

# ACCENTS 2018



ACCENTS IMAGINE - AND DELIVER - EXACTLY  
THE KIND OF INCLUSIVE PLACEMAKING  
PROGRAMMES LONDON NEEDS

Lisa Taylor Director, Future of London

Born in Poplar in 2014, Accents conceives and delivers projects and strategies, big and small, which support broad-based social, economic and cultural regeneration, whilst creating sustainable revenues, and bringing investment into the community.

Our approach is simple: we reappraise assets to maximise their value to communities and stakeholders. We think creatively about the city, devising projects which engage and motivate spaces, stories, businesses and people in an area. Working with fantastic partners, from community groups to global institutions, to grow sustainably mixed and cohesive places. We work with assets of all kinds:

### **Space**

Turning liabilities into assets

### **Community**

Enabling people to define their futures

### **Business**

Building identity and democratising procurement for a stronger local economy

### **Place**

Celebrating heritage & finding fresh opportunity in future change

### **People**

Turning colleagues' passions into projects



# 2017/18 HEADLINES

- **Mayor pledges £2m million to East London fashion hub**, which will see the delivery of Poplar Works Phase 2
- **Open Poplar Round 2** attracts ten viable ideas for turning disused spaces into opportunities, which Accents has been supporting and nurturing into reality
- New **BMX track**
- **The Tommy Flowers community pub**
- **13 new public artworks** delivered across Poplar.
- **£10,000** DEFRA air quality grant secured with LB Tower Hamlets.
- **355 people** taken on tours of Poplar
- **East London Skaters** launches
- **210 local people** involved in Accents Projects
- **1,510 Volunteer hours** on Accents Projects
- **E-CAR Club** removes **18,300** of petrol miles from roads
- Fourth **V&A Micro-Museum exhibition** launches
- **4,000 people** attend Poplar's 5th **Swing East Festival**
- **7,900 people** attend Accents events
- **72 Poplar HARCA staff** involved in Accents projects
- Partners invest **£430,000** in physical improvements in Poplar



# SPACE

THE CITY IS LOSING AN AVERAGE OF 88 HECTARES OF INDUSTRIAL LAND EVERY YEAR AND THE NEED FOR HOUSING WILL INCREASE PRESSURE FURTHER *Architectural Review*

Across London the pressure on affordable space, especially workspace, is growing. We are in danger of losing sectors, skills and identity.

Concurrently, we need to find new revenue streams and ensure work and leisure space is available to a growing population.

Accents is interested in how, by looking differently at space, value can be maximised for stakeholders, businesses and communities, existing and new.

# OPEN POPLAR SPACE FOR IDEAS

Launched in 2015 with over 50 unused and underused spaces in Poplar, aimed at turning liabilities into assets. Since the latest call for proposals in 2017, over 21, 500 sqm of exceptional business ideas have been generated. It has sparked a re-evaluation of space within Poplar HARCA and led to new capital investment, increased revenue and decreased costs.

## ARBEIT STUDIOS

Arbeit Projects have transformed an unused basement into an exciting new creative and cultural hub for artists, designers and local creatives in Poplar. The affordable creative studio space houses local artists, designers, small businesses and start-ups, alongside business support, event and gallery space.



## ABERFELDY PUB TOMMY FLOWERS

The Tommy Flowers is a community pub set up in partnership with the Aberfeldy Big Local and Fitzrovia Noir arts organisation. Built in an old florist shop, the pub is used as an arts and community space in the day time, and a pub in the evening. Named after heroic World War Two coder, and the Aberfeldy Estate's most famous son.



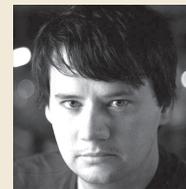
## ONEBYME FASHION

ONEBYME is a gender-fluid urban fashion brand, which crafts garments from a single piece of UK-produced cloth made from 100% natural fibres. Through Open Poplar, ONEBYME has secured low-cost studio space which will allow the business to grow, expand and deliver its community benefit initiatives.



## KAFE 1788 SOCIAL SPACE

In 2016, local barista Richard Macien proposed through Open Poplar, to create London's first Haitian coffee shop. With business support from Accents' Chrisp Street Exchange programme, Kafe 1788 was born, running community & arts events, health & wellbeing classes, and of course, selling great coffee!



"I've lived in Poplar all my life and have been photographing its changing shape over the last 16 years. Accents has democratised space previously inaccessible, adding colour and life. For my Transition Photography Project, that meant a really well attended exhibition in the heart of the Lansbury Estate."

Michael Mulcahy  
Photographer & Poplar resident



# COMMUNITY

NEVER DOUBT THAT COMMITTED  
CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD  
- INDEED, IT IS THE ONLY THING  
THAT EVER HAS *Margaret Mead*

An area's people are its key asset. With authority, independence and support, communities can devise and deliver the most appropriate services and facilities for their area.

Accents works to support a range of local groups, projects and networks to help grow their capacity and take ever stronger roles in shaping Poplar.

## POPLAR PEDDLERS CYCLE HUB

Uniting road-cycling middle-aged men in lycra, young people on BMXs, Bangladeshi mums and people who want to learn to ride a bike, Poplar Peddlers is truly inclusive. The Peddlers run regular group rides, deliver cycling training and have entered a team in the London Nocturne for the past three years. 2018 saw a new BMX track at Langdon Park, delivered in partnership with AccessSport.



## BOX OF TOYS OPEN MIC

Box of Toys is a collective of local musicians who secure opportunities to perform, as well as running events themselves across East London. With over 100 events since being founded in 2015, Box of Toys has supported local artists and has engaged with London-wide music lovers. A first album is in production



## CRISP STREET EXCHANGE WORKSPACE

Our co-working and enterprise support hub launched recently. Funded by the Mayor of London, the hub is run by the London Small Business Centre and offers business support and affordable workspace.



## EAST LONDON SKATERS

Launched in 2018, East London Skaters is a growing network of rollerbladers surfing Poplar's urban landscape. It looks to introduce local residents of all ages into skating and gather London-wide skaters for frequent skate-based events in Poplar. Summer 2018, East London Skaters participated at the St Paul's Way road closure, getting local people on skates and claiming back use of the road!



## R-URBAN MAKING

R-Urban Poplar, operated by Public Works architecture and art collective, offers a series of workshops and events that focus on local people coming together, learning new skills, and enjoying food together. The site consists of a workshop space, a kitchen, tool library and an anaerobic digester. R-Urban is making use of an unused car-plot parallel to the A12, which Accents supported Public Works in securing.



"It's fantastic being part of the Carradale community garden. I've met all sorts of people because of it, from all sorts of backgrounds. We've done loads together building this place and we're a stronger community because of it."

**Tom Gleed**  
Poplar resident & Sustainable Housing's  
Green Tenant of the Year 2014



# BUSINESS

THERE ARE NOW 4.8 MILLION SMALL BUSINESSES IN THE UK AND THEY FORM THE LIFEBLOOD OF EVERY CITY ECONOMY ACROSS THE COUNTRY *Centre for Cities*

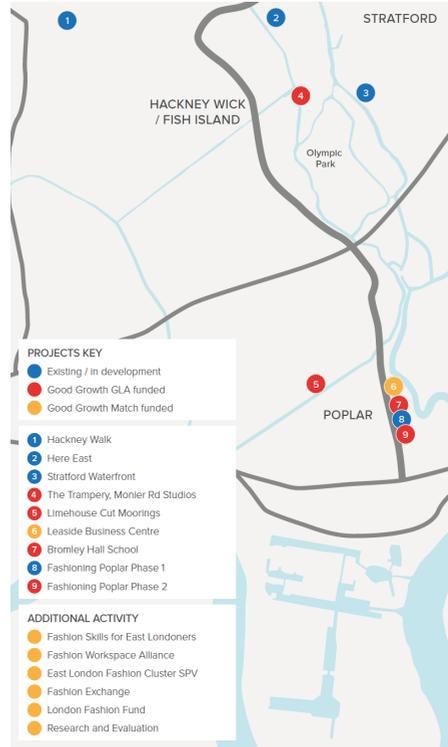
Strong local enterprise is a vital element of building a self-sustaining, inclusive community services and facilities for their area.

Accents has been working to help give local business a voice, support new start-ups and open up new and existing opportunities for local enterprise.

# POPLAR WORKS RE-SEEDING A FASHION INDUSTRY

Poplar Works (formerly known as Fashioning Poplar) is a multi-use fashion hub built on two sets of redundant garages and a disused boiler house spanning the A12, adjacent to large scale residential development sites. Conceived and developed by Accents, in partnership with London College of Fashion: University of Arts London, and creative workspace provider The Trampery, this £5.5m scheme is part-funded by the Mayor of London, through its London Regeneration Fund and Good Growth Fund.

The scheme will deliver 1,993 sqm of low cost design studios, maker workshops, training space, a garment manufacturing unit, events space and publicly accessible café. Fully open from September 2019, the scheme aims to support 150 early-stage businesses to grow through bespoke enterprise support programmes, create 85 jobs for local people and create 185 training, apprenticeship and mentoring opportunities in its first 2 years of operation.



Poplar Works is only the first element of the Accents envisioned Leaside Fashion & Creative Cluster. Aligned to the emerging Fashion District in East London and catalysed by LCF's move to Eastbank in 2022, the Leaside Fashion & Creative Cluster aims to create 11,068 sqm workspace, training and education facilities alongside the large scale redevelopment of the Lower Lea, establishing an authentic, ambitious and accessible industrial identity for the area.



“The Accents team is doing remarkable work in Poplar, developing audacious projects that draw on deep roots in the neighbourhood’s history to create new opportunities for the future. The Trampery is honoured to be working with the team to help realise Poplar Works and foster a new focal point for fashion and creativity in Poplar.”

Charles Armstrong  
Founder, The Trampery



1921: Minnie Lansbury led off to prison with the other councillors  
[photos: Tower Hamlets Archives]

# PLACE

WITHOUT A PAST YOU CAN'T HAVE  
A FUTURE *Michael Ende*

London's East End is changing rapidly, with Poplar no exception. The area's population will double in the next 10 years as new homes are built.

Accents is focused on ensuring the social, economic and cultural offer keeps pace, and vitally, reflects on the past to deliver authentically for all the community, current and new.



## V&A MICRO MUSEUM

From 2016, the V&A's Lansbury Micro Museum has hosted evolving exhibitions, charting local history and culture. This year's exhibition, 'Seeing Red', presents posters made by See Red Women's Workshop - a silk screening collective founded in London in 1974. Curated by the V&A, which will open its new space in the Olympic Park in 2022, and run by local volunteers.



## IMPROVING AIR QUALITY

Air pollution is a major concern in Poplar and one which Accents is actively seeking to address. This includes securing a £100,000 air quality grant for LB Tower Hamlets from central government and delivering a programme of behavioural change activities, community events and targeted local interventions.



## SOLAR PANELS 6,688 INSTALLED

Our PV programmes over the last 3 years have secured the installation of thousands of panels across Poplar, creating £2m income over the next 20 years specifically for community investment and reducing carbon emissions.



## STREET ART COLOUR & PLACE

Accents, in partnership with Global Street Art, has been working with local and international artists to decorate our estates and playgrounds with public works of art. In the last 12 months Accents has enabled 13 new artworks across Poplar.



## POPLAR PAVILION CONVERSATIONS

Over summer 2017, Poplar hosted the Poplar Pavilion - an experimental construction with a design and build generated by the community. The project was orchestrated and led by Wellcome Trust fellowship artist, Alex Julian. The Pavilion catalysed conversation around well-being, change and identity.



"What's exciting about the team is that they work with what's there, with what's coming and with open minds, thereby spying the opportunity to make the right interventions at the right time. A12: Green Mile is a case in point - they have structured a masterplan of potential green interventions with the University of East London, the Borough and other partners and are securing chances to make each a reality."

Dr Paula Vandergart  
Sustainability Research Fellow, University of East London



# PEOPLE

IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE TO HIRE  
SMART PEOPLE AND THEN TELL  
THEM WHAT TO DO; WE HIRE SMART  
PEOPLE SO THEY CAN TELL US WHAT  
TO DO *Steve Jobs*

Every employer will say that their people are their greatest asset...

But do most maximise the full skills and potential of their employees,  
giving them the opportunity to work on self-generated projects?

Accents opens up such opportunities to engage employees in  
developing services, connectivity and themselves.



“As a Poplar HARCA employee simultaneously studying for an arts degree, Accents have enabled me to join up my work and studies. My first project is to help promote reading and literacy in the local community via little libraries filled with free books popping up across our housing estates. We hope this will encourage reading in the neighbourhood which we can then develop into a book club and local literature events.”

Nicola Rushton  
PA to CEO

## SWING EAST ANNUAL FESTIVAL

2018 saw Estate Team Leader Nelson Piperides’ fifth Swing East, the annual festival which celebrates the best of swing music, dance and vintage markets, in its 1951 Crisp Street home. 4,000 people came to the most recent one in July, from close to home and across the UK. Nelson’s monthly spin-off dance classes have also been a hit.



DJ @ Swing East

## LEAP GREEN POPLAR

A free service providing important advice, support and energy saving measures to fuel vulnerable households. The programme is provided by AgilityEco alongside a number of partner organisations. This year through LEAP initiatives, £162,000 worth of household savings have been secured, through newly installed energy saving measures.



LEAP Service

## E-CAR PARTNERSHIP

Having partnered in the launch of the first wholly electric car club in the UK in 2013, Accents has secured ongoing free use of the vehicles for employees during working hours, saving up to £16,000 a year and reducing pollution.



E-Car Club

## POPLAR SINGERS COMMUNITY CHOIR

Poplar Singers began life in January, 2016 and was an immediate hit, attracting members from 18-85 years old. The community choir’s first public outing was the stunning De:Part performance with LIFT and Spitalfields Music in June.



Poplar Singers



“I’ve had the unique opportunity to turn something I love doing, singing, into a community engagement project. It’s been hugely rewarding to experience staff, residents and partners singing together on an equal platform, where boundaries are blurred and differing backgrounds go completely unnoticed. Personally, it’s been really empowering to set up and own a project - something I wouldn’t have had the confidence or ability to do without the support of the Accents Team.”

Hannah Douse  
Senior Communications Officer

# SPREADING THE WORD

## BATH UNIVERSITY VISUALISING

Accents has been working with Bath university students, supporting their projects to design theoretical infrastructures which tackle the physical severance of the A12 and Limehouse Cut Canal in Poplar. The students presented their ideas at Future of London's 'Overcoming Barriers' conference, 2018.



## TALKS

Accents has participated at over 40 events in the last year, from Tallinn to New York, and from Hamburg to Chelmsford.

We have presented and advised on a range of themes including placemaking narratives, industrial strategies, overcoming physical infrastructure and how to make best use of assets.



## QUEEN MARY UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

Queen Mary University's Geography department is collaborating with Poplar HARCA to support Master and Undergraduate degree research work, exploring the question 'Who makes up Poplar?'



## ACCENTS CONSULTANCY

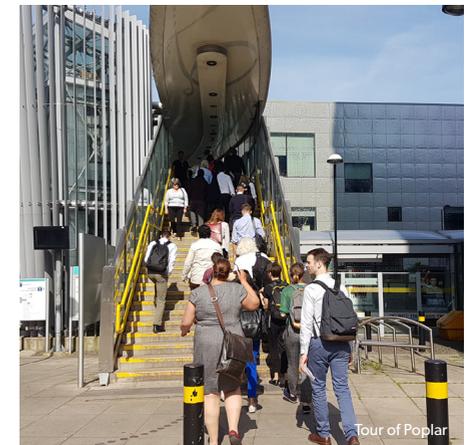
Accents has begun offering a placemaking consultancy service, targeted at local authorities, housing associations, community groups and developers alike. Through this, Accents is supporting area strategies, neighbourhood plans, individual projects and planning applications.



## TOURS

In 2017 we took over 350 people on tours around Poplar and Bow.

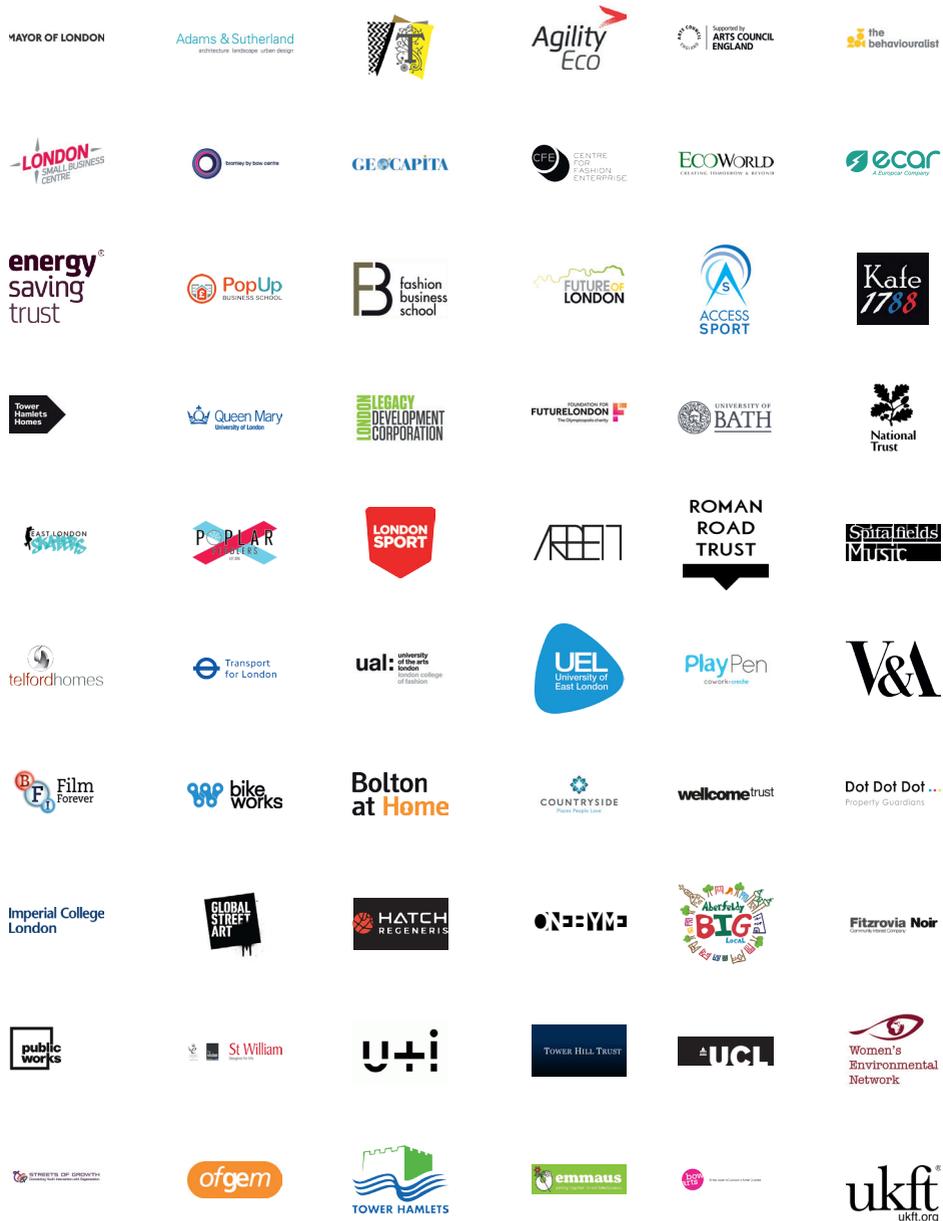
Areas of focus included local heritage, estate renewal schemes, Poplar Works, and independent projects that have come through Accents' award winning Open Poplar programme.



"We have successfully worked with Accents on a number of projects across London. Their ability to advise the right commercial and community strategies has been invaluable for us to design schemes with the strongest impact for current and future local communities."

Simon Jeffery  
Associate Land and New Business Director, Countryside

# PARTNERS



WE'RE DELIGHTED TO BE WORKING WITH THE ACCENTS TEAM, WHO ARE BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS IN THE EAST END THAT DELIVER FOR ALL THE COMMUNITY, CURRENT AND FUTURE

Professor Frances Corner OBE Head of London College of Fashion

ACCENTS HAVE UNLOCKED A RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES IN THE AREA, SOMETIMES CHALLENGING – ALWAYS INTERESTING, AND WE CONTINUE TO DELIVER A NUMBER OF VERY SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS WITH THEM

Marcel Baettig CEO, Bow Arts Trust

THE ACCENTS TEAM UNDERSTANDS THAT COMMUNITIES ARE ABOUT MORE THAN JUST HOUSING. BY WORKING WITH PARTNERS FROM ACROSS THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR, THEY'RE DELIVERING INNOVATIVE PROJECTS THAT ARE HAVING A GENUINELY POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE RESIDENTS OF POPLAR

Vicky Clark, Divisional Director, Growth and Economic Development at London Borough of Tower Hamlets

# ONE OF THE BEST REGENERATION TEAMS IN LONDON

Jamie Dean Regeneration Manager, GLA



**Paul Augarde**  
Director of Placemaking, heads up Accents with 11 years experience in housing, following a career making feature films



**Blossom Young**  
Accents' Head of Operations, Blossom uses her community engagement background to lead Poplar Works



**BeiBei Mu**  
With 6 years of experiences in project management in financial services, BeiBei manages and delivers culture, and environmental sustainability projects



**Alex Jeremy**  
With 6 years of experience working in local government and regeneration, Alex is Accents' Head of Partnerships



**Bree Sims**  
Combines her 18 years PR and placemaking experience with leading our theatre, film and arts projects



**Danny Tompkins**  
Developing and delivering imaginative ways to make the most of Poplar's assets: buildings, places, people, and stories



**Sarah Fullegar**  
With 9 years in the charitable sector, Sarah commissions, and sometimes creates, street art, events and other magic



**Jasmine Drewry**  
Delivers projects across Accents' diverse project portfolio, including culture and sustainability initiatives

- 🏆 Alan Cherry Award 2017 (One to Watch)
- 🏆 Eurhonet CSR Awards: You're a Champ!: Winner
- 🏆 Guardian Public Service Awards Transformation: Winner
- 🏆 24 Housing Awards Innovation of the Year: Winner
- 🏆 Inside Housing Innovation Index: Shortlisted

- 🏆 Sustainable Housing Awards Housing Provider of the Year: Winner
- 🏆 Sustainable Housing Awards: Sustainable Housing Partnership of the Year: Winner
- 🏆 Sustainable City Awards: Award for Greening the Third Sector: Winner
- 🏆 Community Impact Awards: Greener Living Award: Winner



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