**Case study: Coin Street, South Bank, London – a community-led project to create place-meaning**

Coin Street is a community-led housing organisation and social enterprise which is located on the south bank of the Thames, near Waterloo station and half-way between the City of London and the West End. In the 1970s this stretch of the river was characterised by derelict warehouses, a shrinking population and a weak local economy with few services. In 1977 the 13-acre site was due to be sold off for office and hotel development but local residents campaigned for a change of plans and formed a community action group. The group protested continuously and in 1984 the Greater London Council (GLC) re-zoned the site and changed its planning status to residential. The value of the land immediately dropped and the newly formed Coin Street Community Builders (CSCB) bought the land for £1million.

The CSCB organised the demolition of derelict buildings in order to make the river accessible to communities living close by. The South Bank riverside walkway, Gabriel’s Wharf and a new park – Bernie Spain Gardens - were built between 1984 and 1988. The Oxo Tower was regenerated for multiple usage and contains shops, flats, a museum, an art gallery and a restaurant.

The primary aim of the CSCB was set up to make the area a better one in which to live, work and visit. With this in mind, several housing co-operatives were set up where locals live and share outside space and community facilities. There are currently over 230 homes in the area but the CSCB plans to develop a new site – Doon Street – to include 330 flats, a community swimming pool, dance studios and commercial space to let. Other community facilities in the area include the Colombo Centre, a community sports centre, the Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre which has a nursery and after school club, youth club and runs a full programme of classes and activities for all residents. The Centre also runs a full programme of events and festivals for locals and non-locals throughout the year.

**Coin Street, South Bank, London: changing places / meaning and representation.**

CSCB employs a team to develop, manage and maintain the site and oversee its community and enterprise support programmes. Associated charities also support education, arts and community activities. All members of staff are required to live locally and so they understand the needs and opportunities of the area. Residents are closely involved as stakeholders in the project. There are community-led projects to maintain gardens (the ‘Gorgeous Gardens project’), research the heritage of the area and encourage children to read. The Neighbourhood Centre also runs the Confidence to Work and Money Champions schemes, which offer training in employability skills and managing money to support those at risk of falling into financial difficulty.