

Around the Corner

Framework Document ~ Sanaa Asim

Around the Corner is a research and design project that gets young people engaged in the design of their local built environment, through a series of hands-on workshops. These workshops utilised bespoke methods that forge a link between their tacit and embodied knowledge of public spaces, specifically in Southwark, and a finalised design for new public seating in Peckham.

Ostensibly, public spaces are for everyone. However, teenagers make up one of the most frequent users of public spaces¹ - yet are rarely considered in the design and planning process. In fact, they are actively excluded from the public realm, through language, their lack of spending power and the criminalisation of their behaviour. This exclusion of teenagers from public spaces has a profound effect on their self-development, reduces their autonomy and their mobility, leading to feelings of isolation and alienation, a lack of confidence, and increased feelings of fear.

Abstract

Children, including teenagers, are often considered an indicator species for the health of cities². Thus, the importance of this matter is not ignored, but to date, it has been addressed from a criminological perspective, where reducing youth crime is the main goal³. Another approach focuses on the tensions and social relations between different users, honing in on the micro-geographies and territories that emerge out of these relations⁴.

ATC addresses the lack of focus on the lived experiences of young people in the public realm, and how that could influence the design of these spaces in the first place. Thus our main research question is "How might we involve teenagers in the design of public spaces?". Drawing on our understanding of "tacit knowledge"⁵ and "embodied knowledge"⁶, we sought to bridge the gap between the lived experience of teenagers and the design of the spaces they use. We developed a series of methods that aim to not only provide a link to this knowledge, which is difficult to access verbally, but also to translate it into a design for a real public space.

ATC achieved this through a series of 9 workshops, involving a total of 75 participants aged 10-19. We iteratively developed a set of 6 spatial-based methods, that together, can be assembled to form a cohesive design process. We used these methods to run a 4-week long series of after school clubs we ran with local secondary school students, during which they designed a new set of public seating

for The Hub, a new UAL building in Peckham.

Our findings can be divided into two categories. First, those findings relating to young people's lived experience of the public realm. We discovered that many of our participants were averse to spaces designed specifically for teenagers, which had the effect of cordoning them off from the rest of the public realm, denying them the spatial autonomy they need to develop their sense of self. Secondly, the methods we developed were not only effective, but able to be adapted to different groups and projects.

The results of this project signify a clear place for embodied methods of engagement within the urban design and planning fields. Rather than criminalising their presence, working with young people can generate exciting public spaces for everyone, which clearly reflect their wants and needs.

1. P.Travou : 2008

2. Enrique Penalosa, Former Mayor of Bogota, 2014 (in Thomas-Bailey, C.:2014)

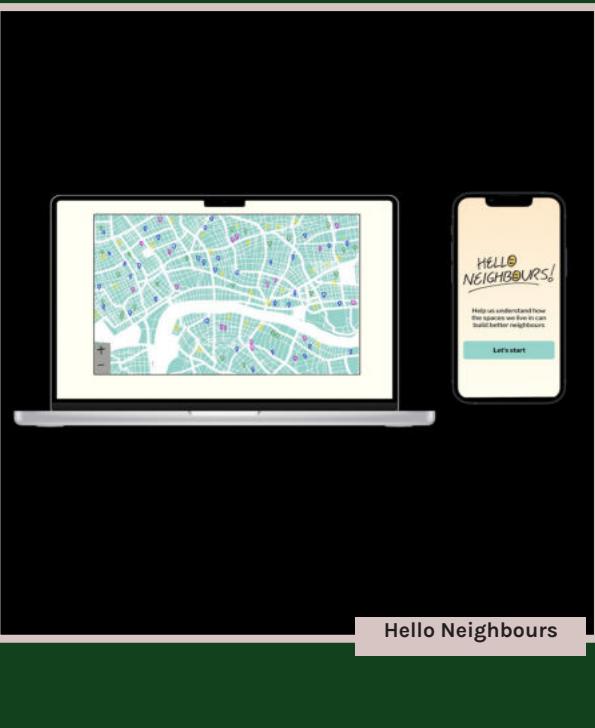
3. Collins and Kearns: 2001, Geason and Wilson: 1989

4. Matthews et al :1998

5. Knowledge that cannot be accurately articulate by verbal meansv(Polanyi : 1966)

6. Knowledge that resides in the body, but also knowledge that is gained through the body (Nagatomo : 1992)

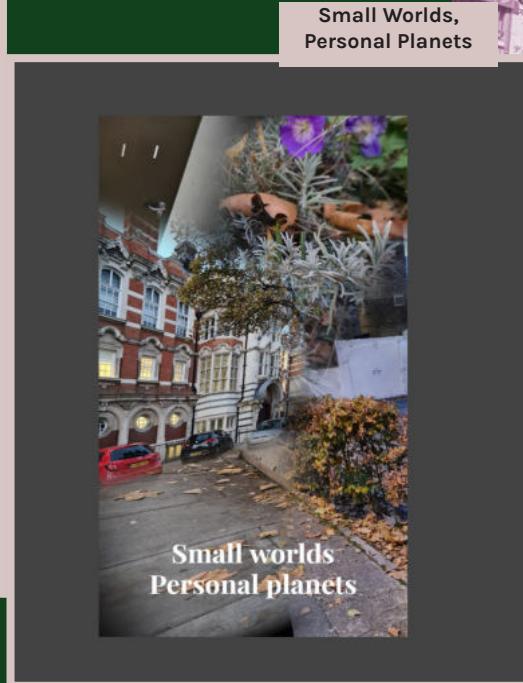
Previous Projects include:



Hello Neighbours

Hello Neighbours explored the impact of our shared spaces on our social relations.

Small Worlds, Personal Planets explored the individual relationship between the human body and its environment.



But how can we link the two?

How can our embodied experience of public spaces impact how we feel and engage with others in the spaces we use?

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The famous "Shibuya Scramble", nearly empty. During the height of the Covid-19 Pandemic, our mobility was severely restricted. It became apparent how vital our spatial autonomy is to our physical health.

Not everyone has the same access to public space, and thus spatial autonomy.

Teens are among the most neglected of these groups.

Around the Corner

by Sanaa Asim & Victor Hwang

The importance of public spaces to our communities and our sense of identity have, in recent years, been made ever more apparent, following the unprecedented restrictions of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

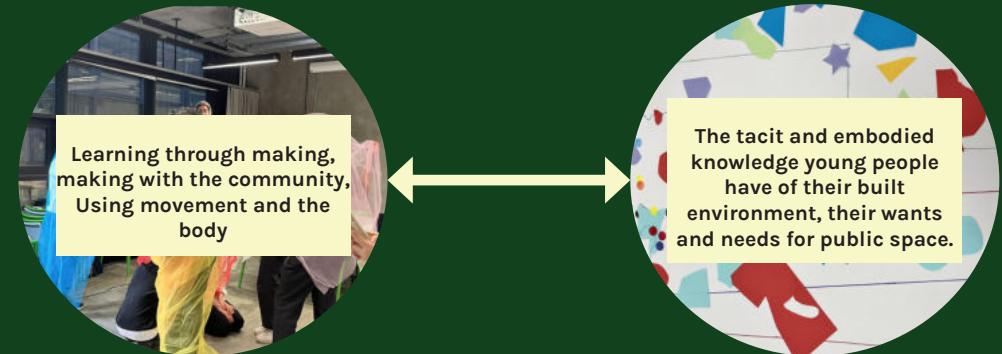
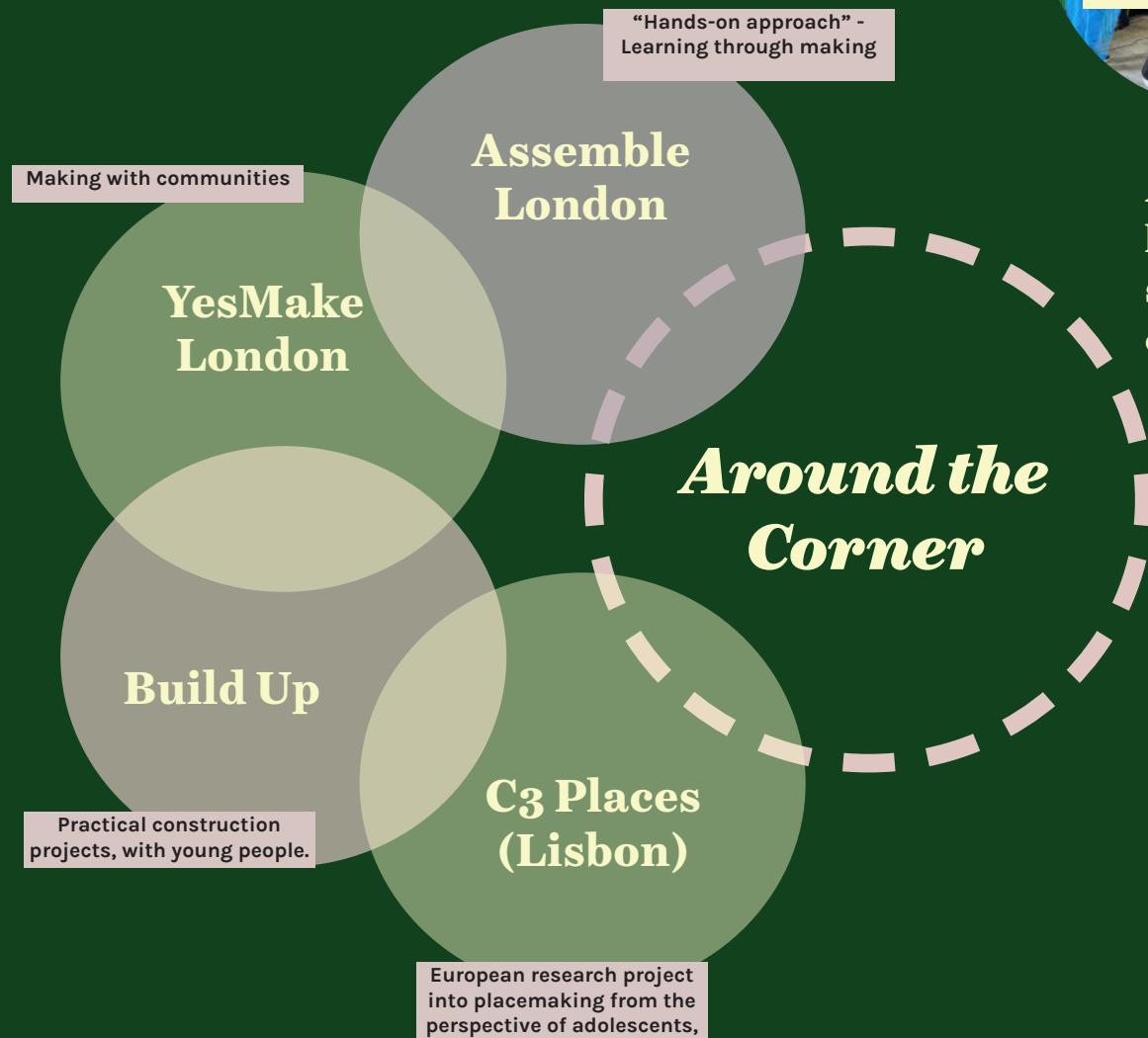
Yet even before the pandemic, young people¹ as a group have been constrained in their ability to access public spaces, in part due to their perception as “perpetrators of anti-social behaviour” (Brown, 2013).

Public spaces are a place of spatial autonomy for teenagers, away from parental control, somewhere for them to independently engage with the world. However, this autonomy has been decreasing since the 70s in the UK (Hillman, Adams and Whitelegg 1990; Greenfield et al. 2000). Recent government policy reflects this through an increased crackdown on anti-social behaviour in public places, with fast tracked criminal prosecution and increased police powers in public spaces (GOV UK, 2023).

Within this context, our project works with young people to investigate what public space is and could be. We give young people the tools to design public spaces, focusing on methods that get teenagers thinking spatially as quickly as possible. The main stage for this is our series of co-creation workshops with young people, creatively engaging with their locale and documenting their lived experiences of it.

1. For the sake of this project, we understood this as children aged 13-19, or teenagers.

Of course, we're not the only ones who involve communities in the design of the built environment through workshops.



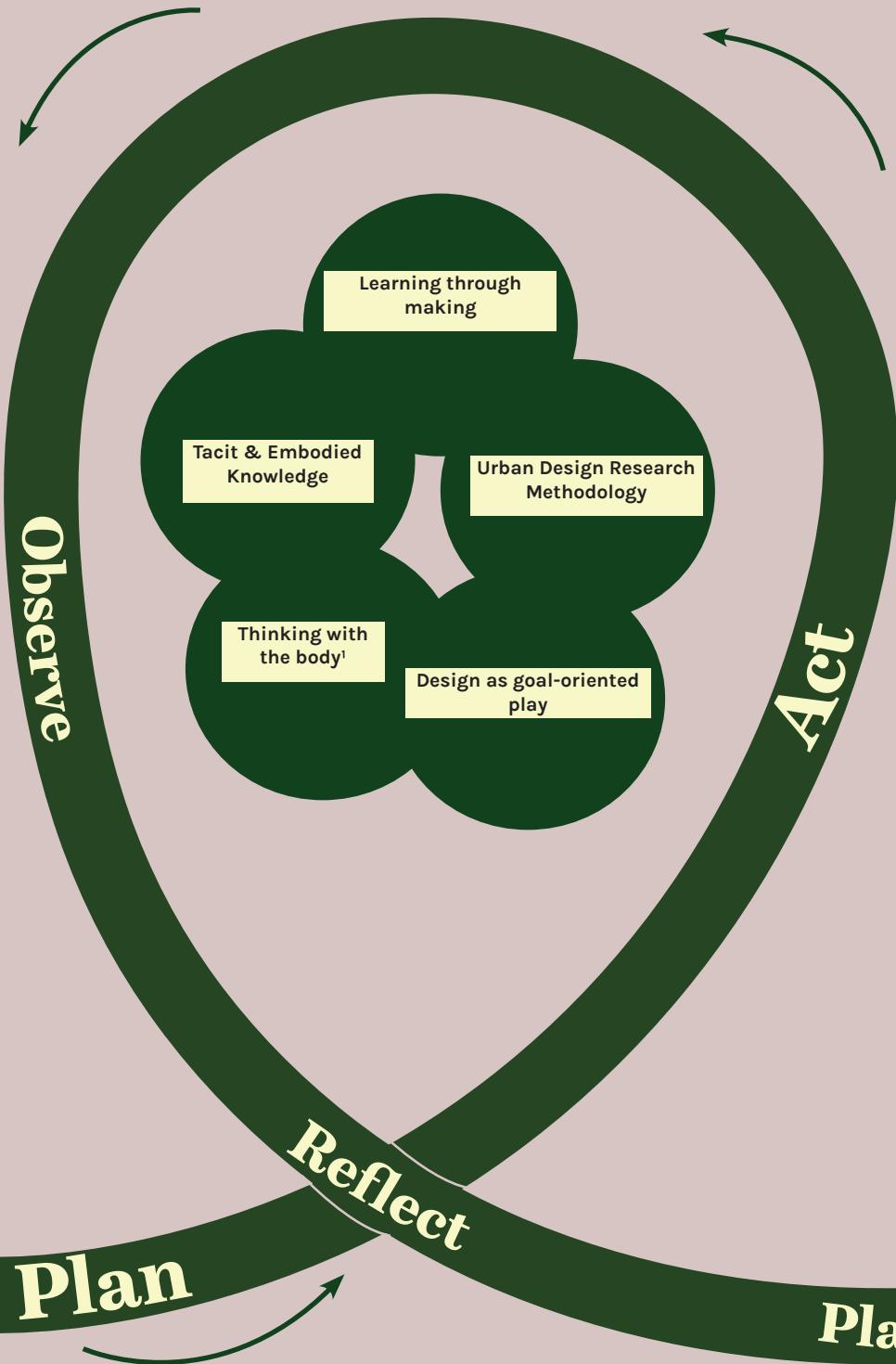
Around the Corner fills the gap between learning through physically making and the specific lived experience young people have of public spaces.

Key Terms:

Tacit knowledge: Tacit knowledge can be defined as skills, ideas and experiences that are possessed by people but are not codified and may not necessarily be easily expressed.

Action Research: A type of applied research designed to the most effective way to bring about a desired social change or to solve a practical problem, usually in collaboration with those being researched¹.

Embodied Knowledge: Knowledge that resides in the body, but also knowledge that is gained through the body.



References:

1. Kirsch : 2010
2. Bradbury : 2015

Following the Action Research methodology², we went through the cycle on the left a total of 9 times, across 9 workshops.

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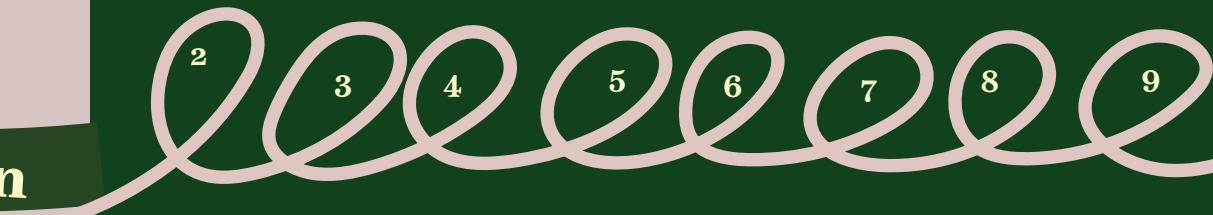
Plan: identifying goals for upcoming workshop

Act: trialling methods used to achieve said goals

Observe: Evaluating the effectiveness of said methods

Reflect: Analysing and organising findings, in order to implement in the Planning stage of the following workshop.

Throughout each cycle, we built on existing research across various disciplines, as seen in the centre of the diagram on the left.



Project Timeline

2022

> Project begins

> Pilot workshops take place

> Consultation workshop with Southwark Youth Parliament

October

November

February

March

April

May

> Held 1-day workshop with Kingston Foundation course students.

> 4 week long after-school workshops begin
> Workshop with Spring Community Hub

> After-school workshops wrap up
> Final design review & submission to the client

> Fabrication of final bench design, completed by the end of the month.

2023

The Process begins.

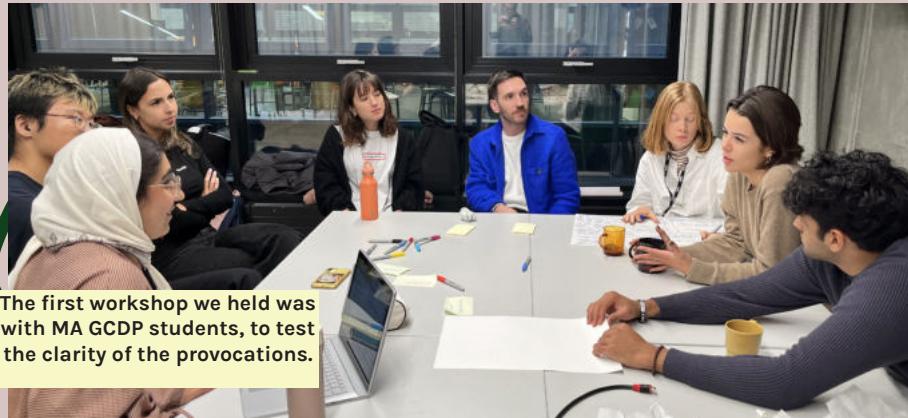
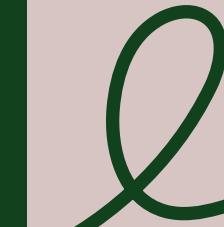
Our initial approach was to design spaces **for** teenagers. In order to do this, it was necessary to understand how teenagers perceive the public realm and their role within it.

We did through a series of one-off exploratory workshops that culminated in 1:1 scale prototyping to create a space that “**cultivates public life**”. This phrase, alongside the verb “**to loiter/loitering**” were our main provocations.

The reasoning behind this was that much of the language used in relation to teenagers and the public realm carries negative connotations, like that used in the new government policy – “blight”, “stain”(GOV UK, 2023). “Loitering” is one such word, however the definition¹ is by itself, quite innocent.

Using these two provocations, we asked participants to prototype their ideal public spaces, for a specified number of people (assigned randomly between 2-30) for a specified amount of time (between 3 minutes-3 hours).

This proved particularly useful in understanding the lived experiences of young people, and seeing how these experiences affected their designs. For example, we asked students to take photos of “good places to loiter” prior to the start of the workshops. They then referred back to these, and related them to their experiences in public spaces (e.g., the Southbank Centre) when discussing what actually makes a “good place to loiter”.



The first workshop we held was with MA GCDP students, to test the clarity of the provocations.



We had already decided that to get the participants' reactions to the provocations, we should keep the exercises simple and quick.



This meant simple materials too - namely, the participants bodies and fabric.

Workshop 2 Product & Furniture Design

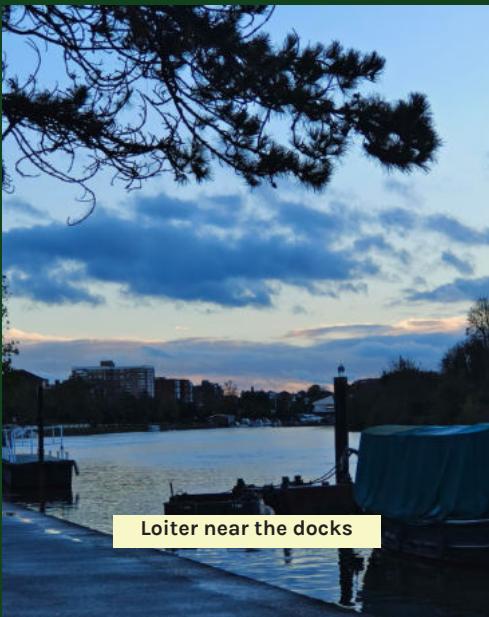


The second workshop built on feedback from the first, namely the vocabulary used and the order of the activities

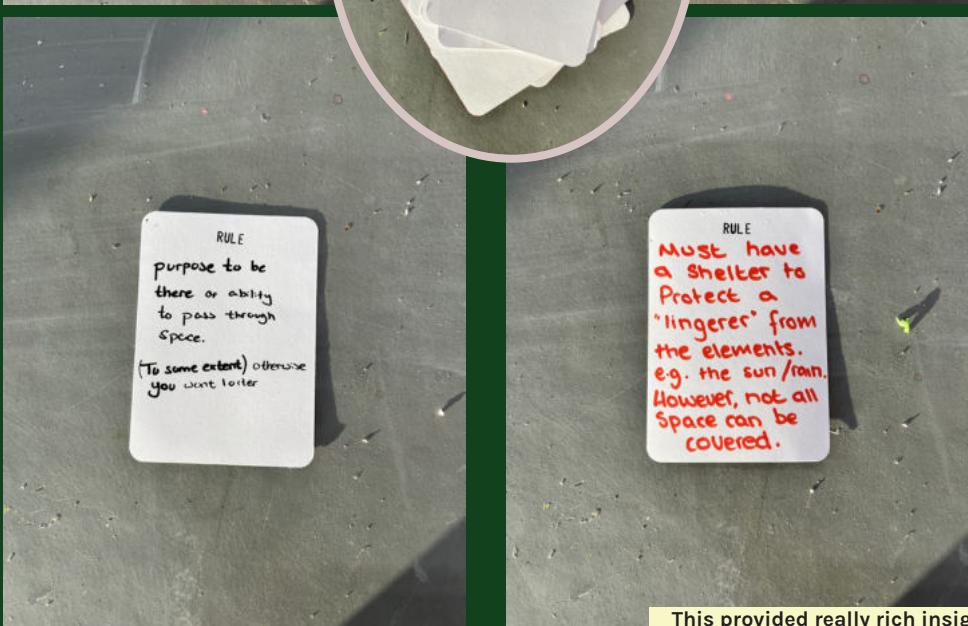
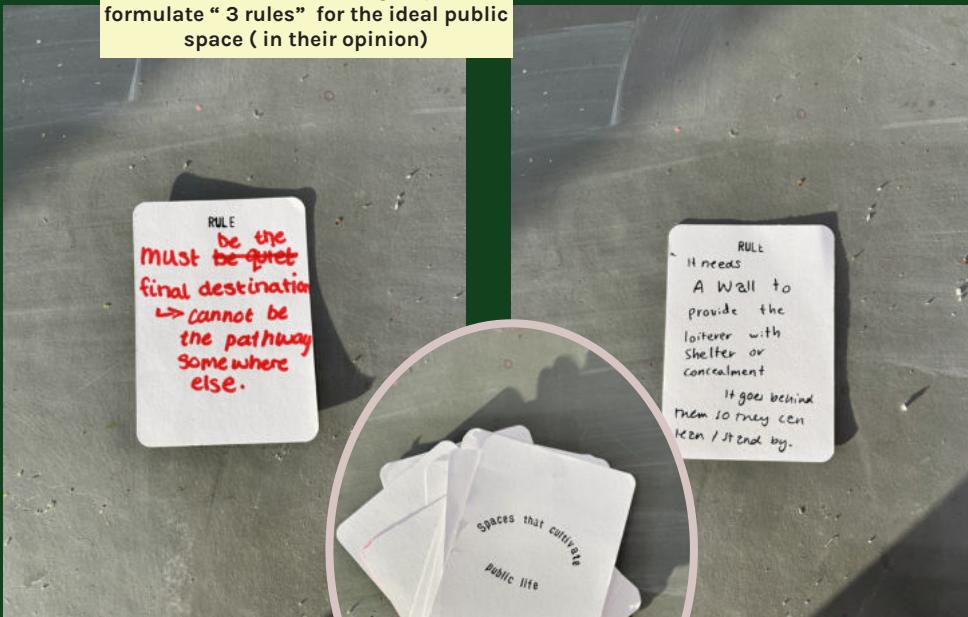
It also meant that we could test the workshop methods on people more in the target age range (~19 years old)



Workshop 3 Kingston Foundation



We then asked them in groups to formulate "3 rules" for the ideal public space (in their opinion)



This provided really rich insight into their experience of public space and elicited personal stories about times they enjoyed/disliked a particular

Workshop 3 Kingston Foundation



After the movement warm ups, we asked them to make rapid 1:1 prototypes only using fabric and their bodies

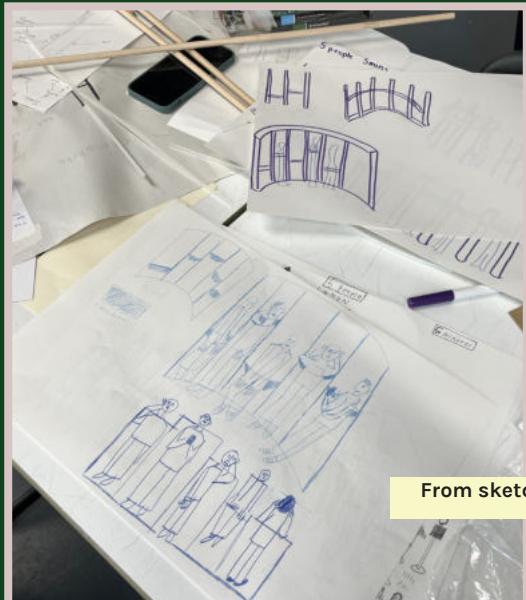


Placing this after the Provocation and discussion allowed them more time to think about the task, and elicited more varied ideas from previous workshops.

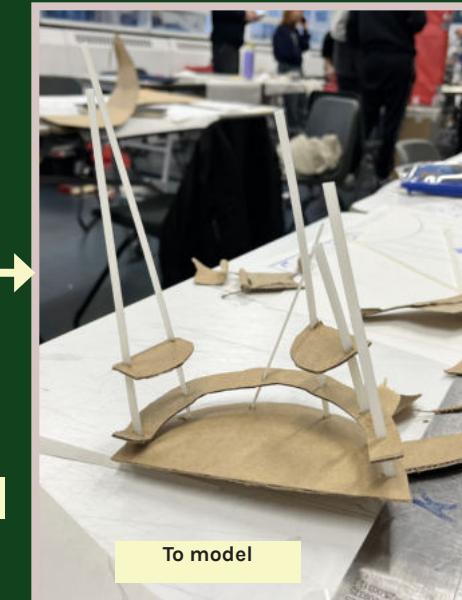


After the fabric prototypes, we asked them to create a space for “X amount of people, for X amount of time”.

They then built more focused prototypes using dowels and other materials.



From sketch



To model



to 1:1 scale Prototype!
This group was tasked to create a space for 5 people for 5 minutes.

In this workshop, we also had a group of “planners” to co-ordinate the final space across all groups. While this had potential, ultimately it only added confusion, so we didn’t utilise this activity again.



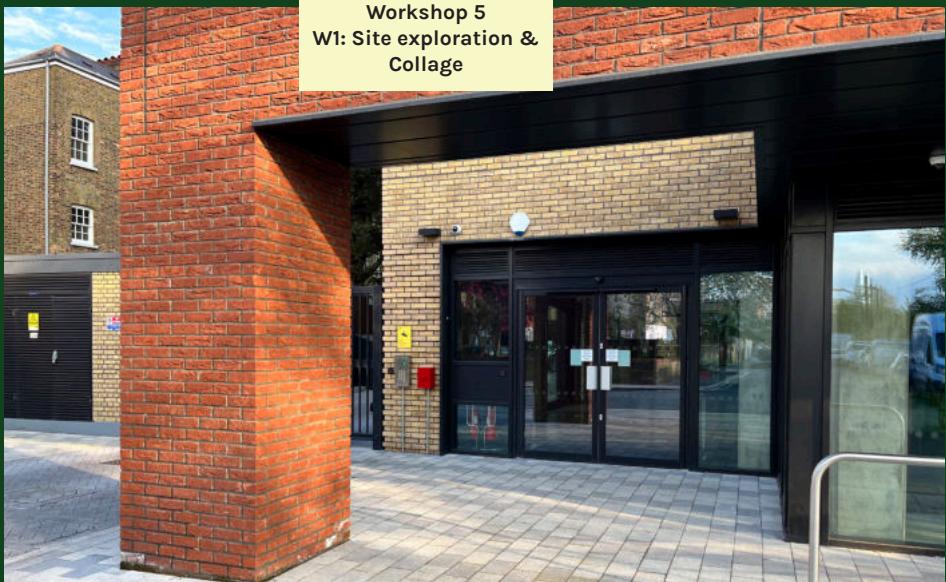
All groups ended by installing their prototypes in the car park outside, and presenting them to each other.

We found that our assumption that designing with teenagers would result in more public spaces for teenagers was ringing false. The teenagers in the Kingston workshop were much more inclined to design for the public, and when discussing their ideal public spaces, showed significant aversion to spaces that were presented as being specifically for teenagers.

This meant that we were presented with a problem – how do we design spaces specifically for teenagers if teenagers avoided spaces presented as such? From the photographic responses, there was a strong preference for informal spaces, places not necessarily built for spending time in. It is here that the power hierarchy embedded in the act of “loitering” becomes even clearer. On the one hand, by describing someone as “loitering”, you claim the right to the space, while proclaiming the other doesn’t have that same right. On the other hand, being where you are not supposed to also serves as a form of empowerment for young people, allowing them to distance themselves from the world of adults and “create their own ‘micro-geographies’ to regain spatial control”. (Matthews et al, 1998).

This prompted us to shift from “space for teenagers” to “space by teenagers”, giving full ownership of the design of a public space to a group of young people themselves. After some initial consultation with Southwark Youth Parliament, we achieved this through a series of 4 weekly co-creation workshops. These workshops guided teenagers from schools in the local area through an iterative design process. This culminated in a design for movable, modular seating for the front courtyard of The Hub at Eagle Wharf, a UAL building set to open in September 2023.





In collaboration with The Remakery, Brixton

THE REMAKERY

Our methodology for this second set of workshops echoes some of the first, particularly the 1:1 scale prototyping, however we found that enforcing this from the start can place barriers on their imagination and vision for the site. Instead we started by thinking spatially, but on different scales. In the first workshop, we used diagrammatic collage, inspired by “diagrammatic sketching” (Giseke et al:2020).



On top of a to-scale outline of the site layout, participants collaged shapes to represent their ideas for the space. In the second workshop, we transferred these ideas into small conceptual models. This allowed for a much more detailed analysis of the site and the ideas as we could explore these at an easily modifiable scale. We then increased the scale to 1:1, using a life-size model of the pillar on site to build around. The final workshop focuses on creating a working model to bring the design closer to reality. Throughout this process, we produced a set of **6 methods** that could be rearranged to form a cohesive design process – taking them from site exploration all the way to load-bearing prototypes.

Workshop 6 Spring Community Hub



We got the opportunity to run a workshop with a slightly younger age group. This was the perfect opportunity to test how smooth the transition from 2D (Collage) to 3D (small-scale models) was, and how intuitive the materials were to build with.



Some of the models made in the 2 hour session



Having the scale models of the site helped participants envision their models in situ



There was still a tendency to think practically, but through facilitation, we encouraged getting ideas out of heads, before thinking about whether they're feasible or not

We found that printing out different images of seating helped to guide the participants, who might otherwise be daunted at having to make something straight away. This participant was inspired by one of these images - a folding, lightweight stool.



We ended the session with a show and tell from each participant



Some participants started to make a whole suite of seating for the site!



Workshop 8: W3: 1:1 Spatial Prototyping



They would then have to begin making 1:1 prototypes of these designs. There were a few clashes of ideas, but the participants were able to work through this with little input from us. Mainly the constraints meant that their options were limited and NOW they had to think practically.



This is where things started to get exciting - we split them into 2 groups and gave them some time to discuss and consolidate a single design per group! We also re-emphasised the constraints of the brief - that it must be modular and movable.



Of course, just because they envisioned it doesn't mean that it worked. Through prototyping, the participants quickly realised what didn't work, grabbing more chalk, cardboard and duct tape to make some quick alterations.

Now that's a design process!



Under watchful eye of the facilitators, we allowed them to use more tools to create what they envisioned.



The prototypes they made on this day were then stored away, alongside all the sketches, ready for the next week where they would translate these cardboard models into load-bearing, wooden prototypes



Time to build!



Victor and Ahimsa talking through some sketches on a piece of wood.



Callum, a facilitator, with the finished top of one of the prototypes



Since the aim was to make it load bearing, giving it enough support was key, as the participants are learning here.



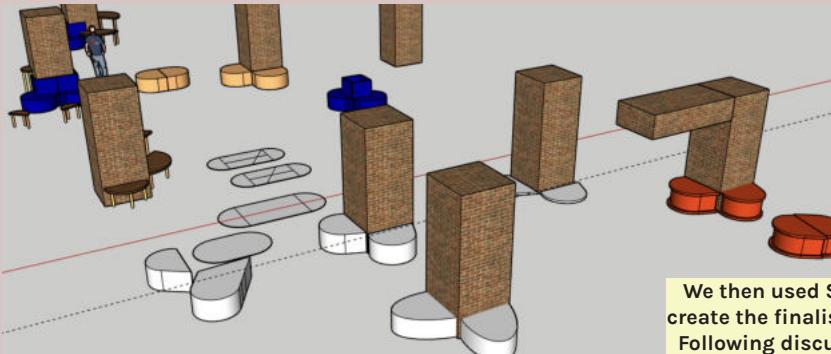
Tiffany learnt how to use a drill and was thrilled. By the end of the session, she could use it without assistance



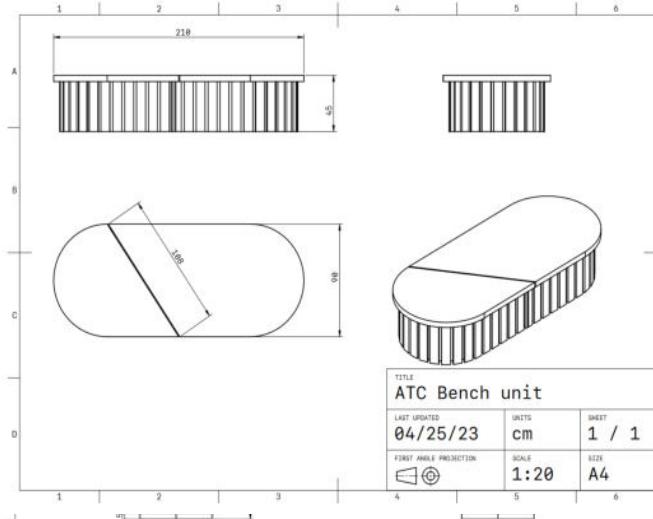
The final two prototypes:
On the far side of the makeshift "pillar" is a two tier seating/standing desk combo, ready for work or play.
The final two prototypes:
On the near side, is a curved "fidget spinner" shaped seat, with enough space for two - to sit together, or face away from

Workshop 9:
W4: Load bearing
Prototypes

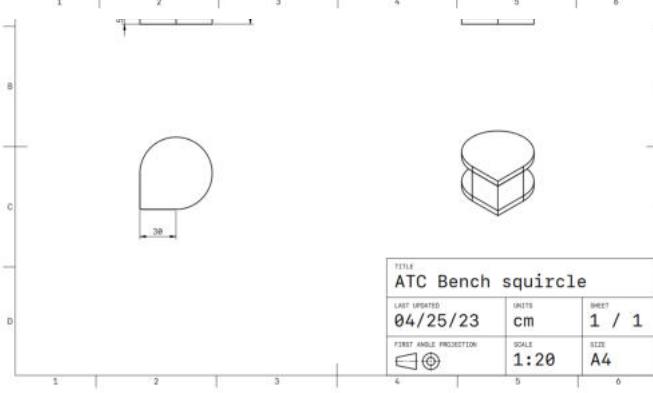
Outcome 1: The Bench (Final design)



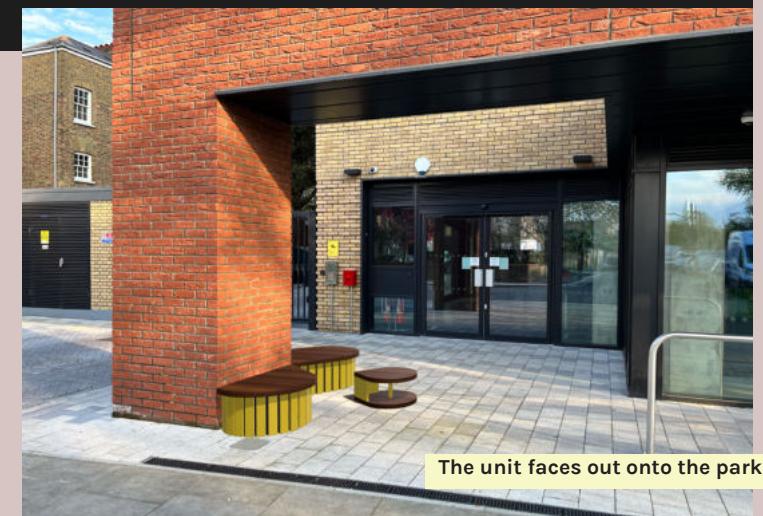
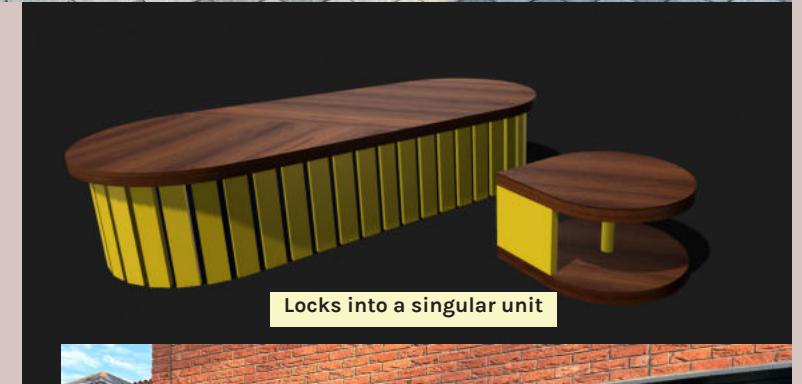
We then used SketchUp and Shapr 3D to create the finalised design and schematics. Following discussion with facilitators, we decided that the design would need to be modified, as the designs on the left, while they fulfill the brief, ended up looking quite phallic.



On the left are the plans for the final design. It consists of a pill-shaped unit, that divides across a diagonal into two different seats which are movable and can be positioned around the pillar. The diagonal cut allows for the seats to angle towards each other slightly, fulfilling the desire of the participants to create a space that can facilitate conversation.



The “squircle” shaped table is lightweight and can be used as an additional seat, providing even more possibilities for the site.



“Victor, Sanaa and Team listened to our requirements closely and ensured they had a proper understanding of the space and its limitations.



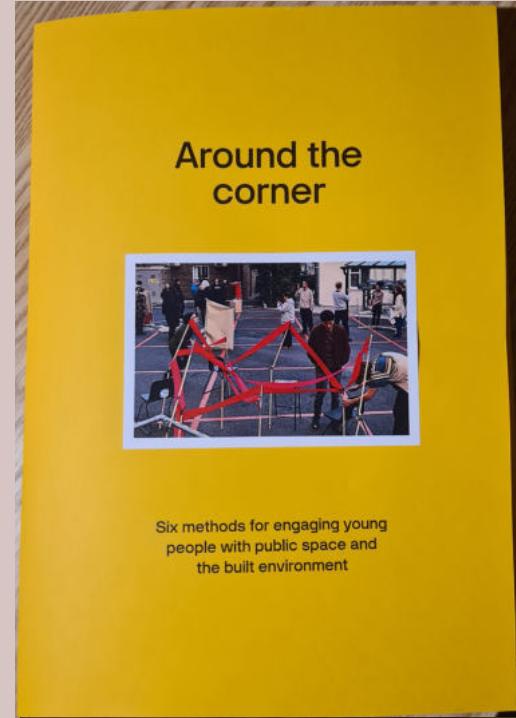
Hub Manager
The Hub, UAL

The proposed seating design is hugely impressive, a space that encourages collaboration and conversation and meets our sustainability and social purpose agenda.”

Following the workshops, Victor and I have created the final technical design and plan to build the final design alongside skilled woodworkers so that we can present at the opening of the Hub.

While the physical outcome of this project is the finished seating unit, the main outcome is the methodology we have developed out of the process of designing with teenagers. In particular, we found that by adapting the co-design process to a spatial context and using interdisciplinary research and workshop methods, we can encourage and prompt young people to think spatially about design from the start, and thus, meaningfully engage them in the spatial design process.

We were also pleased to hear the personal impact the process had on the participants, with one feedback being “it helped me feel confident to socialise with others”. This is also a very meaningful outcome of the project as it helped create a sense of community amongst the participants themselves.



Outcome

2:

Methods Pack

Collaborative mapping

Get young people discussing their lived experience of public space by planning a walk through the local area



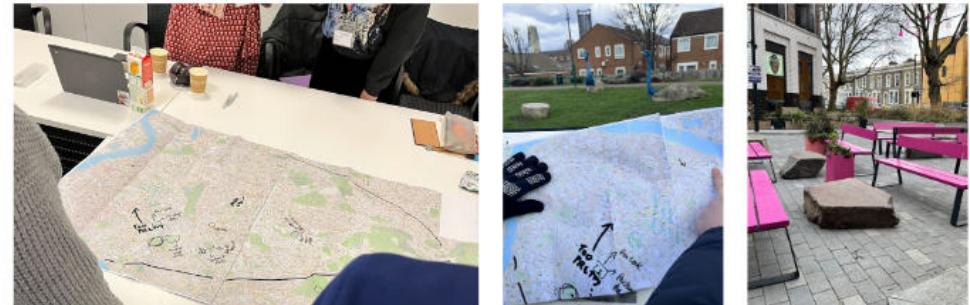
Why use it

Build a rich picture of young people's current experience and opinions of the built environment

Ground discussion in lived experience: the map helps participants recall specific examples to illustrate their thoughts and opinions

Planning a walk encourages the group to hone in on the most relevant local examples of good and bad public space

Collaborative mapping - Facilitation guide



Collaborative mapping at Southwark Youth Parliament, the map in use on the walk and a space that was highlighted

MATERIALS

- Large printed map of the local area
- Thick pens
- Dot stickers

TIPS

- Draw on the map to break the tension and encourage others to do the same!
- This method is all about the discussion it generates. Leave space and time for this to evolve naturally, and encourage it by asking probing questions.
- Encourage dissenting opinions about a space - this discussion can help uncover people's core values about public space.

METHOD

Part 1- Mapping (45 mins)

- Get everyone to stand around the map with a pen.
- Have the group find and mark the workshop location, and allow some time for everyone to familiarise themselves with the map.
- When everyone's ready, ask a question related to their experience of public space that can be answered with the map - this could be where they spend time, places that could provide inspiration for good public space, or places they think could be improved.
- Encourage them to mark the locations that come to mind using dot stickers and add notes using the thick pens.
- If there's time, another prompt can be given with the responses marked using a different colour.
- Collectively plan a walk through the locations that best illustrate what's important to the group in public space. If you're feeling stuck, ask each participant to mark the most important location to visit for research on the map and use these as a starting point.

Part 2 - Walking (optional - half a day)

This part can either be conducted with a group of participants, or solely by the facilitators with findings reported back.

- Conduct the walk planned from part 1, pausing at each location to have a discussion about that space. Why is this an example of good or bad public space? Take photos and notes to document responses to each space.
- Along the way you will probably spot spaces that weren't discussed that are still interesting to the group. Take a moment to discuss these spaces too!
- If doing the walk without participants, make sure to wrap up your findings and send a brief report back to the participants to thank them and tell them what you found.

4 to 30 participants · 20 mins

On-site movement

Warm participants up to the site, each other and get everyone thinking with their bodies



Why use it

Rapidly build a shared understanding of the site and wider context the intervention will be situated in

Break the ice between participants by getting everyone moving and forming groups spontaneously

Frame the rest of the workshop by getting participants thinking spatially and in terms of movement early on

On-site movement - Facilitation guide



An adapted version of the 'Becoming furniture' activity using fabric with people's bodies as material

MATERIALS

- Fabric (optional)

TIPS

- You'll need to get stuck in and involved to help people get over the fear of looking silly! Once everyone's past that it's much more enjoyable and you'll have better results
- A good follow-on activity from this involves giving each group a length of fabric and some slightly more involved prompts
- During the 'becoming furniture' activities give everyone a moment to see what everyone else has done.
- Before going back inside for other activities, encourage everyone to have a final look around the site.

ACTIVITY 1 - SITE WALK (2 MINS)

This activity gets everyone familiar with the site boundaries, and a sense for how it can accommodate different densities of people.

- Stand on the edge of the site equal distance from each other
- Have everyone slowly walk in to form a circle with each person nearly touching the next
- Turn around and slowly walk back out to the edge

ACTIVITY 2 - FLOCKING (3 MINS)

This activity gets everyone moving at different speeds and experiencing different areas of the site

- Get everyone to stand in an open space on the site
- Tell them to secretly choose two other people - it doesn't matter who!
- Say 'When I say go, you must get yourself an equal distance between the two people you chose...keep moving until you are an equal distance. Go!'
- Stop the activity when the group reaches an equilibrium, which'll likely take just a few minutes.

ACTIVITY 3 - BECOMING FURNITURE (10 MINS)

This activity gets everyone thinking spatially and using their bodies to consider furniture and its proportions

- Tell everyone to find an open space again. Firstly, they should turn themselves into a chair, using their body as the 'material'.
- Then, get them to find someone else to make a piece of furniture together. It could be a bench, table, etc.
- Then, tell everyone to get into a group of 4 and create something larger still - eg: a shelter.

Feel free to adjust the prompts to make them more relevant to your workshop goals.

4 to 6 participants · 1 hour

Provocation + response

Encourage participants to push beyond the obvious by providing provocations and encouraging collective responses



Why use it

Kickstart discussion with a provocation that has participants re-examine the everyday

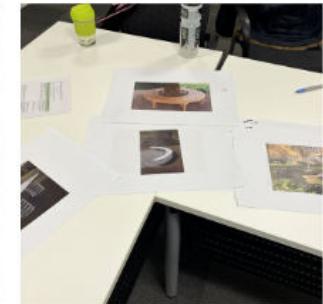
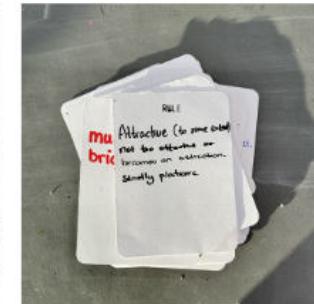
Unpack public space as something which isn't neutral and investigate its underlying politics

Get groups to generate design prompts for their use later in the workshop

Provocation + response - Facilitation guide



'Rules for...' groups in discussion and outcome



King of the benches

MATERIALS

- Large paper
- Thick pens
- Index cards
- Printed photos (optional)

TIPS

- If running this activity with lots of groups, hop between the tables to push discussion forward. Encourage them to be as specific as possible in the language they're using.
- This method, especially in the 'King of X' version, is valuable because of the discussion generated. Because of this having a note taker alongside the facilitator is very helpful!

This is a very flexible method. You'll want to adapt the provocations you used based on your workshop goals. The key is to provide participants with something specific to push against, to generate interesting discussion. Below are two examples to start from.

EXAMPLE 1 - RULES FOR X

- Brief participants the week before the workshop to take photos of public space in response to a provocation. For example, we've used 'A good place to loiter' successfully. Print their responses out for the workshop.
- In the groups, have participants discuss their photos. What do they have in common? What are some features of the spaces captured? Encourage them to make notes as they discuss on the paper.
- Give each group ~10 mins to create three 'rules' based on their discussion. This should be closely related to the discussion they've been having, but can be gently re-framed to push the discussion further. For example, we asked them to create three rules for 'spaces that cultivate public life'.
- Have each group share their rules back to the group. These can be used to inform design activities, or used as criteria for assessing design ideas, later.

EXAMPLE 2 - KING OF X

- Print out ~12 images of versions of a thing related to public space. We used benches. Make sure they're varied but comparable.
- Show the participants 3 of the photos at a time. Facilitate a discussion on which is the 'best' version of X. Ask why and encourage debate. After a couple of minutes, hold a vote on the 3 photos.
- In a final round, pit the winners from each round against each other. Crown the highest voted of the options the 'king' of X.

4 to 20 participants · 1 hour

Diagrammatic collage

Bring a playfulness to site planning with a generative method that encourages rapid iteration



Why use it

Get young people thinking in terms of people's needs and movement through the site before jumping to aesthetics

Generate a series of ideas which are easily comparable to one another, leading to fruitful discussion

Using collage encourages low-fidelity ideas and stops people getting too bogged down in detail too early on in the process

Diagrammatic collage - Facilitation guide



Final outcome from a diagrammatic collage activity

MATERIALS

- A few large cardboard templates of the outline of your site (Roughly A2)
- Coloured sugar paper
- Thick pens
- Large rolls of paper

TIPS

- It helps to either do this activity on site, or have photos and/or a 3D model of the site to help people contextualise the site outline they're working in.
- Cut some shapes out beforehand that are roughly the right size to show everyone.
- Give a strict time limit to this activity - it should be for unloading initial ideas which can be fleshed later!
- Some people will want to annotate their ideas, or even make 3D models. Don't stop them!

If possible, this method works best when everyone's together on one big table. Roll the paper out to cover the table.

If you've run some of the 'research' methods which have generated design prompts or discussion, remind participants of these and encourage them to have them in mind when working.

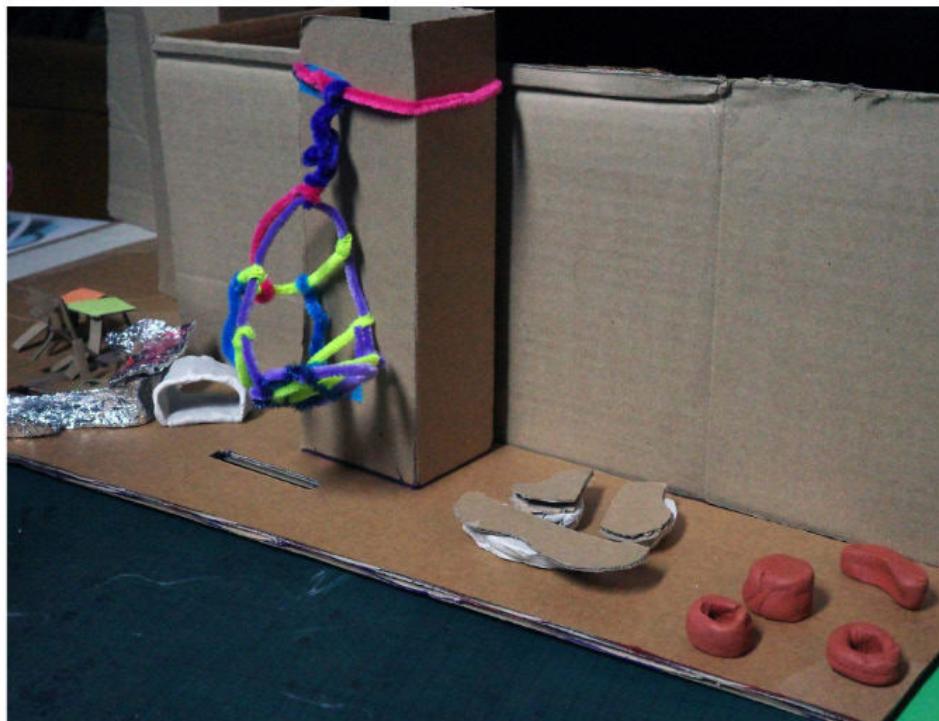
METHOD

- Tell everyone that we're going to be taking an experimental approach to making floorplans.
- Get everyone to grab some sugar paper and start cutting out random shapes. They should be roughly sized to fit inside your cardboard floorplan.
- Whilst that's happening, hand the cardboard templates out and get pairs of people to draw around the template.
- Once every pair has an outline of the site in front of them, get them to start taking shapes from the pile and turning it into a plan inside their outline, with shapes representing different kinds of furniture.
- Optional - For groups who are already comfortable with each other, you can develop each other's ideas in an 'exquisite corpse' style. To do this, get each pair to stand up and move 2 seats to the right. Everyone should now be in front of another pair's design. They are invited to build on it. Prompt people to try to understand what the site plan is trying to achieve, and how they can add to it using some of their ideas.
- Have each pair share what they've made with the rest of the group and have a discussion. Have everyone place dot stickers on the things that they like the most from everyone's work.

3 to 6 participants · 2 hours

Conceptual modelling

Explore aesthetic possibilities and develop a visual language for your intervention



Why use it

Enable rich discussion between young people about how they want the space to feel

Open up discussions about materials through the kinds of aesthetics being explored

Uncover aspects of the design which should be tested through prototyping

Conceptual modelling - Facilitation guide



Making models from clay, cardboard and pipe cleaners

MATERIALS

- Printed reference material
- Cardboard site model
- Modelling clay
- Pipe cleaners
- Cardboard
- Tape
- Glue
- Thick pens
- Paper

TIPS

- Make some models beforehand to show people what can be done with the materials and help break the fear of the blank page / empty model.
- This is quite a long activity, so make sure to have decent breaks.
- The materials will dictate the forms you end up with to an extent. Compensate for this by having discussions throughout about what your participants are aiming for.

If you've run some of the 'research' methods which have generated design prompts or discussion, remind participants of these and encourage them to have them in mind when working.

METHOD

- Before the session, print out loads of visual references of the kinds of thing you're making with your workshop series. Try to get a wide variety of form, material and aesthetic. Relevant books with lots of imagery also work well.
- Place a cardboard model (roughly 1:15 scale) of the space at the middle of each table.
- Give everyone an overview of the materials, and show them some of the possibilities with each.
- As a warm up, give participants 5 minutes to make 5 models with some chosen materials. This is to help avoid 'blank page' paralysis and get people familiar with the materials!
- Have everyone review the plans you created as part of the 'Diagrammatic collage' activity. Ask participants to focus on the areas which received a lot of votes or were discussed favourably. Give them some time to create some models. Float around between people, offering help and encouragement.
- Once most people have finished a model, give everyone 1 or 2 minutes to show the rest of the group.
- Ask participants to get into groups of 2 or 3 based on ideas they think are similar to their own. Task them with creating a 'family' of objects which share a certain quality.
- Have each group present back their work.

3 to 5 participants · Half day

1:1 spatial prototyping

Brings together the skills developed in previous methods to develop a full-scale prototype



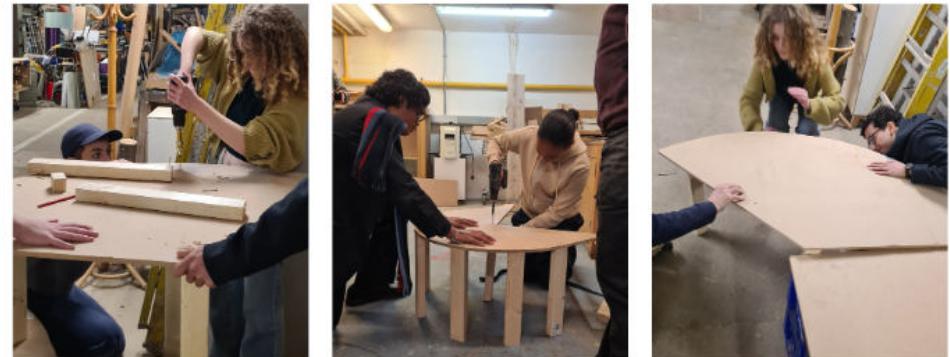
Why use it

Create a point of focus for the project, enabling deep and specific discussions about public space

Develop fundamental design skills with participants by touching on form, ergonomics, materials and engineering through one method

The satisfaction of seeing their ideas come together in a collaboratively made prototype provides a well-earned moment of celebration

1:1 spatial prototyping - Facilitation guide



1:1 prototypes being made, with many participants using a drill for the first time

MATERIALS (SUPERVISED)

- Cardboard
- Thin sheet wood
- 2 x 2 timber
- Screws

TIPS

- The making is often the bit people get the most out of - take participants along on the journey and encourage everyone to get stuck in.
- Keep an eye on time throughout the workshop, and encourage quick decisions through making. The best way to unblock a decision in the group is to suggest making it out of cardboard to test and discuss.
- This workshop can also be run with simpler materials that don't require power tools. You might do this if you're working with loads of participants. For example, we ran a version of this with bamboo, cable ties, cardboard and fabric which worked well.

1:1 prototyping requires facilitators with some making experience, and a little more flexibility in process. What follows is general guidance; expect to be reactive to the context of your workshop.

METHOD

- Gather together everything created with the other methods so far by participants for reference.
- Explain that we'll be creating a prototype that stands up on its own by the end of the workshop. Emphasise the need to work and make decisions quickly!
- Guide participants to work together to come up with a consolidated sketch of what the prototype will look like. Having worked together and had many discussions throughout the process, there should be some key ideas bubbling to the top. However, this will require a bit of shepherding from the facilitator.
- Once there's a rough sketch, start to plan how you can recreate it in 3D. Look for simple shapes that can be cut out of cardboard on a 1:1 scale.
- Have the group start to arrange the cardboard components in space. Encourage them to use their own bodies as reference for things relevant to the aims of the prototype - how high seating should be, where arms rest, where people can lean, etc.
- You can then start filling out aspects of the prototype, using 2 x 2 lumber and sheet materials. This will involve cutting, drilling, screwing things together. Encourage and help participants to do as much of this themselves as possible.
- At some point in the workshop make time to discuss materials, colours and finishes with the group.
- Leave enough time at the end to experience the prototypes and discuss what you'd do differently when making it for real.

Research Findings

One of the things we set out to achieve was to nurture the interest of young people in design and the built environment.

We gathered feedback from each individual workshop and thematically analysed them to illustrate some key themes:

	Relating to workshop content & ideas	Relating to the running of the workshops (materials, overall structure, timing, location etc)	Relating to design skills	Collaboration		
What would you improve and why?						
20 responses						
Do the crit inside						
The crit - far too cold to concentrate						
brainstorm more initial ideas that would fit into our time frame						
A wider range of materials						
Spend more time making and maybe spend less time outside						
Designing and thinking through my idea more						
More time to plan what we where going to make as we had to change the design after we started making						
The structure of our thing						
More time to make						
Not doing it in the cold :)						
More materials						
maybe make the experiments a bit longer to create a more final product						
The amount and array of materials						
I think having the three rules, the number of people and time frame, and the context of loitering provided too many restrictions however just a few of them together would have made a great brief!						
Maybe some time to do test models.						
I would have slightly improve the amount of time given to create the final outcome.						
I wish I could have spent more time designing things because it would have resulted in a better and more themed design						
Time for smaller models before creating the big design and working through more of the specifics of how we should focus on a set amount of people or loitering/cultivating public life						
My making process and ideas of redesigning public spaces. It is really helpful for my portfolio.						
The making part, it might be bit rough because the shortage of time.						
Is there anything else you'd like to add?						
20 responses						
Loved it! :)						
NA						
more detail to the model						
More time to plan and brainstorm						
I would like to have an opportunity to further develop this project						
None! Loved the day						
Thanks						
Not really						
Nn						
After school workshops						
1.What is the thing you've enjoyed the most?						
1. Session 4 - making a more substantial prototype and the ideas coming together						
2. Designing prototype-making, making smaller models out of paper, clay etc.						
3. The building process was the most enjoyable part. Also I loved socialising with others						
4. The final prototyping session out of MDF in the workshop is what I enjoyed the most. This is due to the practical aspect and the collaborative aspect.						
5. Watching young people becoming more confident in the weeks progressing.						
6. What I enjoyed						
7. learning to use a drill						
8. was able to design and make / build something						
9. the great people						
10. the interesting venue						
2.What did you find the most challenging?						
1. Brainstorming ideas and combining ideas without tunnel-visioning on one idea. Not really having a clear direction/aim						
2. Something challenging about the workshop was combining ideas with others, but in the end, everyone's ideas fit into one.						
3. Coming up with initial ideas. Combining ideas with other people.						
4. I had found the designing/modelling from card the most difficult due to the pressure of condensing the whole group's idea into one design. Maybe have smaller groups. sometimes the ideas were unrelated						
5. not enough times/sessions						
7. at first: conceptualising the designs and how they fit in the space						
3.What is one thing you would change?						
1. More sense of progression / development of designs (e.g. form → functionality → feasibility), not just generating ideas.						
2. Something I would change about the workshop is that, I actually don't have anything - not the most helpful.						
3. More focus on initial ideas + design. Focus on picking material & colour :)						
4. I would make the design groups small (if more people came to the last session, I would increase the available materials)						
5. What I would change:						
6. longer / more sessions						
7. more pictures of the space						
8. incorporate tech / google maps / put digital photos we could mockup/ videos of the space						
4.What is one thing you've learnt from the workshops?						
1. How ideas can be developed into a prototype with experimentation						
2. something I've learnt:						
3. how to drill						
4. how to socialise more						

"I enjoyed making a more substantial prototype and seeing everyone's ideas come together"

"My favourite part of the process was making structures with our bodies, because it was new and different"

"I've learned how to think more dynamically and fuse my ideas together with others"

"I learned how to fend for myself without a buddy and how to use a drill"



We also gained real insight into the lived experience of young people in public space.

The responses to the provocations we gathered as a part of the workshops became interesting to consider in light of existing public spaces.

In the 4-week after school club, they directly led to the creation of a design that fulfilled their desires for the site.

The “Rules for Public Space” activity we ran with Kingston Foundation could be summarised in the 5 “rules” below. Each of the rules they wrote then became a measure for the success of their prototype.

Spaces must have an attractive atmosphere

Spaces must have areas that conceal, and areas that reveal

Spaces must support the body in some way.

Spaces must have many possibilities

Spaces must be lively

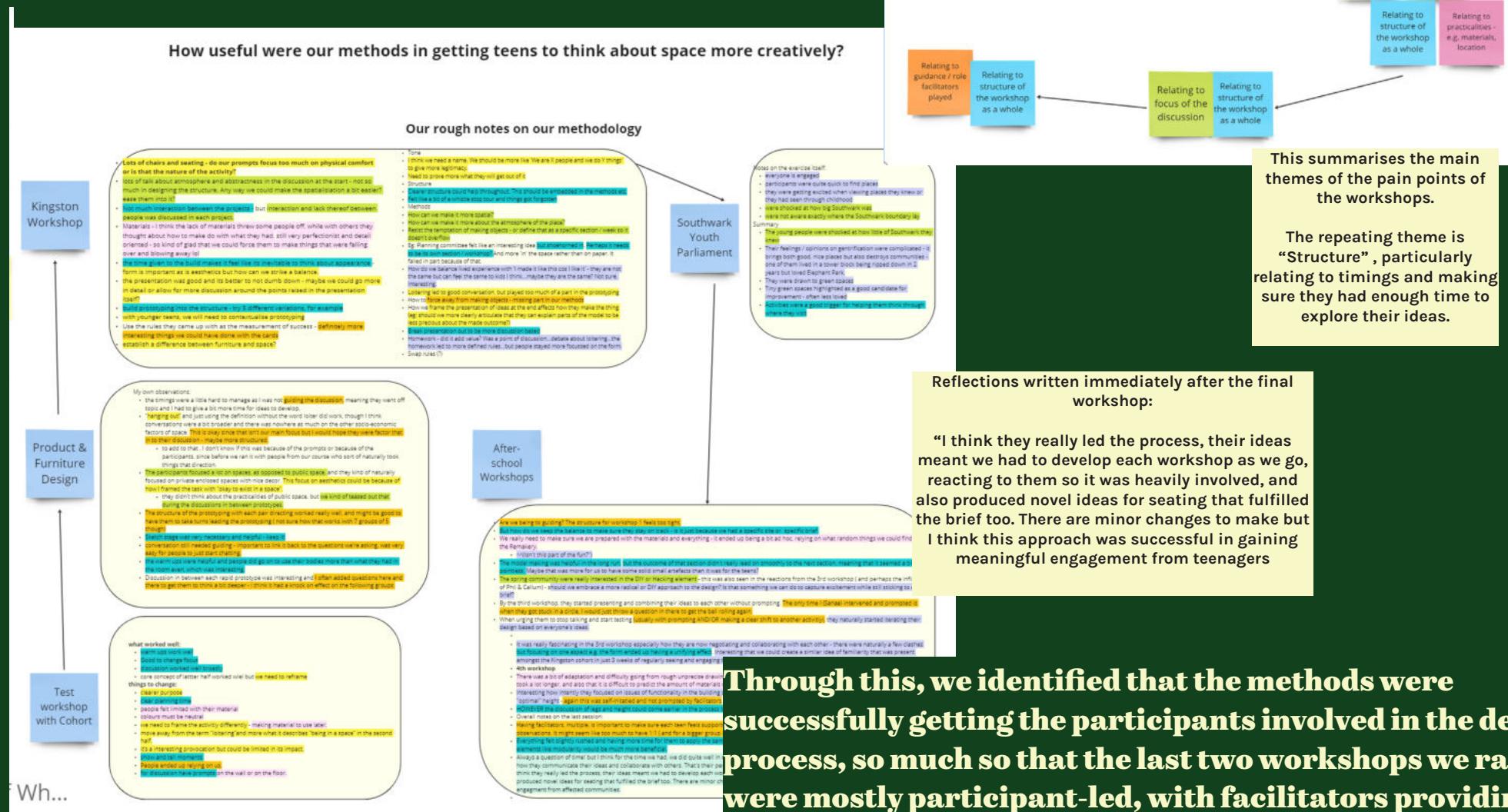
^^Though they are specific to the provocation - “What makes a good place to loiter?”, we saw these sentiments echoed in other workshops.

For example, the students who took part in the 4 week workshop also emphasised that the space should be flexible for different needs and uses.

Multiple possibilities & uses for the space



We also conducted a thematic analysis on our observations from the workshops. This allowed us to understand which aspect of the workshops worked well, and what needed further development before the next iteration.



Through this, we identified that the methods were successfully getting the participants involved in the design process, so much so that the last two workshops we ran were mostly participant-led, with facilitators providing practical making support.

Having tested our methods across a broad age range, they could be used at different scales and with different target communities.

In a solution ecosystem, we find these methods align well with the recent need for “co-production” in the built environment sector (Future of London, 2023).

Alongside textual based methods on consultation, embodied methods of consultation and engagement not only involve the local community in the design process, but they give them back ownership of the built environment.



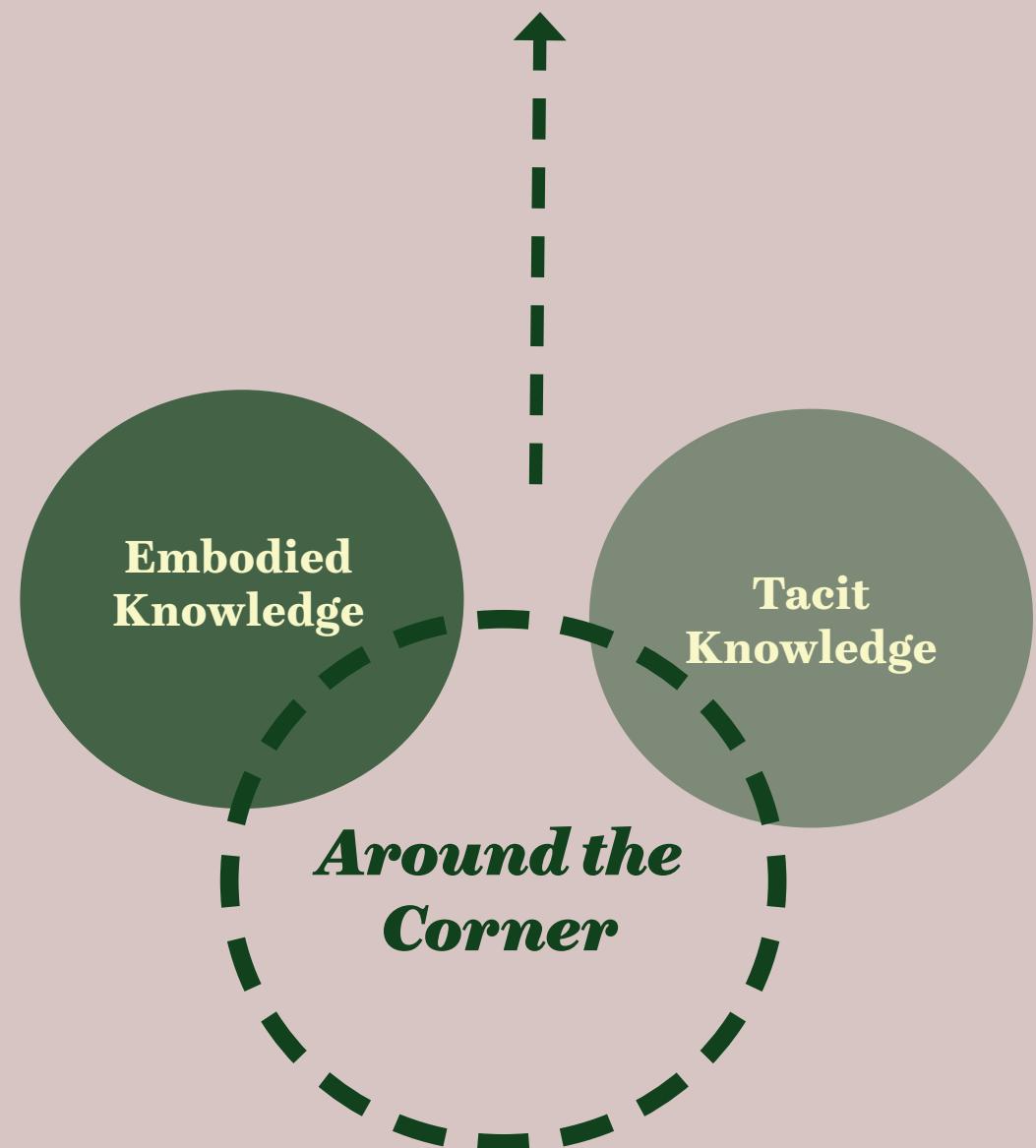
Current Methods of Consultation*

Focus Groups

Drawing

Surveys

Q & A



* As laid out in the Southwark 2030 Listening Toolkit and LGA's Guide for Consulting Residents

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