



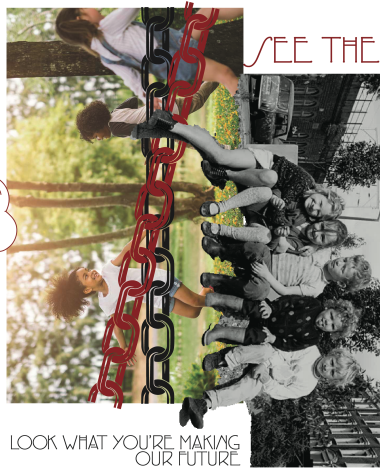
DONT FORGET THE CHILDREN OF HACKNEY WICK



YOU'RE STEALING OUR HABITAT



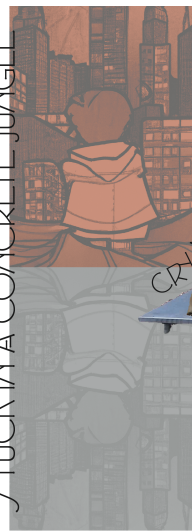
WE MUST ALSO REVOLT



SEE THE PAST

LOOK WHAT YOU'RE MAKING OUR FUTURE

STUCK IN A CONCRETE JUNGLE



HAPPY CHILDREN HAPPY HACKNEY





# GROWING UP IN HACKNEY WICK: EXPANDING AND ANALYSING THE ZINE

## COVER PAGE

Growing Up in Hackney Wick is a zine that has been presented from the point of view of the children of Hackney Wick and is intended for the policy makers, developers, investors, and designers that have been influencing the rapid change in the built environment of the area and the consequent gentrification. The zine is using the tones of sensationalizing these issues and presenting a sense of a 'children's revolution'. The zine used mostly the colors red and black which symbolize anger and revolution. The image on the cover has been created to represent children rebuilding Hackney Wick which is the underlying theme of the zine.

## PAGE 1-2: WE DEMAND OUR RIGHTS

Children form a core part of the areas demographic yet have been severely overlooked in the grand narrative of the urban development of Hackney Wick. In the midst of urban transformation, we find an essential aspect missing from the dialogue- the creation of a truly child-friendly environment. It is important to understand that designing spaces for children isn't just 'for the children' but such a space then attracts the entire family. So, what has been neglected is not just children but entire households. The zine takes the form of a 'cry of help' on behalf of this neglected demographic.

Starting out by outlining the rights of children when it comes to their consideration in building their neighborhoods, it is most essential to understand independent mobility and its obvious absence in a neighborhood like Hackney Wick. Hackney Wicks transitioned from an industrial to a post-industrial society and this change was mostly reflected through its 'cultural renaissance'. Consequently, it is also suffering through a change in social fabric mainly due to the gentrification. In this period of meteoric change, children and their needs have been ignored. This is evident from utilitarian and under-designed quality of the public realm, Liza Fior stated that there are 'almost no public spaces' in Hackney Wick. Improving the infrastructure of Hackney Wick was an important part of the 'Olympic Fringe Delivery Strategy' but has clearly failed since the impoverished design of the public realm in Hackney starkly contrasts with the highly designed spaces of the Olympic Park.

## PAGE 3-4: LISTEN TO US, UNDERSTAND US

Hackney Wick has a significant young population, and their voices cannot be ignored. This impoverished public realm of Hackney Wick has directly reflected in changing the social scene of the streets. The zine presents quotations of opinions of the children of Hackney (between ages 6-19) where they elaborate on what they believe are the issues with the area. From analyzing several responses, a clear pattern of a domino effect can be understood. Most children find the area extremely 'deserted' with not much for youngsters to do. This often leads to very idle young minds that tend to engage in gangs and gang violence. The children cited gangs as the biggest reason for their unsafety in the neighborhood, these gangs are made up of teenagers and young adults-the idle minds. The feeling of unsafety compromises their right to independent mobility which circles back to an empty neighborhood. The only way out of the vicious cycle is for an intervention in the area that generated some sort of engagement for the children either through interactive design or by the initiation of activity for the children to engage in while also facilitating the

creation of a sense of community amongst these children of Hackney Wick. For instance, multi-use and flexible spaces where young people are able to play and where other activities can occur, create a process of 'self-reinforcing' behaviors, which are essential specially in this particular context.

Streets and spaces are key elements of children's infrastructure and facilitate their right to mobility. There is need for a safe and accessible urban environment. If a particular environment is unsafe for children, then keeping them away or restricting their independent mobility is not the solution. Design interventions should aim to remove danger from the environment rather than remove children from a dangerous environment. It is also key to understand that special attention needs to be given when specifically designing for the children. While the widening of pathways and attempts at constructing cycling lanes has been made in Hackney Wick, even these interventions are not tailored to children or even considered to be. Designing a cycling lane for a child cannot be considered under the same scope as a cycling lane made for a cycling adult. Prioritizing children's perspectives is about looking at what affects young people most and using this as a framework to inform all aspects of planning, designing, or managing cities because it benefits all of us.

### PAGE 5-6: NOW ACT ON IT

These pages are representative of a sense of annoyance of the children. "Why should we be telling you what to do?". The wheel of proposed actions and opportunities, inspired by ARUP's 'Opportunities to shape child-friendly cities', identifies the three main factors that influence changes in the built environment. It provides very brief suggestions for what they might do. These pages are intentionally less packed with information. They echo the quiet power of frustration, the silence that speaks volumes. The narrative here is not a roadmap but an invitation for the reader to pause, to empathize, and to reflect on the inherent injustice of expecting children to be architects of their own solutions.

### BACK PAGE: THE COLLAGES





The collages are a crucial part of the zine and are arranged on an A3 page of a completely unfolded zine. These include a series of images summarizes the arguments of the zine and are meant to create a lasting impact on the reader.

1. The collage involves a series of four images the signify the deterioration of nature of children's play environment. It goes from being a green park space to a park that has lost all color, to a hazed-out background signifying a blurry future for their urban environment and finally the background goes all black. This symbolizes how the children actually feel about the fate of their future in the great outdoors.
2. This collage is a testament to the lonely child that is forced to stay at home because it is not safe to play outside. The child is shown in inverted colors as a shout to the inverted spectrum theory, pertaining to the philosophy of color-of two people sharing their color vocabulary and discriminations, although the colors one sees—one's qualia—are systematically different from the colors the other person sees. It is representing the fact that the adults may not see the same problems the children do. Colors are used to show the aspirations of the child of playing outside.
3. This image is supposed to be a poster of the children's revolution. It uses AI generation to show the children's version of a protest as they assemble by the banks of the regent's canal in Hackney Wick. It is noteworthy that this protest is not violent by any means.
4. This collage uses an image of children hanging around together in the streets of Hackney Wick from the 1950s. This picture shows the children dangling their feet over the 'prisons' of the children's play world in today's day. The chains on the present-day image signifies how the present day child is trapped instead of being carefree. It is also in its own way saying that things were better before, and the recent developments have made it worse for the children.
5. This image shows a young child looking upon a heavily built upon environment with no open spaces. He is stuck in a concrete jungle and cannot do anything about it other than look silently from above. We face the child's back which is symbolic of how children have been ignored in the making key decisions in developing Hackney Wick.
6. The collage shows a crying child where a slide forms its tear. It also attempts to make a punny reference to Justin Timberlake's song 'cry me a river'. This bold and striking visual of a child throwing a tantrum, at the very top of the page, represents the complaining children.
7. These two images have been iterated using AI to show what a happy future for children could look like in Hackney Wick.
8. These two images contain annotations and sketches, on pictures of a barren Hackney Wick, of the future for what would be ideal urban development in Hackney for children.