

# Latin Quarter Elephant & Castle Community Vision

February 2015



# Contents

---

<b>Context .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Identity .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Public space .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Community .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Spatial vision .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Project ideas .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Next steps .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Note .....</b>	<b>17</b>

# Context



Elephant & Castle (E&C) is home to the largest Latin American business cluster in London with 4 core concentrations and more than 80 shops. It is also one of the oldest in London, with over 20 years in the making.

Elephant & Castle is undergoing an ambitious programme of urban redevelopment. The regeneration of E&C presents challenges and opportunities for London's Latin population but the improvements are welcomed within the LA community if their sustainability and future presence can be supported.

The LA community have demonstrated adaptability, flexibility and resilience over the last 20 years to make E&C the vibrant place that it is today. With the appropriate measures in place the community will continue to thrive, grow and attract new visitors to the area.

The opportunity to create a truly vibrant Latin Quarter in London is unique. The principle of the Latin Quarter is to enhance what is already there, to attract a wider customer base by making it more visible and appealing to new visitors and customers. Latin Elephant is providing opportunities for Latin Americans to participate in the process of urban change in what is now a key design and planning stage at E&C.

## **About Latin Elephant**

Latin Elephant is a Charity which aims to promote the inclusion of Latin Americans in regeneration initiatives across London. We do this by influencing infrastructure, increasing awareness and use of public spaces where Latin Americans are often underrepresented, and encouraging inter and intra-community integration.

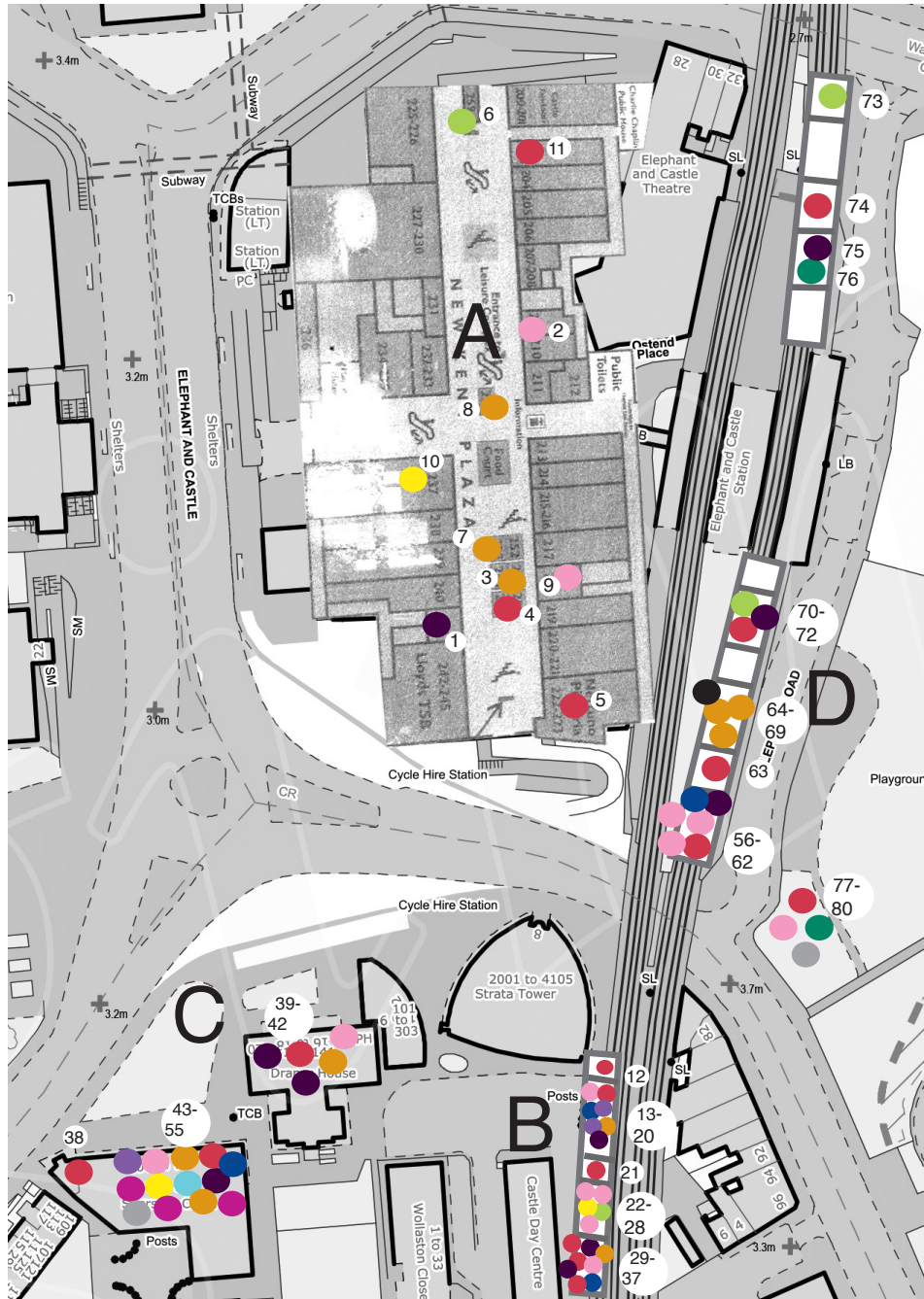
Latin Elephant advocates for a more inclusive understanding of urban policy in London and as such we promote the contribution that migrant and ethnic communities make to London's diverse economies and cultures. We are interested in finding out more about the mechanisms and processes that are deployed by national and local government for incorporating migrant and ethnic economies in urban regeneration.

## Latin American Businesses in Elephant and Castle

Updated November 2014

### Key

- Cafe/Restaurant
- Clothes/accessories
- Travel agency
- Food shop
- Games/entertainment
- Dentist
- Film/Music
- Money transfer/Courier
- Hair and beauty
- Auto repairs
- Estate agency
- Computer/Print shop
- Retail
- Translations/Legal



### Cluster A - Shopping Centre

1. Inara Money Transfers (Unit 241)
2. Lucy's Hairdressing Salon (Unit 209)
3. Medellin y su moda (Unit 254-255)
4. La Bodeguita Cafe (Unit 222-223)
5. La Bodeguita Restaurant (Unit 256-257)
6. La Tienda (Unit 259)
7. Alteraciones Nicole's (Unit 253)
8. Ana Castro (Unit 250)
9. Leonis Hairdressers (Unit 218)
10. Viajemos (Unit 237b)
11. Castle Brasserie (Unit 203)

### Cluster B - Eagle's Yard

12. Los Anteros (Arch 141)
13. Punto Latino (Arch 143)
14. La Calenita
15. Salud y Vida
16. Videomania
17. Tienda Lucky Shop
18. Sterling Jewellers
19. Nativo Services
20. Peluqueria
21. Corporacion Ponce (Arch 144)
22. Arko 146 (Arch 146)
23. El costenito
24. Heladeria Oasis
25. Serviciell Travel
26. Peluqueria
27. Peluqueria
28. Amanda's Hair and Beauty
29. San Andreccio (Arch 147)
30. Geomil Express UK Ltd
31. Antojitos Coffee Shop
32. Lara Express International Services
33. Alteraciones Erika Alexandra
34. Peluqueria
35. Diego CDs
36. Corcoma
37. Delicias Lucy

### Cluster C - Draper House Sherston Court

38. Sabor Peruano
39. Colombian Fashions (16A Draper House)
40. Cafe do Babado (16A Draper House)
41. Andre & Adam (16A Draper House)
42. Servissell (16A Draper House)
43. Tiendas del Sur (91-95 Newington Butts)
44. Unit 1, Latin Touch Hairdressers
45. Unit 2, Soliman Travel (since 1979)
46. Unit 3, H&S Legal LLP
47. Unit 4, Casa en Casa
48. Unit 5, LEA
49. Unit 6, A Silva Dental Studio
50. Unit 7, CJ Multicentre Boutique
51. Unit 8, Ku-Yoruba - Santeria
52. Unit 9, Oro Facil Shop
53. Unit 10-11, Aroma de Cafe
54. Unit 12, Money To
55. Unit 13, La Chatica (Surtihogar)

### Cluster D - Elephant Road

56. La vida loca (Unit 1 Farrell Ct)
57. Costa Dorada Ltd
58. Luz Dary's Nails
59. Video
60. Money Transfers
61. Hairdressers
62. Beauty
63. La Chatica Cafe (Unit 2 Farrell Ct)
64. Arco del Centro (Unit 3 Farrell Ct)
65. Ashley's a Creaciones
66. Topless
67. Chiroso Gustavo
68. Diego Computers
69. Elephant Flooring
70. Distriandina (Unit 6 Farrell Ct)
71. Tienda de Dulces
72. Planet Services
73. La Fama (103 Elephant Rd)
74. Elephant Coffee (109 Elephant Rd)
75. Bola8 (113 Elephant Rd)
76. GE Services (113b Elephant Rd)
77. Chatica Cafe (The Artworks)
78. Christian Hairdressers (The Artworks)
79. Carnaval del Pueblo (The Artworks)
80. Colraices UK (The Artworks)



# Introduction

**The Latin Quarter Workshop**, hosted by Latin Elephant was held on 19th November 2014 and brought together around 60 participants, including 21 Latin American traders and business owners, local councillors, representatives of the development companies involved in the regeneration of the area, representatives of community and voluntary organisations, architects and researchers.

Attendants were divided into 5 groups which held focussed discussions on three main themes: identity, public space and community in the context of the Latin Quarter. Participants were encouraged to identify the key positive and negative aspects of the current situation of the business community and brainstorm ideas for projects that would meet the needs of Latin American traders and wider Latin community.

This was a great opportunity for different stakeholders to raise the issues they are facing and have a positive dialogue with decision makers and other interested parties about the future of the area.

**This report** aims to reflect these discussions, in particular the perspective of the Latin American community, highlighting the main issues behind the three themes. It is underpinned by a spatial vision of the Latin American quarter, alongside a number of different strategies and projects which could be implemented together or separately in order to address the current needs of the community and look towards the future.



**Participants discussed about the Latin American identity, how it is perceived in the community and outside of it, and how the sense of identity at the Elephant can be strengthened.**

## **What works**

Participants agreed that the Elephant has a strong identity which is recognised by Latin Americans, because the business community is well known in London and abroad as a 'hub'. Its longstanding presence, the sense of inclusion and welcoming given to Latin American immigrants, catering to the community through food, specific products, services and cultural events have built a strong presence in the area. Participants referred to the Latin American business community in this area as being adaptable, resilient and inclusive.

## **What doesn't work**

The business owners felt that whilst the Latin American identity is strong within the community, it does not appear as strong to outsiders. This is due to language barriers and to a tendency of being closed off or protective in order to avoid conflicts. Many of the businesses are hidden, in the shopping centre or in the arches behind the Shopping Centre and Strata and there is no clear signage of what they are, what they offer and where they are from. Some participants felt that the appearance of the shops, together with the surrounding public space are not attractive, do not look inviting, and most importantly not representative of the community.

## **What's missing**

Participants agreed that there should be more emphasis on the visual identity, using art, design and decoration to signal the vibrancy of the Latin American culture on shop fronts and surrounding public space. They felt that the identity of the area as a Latin Quarter would be strengthened through physical links between the four clusters of businesses. Bringing out cultural symbols such as traditional music and food would be a key aspect of consolidating the Latin identity of the area.



# Public Space

---

**Workshop participants addressed a range of issues regarding the links between public realm and the prosperity of the business community, in the context of existing and future regeneration projects in the area. There was strong agreement that amenable public space incorporating elements of Latin American identity would raise the attractiveness of the area both for the Latin community and for the others.**

## **What works**

There were very few positive aspects in terms of existing public realm. Businesses tried to make the outside of the arches more attractive: they have paid for lighting themselves, they have tables outside the shops to create space for seating and gathering.

## **What doesn't work**

A wide range of issues were identified by the traders and other participants, such as low quality public realm, traffic and parking overtaking Elephant Road, the environment feels unsafe, with unsuitable lighting, no green space, and no places to meet. The lack of connectivity between the business clusters means there is no unified Latin Quarter at the moment. There is no crossing under the bridge over Walworth Road, but the desire line is to cross there, which is very dangerous. The general derelict appearance of the area and the fact that the arches are not visible and tucked away behind the Shopping Centre and Strata Tower do not attract more visitors and outsiders.





# Public Space

---

## What's missing

- Physical links between the business clusters
- Lighting
- Green space and play space
- Street furniture
- Pedestrian walkways
- Street signs

## Project ideas

- Create a Latin Boulevard to link Elephant Road with Eagle's Yard
- Pedestrianise Elephant Road in the afternoon to create public space for gathering, events, street market
- Create pedestrian crossings under the bridge on Walworth Road and at the other end of Elephant Road towards New Kent Road
- Improve lighting
- Improve shopfront appearance and have a unified visual identity
- Use public art such as sculpture and murals to decorate the outside of the arches and the railway bridge
- Link with the wider area, using the space outside Tiendas del Sur and the southern roundabout
- Dual signage



# Community

---

**There was overall agreement that the Latin American business community at the Elephant and Castle is strong, welcoming and resilient. Workshop participants discussed about the relationship with other communities around the Elephant and London, how to become more inclusive while continuing to provide support to Latin Americans.**

## **What works**

The business community has a longstanding history at the Elephant. Many of the retailers have been there for around twenty years and have adapted to change through flexible business models, understanding the needs of the community and catering for them. The majority of the customers are Latinos. The hub acts as a well known place where Latin American immigrants can find accommodation, employment and support as soon as they come to London. The community has a family feel and nurtures inclusiveness and entrepreneurship.

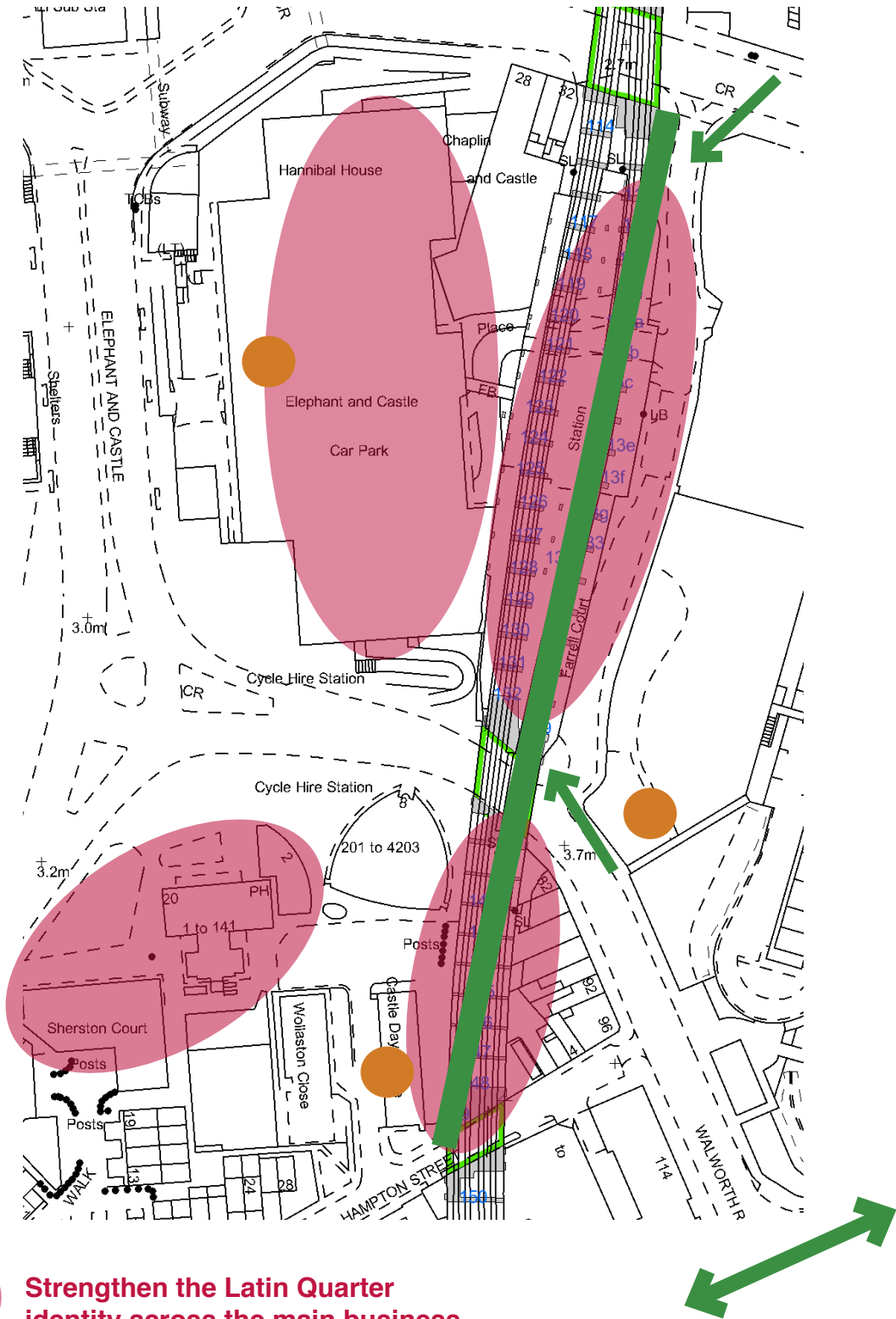
## **What doesn't work**

The community feels closed off to outsiders and does not look inviting, despite the welcoming nature of Latin Americans. Many retailers felt they are not included in the plans for future development of the area as there is no provision for their needs at the moment. Apart from the cafes, restaurants and shops, there is no space for the community to gather, for children to play, no programmes for the youth or other culturally specific events.

## **What's missing**

- Community centre
- Space to gather, play
- Links to other communities
- Affordable premises for Latin American support organisations
- Integration of the Latin community in decision making and consultations
- A representative body
- Project ideas
- Community centre
- Youth programmes
- Cultural events and celebrations of the community
- A management board led by the business community and supported by voluntary sector organisations to make decisions about projects and initiatives in the area
- Green Space or Square

# Spatial vision



**Strengthen the Latin Quarter identity across the main business clusters**

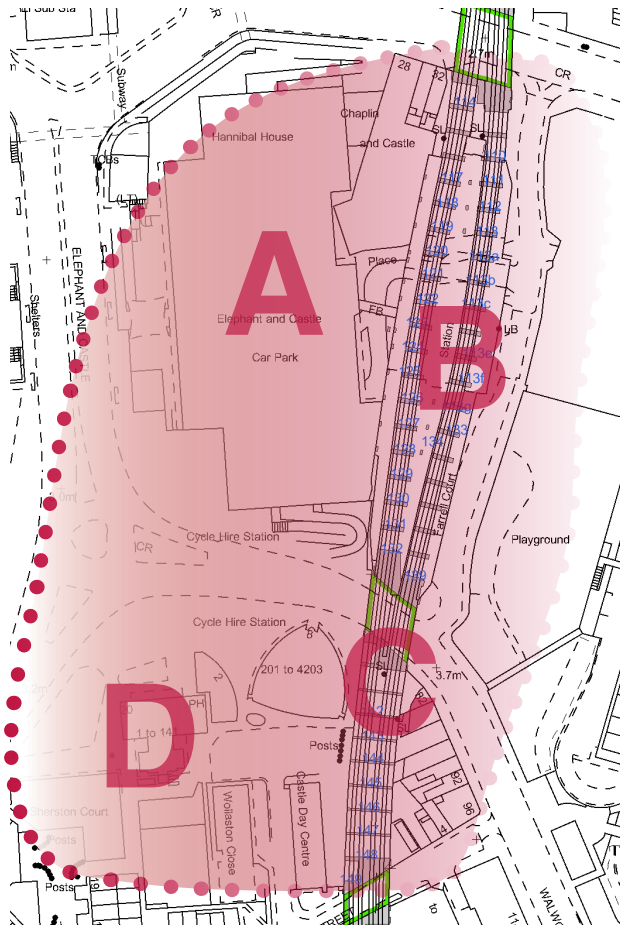
**Meet the needs of the community through improved facilities**

**Create a well defined axis of the Latin Quarter along the railway arches**

# Project ideas

## Latin Quarter Visual Identity

This project consists of a branding strategy for the area as the Latin Quarter, which will include unifying elements of design to connect the four business clusters and tell the story of the Latin American business community at the Elephant.



**Murals** decorating the railway arches and bridge would reflect the colour and vibrancy of Latin American identity.



**A guide to the local businesses** could include stories of Latin American traders at the Elephant, advertise products and services and highlight social events. Business directories and maps are used to provide information about successful shopping parades in London, such as Carnaby Street and Seven Dials



**Bilingual street signs** are used in many cities to reflect the presence of ethnic communities in the area, provide more accessible information and a sense of ownership and recognition.



# Project ideas

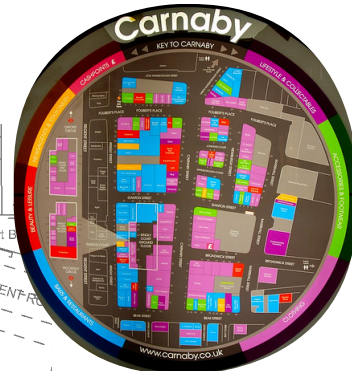
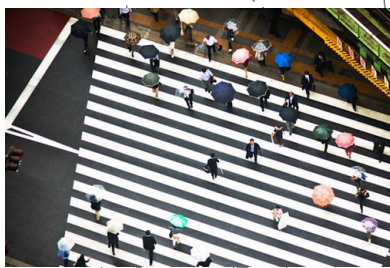
## Latin Boulevard

Also known as Calle Latina, this boulevard will be the main focus and attraction of the Latin Quarter. It will connect Elephant Road with Eagle's Yard through unifying urban design elements, such as pavement, lights and street furniture. The Boulevard will be pedestrianised in the afternoon and evening, in order to create a safe and enjoyable public space to gather, play and host events.



Elephant & Castle train station is an important point of access to the Latin Boulevard. **Murals and design elements on the platforms and entrance to the station** can be used to reflect the history of Latin American traders in the area. This approach is used in many parts of London, such as the stations on the Overground line.

**New and improved pedestrian crossings** will ensure safety and accessibility and will link Latin Boulevard with the wider area. Proposals include a crossing on Walworth Road under the bridge, to follow pedestrian desire lines.



**Maps** around Elephant and Castle will show the types of businesses on Latin Boulevard, increasing accessibility to other communities, and indicating the large spread of trades and services available in the Quarter.



**Gateways** to the area would create strong signifiers to attract and welcome visitors to the Latin Boulevard, and physically define the Quarter. They should contain elements of design and create bright, open and inviting spaces.



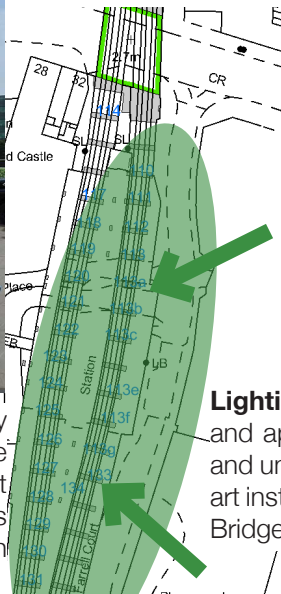
# Project ideas

## Public Realm Improvements

A public realm improvement strategy would address a range of issues identified in the workshop, such as safety, attractiveness of the area and coherent urban design. The delivery of the required work can be undertaken in partnership with the local business community through setting up a management board, together with the Council, developers and other partners such as Network Rail and voluntary organisations.



**Outdoor seating** will increase the functionality of public realm, creating safe and enjoyable pockets of space to gather, rest and eat. Street furniture can be placed outside the arches especially between Walworth Road and the train station, where there is more room and shelter.



**Lighting** is an essential element for improving safety and appearance, especially along the railway arches and under the bridge. Solutions could take the form of art installations, such as this example from Hungerford Bridge.



**Refurbishment of the railway arches** would meet the needs of growing and emerging businesses, and would support the flexible approach taken by Latin American traders to share the space between a variety of uses. Improving the appearance of storefronts by incorporating elements of design and art would make the business clusters more visible and attractive.



By creating a **shared space on Latin Boulevard**, serving deliveries in the morning and open to pedestrians in the afternoons, the street would become a public space which can be improved through landscaping and functional elements.



## Latin American Food and Craft Market

Food, arts and crafts are extremely important and defining elements of any culture, which bring communities together and attract others to join in and understand more. The large number of Latin American restaurants and cafes at the Elephant, as well as local artisans and manufacturers of traditional products could come together at a Food and Craft Market held regularly in the area. London's street markets are very successful, as they cater both for locals and tourists, creating spaces for businesses and communities to thrive. Potential locations for a market in the Latin Quarter could be Elephant Road, Eagle's Yard or the public space part of the Delancey Phase 1 development, on the corner of Elephant Road and New Kent Road.



**Street food festivals** are a way of celebrating traditions and culture and creating memorable experiences. They can also be a creative fundraising tool, where profits from the event can go towards supporting other community projects.



**Markets supplying fresh produce** have a great contribution to the health and well being of communities. Specialised markets in London cater for different communities with their supply of traditional spices, oils, fruit and vegetables.



**Pop up temporary markets** have recently become a popular way of utilising sites that are being developed, an example being the Bishopsgate Market which ran during the summer of 2014 next to a development site near Liverpool Street, or the Eat St market located to King's Boulevard, adjacent to the redevelopment of King's Cross.

This type of market often contributes to the gentrification of an area, as it caters to different categories of customers. However, the Latin American food market supplied by local businesses would increase the strength of local economy while continuing to provide traditional food to the community.





# Project ideas

## Community provision

**Providing social infrastructure tailored specifically for the Latin American community is an essential step in recognising their needs, culture and long-standing presence at the Elephant and Castle. A range of facilities and services should include a community centre, affordable premises for community and voluntary organisations, open and play space, as well as training, education and language support programmes.**



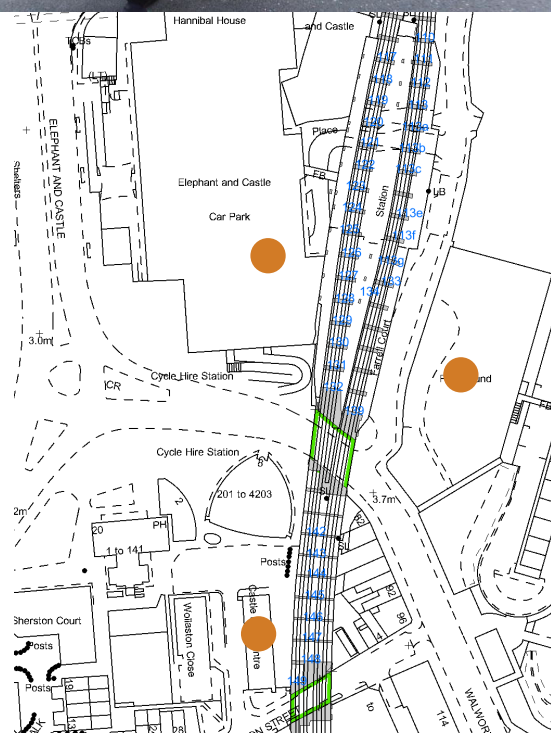
**A community centre** would provide the premises for organising meetings, events, an information and support point, as well as office space for voluntary sector organisations. Using existing or forthcoming facilities such as the Shopping Centre or Crossway Church which will be redeveloped next to Eagle's Yard would ensure the integration and collaboration with other communities.

Another option for hosting these services and activities would be the containers at Elephant Artworks, set up as an interim use on the Heygate redevelopment site.



**Provision for young people** is also needed in the Latin Quarter and it should include a football pitch in the Elephant Park which will be developed as part of the regeneration of the area, childcare facilities in close proximity to the businesses, as a large proportion of the traders are women, as well as training and education programmes.

**Festivals and celebrations** of Latin American culture should be supported by the council, developers and other partners, as an integral part of community life.



# Next steps

---

The Latin Quarter workshop, Latin Elephant's first activity under Southwark's High Street Challenge Grant, aimed at promoting innovative ways of incorporating and including the Latin American community of retailers in the Elephant & Castle in discussions about the regeneration of the area.

The collective vision that emerged from this workshop and which is documented in this report will feed into a feasibility study for London's First Latin Quarter, which we aim to finish by the end May 2015.

The long term aim is the creation and submission of a genuinely community led proposal to celebrate and promote this distinctive Latin Quarter ensuring its continued economic sustainability and place as a core component to the growth of the local economy at Elephant & Castle.

# Appendix 1- Event programme

---



## PROGRAMME

**Registration: 5:30 – 6:00**

**Introduction: 6:00 – 6:45**

Latin Elephant – Welcoming Patria Roman  
Latin Elephant – Preliminary Survey Results Nicola Hill  
Elephant & Walworth Neighbourhood Forum Richard Lee  
Walworth Society Jeremy Leach  
The United Reform Church Peter Stevenson  
Latin American Disabled Peoples Project Jhon Marulanda  
Main Facilitator - Guidance for Workshops Ilinca Diaconescu

**Workshops: Main Hall & Red Room: 6:45 – 8:15**

**Feedback: 8:15 – 8:50**

**Closing Remarks: 8:50-9:00**

**Refreshments: 9:00 – 10:00**



# Appendix 2- List of participants

<b>LATIN QUARTER WORKSHOP - LIST OF PARTICIPANTS</b>		
<b>Retailers</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>Area / Zone</b>
Andre & Adam	2	Drapers House
Arco del Centro	1	Elephant Rd
Arko 146	1	Eagles Yard
Bola8	1	Elephant Rd
Cafe do Babado	1	Drapers House
Carnaval del Pueblo	3	Elephant Rd
Distriandina	2	Elephant Rd
Escuela Gabriel Garcia Marquez	1	Rockingham
Extra Media	1	Manor Place
La Bodeguita café & rest	1	Shopping Centre
La vida loca	1	Elephant Rd
Lucy's Hairdressing Salon	2	Shopping Centre
Peluqueria, Arko 146	1	Eagles Yard
Tiendas del Sur	1	Newington Butts
Viajemos	2	Shopping Centre
Coronet	1	Shopping Centre
<b>Local Councillors &amp; Council Officials</b>	<b>6</b>	
<b>Latin American Organisations, Local Groups &amp; Experts</b>	<b>16</b>	
LADPP	1	
LAWRS	2	
Elephant & Walworth Neighbourhood Forum	2	
Walworth Society	1	
United Reformed Church	1	
Academic Researchers	2	
<i>Studio Gil Architecture</i>	2	
Casa Teatro Festival	2	
Insight Share	1	
Fotosynthesis CIC	1	
Global Entrepreneurship Week	1	
<b>Other Stakeholders</b>	<b>4</b>	
Lend Lease	1	
Delancey	1	
Network Rail	2	
<b>Facilitators &amp; Volunteers</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>	

# Note

---

**NOTE:** The Latin Quarter Workshop builds on a preliminary survey and visual study conducted in 2012. We produced a preliminary report that outlined the concerns of the Latin American community in Elephant and Castle regarding existing spatial and design issues, the lack of a unified Latin character of the area and the impacts of future development on businesses and the wider community. A total of 15 business owners participated of the 2012 Survey: Tiendas del Sur , Spa at Tiendas del Sur, Hairdressers, GE Transfers, Medellin y su moda, Leoni's Hairdressers, La Fama, Corporación Ponce, CJ Music, Elephant Café, Herbal Shop, La Calenita, Topless, Distriandina, La Vida Loca.

**The Latin Quarter Workshop** was **Latin Elephant's** first activity under Southwark's High Street Challenge Grant R1

**Latin Elephant's Team:**

Patria Roman, Chair  
Nicola Hill  
Silvia Rothlisberger  
Julia Ferrari



This report has been prepared by Ilinca Diaconescu for **Latin Elephant**.