and yet, at the same time, endeavours to impose a new rationality upon it, to tidy it up and control its future development.

Heavy bombing during the Second World War created an important motivation for planning on this scale. And yet, over the following decades into the 1970s, the reconstruction, redevelopment and industrial relocation process did not unfold quite as Abercrombie foresaw. Clarnico was particularly hard hit during the Second World War, leading to the destruction of several of its buildings west of the Hackney Cut and the redevelopment of its Marsh Yard site to form a modern factory, completed in 1955 (and which survived in adapted form until 2006 as the East Cross Centre). A few buildings in yards off Marshgate Lane and Carpenters Road were also ruined and reconstructed on a building-by-building basis. Infill development north of Stratford High Street generally coincided with the arrival of new industries. The area devoted to railway activities grew in the 1950s – the Stratford Works expanded north from its original





Figure 1.22  
The J Gliksten & Son Ltd  
timber yard on Carpenters  
Road and environs,  
Stratford, from the  
south, 1949

locomotive building works, and the Marshgate railway sidings also swelled. An impression of the site in 1949 is given in Figure 1.22 and a map of the site in the early 1950s shown in Figure 1.23. The aerial photograph focuses on the J Gliksten & Son Ltd timber yard on Carpenters Road and shows the Clarnico buildings just above this and the Stratford Works to the right.

In 1963, under the Local Government Act, the conurbation of Greater London was officially recognised and this led to the creation of a new local government structure for the capital in the form of the Greater London Council (GLC), taking effect in 1965. This shifted the position of the Lea Valley relative to city limits, and transformed it in the process into a new kind of periphery – a partly open, partly industrial ‘edge’ within the city. The site now lay fractured across the boundaries of four London borough planning authorities and was

at the same time subject to the GLC’s strategic urban planning. *The Greater London Development Plan: Report of Studies* of 1969, produced under Conservative rule at the GLC, highlights a decline in manufacturing employment in London between 1961 and 1966, related to such factors as decentralisation and the migration of ‘skilled workers’ to the new and expanding towns in Hertfordshire and Essex. However, it also draws attention to the strong demand for industrial space and low levels of unemployment in east London at this time, with almost half the population of the ‘Outer North-East’ of London (including the former Essex borough of West Ham) being employed in manufacturing. Unlike the approach contained in the Abercrombie report of a quarter of a century earlier, it places ‘emphasis on economic growth’ over the more ‘social’ objectives of decentralisation and the regulation of land supply for industry and



Figure 1.23  
Map of the site in  
the early 1950s

commerce.<sup>41</sup> The growth in the railways and industry across the site during the 1960s can be understood in this new liberal context, as can the expansion of the kinds of processes that gave Stratford its 'stinky' reputation locally.

But within 15 years of the GLC's analysis and strategy, the London Docks had closed, largely as a result of the containerisation of shipping. Between 1967 and 1981, more than 150,000 jobs in port and related activities disappeared in east London. The railways industry, particularly traditional goods handling, was heavily impacted. Sidings in Stratford were transformed into container terminals which, along with diesel engine repairs, continued in operation until the 1990s. The Temple Mills marshalling yards, however, closed in 1983, after being remodelled to cope with freightliner wagons. The Chobham Farm container terminal and adjacent Midland

Cold Storage depot (still on the site in 2006) formed the focus of the 1972 'Chobham Farm pickets', one of the most prominent industrial strikes by unionised labour of the 1970s, led by five dockers.<sup>42</sup>

Between 1975 and 1982, Greater London as a whole suffered as a result of what geographer Ian Hamilton describes as an 'unprecedented 60 [per cent] decline in factories employing less than 20 people'.<sup>43</sup> Many industries on the site departed in the 1970s, reflecting the impacts of recession as well as the broader failure of British manufacturing in the post-war era. The list included Clarnico, all the soap manufacturers, furniture producers and many of the print ink manufacturers.

According to economic sociologist Gavin Poynter, writing in the mid-1990s, parts of east London were indeed transformed into 'an industrial wasteland' offering a 'bleak picture' in the context of high levels of unemployment.<sup>44</sup> This occurred at the same time as the massive expansion of financial and business services informed the development of the Docklands project on the Isle of Dogs. However, there is little indication of extensive building vacancy or dereliction across our site in the years between 1970 and 1990. Rather, a shift to smaller and more varied firms occurred in the wake of some of the larger industries. These included construction (materials supply and some manufacturing), creative industries, waste and recycling and car repairs. The range also reflected some continuity with the past, including furniture making, chemicals, printing, clothing manufacture and food businesses. By 1990, only one fuel and chemicals firm remained on Marshgate Lane, whereas in 1940, 30 per cent of firms had been in fuels or chemicals. Those that remained reflected not just the vestiges of old industry but, as Poynter puts it, an important 'strand of resilience which ... ensured that east London [remained] a centre of manufacturing industry in the south-east of England', even in the context of widespread decline and the massive loss of riverside jobs.<sup>45</sup>

Small firms occupied buildings vacated by larger firms, producing the range of juxtapositions of architecture, trades and professions still evident in 2006. As a result of the life and jobs they brought, supporting and boosting the appeal of the area for such firms became a focus of local planning policy in the 1980s and early 1990s. Reflecting this, the Carpenters Business Park and Bow Industrial Park (Royal Opera House workshops, shown on page 88, was



here), both in Tower Hamlets, were developed to provide industrial units to modern standards in the 1990s. Similar development also occurred in Newham, such as at the Marshgate Trading Estate, where the firm H Forman & Son (shown on page 117) was based. These relatively small-scale projects, which emphasised the role of local start-ups as drivers of regeneration, contrasted with the large-scale, comprehensive redevelopment of the London Docklands from the early 1980s, championed by the Conservative Thatcher government. This was aimed at enticing the expanding financial services industry into east London but has often been seen to have failed to generate employment opportunities for people impacted by industrial decline or to support local entrepreneurial activity.<sup>46</sup>

Poynter argues that one of the problems of decline in east London was that it tended 'to obscure from view a rich past with illustrations of industrial innovation and social change'.<sup>47</sup> This remained obscured from view in the context of the official accounts of the site at the time of the CPO that this chapter began by discussing, which focused on decline and propagated a view of the site as perpetual problem-place of little historic value – as a landscape without future.

## An urban edgeland

In contrast, the research for this chapter has endeavoured to do something different, beginning by relooking at the site at the time of the CPO in closer detail, in terms of its different uses, textures and environments. This has revealed a landscape that, far from being flat, lifeless or homogeneous – a wasteland – was occupied by diverse industries and other uses. Many of these uses were associated with forms of social and/or economic marginality, aggregating here at the seams of four London boroughs. Industrial spaces were filled with the materials, equipment, artefacts and by-products of production. The landscape was shaped through time, accumulating the traces and evidence of earlier eras. It was, rather than a wasteland, an edgeland, developing and evolving at the changing boundaries between different ownerships and authorities and between the forms of freedom and control, and of inclusion and exclusion that these limits implied.

The research has revealed a 'historic landscape' as defined by geographer Mike Crang.<sup>48</sup> Heritage, for Crang, denotes those spaces of the past that acquire legitimacy through 'the privileging of an academic gaze'. By contrast, 'historical landscapes', or palimpsests, are replete in his analysis with 'traces' of different sorts, including 'redundancy, obsolescence and irrationalities – things that remain as a mark: the burden of the past or an inheritance, depending on your point of view'.<sup>49</sup> Historic landscapes may fail to conform to aesthetic norms in planning and architecture and often retain a sense of incompleteness and openness to interpretation. The Olympic site, as has been shown, could be seen as a place of uncomfortable social history, environmental and human exploitation, entrepreneurial spirit, social reform and intervention, unplanned urbanisation and the product of a transforming economy.

Perhaps more importantly, this chapter has shown what is lost in the process of comprehensive redevelopment. Regeneration, as architectural historian and theorist Ben Campkin writes, 'has consistently been envisioned through representational strategies that seek to detach and decontextualise places from their existing histories, identities and communities'.<sup>50</sup> Here, indeed, redevelopment involved erasing the built environment as existing at the time of the CPO, but also all the ways in which this was a product and reflection of the past.

Edgelands are seen to be particularly prone to such representational strategies. In her essay *Edgelands*, planner and environmental activist Marion Shoard argues that this reflects a widespread failure to appreciate or represent their qualities, characteristics and histories. She encourages creative practitioners of all kinds, including architects and planners, to consider possibilities for representing them, awakening wider interest and transforming perceptions.<sup>51</sup> 'It is time', she writes, 'for the edgelands to get the recognition that Emily Brontë and William Wordsworth brought to the moors and mountains and John Betjeman to the suburbs'.<sup>52</sup>

Through documentary photography, this is precisely what the *Dispersal* archive does – encouraging its viewers to be moved by and to find beauty in an industrial place. We turn to it now in Chapter 2.