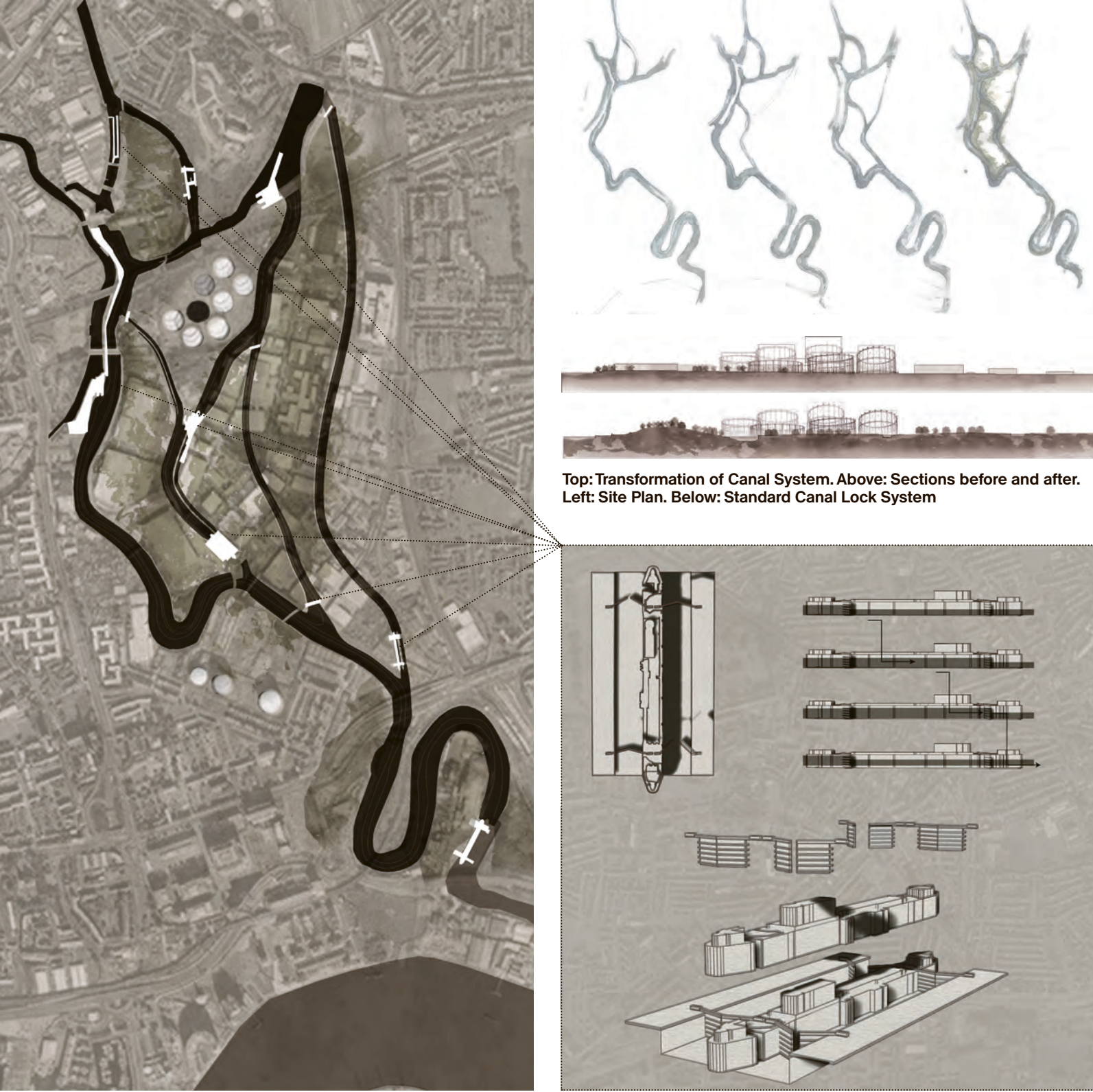


Question: What is the relationship between landscape and a city? Does one lie in the other? Do they sit next to each other? Do they fold around each other? Is one born out of the other? Or are these all the wrong questions, is landscape the city, and the city landscape?

Non-City – Border, movement, reflection are the elements of Non-City.



London's extensive and historic canal system has the potential to provide a significant network of dynamic public waterfront space, linking neighborhoods and re-stitching the urban fabric. With the addition of two parallel branches of the lea river and three canal locks, the risk of flooding will be reduced and these branches form the foundation



Missing Link:
Lower Lea Valley to the
Thames

As part of the interdisciplinary curriculum at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, this studio taught by Prof. Günther Vogt was primarily concerned with design processes in complex urban territories. Drawn from the fields of Landscape Architecture, Architecture, Urban Design and Planning, the international group of students was asked to take a radically subjective position on the future of the Lower Lea Valley based on a comprehensive analysis of the site and its social, spatial, ecological and economical particularities. Between formulating the program and communicating the design concept, the studio required a commitment to continuous documentation through personal cartography while engaging a variety of scales and tools, ranging from large-scale territorial mapping to personal experiences on site. Consolidated in this wallpaper, the resulting 13 positions will hopefully foster the ongoing public discussion.



- Position I
missing link to common ground! – Chair of Günther Vogt
- Position II
Non City – Sarah Tavakoli
- Position III
Unlocking the Lower Lea – Madeleine Murphy
- Position IV
Wonderland – Mona Zhang
- Position V
Park City: East London Park – Han Sol Kang
- Position VI
Lea & Lee: Reintegrating the Identities – Yuyu Wang
- Position VII
Meridian Fields – Senta Burton
- Position VIII
Foggy Fields: The becloued sanctuary – Brennan Baxley
- Position IX
Shepherd's Lea: Re-stitching the LLV – Judith Rodriguez
- Position X
Networked Disconnection - Reconnecting the LLV – Cassandra Bosco
- Position XI
Lower Lea City – Fabiana Meacham
- Position XII
London Public Marsh – Sungjin Na
- Position XIII
Verdopolis – Heather Sullivan
- Image above:
Site Photo by Daia Stutz

take position!
www.position.la

About
The authorship of the position texts II-XVIII as well as plans and images is subject to the respective student

Publisher
Chair of Prof. Günther Vogt, ILA Institute of Landscape Architecture, ETH Zürich
www.vogtarch.ethz.ch

Editorial Staff
Daia Stutz

Authors
The authorship of the position texts II-XVIII as well as plans and images is subject to the respective student

Concept and Design
Chair of Günther Vogt and Samuel Bänziger, www.baenziger-hug.com

Thanks
Harvard Graduate School of Design, Vogt Landscape Ltd., Lara Kinnerl, Prof. Charles Waldheim, Prof. Pierre Bélanger, Prof. Gary Hilderbrand, Prof. Marcel Meili, Prof. Christian Schmid, Cassie Bosco, Madeleine Murphy, Brennan Baxley,

Distribution
ILA Institute of Landscape Architecture, ETH Zürich

Copyright
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior consent of the publisher. Printed in Switzerland. 2013

missing link to common ground!

London's Lower Lea Valley is experiencing an unprecedented urban transformation. Triggered by the 2012 Olympic Games, a series of major redevelopment and regeneration projects have turned the former derelict yet characterful industrial area on the fringes of East London into the epicenter of future investments and urban renewal. A staggering amount of new housing, infrastructure, open spaces and restored natural habitats are rapidly and thoroughly reshaping the face and spirit of this divers and complex part of East London. Still, after the Games, the Lower Lea Valley remains a landscape without a coherent geographical and programmatic identity; a challenging and complex territory full of history, meanings and latent potentials. The site we have chosen for the studio is a particular strip of land within the Lower Lea Valley, located between the former Olympic site in Stratford and the river Thames. As a largely impassible zone that separates the boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Newham, this post-industrial yet still partly productive wedge of land represents the missing link in a large system of open spaces between the Olympic park site and the river Thames. Moreover, it acts as a gap in the continuous urban fabric of East London. Although the area still continues to function as an industrial area while serving as open yet fragmented public space, it remains a neglected place of pollution, urban decay and social marginalization. Historically, the area has been a place for industrial greenhouse food production, shipyards, iron works and other industry. Today, the site is a palimpsest of former and contemporary industrial uses, non-sites, border regions, creeks and canals, counsel housing, art studios, parks and wilderness, pedestrian paths and overpasses. Its sectional and programmatic complexity, hydrological temporality, fragmentation, pedestrian impermeability and economic disparity is both fascinating and overwhelming. As we became familiar with this complex territory, certain themes readily emerged: the post-Olympic hangover of the city, the speed of capitalist speculation, decaying and new infrastructures, and the sociological and economic pressures they create. As a place of multiple identities and various layers of meanings, the area represents a highly contested ground. The diversity of uses, people, cultures and spaces, the coexistence of old and new as well as the temporal and undefined character provide a particular and striking sense of urbanity. Moreover, the relative looseness, openness and broad vistas of the abandoned industrial sites as well as along the canals depict an enormous urban quality while standing in stark contrast to the cramped conditions of Central London. With that, the Lower Lea Valley not only represents one of the last resources of large public spaces in London, but also one of the few potential common grounds of the city. Its access and ownership should be shared by a broad public, collectively engaging and investing in its future. The opportunity to create a programmatically open, ecologically divers and socially just neighborhood where urban production, living, leisure and nature coexist should not be missed out.

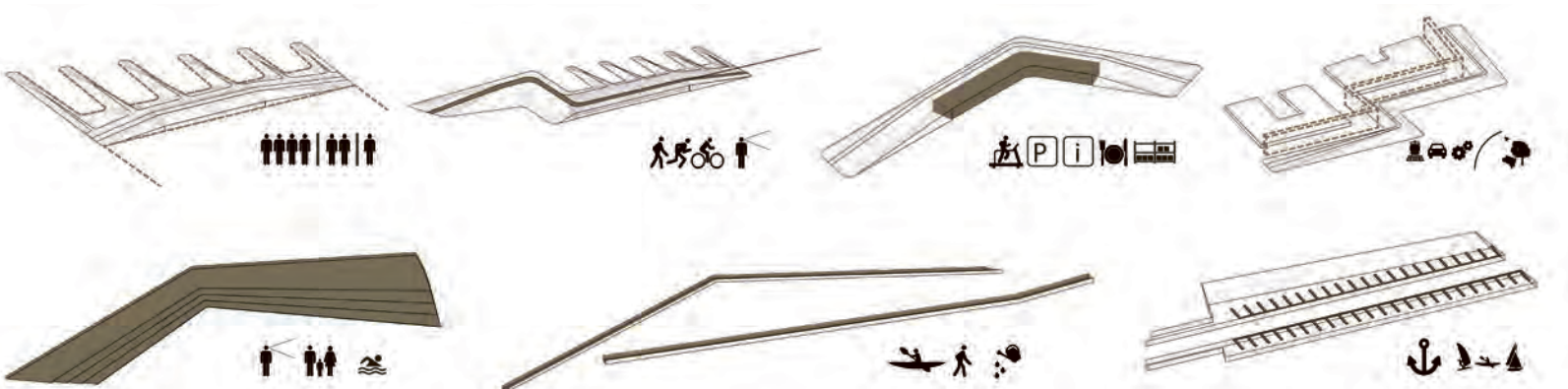
Play is the best way to bring different ethnic communities together. Play is not only for children but for adults as well. The design attempts to evoke dynamic experiences of the river Thames, and forge connections with the surrounding communities. A large park is proposed which could host a wide range of activities that bring together the different

ethnic groups and families. This project is a nature landscape fantasy that contrasts the surrounding urban conditions and addresses the monotony of the existing riverfront along the river Thames. The design not only addresses the above ground landscape, but the underground space as well.



Park City:
East London Park

What makes the Lower Lea Valley a missing link of London City? First, when compared to West London with its Royal Parks, East London is lacking any open space that acts as an international destination. Further, even though the site is located on a strategic intersection between the rivers Thames and Lea, its potential green network of open spaces remains disconnected. Even private gardens – representing valuable alternatives green spaces throughout London – are missing along the LLV. Park City takes advantage of these potentials and proposes a series of parks with various scales and experiences, giving rise to a large park of parks as the new strong identity of the area.



Multi-scale Parks with diverse programs: Earth-Work (top, from left to right: Space Definition, Overpath, Inserted Building) and Water-Work (above, from left to right: Open Water, Linear Water, Docks). Below: Site plan and perspectives (Lake and Great Lawn).



Above: Site boundaries in the context of London City (image source: Google Earth). Right: Bird's-eye view of the site (image source: <http://huas-school.ac.uk/design-workshop/archive/lower-lea-valley-london>). Below: Impressions from the site visit (image source: Daia Stutz, Lauren Hamer).



Lea & Lee: Reintegrating the Identities

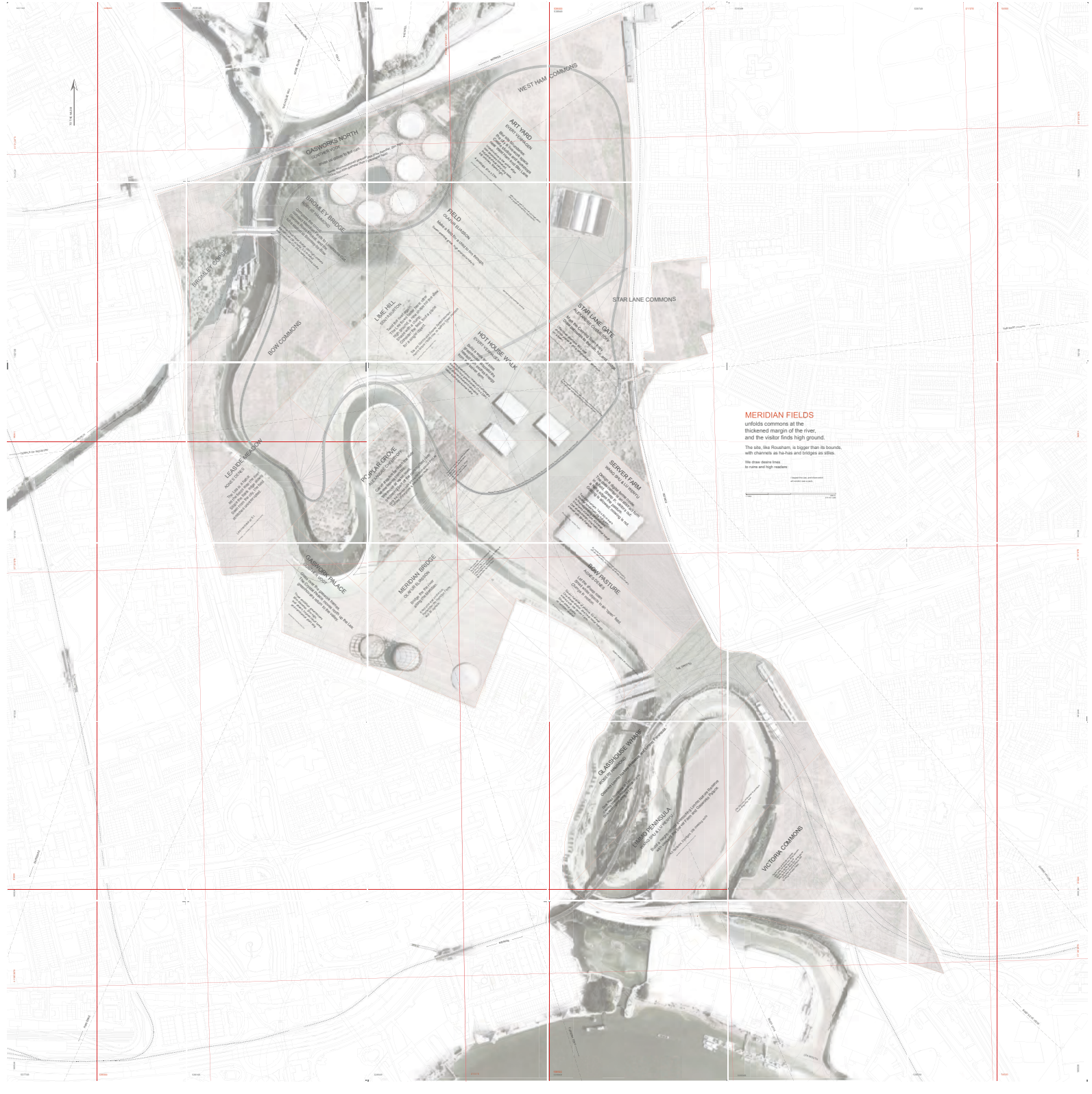
The aim of this proposal is to merge and thereby enhance the two declining identities of the area: the natural remains of the Lea River and the industrialized Lee Canal. The water that runs through the site, historically representing the most important location factor of the area, is being reused and re-appropriated to become an active integrator of the two suppressed and competing identities. Lea and Lee become programs of equal importance again, sustaining and assigning new functions to each other while providing divers experiences and multi-functional recreational grounds for both human and wildlife.



Meridian Fields

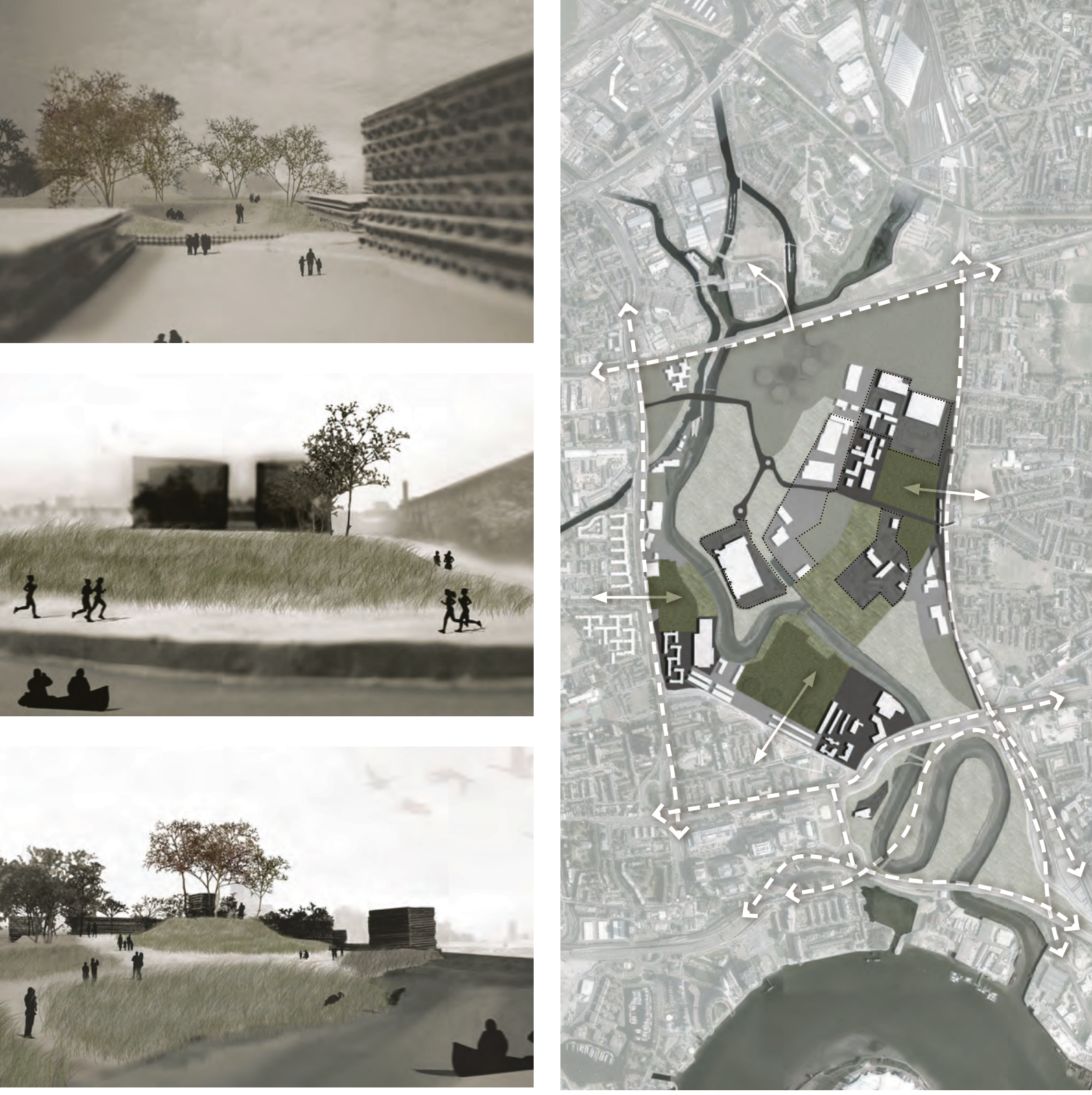
Meridian Fields unfolds commons at the thickened margin of the river, and the visitor finds high ground. The site, like Rousham, is bigger than its bounds, with channels as ha-has and bridges as stiles.

We draw desire lines to ruins and high readers: I leaped the Lea, and discovered all London was a park.



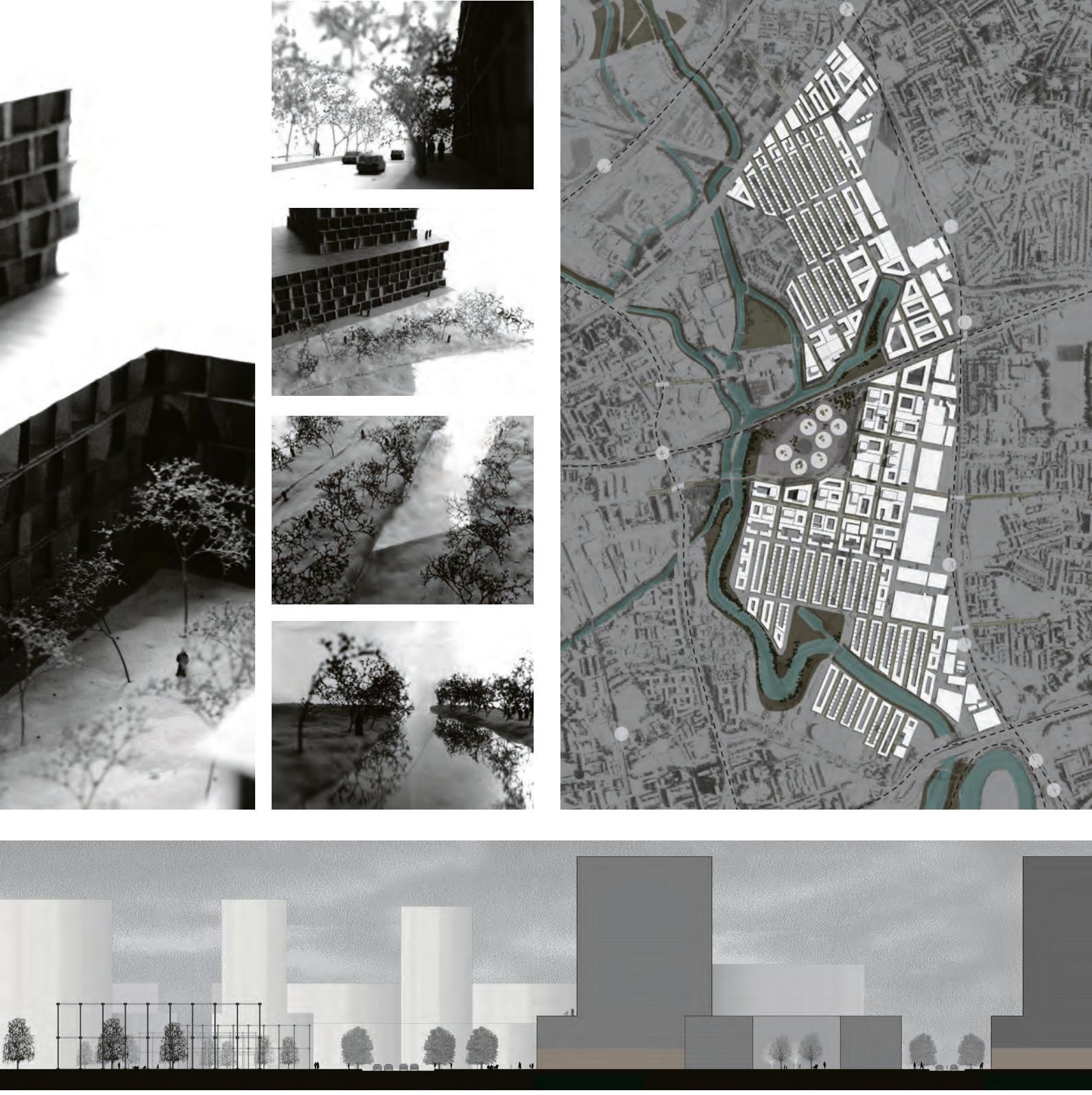
Networked disconnection: Reconnecting the LLV

Though London expanded eastward in the late 20th century, development leaped over the river Lea and left the Lower Lea Valley lacking a coherent identity. Today, fast highways, the Underground, the Docklands Light Rail disconnect this area from its multi-cultural neighborhood. Neighborhood parks will empower local communities, reframe the river as a social resource, and connect the 2012 Olympics to the Thames. Slowing the pace of high volume transit that bounds the site reveals London's new destination for urban recreation and healthy living – a tribute to the hardship and labor that makes East London what it is today.



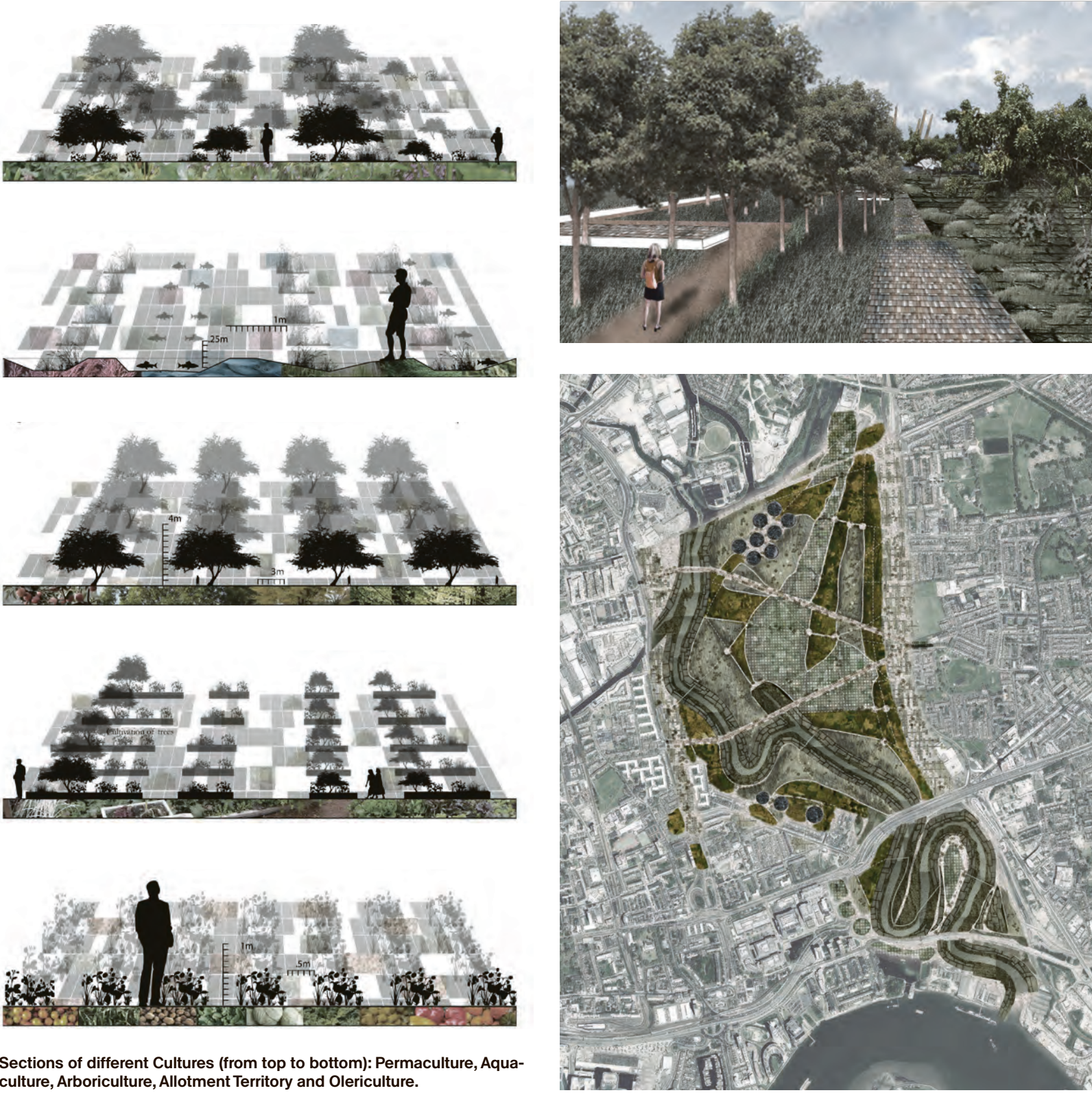
Lower Lea City

A high density residential hub for East London, Lower Lea City will house 52,600 people in 22,870 new dwelling units. Building off of the post-industrial historical center of Three Mills, residence towers will concentrate around the mixed use hub of the Gasworks Plaza, offering retail, public services and a large outdoor public space that retains the industrial character of the site. The industry which has historically developed along the banks of the river will relocate to the periphery of the site, while residents take advantage of the distinctive Lea River as a desirable housing location, recreational space and pedestrian pathway.



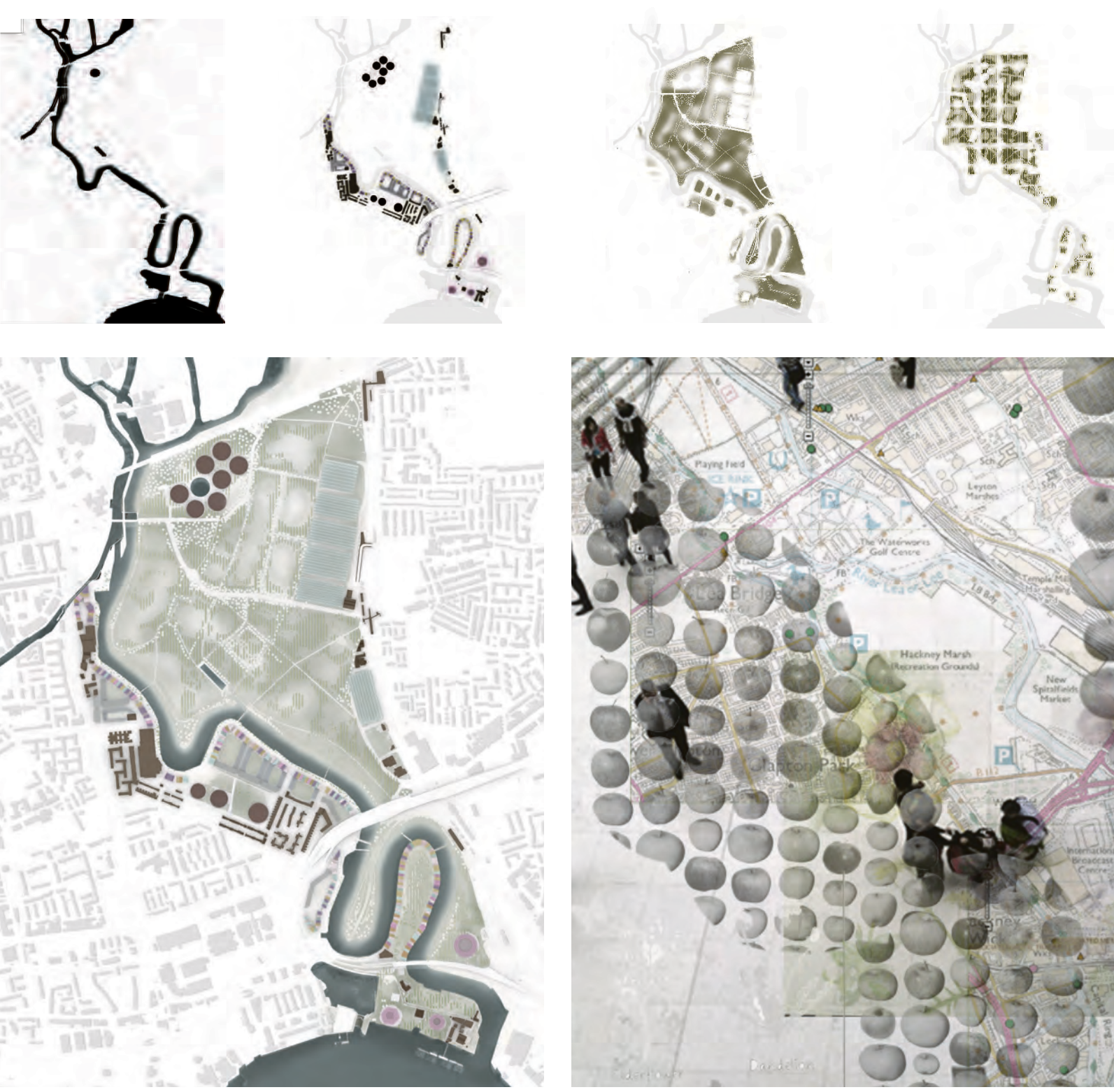
Foggy Fields: The beclouded sanctuary

The transmission intends to enliven the canvas by acknowledging its historical significance of a productive and effectual space. Therefore the incorporation of dense layers of cultivation, manipulation, and activation (heavy fog that characterizes), will ignite the revival of productivity. These vibrating surfaces will blend thresholds and fragments of yield by circulation, performance, and emergence where human and development acts enzymatically and functionally in this urban fecundity.



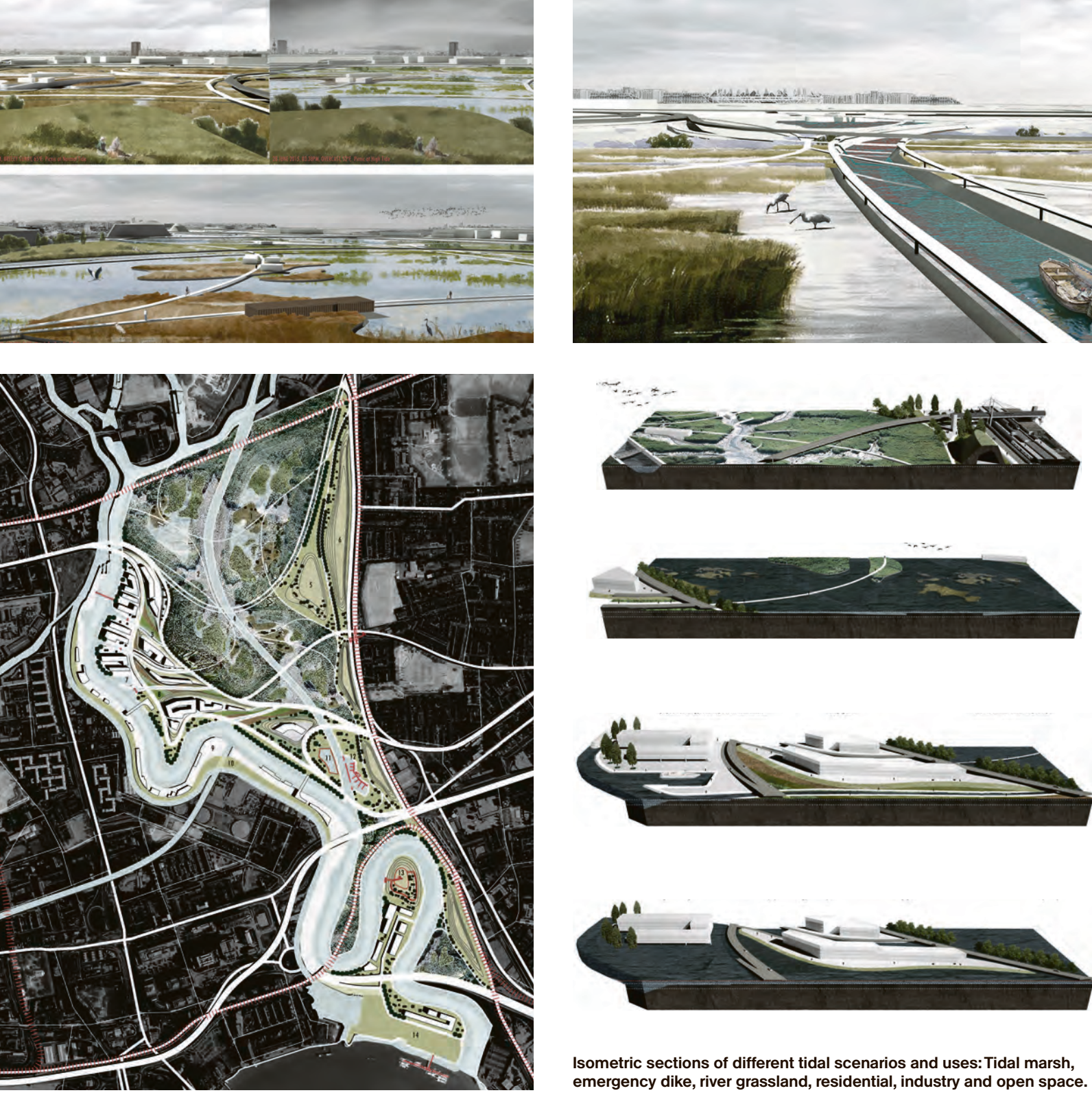
Shepherd's Lea: Re-stitching the LLV

The re-stitching of the Lower Lea Valley is done through the revalorization of the River Lea waterfront by creating a new park, community orchard, green industries and new housing. A new soft edge, part of the water management infrastructure, will enclose the new shepherds' park where sheep are maintaining the park's meadows while creating new jobs. The new housing tutti-frutti composition allows for diversity of design, typology, use and people. The design attempts to connect the Lea Valley east and west, north and south by offering a continual and fascinating change in scenery. The landscape design ameliorates soil, water, air and environmental conditions by fostering rich botanical, ecological, social gatherings and human diversity in the new housing and open space.



London Public Marsh

London is exposed to severe potential damage from flooding. While flood protection levels are presently good, climate change could lead to increased risk with devastating consequences for people, buildings and infrastructures as well as to disruptions of London's transport network in the long term. London Public Marsh is a public open space in the center of London, acting as a new flexible system that accommodates both current complex urban layers and future global change. It will represent a sustainable urban environment as an Integrated Urban Framework, Central Public Open Space, and Flexible Flood-Defense Matrix for 21st-century London.



Verdopolis

Existing brownfields of gasometer ruins and industrial business parks will be networked with London's markets, city farms, and community gardens to become a new type of public space: a market garden park & village. With high unemployment and London's high land value, the increasing demand for local agriculture and horticulture, a modular system of productive garden beds will provide sources of labor, leisure and social exchange. Verdopolis will be a productive pre-fabbed paradise, hand-crafted over time, to become a 21st-century winter garden.

