

**DESIGN THINK TANK
CALL FOR PRACTICE
BRIEFS**

**LONDON SCHOOL OF
ARCHITECTURE
BY 23 JUNE 2026**

WHAT IS DESIGN THINK TANK?

DESIGN THINK TANK

MODULE INTRODUCTION

The LSA Design Think Tank (DTT) module generates creative design propositions informed by rigorous research aimed at addressing tangible built environment issues in London, during a 14 week module for year 1 MArch students. The LSA is seeking to run DTTs for the 2026-27 incoming cohort of Part 2 students. This year we continue to explore the tension between intensely local analysis with the global issues and crises facing humanity and the planet. Collectively we seek to imagine how radical ideas in local governance can contribute to meet these much wider challenges to secure more sustainable futures. Each Design Think Tank will work with an active stakeholder.

The research emerging from the Design Think Tanks will be codified in digestible reports that can be used by local partners, ranging from London Boroughs of Newham, Barking and Dagenham, Havering, Greenwich and Bexley, to institutions of civil society and community groups. As the LSA welcomes its twelfth cohort, colleagues will notice that some themes have been explored to varying degrees in previous years. We strongly encourage practice and students to build on, challenge, and develop work undertaken by your predecessors and indeed from others in the sector. How can the LSA be ever more radical and disruptive of the status quo?

Each year the LSA selects a shortlist of DTT topics to be studied from a long list of proposals made by the LSA Practice Network. We have suggested some initial themes below – we are seeking the energy of our colleagues in practice to evolve ambitious, thoughtful proposals and look forward to your suggestions. Students elect to work on one of the shortlisted study topics in collaborative groups of 6, led by practitioners from the practice that suggested the DTT study topic. LSA Faculty work with the DTT leaders to guide and support students through the research and design process.

PRACTICE BASED



01 GROUP WORK
Students
Practice
Related Industries

02 WORLD ISSUES
Architectural Practice
Future orientated
World Leaders

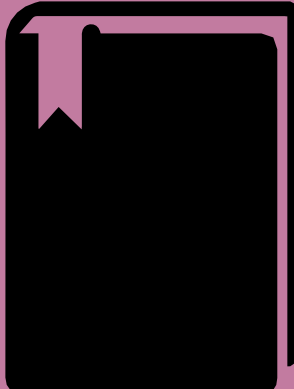
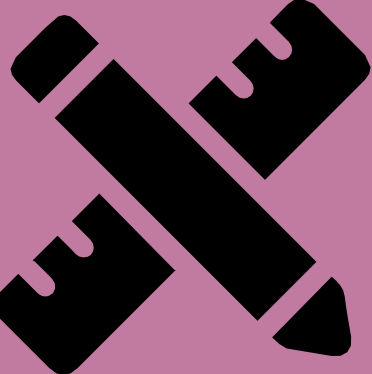
RESEARCH LED



03 RESEARCH
Study and
Practice Research
Analysis

04 BRIEF
Contextualisation
Methodology
Strategy

DESIGN OUTPUT



05 DESIGN
Synthesis
Exploratory
Research Design
Outcome

06 OUTPUT
1 Report (3000w / 50p)
1 Pamphlet
3 Competition Boards

DESIGN THINK TANK

WORK SAMPLE - 25_26 DSDHA & PIERCY CO



DESIGN THINK TANK

WORK SAMPLE - 24-25 EAST

BELT TO RENT

Your Local Food Network Rooted in Community

Market Garden

6.6.22 The council's Food Growing and Allotments Strategy 2020 recommended that opportunities for temporary food growing are pursued. A network of food growing opportunities for new major residential developments will be sought, taking into consideration the demand for provision within the area. Where it is considered appropriate, the council will encourage the provision of new allotment plots on major development sites.

6.6.23 BELT TO RENT PROPOSES A NEW FOOD GROWING STRATEGY, UTILISING UNDERUSED SPACES WITHIN THE BROADBENT, TOWNHALL AND MARKET GARDEN. A NETWORK OF FOOD GROWING OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE ESTABLISHED TO PRODUCE AND DISTRIBUTE ORGANIC FOOD ACCESSIBLE TO THE POPULATION WITH AN EMPHASIS ON AFFORDABLE AND HEALTHY PRODUCE. AN ESTABLISHED 'BROUW' LABEL WILL BE USED FOR FOOD PRODUCED IN THE GREENBELT.

cultivation → growing → harvesting

Arable Farming

Market Garden

Agroforestry

The Green Belt should be protected from inappropriate development:

- development proposals that would harm the Green Belt should be refused except where very special circumstances exist;
- subject to national planning policy tests, the enhancement of the Green Belt to provide appropriate multi-functional beneficial uses for Londoners should be supported;

143 Green Belt serves five purposes:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration and the recycling of derelict and other land.

144 Exceptional circumstances are required to justify either the extension or redesignation of the Green Belt through the preparation or review of a Local Plan.

Legend:

- Woodland
- Public Parks
- Golf Courses
- Local Nature Reserve
- Market Garden
- Agroforestry
- Arable Farming
- Canal
- Sites and Travel Route

Process Diagram:

transportation → storage → milling

Distribution Centre

Social supermarket

Process Diagram:

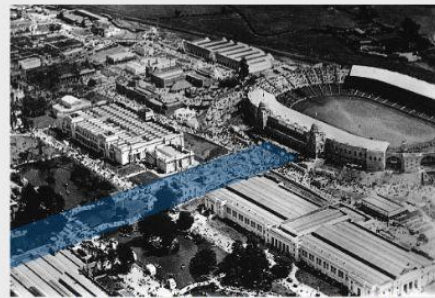
transportation → social supermarket → miller flour

Labels: *Label No. 1*, *Magnum Honey*, *Spina Honda*, *Carolina Cullinan*, *Alou Hanga*, *Laspar Borsos*, *Dimitra Gaidak*

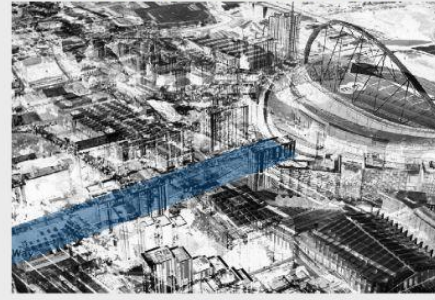
DESIGN THINK TANK

WORK SAMPLE - 24-25 DSDHA,
SAQQRA, THE PLACE BUREAU

SUMMARY:



British Empire Exhibition Procession Route (Then)



The Remnants of a Colonial Vision (Now)

THE EVERYDAY IS THE PAGEANT

Olympic Way has always been a procession route. One hundred years ago, it was the arterial route to the British Empire Exhibition, which has been largely forgotten – for some it's the pageant that never happened. Its legacy is hidden, only to be partially revealed in local road names and imperial-nostalgia collectibles bought on eBay.

Olympic Way is now a Privately Owned Public Space (POPS), owned by Quinlan – perhaps this an appropriate conclusion for a space dedicated to extraction.

Today, the people of Brent represent the empire's legacy – they are here, because Britain was there.

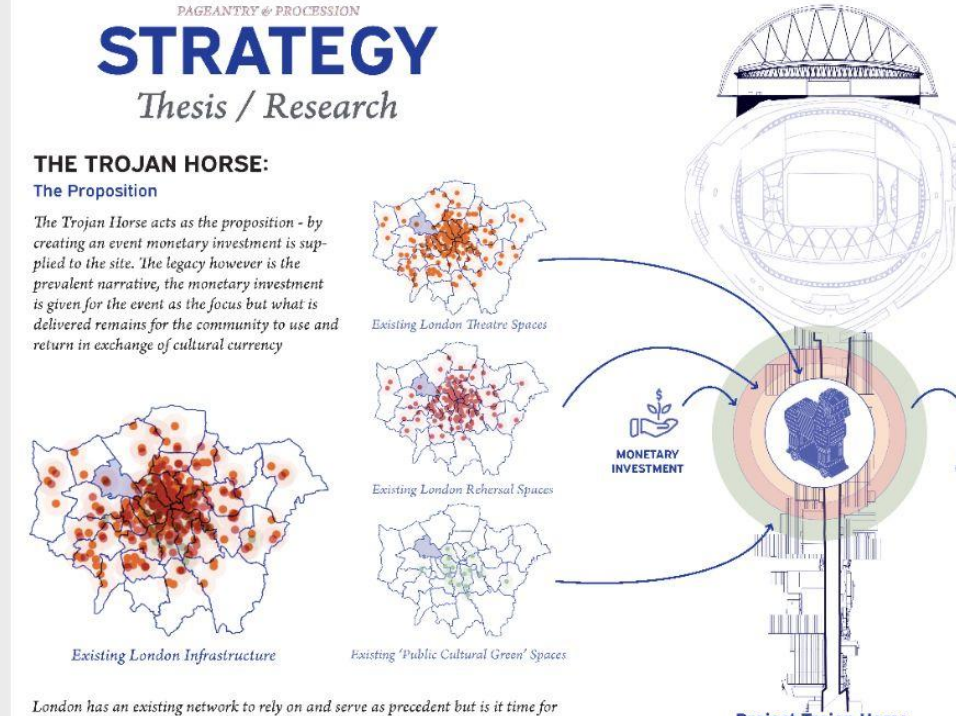
There is a need for a decolonial education. AS A STARTING POINT, A SPECTACLE IS REQUIRED TO BREAK THE AMNESIA. A spark to trigger a cathartic release in dance of imperialism, through joy and celebration.

So, we propose the Everyday Pageant, hijacking an subverting the rationalism of its situated history.

STRATEGY
Thesis / Research

THE TROJAN HORSE: The Proposition

The Trojan Horse acts as the proposition - by creating an event monetary investment is supplied to the site. The legacy however is the prevalent narrative, the monetary investment is given for the event as the focus but what is delivered remains for the community to use and return in exchange of cultural currency.




Existing London Infrastructure Existing London Theatre Spaces Existing London Rehearsal Spaces Existing "Public Cultural Green" Spaces

MONETARY INVESTMENT CULTURAL CURRENCY

Project Trojan Horse

London has an existing network to rely on and serve as precedent but is it time for Brent to be in the spotlight.

DECOLONIAL STRATEGY:




1. British Empire Exhibition 2. Demolishing 3. Creating Northala Fields


4. 'Erase Project' 5. Walking on the rubble of 'The Empire' 6. Discussions in 'Front Rooms'

THE PROCESS OF THE TROJAN HORSE:

'If its designed for a pageant - it's designed for The everyday'



1. The 'Trojan Horse' is wheeled onto site 2. It is Unpacked and the performance takes place 3. Remains as a golden standard of public realm



Existing Collective action... Reclamation... Celebration... Legacy...

PAST & FUTURE:

PAGEANTRY & PROCESSION

POLICY
Antithesis

British Imperial Rule The Protest Pageant



BRENT SEEN & HEARD (2020):



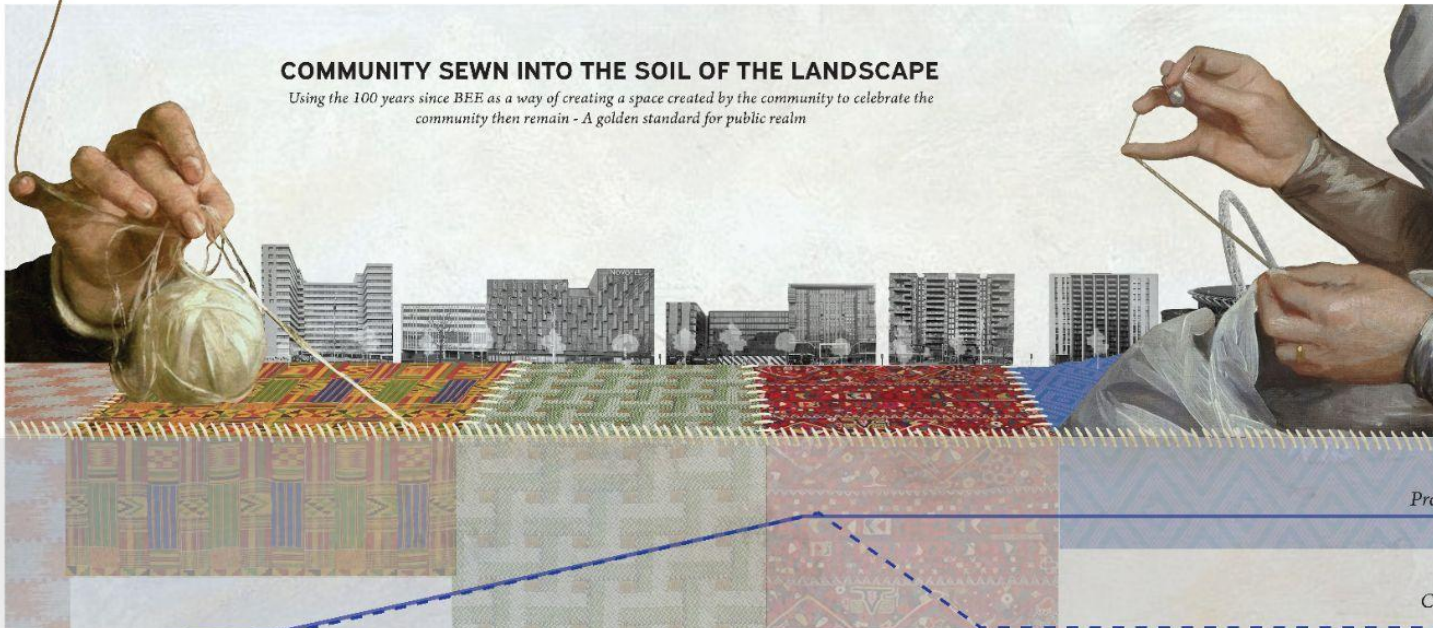
PROGRAMMABLE → events and food are important to us as public space
INVITING → offering areas to hang out
DECENTRAL → offering areas to hang out as opposed to one central spot
FLEXIBLE → able to be adapted for multiple purpose
INFORMATIVE → a place where we can find important information that's relevant to us
COLOURFUL AND CREATIVE → it needs to stand out

CONSIDERATELY ENCLOSED → to be hidden but seen
A BALANCE OF DEFINED AND UNDEFINED USES → to attract groups of friends but also bring individuals together
FOR EVERYONE → but also with a sense of ownership
FOR US → a space for our specific age group where we can be kids
FUTURE PROOF → a space that remains 'ours'
GREEN → a space that values natural elements

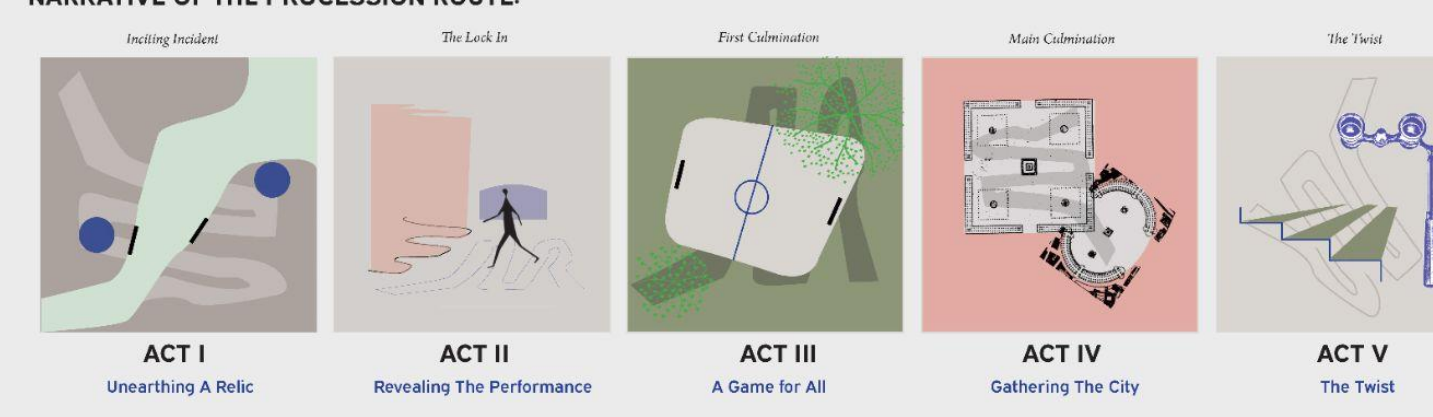
POLICY:
Policy influences management - so we propose the building of cultural capital and economic benefit in the form of a Pageant and Procession district.

Looking to the future:
We demand objectives for management that allows for congregative and listening to be anchored in the POPS management framework of new ownership enforced by an updated council Wembley Growth Area Plan
The objective would pressure new POPS ownership and EA:
1) TO ENSURE 5% OF TURNOVER TO FUND NON-STADIUM INFRASTRUCTURE TO THE DISTRICT AREA
(providing social value to the Brent residents and support local economy)
1) TO ALLOW FOR FLEXIBLE USAGE ALONG THE PUBLIC HIGHWAY IN RECOGNITION OF LOCAL HISTORIES AND DECOLONIAL EDUCATION

COMMUNITY SEWN INTO THE SOIL OF THE LANDSCAPE
Using the 100 years since BEF as a way of creating a space created by the community to celebrate the community then remain - A golden standard for public realm



NARRATIVE OF THE PROCESSION ROUTE:



Inciting Incident The Lock In First Culmination Main Culmination The Twist

ACT I: Unearthing A Relic ACT II: Revealing The Performance ACT III: A Game For All ACT IV: Gathering The City ACT V: The Twist

PAGEANTRY & PROCESSION

DESIGN
Synthesis / Disseminate



ACT I
Unearthing A Relic

ACT II
Revealing the Performance

ACT III
A Game For All

ACT IV
Gathering The City

ACT V
The Twist



Place to Reflect Converging & Conversations

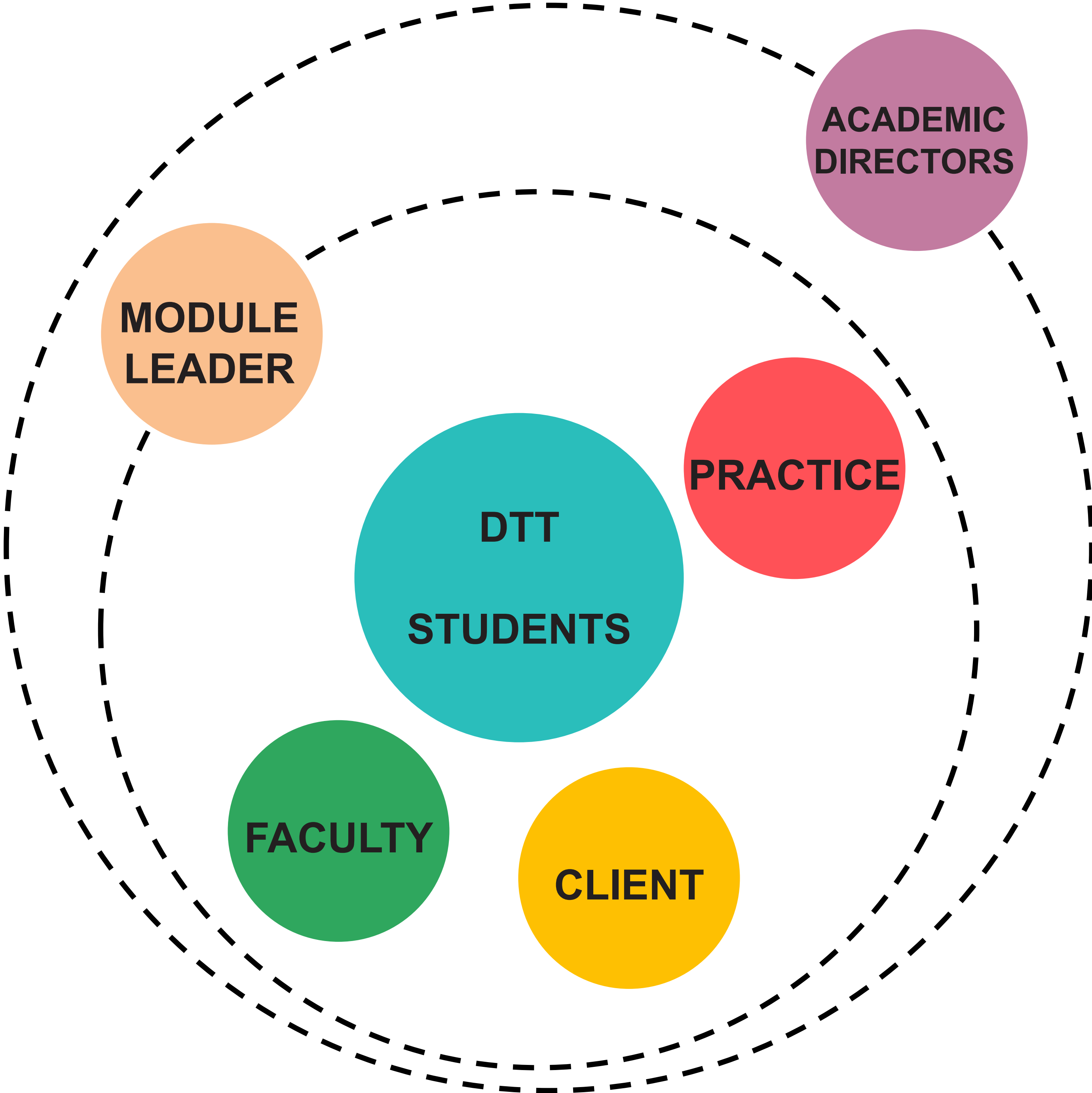
Front Rooms



Key Plan

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MODULE STRUCTURE



CLIENT

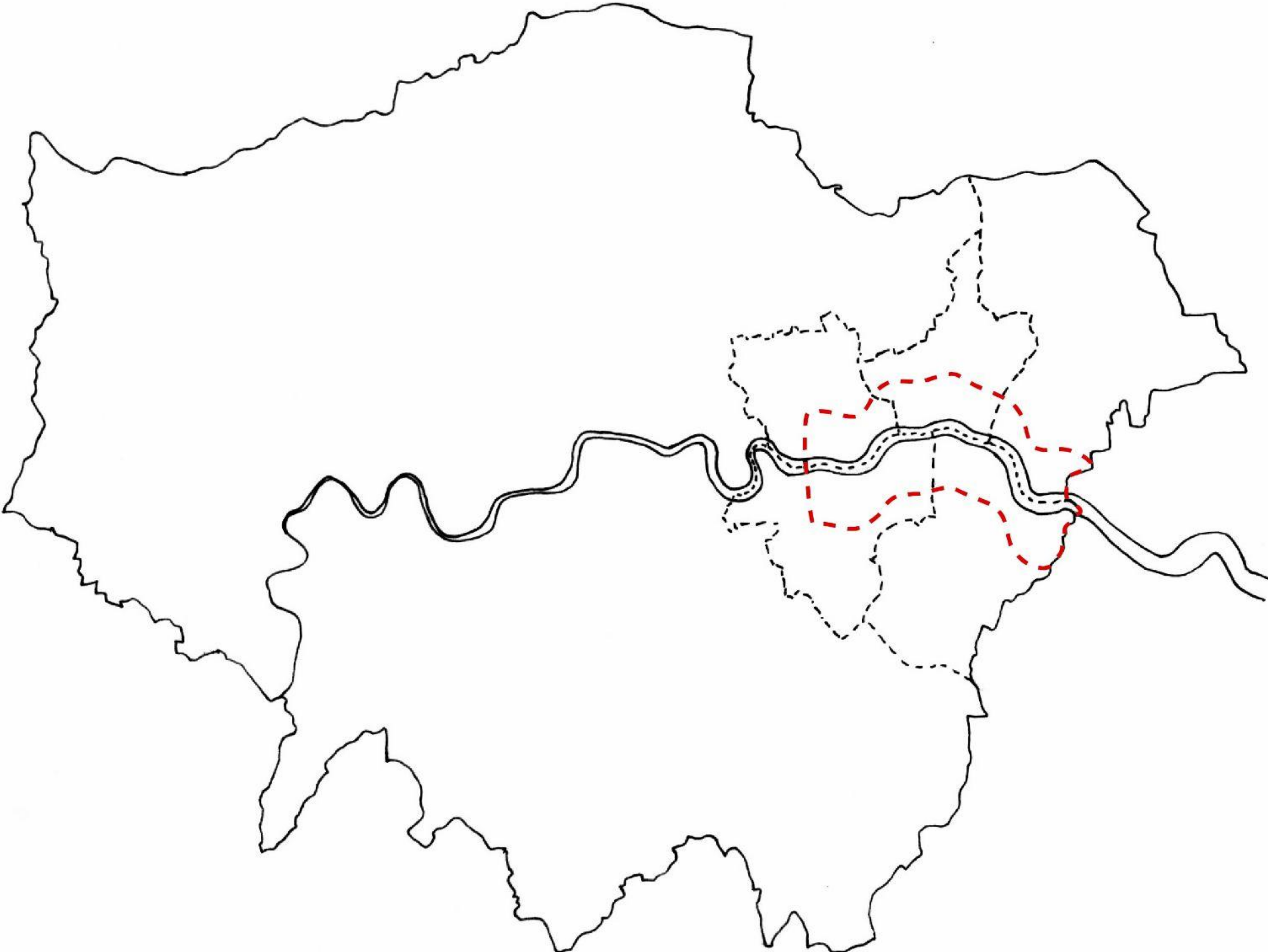
ALL PRACTICE BRIEFS MUST IDENTIFY A PERSON(S) OR ORGANISATION(S) TO ACT AS LIVE CLIENT OR KEY STAKEHOLDER FOR THE PROJECT

POLICY

EVERY THINK TANK IN 2026/27 MUST INDICATE A POLICY AND / OR STRATEGY LEVEL PROPOSAL WITHIN THE WORK. PRACTICES ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO INCLUDE POLICY REFLECTION WITHIN THEIR BRIEF PROPOSALS.

DESIGN THINK TANK

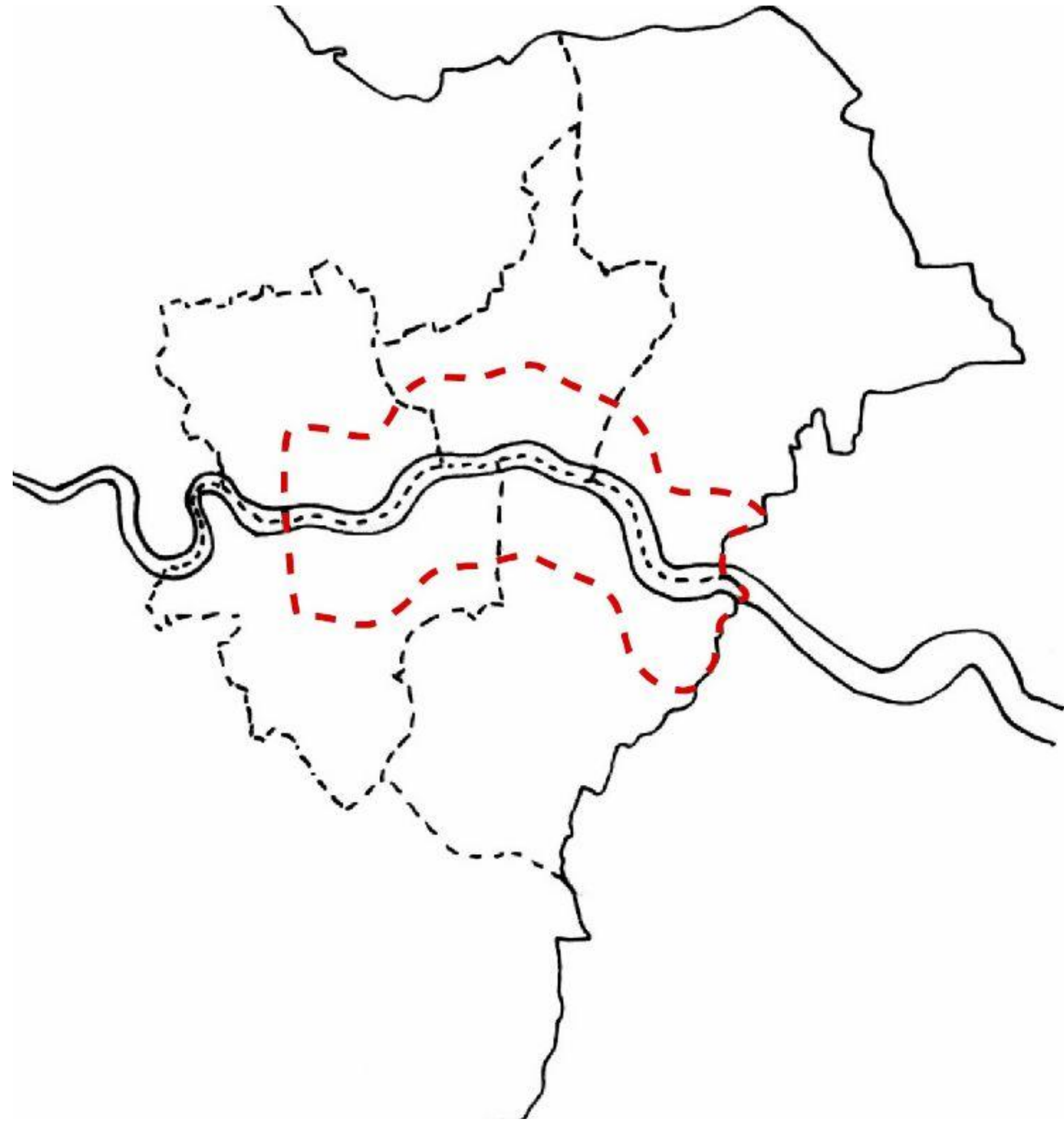
SITE OF INTEREST 2026-27



SITE

2026/27 DESIGN THINK TANKS WILL BE BASED ON SITES UP TO 2KM FROM THE RIVER THAMES IN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF NEWHAM, BARKING AND DAGENHAM, HAVERING, GREENWICH AND BEXLEY.

THE AREA WAS SELECTED FOR ITS POTENTIAL TO ADDRESS ISSUES THAT INCLUDE INDUSTRIAL REUSE, ECOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, HOUSING DENSIFICATION, AND FLOOD RESILIENCE, SERVING AS A MICROCOSM OF THE URGENT CHALLENGES FACING GREATER LONDON.



SITE DESCRIPTION

From the Thames Barrier to the river Darent, both sides of the Thames are characterised by a rich diversity of built and natural, social contexts and spatial typologies. The river acts as a central spine for the study area, with a 2km band on either side capturing an array of urban and ecological landscapes. After the Thames Barrier the river widens into low-lying floodplains and marshland. On the north bank, in the London Borough of Newham, London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, and London Borough of Havering, dense docklands give way to open estuary terrain. The south bank includes Royal Borough of Greenwich and London Borough of Bexley, formed of a similar fragmented landscape of suburban housing and remnants of industry.

For some time, the area formed the London 'part' of the Thames Gateway, a vast regional masterplan that delivered, in the end, only piecemeal change. Meanwhile, just beyond Greater London's borders, new international logistics hubs have emerged which bring new challenges and opportunities to the region.

The area can be described as a patchwork in transition: Royal Docks historic dock infrastructure sits across from the Thamesmead estate (subject to major regeneration and development) and projects such as Barking Riverside. Historically, this area was key to supporting London's industry, shipping and manufacturing. Following late 20th-century decline, large areas became underused. Today, the east London Thames is a landscape of overlap and change, where infrastructure, housing, and ecology continue to reshape the river's edge.

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INDICATIVE TIMELINE



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SUBMISSION

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Create architectural design proposals of a scale, complexity and type appropriate to the Design Think Tank, represented using a range of media, and in response to a research-generated brief
2. Demonstrate relevant knowledge of the histories and theories of architecture and the related arts, technologies and human sciences and ways in which they have influenced the spatial, social and technological qualities of architecture
3. Analyse past and current precedents of function, typology, organisation and technological strategy to prepare the programme and brief for design projects
4. Apply a set of research methods for their design practice. Students should understand and be conversant across five research methodologies and have employed at least two

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Rigorous Research – the students will have a series of research seminars introducing research methods in advance of starting the Design Think Tank Module. These are expected to be used in a rigorous way.

Design – the outcome does not have to be a building, it can be a designed object or document or other – this is open to interpretation and the needs of the brief/stakeholder

SUBMISSION

**8 MARCH
2027**

**3XA1
COMPETITION
BOARDS**

**DESIGN REPORT
50 PAGES
+
3000 WORD
REFLECTIVE
STATEMENT**

**A5 PAMPHLET
FOR
DISSEMINATION**

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2026/27 THEMES

As a school we have interest in projects which facilitate **Decarbonisation** – the attention to urgent climate emergency through design, **Decolonisation** – critique of colonial/power structures past and present, **De-standardisation** – mitigating standards that are exclusionary to different modes of being. We invite your propositions for a Design Think Tank brief on a theme relevant to your practice.

There is an expectation that your research will engage with an **active client/stakeholder**, **Bioregional design** and the **Policy context** relevant to this area, from global to local. This brief may explore, but is not limited to, the following themes:

**ECOLOGY and
LANDSCAPE**

**MAKING and
CONSTRUCTION**

**SOCIAL
JUSTICE &
INCLUSIVITY**

**VISUAL
LANGUAGE
and
HERITAGE**

**DIFFERENT
MODES of
LIVING**

**URBAN
STUDIES
and PLANNING**

ECONOMIES

**(CIVIC)
LEARNING**

ECOLOGY & LANDSCAPE

As we face the challenges of climate change and geopolitical instability, how can we design and plan cities that encourage ecological resilience, while enabling biodiversity to thrive and carbon emissions to reduce?

A design think tank could explore:

- Ecological Stewardship
- Urban Agriculture
- Flood resilience
- Valuing the More-than-human
- Beyond resilience
- Post development

MAKING & CONSTRUCTION

How can architects and their designs re-engage and nurture local networks of makers, craftspeople, and skilled manual labourers?

A design think tank could explore current ideas around de-standardisation, digital fabrication techniques, and the renewed anxiety around the automation of human jobs. It could explore themes relating to the reduction of new building, prioritising adaptation and preservation.

- Moratorium on new construction
- Industrial preservation
- Re-use, adaptation, and maintenance

**SOCIAL
JUSTICE &
LEARNING**

How can architects make a meaningful contribution to the urgent reshaping of learning and civic agency?

A design think tank might co-explore notions of:

- Communities of practice
- (Grassroots) Civic Pedagogy
- Social justice/right to the city
- Ecologies of care
- Solidarities
- Feminist cities
- Ethics of practice
- Schools and learning spaces

**MODES of
LIVING**

A design think tank could explore new modes of living and the future of housing. Through research into intergenerational living, rented homes, family hubs, queer spaces, co-living, and Community Land Trusts, it might investigate how architecture can respond to changing social structures, economic pressures, and collective life. How might housing move beyond the isolated nuclear household to support new models of care, affordability, and belonging?

- intergenerational living
- rented homes
- family hubs
- queer spaces
- Co-living and CLTs.

URBAN STUDIES

A design think tank might focus on urban edges, hinterlands, and infrastructures as critical sites of ecological, spatial, and social change. Through the study of stations, bridges, logistical corridors, and transitional landscapes, it could investigate how infrastructure shapes everyday life and territorial relations. What forms of collective life emerge/could be imagined in the spaces between centre and periphery?

- Edges and hinterland conditions
- Infrastructure(s) (such as stations, bridges)

ECONOMIES

The objective of a design think tank could be to explore the architectural and urban consequences of alternative economies. Through spatial research and speculative design, it could examine how economic models shape the organisation of cities, resources, labour, and collective life. What forms of architecture emerge beyond extractive growth? How might urban space be reorganised around care, reciprocity, and shared access rather than accumulation?

- Circular economies
- Doughnut economics
- Markets and exchanges
- Commons

SOCIAL JUSTICE & INCLUSIVITY

A design think tank could explore social justice, inclusivity, and coexistence in the built environment. Through research into public space, cultural infrastructure, and civic amenity, it could examine how architecture can support marginalised communities, neurodiverse and disabled citizens, intergenerational publics, and safer environments for vulnerable groups. How can spaces foster care, dignity, and collective empowerment without exclusion or control?

- Marginalised communities
- Disabled, Deaf and Neurodivergent communities
- Women's safety
- Community empowerment

HERITAGE & CONTINUITY

How can architects change the way they relate to heritage buildings, to bring local communities and charities along in the preservation and revitalisation of their historic assets? Preservation of tangible and intangible heritage is essential to support diversity of place and people: these include traditions, culture and behaviours. A design think tank might revisit the meaning of and what might be conceived of as heritage, exploring the spatial and social needs for the future.

- Tradition and conservation
- Historic assets
- Suburban heritage

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO
YOUR PRACTICE BRIEF
PROPOSALS BY**

23 JUNE 2026