



Country / City UK / London
University / School University of Greenwich / School of Design
Academic year 2023 - 2024
Title of the project Brutalism Undone: Metabolising the Technosphere in Thamesmead
Authors Alan Gillingwater

TECHNICAL DOSSIER

Title of the project	Brutalism Undone: Metabolising the Technosphere in Thamesmead
Authors	Alan Gillingwater
Title of the course	Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA)
Academic year	2023 - 2024
Teaching Staff	Helena Rivera and Ed Wall
Department / Section / Program of belonging	Landscape Architecture and Urbanism
University / School	University of Greenwich / School of Design



Written statement, short description of the project in English, no more than 250 words

This year we have been investigating how landscapes can be redefined through collective practices, this has been framed in multiple ways. We have been engaging with human and more-than-human beings, with materials, policy and environments to speculate on how collective, situated and radical landscape practices can bring about change.

Brutalism Undone establishes a collective practice between community, material, and the legacy of concrete within Thamesmead, London. The projects ask us to return to a moment before decomposition and asks whether a different approach can be taken to the brutalist legacy of Thamesmead that can attract renewed interest and energy to Thamesmead. *Brutalism Undone* reconfigures the concrete artefacts in Thamesmead as anti-monuments that can be accessed, recycled and reworked by the local community. In doing this new topography is formed enabling porous boundaries to increase human and more-than-human access within the site.

These concrete actions start the process of refiguring this human-made material that once dominated the site. It creates new human and non-human relationships which highlight the potential of the landscape as a collective practice.

For further information

Máster d'Arquitectura del Paisatge - UPC

Contact via email at:
master.paisatge.comunicacio@gmail.com

biennal.paisatge@upc.edu

Máster d'Arquitectura del Paisatge - UPC

Sede ETSAB - Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya

Calle Jordi Girona, 15. Edificio Omega 1-3
08034 Barcelona - Spain

COAC - Colegi oficial d'Arquitectes de Catalunya

Carrer Arcs, 1-3
08002 Barcelona - Spain

12th International Biennial Landscape Barcelona

Barcelona November 2023

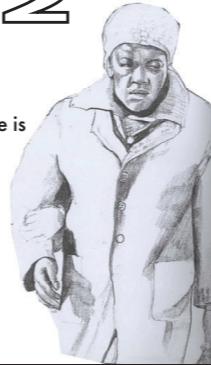
SCHOOL PRIZE



2 0 2 2

concretopia

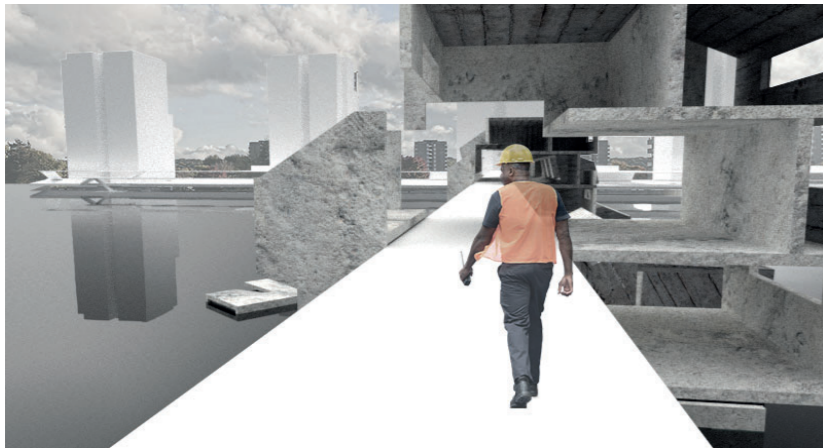
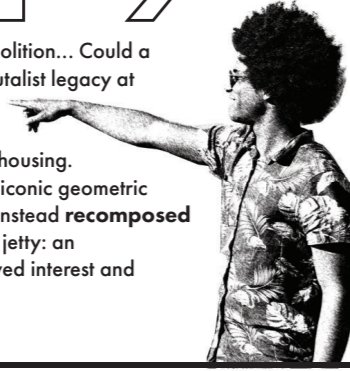
A bare concrete podium plays host to the quiet hurriedness of tower block residents exposed to winds sweeping across a strangely still lake. A nervous glance is cast over the shoulder to the nearby Peadody redevelopment site. The **brutalist** architectural history here is erased; a *tabula rasa* to start again, yet this time with much more modest ambitions. Concrete and rebar lie in neat piles here, ready to be subsumed into sub-base for identikit new housing, **memories** buried alongside.



2 0 1 7

recompose

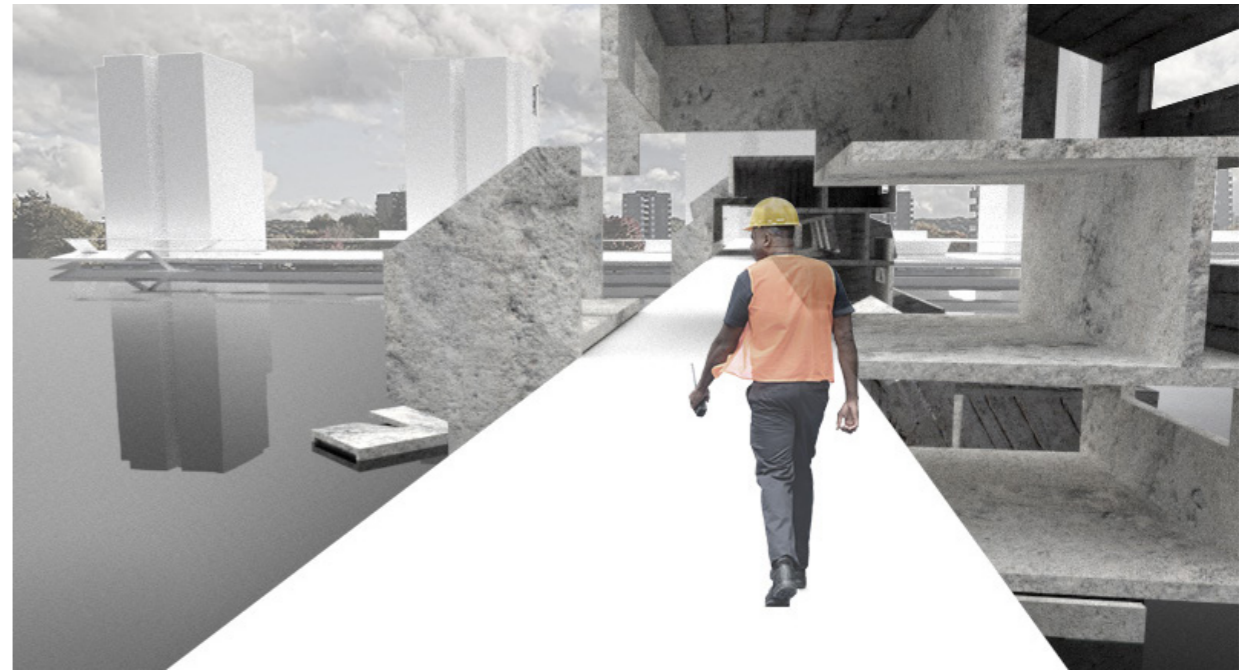
Let's return to the moment before demolition... Could a different approach be taken to the brutalist legacy at Thamesmead? With all its problems it was accepted that Binsey Walk was irretrievable as housing. Yet, rather than reduced to rubble the iconic geometric forms of the concrete slab-blocks are instead **recomposed** in Southmere lake as an experimental jetty: an **(anti-)monument** that attracts renewed interest and energy to Thamesmead.



2 0 3 0

ruin

The anti-monument jetty organically **decomposes** as the local community access and recycle materials for home works. A workshop under the podium deck equips local residents with the skills and machinery to rework and repurpose the concrete blocks. Failed aspects of the brutalist hard landscape are reimagined. The levels are opened to remove dead spaces and allow light back in. A new topography is formed, enabling a porous rather than hard border to the lake.

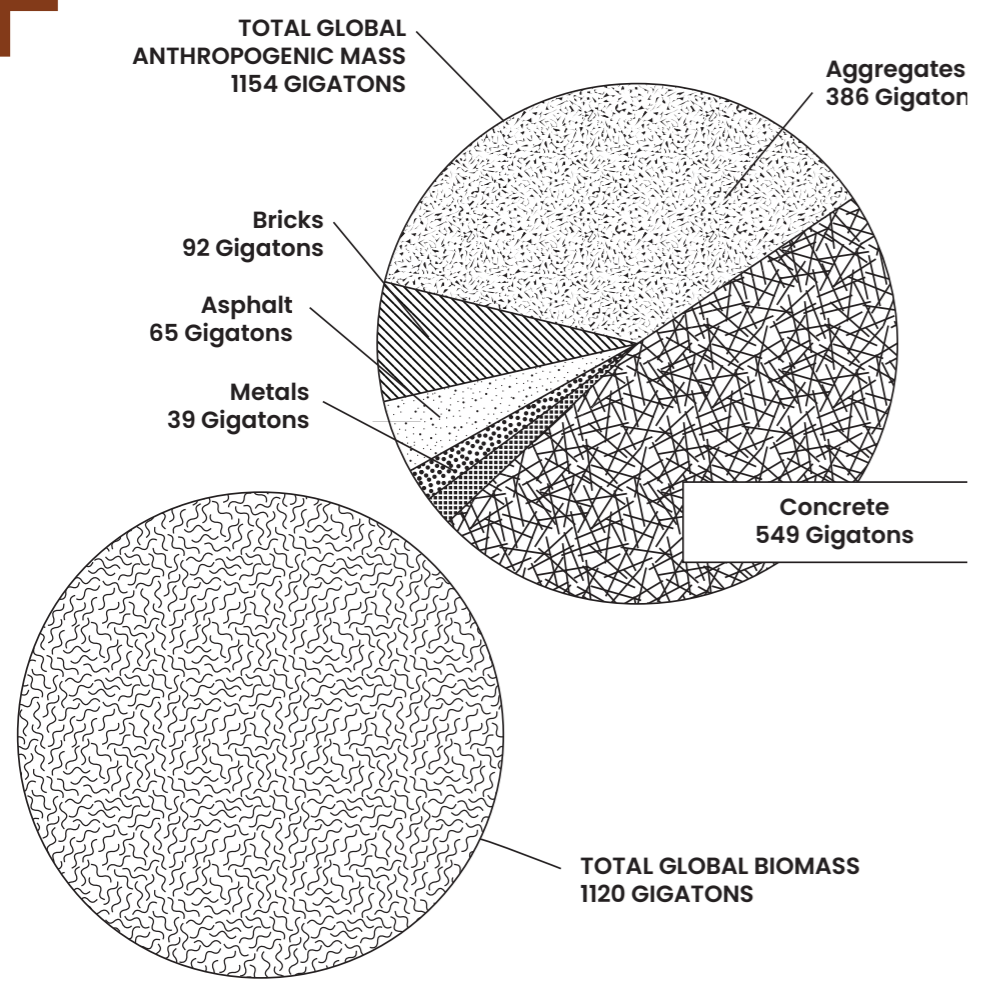


2 0 5 0

repair

A new phase of community action sees a layer of repair to the jetty. The concrete workshop is reconfigured as green-wood workshop. Repairs are made to the jetty as it ruins to allow its continuation as a space of access to the lake. The repairwork expresses the idea of **wabi-sabi**, whereby minimal impacts allow the ecological niches developed through ruination processes to continue to provide estuarine habitats.





A. Diagram based on 'The Scale of Concrete'. Source: <https://lowcarboncement.com/the-scale-of-concrete>

