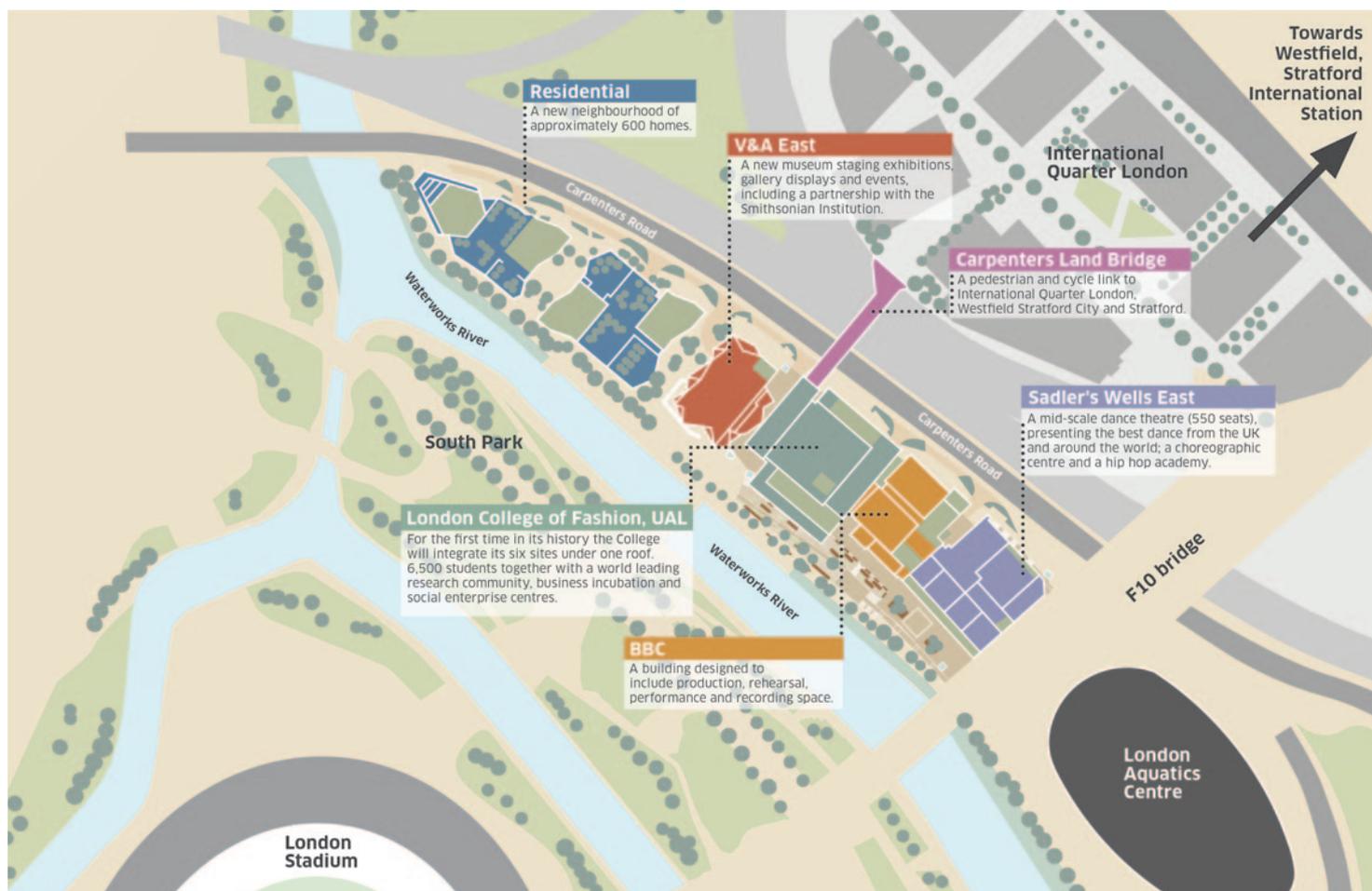


New vision for Stratford Waterfront



The addition of a fourth institution and the guidance from the Mayor on the interpretation of the London View Management Framework (LVMF) gave us the rare, and welcome, challenge to comprehensively re-think the Stratford Waterfront project. The design of each building, their location, plot size and adjacencies are all new as is the configuration of the new public external spaces that they stand within.

That said, we have retained the inviting, accessible and porous quality of the earlier design with clearly legible public buildings that address the Park on one side and bring new life and visual interest to the streetscape along Carpenters Rd on the other. V&A East straddles the intersection of new routes at the centre of the site; arranged to its south are the London College of Fashion (LCF), a building for the BBC – the new institution, and Sadler's Wells East, now facing the London Aquatics Centre and the arrival from Stratford. To the north

is the housing component, now an ensemble of four shorter buildings.

At the heart of the project's intent is the need for it to engage - to be open and relevant to the local community. This translates directly into a need for the masterplan, and the buildings within it, to connect with their physical surroundings rather than standing aside from them. To achieve this, a key principle of the masterplan is that a 'common ground' should flow continuously from the Park up to and into the public buildings, inviting easy colonisation by people, nature and culture. In purposeful contrast to the formality of arrival and threshold of many traditional cultural buildings, we have explored ways to make the buildings relaxed and welcoming and remove barriers to entry - covered outdoor rooms; thick walls with built in seating and displays; open foyers, cafes and colonnades all enable people to be 'within' the buildings before actually entering them.

The buildings form a terrace which, while compact and efficient in its use of land, is deliberately relaxed in its composition. A single megastructure or an overly uniform group of buildings would have risked appearing fortress-like and alienating while likely struggling to accommodate the varied range of uses. Our aim, instead, is to create a living piece of city whose diversity, complexity and richness matches its surroundings; that will welcome people in through routes that extend far beyond the site; and whose texture of distinct, characterful buildings reflects both the institutions' and London's energy and personality. At East Bank, culturally dynamic organisations will become neighbours for the first time. Our masterplan maximises the potential of these close adjacencies, in a way that is natural and dynamic, rather than rigid and prescriptive, to explore the opportunities for permeability, interaction and collaboration at the interfaces.

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level, the L-shaped foyer is fully glazed on the two public sides giving access and views into the café, bar and community dance space. At the upper levels, six dance studios look out over the park and city. It is a robust building of natural coloured brick and cast clay tiles, metal windows and concrete structure. It has an open welcoming character; a place of creativity, making and performance.

The building for the BBC is a working building where the studio for the BBC Symphony Orchestra is expressed within the composition as a large weathered steel volume, recalling the industrial heritage of the site prior to the Olympics, around which wrap the support spaces. These similarly demonstrate the building's unique programme as artists' rooms project out over the street and parts of the building step back in response to neighbours or to create garden terraces.

The largest building on the site, the London College of Fashion, is a place of education, research and enterprise for a

>>> East London has a rich heritage of making; the site itself was formerly a site of manufacture before the historic buildings were re-appropriated as studios and workshops. It is a key principle that the buildings' materiality and character should reflect this making heritage; be robust, durable and crafted; and explore opportunities for innovative pre-fabrication, on-site experimentation and artistic commissions. We set ourselves the challenge to make all the buildings embrace the concept of 'casting', whether it be concrete, glass, metal, brick or ceramic, resulting in a palette of warm, earthy tones. And like factories of the past, each of the buildings will have their names cast in them, proudly proclaiming their presence. This approach to materiality and craft conveys permanence and robustness, and offers a contrast to the glass-and-steel of neighbouring developments.



Bob Allies is a partner in Allies and Morrison

Each building though is unique. Sadler's Wells is the first in the terrace of new civic buildings which face the waterfront and Carpenters Road. Its end position gives it a third public front onto the F10 bridge. The saw-tooth form of the dance studio roofs gives the building a distinctive and recognisable roofline. Along Carpenter's Road the sculpted brick mass of the auditorium/ fly tower has presence and weight. At podium





large cohort of students and staff. Conceived as a 21st century workshop, its design is inspired by the 19th century mill buildings common to many industrial cities - outwardly simple, unpretentious and robust while capable of containing multiple complex and process-driven internal arrangements that are continually susceptible to change. At the heart of the building is a dramatic internal courtyard crossed by stairs linking spaces for exchange. The College's elevations are characterised by the day-lit and naturally ventilated workshops around its perimeter with tall, factory-like steel framed windows set between textured pre-cast concrete columns.

With the V&A's archival spaces moving across the park to Here/East, it has opened up the opportunity to create an expressive gallery building for V&A East. Its distinctive angular form contains free galleries and public spaces at its lower levels with a ticketed gallery above. The museum sits at the crossroads of pedestrian routes, at the centre of the multi-layered terraced landscape. The public has access to all five floors, from the café at Waterfront Square up through the gallery floors to the roof terrace overlooking the Park. The outer skin of the structure is crafted as a three-dimensional folded composition, a complex form cast in concrete, with scored lines drawn across its faceted surface.

Beyond the V&A building is a residential neighbourhood of four towers – the tallest at the prow of the site, visible from afar, whose large scale openings and stepping form are set as counterpoint to the group of three simpler, refined towers adjacent. There is intimacy with mews-scaled entrances for residents off the main routes of Carpenters Rd and the Waterfront. Around the outwardly facing perimeter at ground level, spaces are carved into the buildings which we hope will become animated by bespoke retail offer accommodating a number of uses to appeal to all.

Throughout, this has been a deeply collaborative process. The masterplan is authored by all four practices informed by extensive consultation with LLDC, the institutions, occupiers and the public. Each practice retains principle authorship for individual buildings, alternating across the scheme in a sort of back-and-forth dialogue. Allies and Morrison is lead architect for LCF, BBC and three of the residential buildings; O'Donnell +

Tuomey, Sadler's Wells, the V&A and the northern residential building; Camps Felip Arquitecturia the new footbridge to the International Quarter London to the north; and LDA Design the new footbridge to the public realm. But across it all, we are working completely hand in glove. We are co-located as one team and are very much enjoying working together in this way. This commission is, and continues to be, a true privilege. ■

PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: V&A, the Waterfront, Sadler's Wells and University of the Arts Credits: Allies and Morrison and Ninety90

