

London Square Bermondsey Social Impact Report

At London Square, we believe that everyone deserves a great place to live, with access to community networks, training and employment opportunities. We recognise that in order to build social capital, a shared approach with a range of stakeholders is needed. This includes the businesses we procure works, goods and services from, and the residents we deliver to.

This report sets out our commitment to creating sustainable neighbourhoods and seeks to quantify the direct and indirect socio-economic impact of London Square's Bermondsey development work on the surrounding community.

Overview

London Square Bermondsey is multi-tenure, mixed use development, comprising of 406 1, 2 & 3-bedroom homes, both private and affordable, flexible workspaces for small businesses and art studios in a collection of heritage and contemporary buildings. Split into 3 phases the development has been designed by both Coffey Architects and AHMM Architects.

Identifying Local Needs

A range of physical and digital tools were used to advertise the engagement, with updates also provided on printed flyers and those without access to the internet offered the opportunity to provide feedback via a Freepost feedback form and/or request further information via telephone.

Activities undertaken as part of the engagement process included:

- A printed flyer and a printed newsletter with an enclosed feedback form sent to c.5787 addresses in a distribution area around the site.
- Five social media advert campaigns reaching 45,936 with 192,873 impressions and 1820 click throughs.
- Email newsletter updates sent to 416 people who had signed up to the mailing list via the engagement website.
- 3,218 visits to the dedicated engagement website (4,616 individual sessions)
- 1,236 number of survey responses

A cross-section of the local community engaged, including local residents and businesses, and visitors to the area (residents making up the greatest numbers). The majority of respondents were keen for business continuity while the development was taking place. In particular, they wanted to know how artists' spaces would be meaningfully integrated into the development. There was considerable local interest in continuing the strong link with local artists, with support from local councillors and the Arts Council.

Prior to development, the factory buildings had been let as artists' studios and gallery space to local artist led organisations Tannery Arts and Drawing Room.

Tannery Arts is a small, independent charity concerned with making contemporary art accessible to a wide public through exhibitions and learning projects. It supports the professional development of emerging and established artists and curators, promoting their practice through opportunities to exhibit work, develop projects, to engage in learning activities and through the provision of affordable studios.



Drawing Room delivers the exhibition and learning arms of Tannery Arts' public engagement programme, exploring ideas around contemporary drawing and making them visible in the public domain.

London Square Bermondsey Social Impact Report

We retained the factory buildings let as artists’ studios by Tannery Arts, providing them with bespoke designed studios, gallery, and exhibition space. To enable continuity of businesses, we developed a phased building method that allowed the businesses to continue in occupation until their new workspaces became available. We also worked with the artists offering them temporary display space on site for “pop-up” exhibitions.

We integrated studio space for local artists and implemented flexible leasing arrangement to meet local needs to offer affordable workspace for up-and-coming artists. The rental terms are significantly below market levels to ensure that artists can continue to live and work in the area.

Tannery Arts moved into the purpose-built arts hub in 2022, with studios and gallery spaces for Drawing Room, as well as studios and a base for Tannery Arts, with artist-run projects for families, school pupils, teachers and community groups, plus studio visits, evening classes and multi-artform events.



Skills, Employment & Community Initiatives

Creating an economically active neighbourhood where barriers to skills and employment are removed, and a resilient and strong community is established is one of our key objectives for the development. We have demonstrated our commitment to making London Square Bermondsey a sustainable and thriving neighbourhood by working in partnership with our stakeholders, including local authority, Southwark Works, VCSE’s, Jobcentre Plus and community partners to increase education, training and employment opportunities and improve community development in the area.

Skills & Employment Outcomes
Over 140 new jobs have been created for unemployed Southwark residents during the construction phase, 42 of which have been sustained for 26 weeks plus.
Supported over 39 new and existing apprentices onsite.
Delivered over 140 short courses and 574 hours of free training provided for Borough residents.
Information sessions held at Southwark Works (Council’s employment brokerage service) to promote end-user job opportunities with Coop. Southwark Works supported 30 local unemployed people to make online applications in accordance with Co-op’s instructions to ensure a fair recruitment process. From these, 19 were invited for face-to-face interviews on 20 November and 7 December 2021. 7 candidates were offered a position, of which 5 accepted the offer. This includes 2 x Team Leaders and 3 x Team Members.
Promoted SMEs by sourcing goods and services locally. This includes using artisan suppliers, Mike and Ollie for seasonal and sustainable produce, while local bookshop, Morocco Bound, offered Bermondsey craft beers, books and a live jazz band at our summer event.

London Square Bermondsey Social Impact Report

Apprentice Case Study | Ibrahim Kargbo

Southwark resident, Ibrahim Kargbo, gained a Level 2 Diploma in Bricklaying at Lewisham College and secured a paid placement with Winchmore Brickwork at London Square Bermondsey. He is currently working with J&L Build on London Square's Axion House development in Lewisham.

What does your role involve?

Every project is unique, and I've been lucky to experience three schemes with London Square, including Rich Estate, Greenwich Police Station and Axion House. I'm grateful for all that experience and the mentoring I've received during my time.

What do you like about your job?

The best thing about being a bricklayer is that I enjoy it! I really don't mind getting up in the mornings for work. In fact, I'm actually excited to get my gear on and get on to site to do what I love most. Another thing I like about my job is seeing the result of hard work. It's so rewarding to see something you've contributed to, such as a gable end, as the finished product.

It's nice to work with people who have similar interests, and you can get along with. Although we're always busy, working with friends makes the job even more enjoyable. There's a great balance of independence and teamwork on the site.

What skills do you need in your job?

I think being organised is important, as is having an eye for detail. I like picturing the structure I'm tasked with building when looking at the plans, so it helps to have some imagination too. The trade skills come later though and it's great to have staff who know them inside out training you.

What was your background before starting this role?

From an early age, I was obsessed with becoming a professional footballer. I represented Sierra Leone at the African Nations Cup 2019 tournament in Southwark so I'm really proud of that. Unfortunately I was unable to pursue football professionally due a foot injury so my father suggested bricklaying as he works in building and construction. After taking the level 2 course at college, Southwark Works helped me to apply for a position at London Square Bermondsey.

Where do you see yourself in five years' time?

It's hard to know exactly where I'll be in five years, but I'm sure I'll have a future in construction. In the nearer future, I'd like to make it onto a level 3 course as I'm still hungry to learn much more about the trade and industry.

What's your advice for anyone thinking about a career in construction?

First and foremost, just go for it! It's great to be able to learn while you earn, which is rare. If you've already got an interest in building or you want to learn more, then just do it, I'm sure you'll enjoy as much as I do.



London Square Bermondsey Social Impact Report

Employment Case Study | Bernice Fasugba

Southwark resident, Bernice Fasugba, joined the Bermondsey project team in October 2020 following a career change.

What do you do?

I am a project administrator working on London Square's mixed development scheme in Bermondsey. There's an administrative element to my role as a considerable part of my job is about keeping track of data relating to people onsite for reporting and monitoring purposes. I love my role because every day is different, you're always learning something new and you're always working with new and interesting people.

What is your background?

Like a lot of people, I came to be in this job more by a series of evolutionary steps rather than a conscious career decision.

I had worked as a salon manager and receptionist for over thirty years and decided to change careers just before the pandemic. I was at a loss for what to do next, so I enrolled in a computing and business administration course at Lewisham College to learn new skills and update my knowledge.

I have always been interested in building design so living in Southwark I have seen the transformation of landscapes in my own neighbourhood. I had walked past London Square's development on many occasions, but I never would have imagined that I would end up working here.

The opportunity came about after I attended a local job fair at Southwark Works and the rest, as they say, is history. I have started expanding my role, taking on more responsibilities and really enjoy working for London Square.

What characteristics do you need to be successful in your job?

Technically, you need a good understanding of IT software, particularly Excel. You also need to be a fairly organised, well-planned person.

You need to be quite a calm person, somebody who doesn't easily get upset or ruffled. Apart from the planning and organisational skills, I think there's a lot of 'soft' skills involved; this is the aspect of the work that a lot of people overlook.

It's about working with the people on your team and the project manager to make that happen. That's a lot to do with understanding people dynamics, understanding the way that people work, the things that drive them and how they do what you need them to do.

What are your ambitions?

My ambition is to go on being interested in the work that I do, to go on learning new things, to meet new and interesting people and to go home every day feeling that I've achieved something. The career progression here is through working on bigger and more complex projects involving more people.

What advice would you give to someone interested in your career?

I would say that if, having heard a bit more about the job, it fits your skills and interests, then go for it. Find out how you can get trained, how you can start working on construction projects and who you can learn from



London Square Bermondsey Social Impact Report

Tackling food insecurity & food waste | Love North Southwark Pantry at Cherry Garden Hall

Since 2013, [Coop](#) has partnered with [FareShare](#) to distribute surplus fruit, vegetables, ready meals and chilled items to community groups helping vulnerable people across the UK. To date, Coop has given away over 3 million meals that would otherwise have gone to waste.

The FareShare network supports 11,000 charities and community groups including domestic violence refugees, breakfast clubs, homeless hostels, pantries, food banks, holiday hunger schemes, day centres and breakfast clubs for children.

During the pandemic we worked with Co-op – an end-user commercial occupant at LSQ Bermondsey – to establish a food share scheme. Beneficiaries of the scheme include Love North Southwark; a food pantry and foodbank based at Cherry Garden Hall.

The Cherry Garden Estate is a council estate in the Bermondsey area of Southwark. The estate was constructed in the late 1950s, and has high levels of deprivation, poverty, and unemployment, with residents experiencing poor levels of health.

We supported Love North Southwark to help grow and expand their food pantry service through Co-op's Foodshare Scheme. The Pantry relies on donations of surplus food to support low-income families in addition to signposting and advising residents on a range of issues from employment and training, fuel bills, housing, benefits advice, and more.

Project outcomes include:

- Increased mental wellbeing and a wider social support network.
- Increased awareness of healthy eating/diet, with residents trying new foods; new cooking skills learned – families eating better.
- Residents have come forward to undertake volunteering at the Pantry.
- Greater partnership working has taken place which has made an impact on service users in terms of developing information finding skills, helping to develop relationships and building social capital in the community

Further beneficiaries of Coop's Foodshare Scheme include [The Bridge](#) (community café and female only gym aimed at empowering women to lead positive and healthy lives) and [Providence Row](#) (charity supporting single homeless people, including rough sleepers with low support needs).



Photo: Love North Southwark founder, Kathleen Heather, with a group of volunteers at Cherry Garden Hall Pantry



London Square Bermondsey Social Impact Report

Social Mobility Case Study | Nneoma Awodigede

Earlier this year we partnered with social mobility charity [upReach](#) to support university students with a home address in Southwark to gain vital work experience at London Square Bermondsey.

Nneoma joined London Square on a work placement in April. During her time at the Rich Estate Development in Bermondsey, she got to grips with the day-to-day operations of our sales & marketing suite, in addition to shadowing the project team on-site. Following her work experience, Nneoma was introduced to Exterior Architecture and successfully secured an industrial placement with the firm starting August 2022.

Why did you apply for a work shadowing placement?

I am currently studying architecture at Loughborough, and I wanted to get some work experience that would help expand my network and open up opportunities for an industrial placement.

What was the application process like?

I asked about work experience placements through a social mobility charity called UpReach and they put in touch with London Square. I thought the application process would be long and daunting, but it was actually really simple, and I heard back straight away. The team at London Square were really accommodating, making sure to fit me in for the week that was most convenient for me.



What did you get up to at LSQ?

During the week I got to spend time in different departments across the company. Each day I was partnered with a colleague who showed me what their role entails. It was really helpful to be able to talk to people who had been in my situation. Mark Gawke (Technical Manager) gave me a tour of the development and explained the types of materials they onsite. I am really interested in the study of sustainable architecture and the environmental impact of buildings, so it was such a thrill to see green roofs included in the building design.

What did you learn?

Spending time in all the different departments highlighted the areas of work that I found the most interesting. The placement was a great way to strengthen my professional network as Neda Haghshenas (Social Sustainability & Community Manager) helped me to connect with employers. She forwarded my CV to a few architectural firms and thanks to London Square, I am now excited to be starting an industrial placement with Exterior Architecture this summer.

I could not recommend the work experience programme at London Square highly enough and would encourage anyone to apply.





London Square Bermondsey Social Impact Report

Youth Opportunities Fair | Southwark College

On Wednesday 20 October, Southwark College, in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions, hosted its first in-person Youth Opportunities Fair since before the COVID-19 pandemic.

The event had a host of employers including London Square, O'Neill & Brennan, Unity Works, The Felix Project, Millwall Community Trust, Galldris Group, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, UpReach, Park Plaza, and many others actively engaging with over 150 visitors to promote recruitment opportunities in Southwark.

Neda Haghshenas, Social Sustainability & Manager at London Square said: We're immensely proud to have created over 140 jobs for local unemployed people and supported over 30 apprentices onsite. It's fantastic to be able to bring businesses and residents once again into a physical location and we're delighted to be working with Southwark Works to match jobseekers with vacancies at our Bermondsey development so that residents benefit from opportunities on their doorstep.

