



LEARNING FROM OTHERS

Four case studies of meanwhile land use: financial relationships, business models, partners, stakeholders, commercial arrangements and success.

SUMMARY REPORT

PREFACE

This research was compiled by principal investigators Coda Architects Ltd and Common Capital with collaborators from Pop-Up Bristol and Cardiff University. The four partners came together in September 2012 to deliver this piece of work for the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) because of their like-minded perspective.

As a team we approached this work unashamedly with **three** explicit assumptions. **First**, we believe that to create truly successful and sustainable outcomes we must consider social, environmental and economic factors equally - not only economic growth. **Second**, that somehow community involvement, engagement and participation are critical to determining the perceived success of meanwhile use developments.

'Meanwhile Use' developments literally occupy spaces in realms between the festival scene and the built environment; between the formal economy and community action; and between the fleeting and the long-term. Various approaches to regeneration have been advocated, tested and applied over many decades with mixed success in both rural and urban settings, long before the term 'Meanwhile Use' became popular. Our **third** assumption then, is that a critical appraisal of emergent practice must be helpful and indeed necessary for meanwhile developments to successfully support future models of regeneration.

The opportunity to investigate effective models for the delivery of 'Meanwhile Use' developments was therefore a hugely exciting one. We would like to thank all those people who joined the discussion, allowed us to visit their sites and contributed so much in interviews. A special thank you goes to the commissioning team at The London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) for having the foresight to see the potential value in this work; The Greater London Authority (GLA) for their candid support; the photos supplied by the Shambala Festival Team, and the Experimental Psychologists at the University of Bristol.

Produced January 2013



COMMON CAPITAL

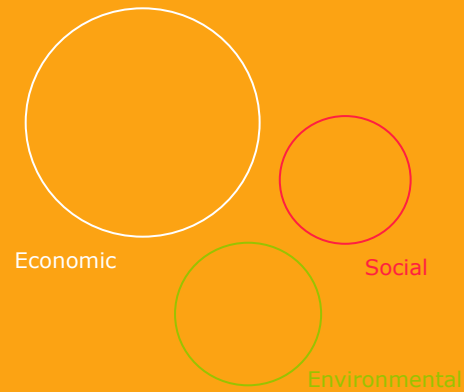


“IF MAPPED OUT CORRECTLY, THIS COULD BECOME A VIABLE AND REPLICABLE MODEL FOR FUTURE DEVELOPERS, COUNCILS AND CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURS.”

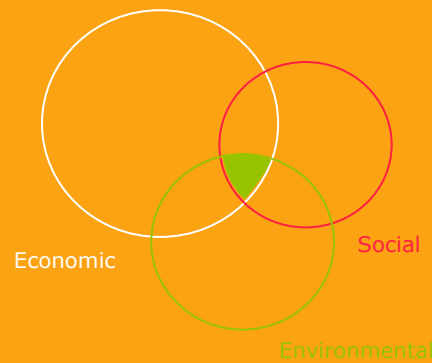
Dutton, C. Armstrong, D. (2012) Volume 5 Number 4. Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal. The 4th dimension = Meanwhile London: 328

The three models presented below depict the evolving relationships of three key factors which affect our well-being.

Model A: Economic factors dominate, with less importance given to environmental and social concerns.



Model B: Economic, environmental and social concerns converge.



Model C: True sustainability - achieved between economic, social and environmental factors.



Source: www.absconsulting.com

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Against a backdrop of almost unparalleled financial and economic uncertainty, we are seeing increased interest in meanwhile use of empty assets with a view to supporting enterprise and innovation, creativity and quality of life in the UK. While the occupation of shops, offices and other empty buildings has been relatively well documented, *meanwhile land use* has received less attention. Yet there is so much to learn.

*"AN EMERGING CONSENSUS THAT IF CAREFULLY AND SENSITIVELY MANAGED, TEMPORARY USES CAN ADD COMMERCIAL AND SOCIAL VALUE."*¹

There is little evidence of what constitutes and drives success, and equally limited guidance for practitioners, landlords and funders of meanwhile land use. In this light, the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) commissioned research into the delivery of grassroots interim use. CODA Architects, Common Capital, Pop-Up Bristol and Cardiff University have responded through this research in order to help LLDC more successfully enable the activation of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and surrounding neighbourhoods.

The aim of this work has been to critically dissect, analyse and evaluate a number of meanwhile use developments. We have examined how a number of projects have been delivered, with a particular focus on finance, collaboration, community involvement, success, business model and the commissioning and procurement perspective. We reviewed the relevant literature, held regular meetings with LLDC and others and undertook structured interviews with those close to our 4 case studies.

- Bristol Urban Beach was a multi- functional space providing a range of services and activities in central Bristol. for 6 weeks.
- Caravanserai is intended to be a "trading post" in Canning Town. It is a new public square enclosed by units to be used by local community groups, artists and traders; food stalls and cafés, a small covered stage, a bar and workshop space.
- Creative Common is a seasonal tented event space in Bristol for 6 months of the year over 3 years and the potential for wider revenue generating activities including retail, markets, workshops and restaurant.
- The Diesel Depot site will be the "central growing and distribution hub" for The Severn Project's agricultural production in Bristol over the next few years.

1 Bishop, P. and Williams, L. (2012) *The Temporary City*, Routledge. 215





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Examining the business model, commercial arrangements, nature and extent of community engagement and the perceived success and various other characteristics of each case study suggested a number of conclusions of potentially wider significance for meanwhile land use.

Our 4 case studies also prompted us to reflect on the nature of the financial relationship between funder and funded, landlord and occupier, in terms of revenue funding (commissioning / procurement, revenue grants, leasing / concessions) or capital (lending, risk capital or capital grants). Public or quasi-public landlords and funders may also support the success of such developments through non- financial support, such as infrastructure, legal and financial support, etc.

For practitioners, we believe that those taking forward meanwhile projects will often need to prepare themselves for the following:

- Challenging relationships and tensions with those not used to meanwhile use.
- Complex funding, regulatory and collaboration patchworks with the onus is often on the entrepreneur to do the stitching, with significant transaction costs.
- A need to consider the needs, demands, expectations and preferences of the local community. And to engage successfully with the local communities.
- Subjective measures perceptions of success.
- Varying degrees of skills and capacity required at different stages in a project’s life cycle.
- Tough market conditions, unknown levels of footfall to the site and assumptions on the viability of meanwhile use development.
- A financial model based on “no cost, no revenue” or ‘income and expenditure’ project model versus a more ambitious ‘invest and return’ or ‘enterprise’ model.

We believe that in taking forward the London Legacy Development Corporations ambitions for meanwhile use developments on the Olympic Park, the LLDC (and indeed other landlords in other circumstances) should consider:

- The financial case for meanwhile use, not only in terms of the income and expenditure linked to development but also in terms of cost savings (e.g. reduced security and maintenance) and changes in the value of land and other assets.
- Providing clarity over terms, tenure and the site itself.
- When seeking to enable meanwhile activity across multiple sites, that a sufficient proportion of activities need to be attractions in themselves, while other less 'destination' activities may benefit from being clustered, and that sites should complement rather than undermine each other's viability.
- Encourage and select occupiers with regard to the suitability of their vision to the physical characteristics of the site and with a view to the demands, needs, expectations and preferences of the community, in whatever form that takes.
- How meanwhile leases can be structured to enable practitioners to secure external investment .
- Advertising to a diverse range of potential occupants, holding competitions or issuing calls for ideas. Whilst some occupants might be architects and designers, or those working in collaboration, the focus for a large proportion of the land should be for start-up business and entrepreneurship. Looking to local businesses, graduates, students, social enterprises and community groups will add diversity and may established networks of pro bono support, with a greater chance of delivery success.
- Hosting a continuous series of events to encourage footfall

As a potential funder, the LLDC (and indeed other public bodies) should:

- Recognise the spectrum of commercial and community-led approaches to meanwhile use.
- Consider the need for funding relationships to reflect the underlying business model of the occupier.
- Consider the need to give clarity and support to project partners as early as possible about the parameters of the potential terms of any financial support available.,
- Help fund 'hardware', for speed of occupancy of land, such as:
 - Physical capital
 - Groundworks
 - Infrastructure
 - Signage
 - Storage space
 - Wi-Fi
 - Toilets and showers (key code)
 - Cash machines and card readers
 - An integrated schedule of events
 - Monitoring policy
 - Security
 - Hoardings





- Select occupants and leaders based on software assets, such as, human capital, skills, experience, energy, drive, availability of time, motivation etc. required to deliver this style of development.
- Clearly identify one lead 'case officer' to liaise with the meanwhile practitioner and support them to navigate the legal hurdles and planning regime, for example.
- Give due regard to formal processes (procurement law, state aid law, etc.), whilst maintaining a healthy appetite for risk, exploiting flexibility in discretionary budgets, and proportionate monitoring and reporting, etc.
- Stay flexible and be prepared to problem solve as unexpected issues are likely to arise as is the nature of new businesses and construction work.
- Approach business rates in a consistent, fair and transparent manner.
- Consider the costs and benefits of providing financial support to enable meanwhile use. This may require the development of an investment model to weigh up various options. Such a model would forecast the financial implications of doing nothing, security costs, whether meanwhile use brought in additional money to the site, if land values changed, etc.
- Consider the role for an intermediary support agency or even a more fully-fledged meanwhile development agency to take on the role of delivering the financial and meanwhile strategy of the public body, attracting investment from other sources and providing specialist meanwhile expertise.

We believe that meanwhile land use can offer potentially exciting opportunities to test and enable new models of entrepreneurship and innovation which blend economic, social and environmental motivations. There can be no meanwhile land use rule book or one off -the-shelf business plan but meanwhile practitioners are keen to share their experiences, and we are more likely to succeed through humility, sharing lessons learned and working together.

Commissioners, procurement professionals and landlords can create the right incentives to enable successful meanwhile use which in turn delivers them a return on their investment. The success and viability of meanwhile land use will be driven not only through good design, architectural look-and-feel and the cultural cachet of innovation but are also grounded in the technical details, business models, commercial and financial arrangements which underpin each enterprise.

People matter. First, as success is contingent, not least upon the perceptions of the communities which have an interest in the sites on which meanwhile use take place, making appropriate engagement with relevant community crucial to success. But also given the range of skills, capacities and capabilities required for a multi-disciplinary, multi-functional start-up enterprise to literally build itself up from the ground.

We hope these case studies, the lessons learned and our recommendations can help LLDC, meanwhile practitioners and others develop improved models of collaboration which better align incentives in the mutual interest and enable the successful creative, commercial and community-led animation of empty spaces across the UK and further afield.

