Make This Place Ours: Research project proposal (PHO701)

Andrew Brown

Figure 1. Andrew Brown, 2018. Hackney Wick

Aims and objectives

Areas of east London are experiencing dramatic and rapid development, which will potentially transform the local environment and demographic profile. In the past these developments have, at best, brought limited benefit to existing residents, and, at worst, driven long-established communities out of the area.

This project aims to use photographic image-making, alongside other media, to understand the social, cultural, political and economic dynamics of change in these areas, and help residents to be pro-active in achieving positive outcomes for the local community.

Figure 2. Andrew Brown, 2018. Hackney Wick

The objectives are to:

- use photographic images and image-making to understand the life-worlds and aspirations of residents and how their circumstances relate to and can be improved by proposed developments in their locality, and to help them influence these developments.
- work collaboratively with residents, researchers, community groups, local government and businesses to develop photographic and related resources to use in initiatives designed to develop local prosperity.
- increase the complexity and scope of my own practice as a photographic artist in addressing challenging interdisciplinary and multi-professional issues, and to take this work to a wider audience.
- enhance understanding of how photography, in an arts-based research approach, can integrate with and contribute to physical and social science research addressing complex and enduring social concerns.

Figure 3. Andrew Brown, 2018. Bow

Context and approach

I have lived, worked and served the community in east London for over 40 years. I seek to build on and extend the long history of photographic exploration of the area, through collaboration with the groups that comprise the London Prosperity Board (LPB), of which I am a member. The LPB approach focuses on five elements that underpin the ability of local communities to flourish and prosper.
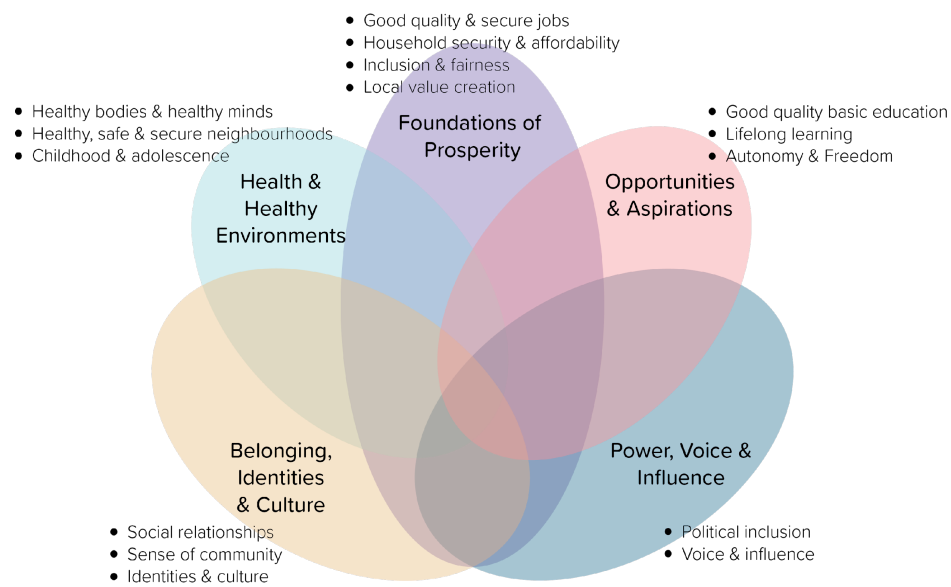

- Good quality & secure jobs
- Household security & affordability
- Inclusion & fairness
- Local value creation

Foundations of Prosperity

- Healthy bodies & healthy minds
- Healthy, safe & secure neighbourhoods
- Childhood & adolescence

Health & Healthy Environments

- Good quality basic education
- Lifelong learning
- Autonomy & Freedom

Opportunities & Aspirations

Belonging, Identities & Culture

- Social relationships
- Sense of community
- Identities & culture

Power, Voice & Influence

- Political inclusion
- Voice & influence

Figure 4. London Prosperity Board, 2017: 3

In accord with this approach, my project involves collaboration with a range of community groups, professionals and academic disciplines to visually explore these factors in tightly defined localities.

Figure 5. Andrew Brown, 2018. Bow

The outcomes of the project will combine three different levels of image-making, engaging different audiences and entailing a range of means of dissemination:

- images produced by residents as part of a participatory Photovoice (Wang and Burris, 1997) style research study, designed to explore the life-worlds of communities.
- images produced in collaboration with local stakeholders for use by the LRB and local community groups for use in local advocacy.
- images produced through my own artistic, emotional and intellectual response to resident and collaborative images and my engagement with the areas and their communities.

Appendix 1 gives more detail on the approach and outcomes.

Work in progress

Initially, I intended to develop my exploration of the Roding Valley Park (first portfolio panel). Critical appraisal of my work in the light of visiting lectures, in particular work by Edmund Clark and Andrew Jackson, has inspired me to change direction and develop a more complex project that is interdisciplinary, multi-modal and addresses a key challenge for London (second portfolio panel).

Out of Sight. Roding Valley Park is a space between places. It runs alongside and beneath three major roads, and acts as a buffer between east London suburbs. This is not a place to be seen, though marks of human activity are prominent. As a form of non-place (Augé, 1995: 77-8) by happenstance not design, conventional time and activity are suspended. This grid of images (originally presented as three vertical triptychs) explores the traces left by mundane daytime and furtive nighttime activities in this uncultivated edgeland (a term coined by environmentalist Marion Shoard; see Farley & Roberts, 2011:5).
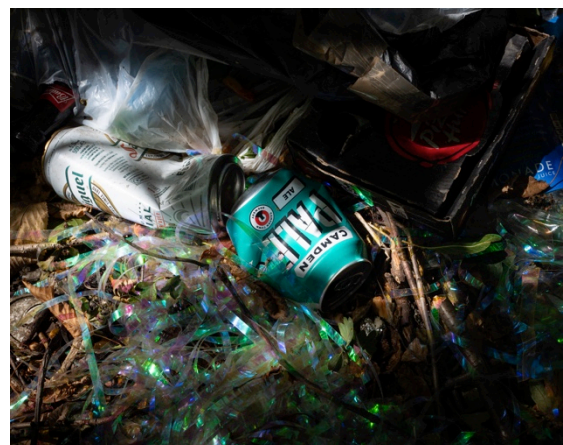

Figure 6. Andrew Brown, 2018. Roding Valley Park

Contested Development. The Olympic Park development is having substantial impact on the surrounding areas. This series explores signs of conflicting aspirations, contestation and resistance. This is preliminary work, and thus visually under-developed. The FMP will place greater emphasis on residents and their aspirations and circumstances, in relation to the development of their locality.

Figure 7. Andrew Brown, 2018. Hackney Wick

I want to convey dynamic human engagement with physical environments, to address how we shape and are shaped by places, rather than represent these places. Within the broader strategic shaping of place in relation to identity, culture, life-world and social inequality, I use photography tactically (in deCerteau's terms, 1984:xii) and collaboratively (Palmer, 2013:120) to explore how we can deepen and transform understanding through image-making. I will explore this theoretical direction in relation to contemporary theory, informed by broadly post-structuralist and materialist/social semiotic perspectives (Game, 1991:x; Kress, 2009), in greater depth in *Informing Contexts*.

Photographic challenge

Life in east London has been thoroughly documented, for instance in 1930s/40s photographs by Hardy, Brandt, Suschitzky and Tudor-Hart.

Figure 8. Wolfgang Suschitzky, 1937. Bethnal Green

Recently, the impact of gentrification has become a focus for photographers. Braden & Campany (2016) combine street and staged images around the Lea Valley area in 2004-5, and after the 2012 Olympics, to explore the impact of regeneration. Nelson (2014) explores identity and culture in Hackney at a time of flux.

Figure 9. Polly Braden & David Campany (2016), Saturday Morning, November, Stamford Hill

This work has led to a re-reading of earlier photographs, for instance Martinson's images of Hackney in the 70s and 80s and Holligan's (2017) 80s Dalston photographs, as being 'pre-gentrification', paradoxically creating a new market for photo-books on the back of the gentrification process (see the Hoxton Mini Press series East London Photo Stories).

Figure 10. Andrew Holligan, 1984-6. Dalston

Projects like Future Hackney work with young people and residents to document changes taking place now.
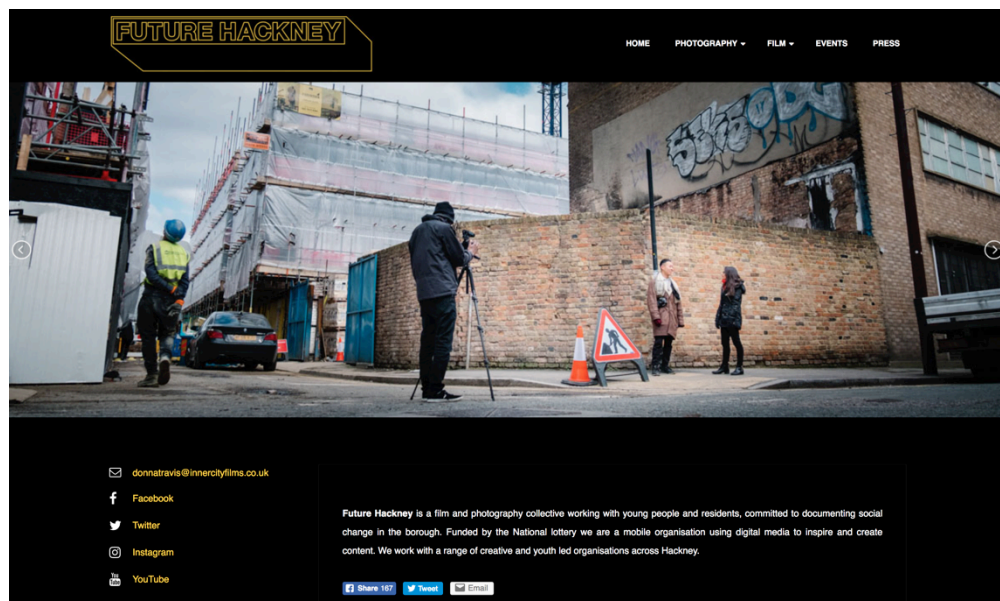

Figure 11. Future Hackney website

Photographic studies of the effects of regeneration and gentrification in other cities include Treiber's study of the transformation of a working class area of Hamburg, Chatelain's before (2007-9) and after (2014-5) study of change in neighbourhoods in Brooklyn, and Hidalgo's study of change in Chicago's Pilsen Barrio.
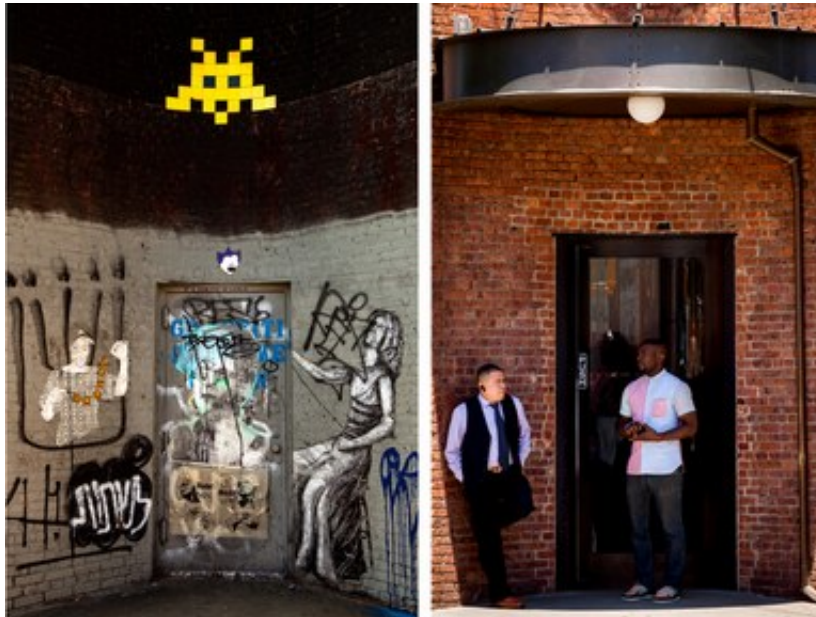
Figure 12. Kristy Chatelain, 2009 & 2015. 193 Plymouth Street

These images take a fairly conventional social documentary form. Bush's (2015) stark nighttime monochrome images, conveying the violence of property development in London, and Vutturi's (2013) organic constructions and altered portraits inspired by Dalston's Ridley Road Market, present more radical visual responses.

Figure 13: Lorenzo Vutturi, 2013. Yellow Chalk #1&2

Figure 14. Lewis Bush, 2015. Metropole

Whilst this work is insightful, my concern is that there is a tendency for photographers to describe and document impacts and, in some cases, give voice to residents, but to stop short of working with others to understand the process of regeneration and to bring about positive change for residents. Working with the LPB (alongside residents, community groups, employers and policy-makers) provides me with the prospect of developing a project that addresses this concern.

Skills and resources.

I have recently taken courses on studio lighting, portraiture and large format photography to prepare for the project. I am taking courses on bookbinding at London Centre for Book Arts to explore alternative forms of presentation. I am working on the HLF project to digitize the photography archives at the Courtauld Institute. Through the UCL Institute of Making I have full workshop access.

I have experience of leading social research projects involving fieldwork, public engagement and complex ethical issues, and will adapt and apply my expertise to this arts-based project. Over coming modules I seek to develop skills in:

- use of online collaboration tools and social media to disseminate and promote the work produced in the project, and enhance public engagement (*Sustainable Prospects*).
- arts-based research, with more sophisticated knowledge of critical theory relating to my project (*Informing Contexts*).
- photo-book production, installation design, printing for exhibition and alternative modes of presentation to different audiences, physically and online (*Strategies & Surfaces*).

Schedule

- *Sept-Dec 2018 (Sustainable Prospects).* Relationship building with LPB members. Identify areas in which to trial collaborative image making. Make links with citizen scientists and local activists. Exploratory image making. Determine locality for main study. Explore online tools and social media for networking, collaborative working, community building and dissemination.
- *Jan-May 2019 (Informing Contexts).* Background investigation of locality for main study (including census based demographic study, mapping and archival work). Investigate the ontological, epistemological and methodological basis of arts-based research approaches. Relate social science theory to theoretical perspectives in photographic arts. Research relevant theoretical foundations of photographic work. Trial Photovoice approach. Final design of study and ethical approval application.
- *June-August 2019 (Strategies & Surfaces).* Continuing personal photographic work and collaborative image making. Explore alternative means of presenting images (including books, installations and online galleries). Conduct workshops to prepare community members for Photovoice work. Determine form of personal and collaborative image making, and process of dissemination. Start collection of Photovoice data.
- *Sept-Dec 2019 (FMP1).* Analyse and write up community member research. Carry out collaborative photographic work and personal image making. Identify methods of presentation of work and agree methods of dissemination and engagement with participants. Secure exhibition space.
- *Jan-May 2020 (FMP2).* Complete all image-making phases. Produce final images and text. Present work, gather feedback and produce account of the project and its outcomes.

Costs

The major cost will be my time. As this is part of an academic programme, I am not seeking payment. Funding may be available through associated projects, in which case I will cost my time as an inexperienced photographer (according to AOP guidance). All travel will be in London, and will incur no cost. I will shoot digitally mostly, and will cover any costs of analogue work personally. I have access to colour processing, darkroom and studio at Barking and Dagenham College and can borrow equipment from UCL as necessary. I will seek support for the exhibition and publication costs from partners (but will cover these personally if necessary).

Risks

This is a complex project, dependent on strong relationships and trust. I hope that my research experience and knowledge of the area will mitigate associated risks. I will seek ethical approval early in the process, and will ensure that image ownership and publication rights are clear before work is produced. I am fortunate that I can

draw on the resources of local universities and colleges, which will further reduce risks. Relating the project to an area in which I have professional and personal experience should mitigate risks relating to my relative inexperience as a photographic artist. I will draw on my experience of supervising higher degree dissertations to ensure that the work remains on track.
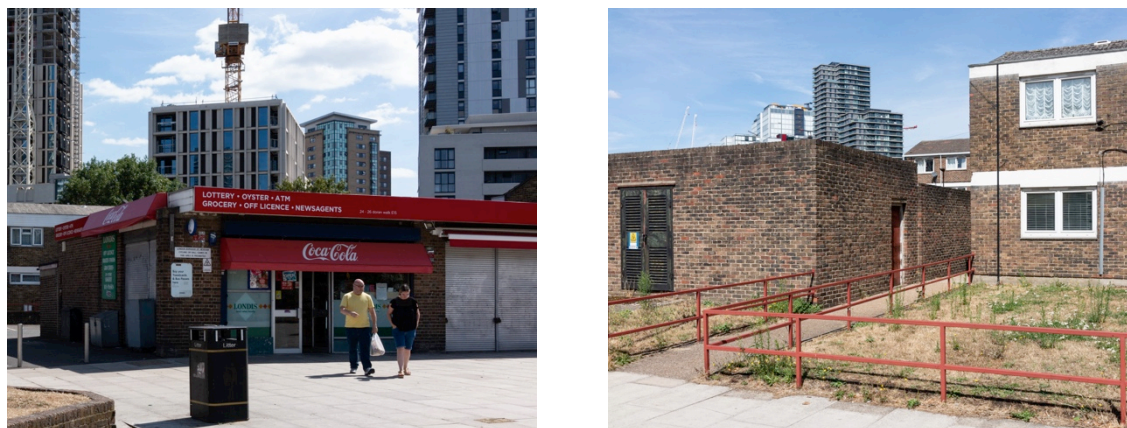

Figure 15. Andrew Brown, 2018. Carpenters Road Estate, Stratford

1623 words

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Figures

Figure 1. Andrew Brown, 2018. Hackney Wick

Figure 2. Andrew Brown, 2018. Hackney Wick

Figure 3. Andrew Brown, 2018. Bow

Figure 4. Andrew Brown, 2018. Bow

Figure 5. London Prosperity Board, 2017: 3

Figure 6. Andrew Brown, 2018. Roding Valley Park

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Appendix 1: Additional project details

I have lived, worked and served the community in east London for over 40 years. Parts of east London, for instance around the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (in Newham, Waltham Forest, Tower Hamlets and Hackney,) the Film Quarter (in Barking and Dagenham) and along the Crossrail route (in Redbridge and Havering), are undergoing profound and rapid change. There is a long history of photographic exploration of east London. In this project, I seek to build on, and go beyond, this work by working collaboratively with the agencies and community groups that comprise the London Prosperity Board (LPB), of which I have recently become a member. The approach developed by the LPB identifies five areas of activity that underpin the ability of local communities to flourish and prosper.

My proposed project:

- focuses on small areas. The LRB focuses on census output areas, which comprise of around 100 households. This enables in-depth engagement with and understanding of communities and their contexts. The LRB has carried out preliminary research in five east London areas.
- is multi-professional and inter-disciplinary. The work involves collaboration with a wide range of community groups, professionals and disciplines (including social anthropologists working with local communities on education, health and employment issues, and engineers working with citizen scientists on the collection of data, for instance on local air quality). This enables exploration of how photography relates to, and can be enriched by, other forms of practice and ways of understanding. It also entails consideration of the relationship between arts-based approaches to research and physical and social science research. In carrying out this work, I intend to keep in mind Barthes contention that 'in order to do interdisciplinary work it is not enough to take a "subject" (a theme) and to arrange two or three sciences around it. Interdisciplinary study consists in creating a new object, which belongs to no one' (1986:73).
- is multi-modal (Kress, 2009). Diverse forms of data are being collected, which are being analysed and presented in a variety of different modes (maps, visualisations, photographic images, sound, video and so on). The final form of presentation of my work with involve consideration of the relationship between photographic images and other modes of presentation.
- entails a multiplicity of forms of photographic image making.

The project will give rise to three distinct forms of photographic images, engaging different audiences and entailing a range of means of dissemination.

- individual residents will produce images as part of a Photovoice style research programme. Photovoice is an approach to participatory research initially proposed by Wang and Burris (1997), and widely used as an approach in research that explores the life-worlds of individuals and communities. Community members are provided with cameras and instruction to make images of their everyday lives. These images provide both insight for researchers and participants and act as the basis for collaborative meaning

making and discussion. It is both educative and empowering as a process, making visible both opportunities and constraints, and providing individuals and communities with the critical resources to shape their futures. Participants will retain ownership of the images produced, to be used strictly with permission in any presentation of the outcomes of this aspect of the project.

- images produced collaboratively for use by the LRB and local community groups, for which, I anticipate, authorship will be jointly attributed and the images distributed under an appropriate creative commons license (most likely CC BY-NC). My experience in working with policy makers as an academic researcher, is that whilst rigorous research is a pre-requisite, often policy makers are also influenced by narratives, and utilize these narratives in the development and implementation of policy. In this component of the project I want to explore the use of images in the development of these research-related narratives, alongside other images such as info-graphics and visual representations of data.

- my own images, produced as a response to the work carried out with the LRB and residents. My involvement with and commitment to the east London has both emotional and intellectual dimensions. Inspired by the manner in which Christian Thompson, an Australian Aboriginal artist, has created images in response to artifacts and photographs, I want to produce work that responds to images produced in the course of the project, and my own engagement with the areas and their communities. This will entail experimentation with a range of forms of image making over the coming year, and exploration of the potential and limitations of my own practice to date.

The artistic outcomes of the project will combine these different levels of image making. The project will provide opportunities for public exhibitions (through UCL galleries and events, and links with east London community groups), and publication (in print and online). In exhibition form, the complexity of the inter-relationship between the forms of work produced will demand something akin to the multi-modal form of Edmund Clark's 'In Place of Hate' (2015-7). In print form, it would be interesting to explore incorporation of other media, for instance in the way that Lewis Bush (2018) has used barcodes to incorporate sound into his book 'Shadows of the State'. I also hope to explore the benefits of incorporation of an arts based approach to research with physical and social science research.

MA Photography Risk Assessment form

FALMOUTH UNIVERSITY

Please read the Risk Assessment Guidelines before completing this form which contains further resources, available from The Photography Centre.
- **Please save a copy of this form to your computer**
- **You will need to attach a risk assessment form to your Research Project Proposal and your Final Major Project Proposal.**

Photographer's Name:	Andrew Brown	Date(s) of Shoot:	From September 2018.
Assistants' Names:	N/A		
Tutor / Supervisor:	Paul Clements		
Location:	Various locations in east London		
Description of work:	Location portraits of community participants and photographs of the locality. Most likely to be using natural light, but may involve artificial lighting. Photographic workshops for participants.		

Persons at Risk   Identify all those at risk

Technical Staff:		Academic Staff:		Students:		Admin Staff:		Canteen Staff:	
Contractors:		General Public:	X	Visitors:		Estates Staff:		Library Staff:	
Cleaning Staff:		Emergency Personnel:							

Other:		Especially at risk:	

Check list				
Equipment	Flash/tungsten	Stands/tripods	Hot lights	Smoke machine/fire
Flammable materials	Risk of Fire	Welfare of Assistant	Welfare of model	Working at Heights
Location	Transport to location	Parking	Vehicles/traffic	Weather conditions
Public	Confined spaces	Derelict Buildings	Animals	Children
Tides	Compressed Gasses	Water	Noise	Chemicals

PRIMARY RISK ASSESSMENT Example			
HAZARD	*What kind of hazards are there at the site or in your task?* *i.e.* **Light stand**	**RISK OF**	*What risks do those hazards create?* *i.e.* **Light stand falling over**
CONTROL MEASURE	*How are you going to minimise the risk associated with the hazards you've identified?* *i.e.* **weigh down light stand with sandbags**		

Please continue your risk assessment, adding additional pages as necessary.

HAZARD	Light stand and backdrop	RISK OF	Falling over
CONTROL MEASURE	Weigh down and secure stands.		
HAZARD	Trailing leads	RISK OF	Tripping
CONTROL MEASURE	Tape down and secure leads		
HAZARD	Unfamiliar locations	RISK OF	Difficulty of access for participants
CONTROL MEASURE	Check access and exits, and needs of participants.		
HAZARD	Use of equipment during field and location work and workshops.	RISK OF	Loss, theft or damage
CONTROL MEASURE	Careful handling of equipment, do not leave unattended or visible when not in use, inconspicuous use when possible in public places, or with assistance where appropriate. Insure equipment appropriately. Careful supervision of workshop participants by an experienced adult educator. Small group sizes.		
HAZARD		RISK OF	
CONTROL MEASURE			
HAZARD		RISK OF	
CONTROL MEASURE			

On site risk assessment: these are control measures that arose on your shoot	

Emergency Information and Procedures	
Phone	Charged mobile phone with full signal / Nearest Payphone / Landline
Medical Expertise	Are you or a member of your team First Aid qualified? Do you know where the nearest one is?
Emergency Procedure	In the event of an emergency dial 999 or 112 ensure that you or someone with you can accurately describe where you are (ideally nearest postcode)
Medical Treatment	Minor Injuries Unit, Falmouth Hospital Open weekdays 8am to 8pm A&E Treliske Hospital, Truro, Open 24 hours
Evacuation procedures	Ambulance can evacuate from main road.
Incident/accident reporting	All incidents or accidents should be reported to tutor at Falmouth University

Assessment carried out by
• I have ensured that I have reviewed the hazards and risks associated with this project and taken necessary steps to remove hazards where possible or reduced the risks associated with the remaining hazards to a minimum.
• I have recorded the main hazards, risks and control measures in this document.
• I have ensured that those working with me have been briefed on the nature of the tasks they are to perform, and are aware of the hazards associated with the task and the measures in place to reduce the risks associated with those hazards. (if applicable)
• I will continually assess hazards and risks 'live' on site to ensure that nothing has been overlooked or has changed since initial assessment.

Signed:	Date: 19.08.18

Assessment reviewed by