Role of Peckham Rye Station Gateway site in the creative industries’ hotspot in central Peckham

According to recent national figures the creative and cultural industries sector is the fastest growing in the UK economy. Peckham is at the forefront of that sector, with a growing creative and cultural cluster of enterprises in and around Peckham Rye station. It is a very dynamic part of the local Peckham economy, with far reaching growth potential. It is now seen on the London and national radar as a creative ‘hotspot’. Network Rail, however, has recently published a ‘Station Gateway’ plan which would destroy a significant part of the cluster of these creative and cultural enterprises. The attached map (Peckham Rye Station creative hotspot businesses) shows the location on the Station Gateway site of several businesses which are part of the new creative industries sector. Several are start ups over the last year.

Pace of change at street level economy

The speed of change at street level is fast, and is currently outpacing the public agencies’ understanding of the dynamic. This pace is an indication of the success of this growing cluster of enterprises in the micro economy, that they themselves are self creating. Peckham has spawned its own self-regeneration process, embracing the Station Gateway site. The site is full of old solid buildings reused for new and creative purposes. The plan would destroy the nature of that site with the old buildings - their spirit, adaptability and low cost - that has helped the self regenerating process take root and flourish. Network Rail’s proposal would be the death of this on the Peckham Rye station site, and so could threaten the whole cluster’s viability.

Enterprise connections

A key characteristic of this creative and cultural sector in central Peckham is the close proximity of the growing number of micro enterprises located on four sites clustered around Central Rye Lane. This proximity enables many personal interactions in a physical creative environment. The second map (Peckham’s creative ‘hotspot’) shows how they cluster around central Rye Lane and the station. Some creative enterprises have long roots in central Peckham. They started some 20 years ago with artisans’ workshops in Blenheim Ct, and artists' studios in the Bussey building. 9-10 years ago Bar Story then Sassoon Gallery began in Blenheim Gv/Dovedale Ct. A few years on, CLF Art Café created a dance, theatre and workshops venue in the Bussey, Hannah Barry Gallery took root next door on the Copeland Park, and created Bold Tendencies and Frank’s Café, in the multi storey car park, which have escalated the growth further. At the same time new creative and cultural enterprises have been growing in the buildings alongside the historic station itself and behind it in Dovedale Ct and Blenheim Gv, and in the Copeland Park. More recently, community asset nomination has brought the Peckham Liberal Club on the north side of the station into the mix as a significant social and performance venue.

These and many more interactions between the enterprises, and their customers and visitors, continue to help quicken the pace of new enterprise start-ups. Several of the businesses also are acting as business incubators through training workshops and direct business experience. They are spawning further micro enterprises in Peckham and beyond. The sector is also influencing positively independent traders in the town centre mainstream economy and there is much potential for collaborative liaison between the sectors. The special nature of the old industrial buildings is a precious asset for Peckham in these clusters. It needs to be valued for the way it matches the special requirements for nurturing the creative and cultural industries in central Peckham. The Peckham Rye station site has an important role in this sector as a suitable environment for creative start-ups and needs to retain its current nature, albeit cleaned up, and better maintained.

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1. The Arches Studios
2. Sassoon Gallery and Peckham Springs
3. Bar Story
4. Brick Brewery
5. Muana Restaurant
6. The Sunday Painter
7. Peckham Refreshment Rooms
8. Peckham Print Studios
9. Barry’s Deli
10. The Old Waiting Room
11. Hannah Barry Gallery

Gateway to Peckham - different parts of Network Rail land, central Rye Lane west
Base map from Gateway to Peckham Cabinet report http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?id=27873
Boundary colours indicative not precise, produced by Peckham Vision 2013 as a discussion aid
Peckham's creative 'hotspot' * January 2014

A1. The Peckham Liberal Club - social, arts and entertainment venue

B1. PeckhamPlex Cinema
B2. Multi-storey car park / Bold Tendencies
B3. Frank's Cafe

C1. The Arches Studios
C2. Sassoon Gallery and Peckham Springs
C3. Bar Story
C4. Brick Brewery
C5. Muana Restaurant

C6. The Sunday Painter
C7. Peckham Refreshment Rooms
C8. Peckham Print Studios
C9. Barry's Deli
C10. The Old Waiting Room
C11. Hannah Barry Gallery

D1. CLFArt Cafe / Bussey - multi level warehouse venue for multiple performance arts, exhibitions, events, club nights, creative workshops, venue hire and more.
D2. Copeland Park - studios, work units and venues
D3. Safehouse, Copeland Road - location hire

* This map shows the creative enterprises fueling the heart of Peckham's hotspot in January 2014. The enterprises are clustered on 4 sites around Peckham Rye station. The Peckham and Nunhead Area Action Plan (PNAAP) refers to creative enterprises as part of Peckham's reputation as a creative 'hotspot' to build on. The following is an extract from PNAAP (September 2012 - Publication / submission version):

4.2.11 Peckham has a positive reputation as a creative hotspot and is home to many successful businesses and organisations and a thriving multi-cultural arts scene. The area around Peckham Rye Station, along Blenheim Grove and the Copeland Industrial Park currently hosts a number of local artists' studios, gallery space and entertainment uses.

4.2.12 We want to continue to build upon this reputation which will help to generate new jobs and contribute towards the vitality of the town centre by creating a more diverse offer for local people and visitors as well as creating opportunities for training and learning.

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