

2022

Re-imagining the Vernacular: Dwelling at the Thames Edge

Sutton, Sally

<http://hdl.handle.net/10026.1/18628>

<http://dx.doi.org/10.24382/893>

University of Plymouth

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Re-imagining the Vernacular: Dwelling at the Thames Edge

By

Sally Sutton

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth in partial fulfilment for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

School of Art, Design and Architecture

April 2021

Copyright Statement

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Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and express my sincere gratitude to the supervisors who helped to guide the research and provide invaluable advice. Director of Studies, Dr Sana Murrani (Associate Professor in Spatial Practice), who more than generously gave her time, patience, and unwavering support throughout. She enthusiastically shared her expert knowledge of spatial injustice along with the theories of Henri Lefebvre. Dr Daniel Maudlin (Professor of History), for his helpful and insightful introduction to the field of vernacular architecture. Dr Simon Standing (Associate Professor of Photography), for inspiring me to adopt re-photography as means of exploring the history of the built environment along the banks of the Thames. My thanks, also to Dr Katherine Willis, who successfully guided me through the funding application process. Without the generous support of a studentship from the University of Plymouth this research would not have been possible.

Numerous organisations and members of their staff helped me carry out my research, including local authority planning departments, the Port of London Authority, the Totally Thames Festival Trust, the Thames River Society, the Museum of London, several architects with an interest in the river, and filmmakers David Kew, John Inglis and Jill Sanders. I am extremely grateful for their diverse and often specialist perspectives of the Thames, which enabled me to examine London's iconic river afresh.

The residents and manager of Hermitage Community Moorings, Tower Bridge Moorings, and the Chelsea Reach Boatowner's Association, all deserve special mention and great appreciation, their unique input was invaluable.

To my colleagues at the University of Plymouth, who are equally passionate about rivers and the water, Eva McGrath, Zoe Latham, and Adam Guy. Your friendship and collegial support have been stimulating, unstinting and sustaining. For those other special few, Ricky Burke, Michael Cassidy, Linda Evans, and Emma Bush, who tolerate our passion and contribute mightily to our scholarly debates and academic well-being, thank you too.

Finally, heartfelt thanks to my family, for their unconditional support, encouragement, and nourishment (thank you Zak for taking over the cooking!). I am very grateful to my husband, Adrian, for his patience, along with his perceptive insights and observations. To him, and to other maritime friends, Charlie, Barbara, Geoff, Lise, David, Kim, Rufus, Anna V, Paul and John, Charlie, and Martin, to name but a few, I would like to say how much I have appreciated our times together spent on the water, the lived experience afloat, and the gifts of knowledge and know how.

From the Thames to the Dart, the Gull to the Mardle, the Orwell to the Helford, the Auld to the Foy, the Deben to the Swale, my very last thank you goes to the rivers I know. They have kept my perspective river to shore, by swimming in them and floating upon them, they have sustained me throughout this prodigious academic endeavour.

Author's Declaration

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Doctoral College Quality Sub-Committee. Work submitted for this research degree at the University of Plymouth has not formed part of any other degree either at the University of Plymouth or at another establishment.

The study was financed with the aid of a studentship from the University of Plymouth between 2016-2019.

Relevant seminars and conferences were regularly attended, and those where the author shared findings are listed below. A research event relevant to the thesis, rivers and identity was co-organised.

Cornerstone Heritage Symposium, Saltram House, Plymouth, December 2017.
'(Re)Viewing the River Thames:(Re) Imagining the Past'

Field Notes: (Re) Imagining the Past: (Re) Viewing the River Thames
'Maritime Traditions of the Tidal Thames Historic Boats as a form of Vernacular Architecture,' presented at the Vernacular Architecture Forum - Potomac 2018 (Washington) 'A Shared Heritage- Rural and Urban Experience on the Banks of the Potomac'.

Flows of entanglement: How rivers shape identities.

Co-organised the conference with Eva McGrath (Department of Geography) and Zoe Latham, (Department of Architecture) September 2019.

'A Comparative Discussion on Fluid Entanglements of Dwelling on London's Rivers' co-presented with Laura Roberts, PhD Student, (Working title: Staying afloat? Making home and creating place on London's canals and rivers, Queen Mary University of London.

Push the film. Award winning documentary investigating why people can no longer afford to live in cities. Co-organised an on-line event with Dr Sana Murrani, 15/16th June 2020.

Southwark Council: Presentation to Planning Department: 1st December 2020

Word Count of the main body of the thesis: **79,300**



Signed

Date. 27/10/2021

Re-imagining the Vernacular: Dwelling at the Thames Edge

For centuries, dwelling on the water has been a traditional way of life for many cultures around the world. Ironically, although these indigenous communities are now in decline, residing afloat is nonetheless a growing phenomenon in the West. The popularity of living on water is viewed by some as a solution to the problem of affordable housing, particularly in large urban centres. Recent reports have highlighted a range of issues associated with the rapid increase in demand, whilst simultaneously reinforcing the precarious nature of this lifestyle. Focusing on London's iconic and multifunctional River Thames, this study presents a timely examination of the contradictory nature of river dwelling.

For many river dwellers, re-purposed working boats have been appropriated and re-imagined as a place to live. Even though boats are not legally considered dwellings, this thesis contends that converted boats are homes. It posits, therefore, that by extension they should be considered as a contemporary form of vernacular architecture, one that both resists and challenges the dominant practices of inhabiting the city. The dual nature of river dwelling is also examined in the thesis, through an in-depth investigation into the experiences and processes of everyday life on water. The framework of the 'right to the city' is used as a concept to evaluate urban problems from a riverine perspective.

The thesis proposes the question, 'what are the forms and moments of resistance used by river dwellers to challenge the dominant economic and political powers?'

Situated within the fields of Vernacular Architecture and Critical Urban Theory, the study draws upon the theories of Henri Lefebvre to reconceptualise boats as a vernacular form of housing. The intention is to reinterpret ideas of the ordinary and the everyday to examine how and why boats, once part of the working river, have evolved into a popular form of dwelling. Furthermore, it seeks to address the lack of critical evaluation into the problems associated with 'built space' at the water's edge to consider the extent to which the river and its banks have been appropriated and contested as a place to live from a riverine perspective.

A variety of methods, including a detailed field study of three river communities, panoramic re-photography, interviews, and archival sources were chosen to examine different aspects of life on the river. In addition, historic moments of struggle and creativity were documented to identify patterns and processes of change that have impacted on the evolution of dwelling on re-purposed boats.

Re-thinking the river as a place to dwell affords the opportunity to examine the extent to which life afloat can be understood as a vernacular form that embodies the processes of change. By re-imagining the vernacular in this way, this thesis provides fresh insight into the production of riverine space. It contributes to knowledge by finding that the transformation of the built environment and its relationship with the River Thames, has framed the space at the water's edge, influencing both the evolution and changing nature of life afloat.

Table of Contents

Copyright Statement	2
Acknowledgements	3
Author’s Declaration	5
Abstract	6
Table of Contents	8
List of Figures, Plates, Tables	11
Preface	14
Chapter One	17
1. Introduction	17
1.1 Research Context.....	17
1.2 Urban transformation of the Water’s Edge: River Dwelling Problems and Possibilities.....	19
1.3 Residential Dwelling Afloat: Locating the Research in Uncharted Waters.....	25
1.4 Vernacular Struggles within a Riverine Context.....	38
1.5 Vernacular Architecture and Critical Urban Theory.....	43
1.6 ‘Right to the City’ and the River: Waterfront Struggles within the Discourse of Neo-Liberal Domination and Resistance.....	47
1.7 The Research Questions.....	53
1.8 The Significance of the Thesis.....	55
1.9 Structure of the Thesis.....	56
Chapter Two	58
2. Methodology and The Design of the Research Methods	58
2.1 Introduction.....	58
2.2 Key Aim.....	59
2.3 The Case Study Strategy.....	59
2.4 The Case Site – The Tidal Thames.....	62
2.5 Mixed Methods - Perceiving the Water’s Edge: A View from the River.....	68
2.6 Methods in the Field/on the River.....	70
2.7 Generating the architectural documentation.....	78
2.8 Interviews.....	79
2.9 Archival material.....	85
2.10 Museums and Exhibitions.....	87
2.11 Synthesis, Analysis, and Interpretation.....	87
2.12 Ethical Approval.....	90
2.13 Access and Positionality.....	90

Chapter Three	92
3. A River in Transition - The Tidal Thames	92
3.1 Introduction	92
3.2 Evolution of Living on the River Thames: The Demise of the Working River and Traditional Sailing Craft	97
3.3 The Converted Vessel as a Dwelling	106
3.3.1 Interior Space	108
3.3.2 Fixtures and Fittings	110
3.3.3 Vessel Exterior.....	115
3.4 Modification by owners and the process of conversion	116
3.5 The Appeal and Demand of Life Afloat	122
3.6 Summary	127
Chapter Four	130
4. Rivers of Resistance: Community Dwelling on the River Thames	130
4.1 Introduction	130
4.2 A Sense of Community on the River	133
4.3 Contentious Politics along River’s Edge: The Claims and the Campaigns	142
4.4 The Outcomes – Tradition versus Change	153
4.5 Resistance from the water: the river as home versus the interests of property investment ...	158
4.6 Summary	165
Chapter Five	168
5. Re-imagining the Vernacular: The ‘Right’ to Dwell on the River	168
5.1 Introduction	168
5.2 The ‘Right to the City’ on the River	171
5.3 Built to Meet Needs: A New Imaginary - The Case of Hermitage Community Moorings	173
5.4 The Development of the Project.....	177
5.5 A Shared Maritime Vision: Private and Public Space - Key Factors Relating to the Success of the Project	185
5.6 The Power of Knowledge and the Knowledge of Power	189
5.7 The ‘Right’ to Dwell on the River	199
5.8 Summary	203
Chapter Six	204
6.Re-appropriation of Life Afloat: Commodification on the River Thames	204
6.1 Introduction	204
6.2 Community not Commodity - The Ongoing Case of Chelsea Houseboats	207
6.3 The Lack of Legal Protection	211
6.4 Re-Appropriating the Vernacular	221
6.5 The Experience of Daily Life: The Tide in the City.....	225
6.6 Commodification on the River	231
6.7 The Changing Face of Gentrification.....	234
6.8 Resisting Gentrification	241
6.9 Summary	242
Chapter Seven	244
7.Dwelling at the Thames Edge: An Affordable Alternative	244
7.1 Introduction	244
7.2 Forms of Resistance along the Banks of the Thames	247
7.3 Urban demands and their impact on River Life: Different perceptions of affordability and home ownership	250
7.4 The Housing Crisis	259
7.5 Luxury Apartments and Urban Regeneration along the bank of the River Thames	262
7.6 The value of a view and the role of the river	268
7.7 Dwelling on the Edge: An Affordable Alternative	273
7.8 Summary	277

Chapter Eight	280
8. Conclusion and Summary of Findings	280
8.1 Introduction	280
8. 2 Methods	281
8.3 Research Aim, Objective, and Research Questions	283
8.4 Reviewing the Research Questions with reference to the main findings	284
8. 5 Theoretical and Practical Contributions to Knowledge	296
8. 6 Limitations.....	302
8.7 Future Research	303
Bibliography	307
Ackroyd, P., (2008) <i>Thames: Sacred River</i> . London, Vintage.	307
Appendix A	324
Types of Floating Residential Dwellings	324
Appendix B	329
Interview Questions	329
Totally Thames Interviewees	330
Appendix C	331
Interview Participants	331
Appendix D	333
Licensed/permitted residential mooring enclaves	333
Appendix E	334
Informed Consent Form.....	334
Appendix F	336
Blank Vessel Survey Form.....	336
Appendix G	338
Chronological Mapping of Tensions played out on the river.....	338
Appendix H	345
Detail Chronology/Themes/Discourses	345

List of Figures, Plates, Tables

	Title Page	
	<i>'Drone Image'</i>	1
	Preface	
Plate 1	<i>'Drifting Down the Thames, Canary Wharf'</i>	14
Plate 2	<i>'Drifting down the Thames, Boulevard of Warehouses'</i>	15
	Chapter One Introduction	
Plate 1.1	<i>'Chelsea Houseboats twitter campaign'</i>	20
	Chapter Two	
	Methodology and The Design of the Research Methods	
Figure 2.1	<i>'Residential Mooring Enclaves along the Thames'</i>	63
Figure 2.2	<i>'Pool of London, Hermitage Community Moorings/Tower Bridge Moorings'</i>	65
Plate 2.1	<i>'Tower Bridge Moorings. South Bank, The Pool of London, tidal Thames' (2016)</i>	66
Plate 2.2	<i>'Hermitage Community Moorings (2016) North Bank, Pool of London, Tidal Thames (2016)</i>	66
Plate 2.3	<i>'Chelsea Houseboats, Chelsea Reach, Tidal Thames' (2020)</i>	67
Plate 2.4	<i>'Chelsea Houseboats Twitter Campaign' (2019)</i>	68
Plate 2.5	<i>'Kabang: Traditional Moken dwelling boat' (2016)</i>	71
Plate 2.6	<i>'The Andaman Sea' (2016)</i>	71
Plate 2.7	<i>'Airbnb Visit to Pin Mill Houseboat Community, The River Orwell, Suffolk' (2017)</i>	73
Plate 2.8	<i>'Tower Bridge, Moorings, 1937, 1997, 2008'</i>	75
Plate 2.9	<i>'Detail Chronology/Themes/Discourses 2019'</i>	84
Table 2.1	<i>'Mapping the Tensions'</i>	86
Table 2.2	<i>'Triangulating the data: Different Lines of inquiry at the Water's Edge'</i>	89
	Chapter Three	
	A River in Transition - The Tidal Thames	
Figure 3.1	<i>'Maxime, (1931, Holland), Dutch Barge: Luxe Motor, Length:23.1m, Beam: 4.5m'.</i>	107
Plate 3.1	<i>'Maxime: Converted Cargo Hold into Main Modern Living Area, Saloon, Kitchen, Dining Area' (2018)</i>	108
Plate 3.2	<i>'Maxime: Modern Forward Cabin' (2018).</i>	109
Plate 3.3	<i>'Maxime: Skipper's Original Aft Cabin circa 1930's' (2018)</i>	109
Plate 3.4	<i>'Maxime: Skipper's Original Aft Cabin. 'Cupboard' with bed inside'</i>	110

Plate 3.5	<i>'Maxime, Stern Cabin/Kitchen, Original tiles and port hole fittings'</i> (2018)	111
Plate 3.6	<i>'Maxime, Stern Cabin/Original Dresser'</i> (2018)	111
Plate 3.7	<i>'De Walvisch, (1896) Dutch Klipper, Interior cabin: In Keeping with its history, reproduction foldaway washbasin and porthole'</i> (2018)	112
Plate 3.8	<i>'Nooit Gedacht (1927) Port Holes instead of windows. They are constructed to prevent water entering the vessel'</i> (2018)	112
Plate 3.9	<i>'Maxime: Collapsible Wheelhouse'</i> (2018) Sutton S	113
Plate 3.10	<i>'Maxime: Wheelhouse/Threshold. Entrance into to the interior of the barge'</i> (2018)	114
Plate 3.11	<i>'Maxime: Steps leading from the wheelhouse into the interior main living accommodation'</i> (2018)	114
Plate 3.12	<i>'Maxime: Historic Exterior Details, Original Hatch Boards covered with tarpaulin'</i> (2018)	115
Plate 3.13	<i>'Original Anchor Winch'</i> (2018)	115
Plate 3.14	<i>'De Walvisch, (1896) Dutch Klipper with Dutch monument status'</i>	116
Plate 3.15	<i>'Nooit Gedacht (1927), Luxe Motor. 'Raw Space'.</i>	117
Plate 3.16	<i>'The Converted Space: Modern living room and kitchen area'.</i>	117
Plate 3.17	<i>'Nooit Gedacht (1927) Historic photographs and documents acquired with the barge'</i>	120
Table 3.1	<i>'Vocational Breakdown of River Dwellers'</i>	122

Chapter Four

Rivers of Resistance

Figure 4.1	<i>'Tower Bridge Moorings. Note how the garden barges (green), aka collar barges, provide the backbone of the moorings and the physical structure for barges to moor alongside'</i>	137
Plate 4.1	<i>'Hermitage Community Moorings, Wapping. The pontoons provide the physical structure of the neighbourhood that enables the boats to moor side by side'</i>	137
Plate 4.2	<i>'If one moves, we all move. Comment by Lundquist T'</i> (2018)	139
Plate 4.3	<i>'Tower Bridge Moorings: Community Space - The Arts Ark'</i>	140
Plate 4.4	<i>'Tower Bridge Moorings: upstream towards the city'</i>	143
Plate 4.5	<i>'Tower Bridge Moorings: downstream towards Canary Wharf'</i>	143
Plate 4.6	<i>'Collar Barge with Roof Garden'</i>	145
Plate 4.7	<i>'Tower Bridge Moorings, Modern Life: Bike Park'</i>	153

Chapter Five

Re-imagining the Vernacular: The 'Right' to Dwell on the River

Figure 5.1	<i>'Where the water meets land: The Gangway'</i>	179
Figure 5.2	<i>'Ordnance Survey Map, Hermitage Stairs'</i> (1896)	180
Figure 5.3	<i>'Layout of Moorings'</i>	182
Plate 5.1	<i>'Hermitage Community Moorings'</i>	174
Plate 5.2	<i>'Re-imagining the dwelling space'</i> (2011)	178
Plate 5.3	<i>'Bespoke Pontoons: Getting to know the location of every nut and bolt'</i> (2011)	183
Plate 5.4	<i>'The Barn Raising Moment'</i> (2011) Courtesy of Kew D	183
Plate 5.5	<i>'View of the Coin Street development from the river'</i> (2019)	201

Chapter Six		
Re-appropriation of Life Afloat: Commodification on the River Thames		
Figure 6.1	<i>'Hounslow Borough Council Plan Mooring Plan'</i>	230
Figure 6.2	<i>'Alternative proposal put forward by river residents'</i>	230
Plate 6.1	<i>'Chelsea Houseboats'</i>	208
Plate 6.2	<i>'Gathering petition signatures'</i> Screenshot	214
Plate 6.3	<i>'No Mooring at Waterman's Park'</i> (2018)	219
Table 6.1	<i>'CYBC fees 2001-2019'</i>	211
Chapter Seven		
Dwelling at the Thames Edge		
Plate 7.1	<i>'The People's Armada to Parliament (1984-6)' Different forms of protest in response to the Dockland's Development'</i>	264
Plate 7.2.	<i>'Docklands Community Poster Project'</i>	264
Plate 7.3	<i>'Luxury Apartments: 'The Bristling Balconies Syndrome' Saunders'</i> (2018). Image journeying along the Thames between Canary Wharf and Wapping (2016)	266
Plate 7.4	<i>'The Riverlight Development Battersea/Nine Elms'</i> (2016)	268
Table 7.1	<i>'Saville's Waterfront Report, 2018'</i>	269
Chapter Eight		
Conclusion		
Table 8.1	<i>'Production of Space at the water's Edge'</i>	301
Appendix A		
Figure A	<i>'Ethel Ada' (1903) Thames Sailing Barge, Length 27.3 m, Beam 6.5m'</i>	326
Figure B	<i>'Converted plan of the interior'</i>	326
Figure C	<i>'Repurposing Costs'</i>	327
Figure D	<i>'A flat bottom steel lighter used for carrying goods between ship and shore'</i>	328
Plate A	<i>'Astoria', (1911) Houseboat, Hampton; early houseboat type purpose built primarily for summer use'</i>	325
Plate B	<i>'Converted Steel Lighter with garden. Tower Bridge Moorings'</i>	328
Plate C	<i>'Interior, Converted Steel Lighter. Tower Bridge Moorings'</i>	328

Preface

“The built landscape is the great pop-up lexicon of who we are, humanities diary”
(Gill, 2004)

“How we treat water is a measure of our civilization”
(Sharrocks, 2018)



Plate 1 'Drifting Down the Thames, Canary Wharf' (2016) Sutton S

“I look again at my images taken from the river between Tower Bridge and Canary Wharf. They cover a large section of the Pool of London, a stretch of the Thames running from London Bridge to Lime House. The river runs fast here, especially on a spring tide, heading for the North Sea and beyond. The built edge, on the north bank, falls under the jurisdiction of Tower Hamlets, on the south, Southwark. At first glance, the never-ending apartments form a wide residential

boulevard, hemming in the river. At either end, stand two iconic bookends, marking the river's most recent timeline. Tower Bridge, the engineering pinnacle of 19th century river-crossing feats, and Canary Wharf, a 20th century annex of corporate America and rival to the City of London. Deeper inspection reveals a murkier landscape, punctuated with fragments from the London's maritime past; a wall here, an ancient stairway there, idle cranes, rotting wood, and muddy ropes on empty foreshores. Dominating them all, lies dock upon converted dock: St. Katherine's, Lime House, West India Quay, Royal Albert...



Plate 2 'Drifting down the Thames, Boulevard of Warehouses' (2016) Sutton S

I note down the large numbers of converted warehouses, thoroughly modernized; sanitised for contemporary use. Two public houses, both claiming to be the oldest on the river (circa 1550). The entrance to London Dock and Tobacco Dock, now filled in and dry. It once housed luxury goods from across the empire: spices, silks, ivory, wine, and wool. It is flanked by two 19th century houses (circa 1811). There are incongruous wooden piers, wrought iron bridges, lock gates, hoists, and cranes everywhere, engineering wonders of a bygone age. The Wapping River Police Station is still in use, facing south over the river. It was established in 1798, to halt the endemic theft of cargo, costing merchants half million pounds a year. Upriver, a stone's throw away, lie two residential moorings gently moving from side to side on a slack afternoon tide. One is offshore, a few meters from the north bank, and the other opposite on the south. On both, float a mixture of re-purposed barges that once crowded this part of the Thames. By sail and later

motorised, they plied the river, back and forward, noisily loading and unloading their cargos. Once the trains and trucks of maritime logistics, hauling the 'raw materials' of industry, they now provide a place to dwell at the heart of the city.

Towering above these riverine communities are swathes of riverside dwellings. Luxury apartments, copper covered, glass encased, row upon row of windows, all shapes and sizes, verandas, terraces, pods, and lofts, all vying for spectacular views of the river. But views of what? Apart from the barge dwellers, the river is empty. Just the odd commuter ferry, sightseeing boat, or the garbage barge from up-river. It is a 21st century panoramic image of an empty riverscape, dominated by near mirror views – of apartments. The viewers of this exclusive riverscape pay a premium to look. It is an asset and sold as such, a part of property, just as much as the rooms and the decor. Meanwhile, below, London's iconic River Thames, charts its natural course from source to sea, as it always has done. Embanked here and sprawling free there. Watching it go by, I reflect on the comments by AA Gill and Amy Sharrocks: just what story can be revealed from 'reading' this particular diary? (Sutton. S. Field Notes, 2016).

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Context

This thesis examines the phenomenon of dwelling on the river Thames to reveal the changing role of the river and the built environment along its edge. By rethinking the river as a place to dwell, this study affords the opportunity to examine the extent to which re-purposed ex-working barges can be understood as a vernacular form. It examines how they embody the wider processes of change and the ways in which river dwelling relate to the ongoing urban transformation of the river itself and the built environment along its banks. The re-imagining of the vernacular contributes to knowledge by providing fresh insight into the production of riverine space within the broader context of contemporary neo-liberal urbanism.

The research traces the historical evolution of living on the River Thames to provide an in-depth understanding of how and why ex-working vessels, once part of the working river, evolved into 'ordinary' types of residential dwellings. The study reconceptualises converted ex-cargo vessels as a contemporary form of vernacular architecture to investigate the extent to which the cultural forms and practices of river dwelling, reimagine, resist, and challenge the dominant practices of living in the city. From this perspective, a range of issues associated with the rapid increase in demand to live on the tidal Thames, along with the precarious nature of this lifestyle, are explored. Focusing on London's iconic and multifunctional River Thames, this study presents a timely examination of the contradictory nature of river dwelling.

The research set out to investigate the discrepancy between demand and precariousness, by chronologically mapping the conflicts that have taken place since the 1970's. Central to this approach, is the recognition that all residential communities along the Thames are required by the Port of London Authority (PLA) to be connected (moored) to the edge. Therefore, in order to analyse the wider context in which river dwelling exists, the study sought to incorporate the immediate surroundings, by re-thinking the relationship between river dwelling, the river, and the built environment along the water's edge. This made it possible to examine the forms and practices associated with living in a re-purposed boat within a contemporary urban context.

The study combines perspectives from the fields of vernacular architecture and critical urban theory with Henri Lefebvre's theories of space, using them to provide fresh insight into an alternative way of dwelling in the city. The research addresses the lack of critical evaluation into the problems associated with built space at the water's edge, to consider the extent to which the river and its banks have been appropriated and contested as a place to live from a riverine perspective. This has been achieved by focusing analytically on the water's edge (both on land and water) as a site of contention; a place where dominant onshore private interests are challenged and resisted by river dwellers in response to both parties claiming space at the water's edge. In this case, the 'edge' is understood to be a place of transformation, tension, discovery, and creativity (Charlesworth, 2005). Through the eyes of the river dwellers, it is seen to conjure up images of the fringe and the periphery, along with ideas of limitless and boundlessness (Charlesworth, 2005).

A variety of methods, drawn from the field of vernacular architecture, including a detailed field study of three river communities, panoramic re-photography, interviews, and archival sources, have been chosen to examine different aspects of life on the river. In addition, historic 'moments' of struggle and creativity are documented to identify patterns and processes of change that have impacted on the evolution of dwelling on re-purposed boats.

1.2 Urban transformation of the Water's Edge: River Dwelling Problems and Possibilities

Since 2014, there have been two high profile cases in London to evict residential boats from their moorings on the River Thames. In 2018, boat owners lost a long-standing legal battle against Hounslow Council to remain at Waterman's Park, Brentford. In the same year, residents at Chelsea Houseboats, one of the oldest river communities in London, was bought by a private developer who significantly changed the terms and conditions of their tenure and threatened them with eviction. In response to these challenges, several of the residents mobilised a high-profile campaign, "*We are a community, not a Commodity*" to try and preserve their long-established community and way of life.



Plate 1.1 'Chelsea Houseboats twitter campaign' Courtesy of Chelsea Reach Boat Owner's Association

In 2017, there was also a campaign by a group of boat dwellers, entitled '*Boats are Homes, Prevent the eviction of Boat Dwellers*' (National Bargee Association, NBA). They organised a demonstration in central London to raise awareness of the precarious nature of living on boats. These protests follow a pattern of conflict between the authorities and river dwellers and can be traced back to the 1970's, when the lack of security of tenure for boat owners was first raised in the Houses of Parliament (Hansard, 14th May 1975, Appendix G).

This study has found that over a number of years, several communities along the river had been in conflict with the authorities. Developers, along with various local authorities, have attempted to remove residential re-purposed boats from the river's edge. In some cases, they claimed that the vessels disrupted the view of the luxury apartment dwellers, in others that the communities were simply in the way of new waterfront developments. The problems, issues and solutions behind these encounters are examined in detail through the case studies in Chapters, Four, Five and Six.

The study has shown that even though these struggles are ongoing, demand to live on the river is on the rise. In 2017, the Canals and River Trust (C&RT) was tasked with developing the first ever moorings strategy for London's waterways. This was in response to problems associated with the increasing numbers of people wishing to live on the capital's waterways (Miles, 2016). It has been suggested that London may have the highest number of people dwelling afloat of any capital city. However, the popularity and problems of dwelling on water for purely residential purposes are not limited to the United Kingdom, they are a global phenomenon (Gabor 1997; Miles 2016). Further examples can be found in Hong Kong, Singapore, the United States and Canada.

Prior to this, in 2014, the popularity of river dwelling was looked at from a different perspective, with discussions focusing on the possibilities of expanding the opportunities to live on water. In a series of public debates, organised by the architectural critics Ellis Woodman and Phineas Harper, (on behalf of the Architectural Review and the Old Royal Naval College, ORNC), developers and river/canal dwellers, architects, urbanists, and estate agents, explored the potential of the river to provide alternative solutions to the ongoing housing problems. The commentators emphasised the symbiotic role that the river has played in shaping London's cultural and architectural identity since Roman times and highlighted the current lack of attention to this valuable resource. The challenge, they argued, was to consider ways in which the river and its banks could be reimagined as a civic space; one that both engages with architectural forms that responds to the water and to become a vibrant part of the living city with access for all (Architecture and Water Documentary, 2014).

In this forum, doubts were expressed as to whether or not riverside developments were contributing to an integrated city, or actually deepening social and physical divisions with adverse impacts on local communities. The unprecedented scale and pace of the latest transformations had resulted in swathes of unaffordable luxury housing along the riverfront. The presenters of the documentary film, '*Architecture and Water: Parts 1, 2, 3*' (Architectural Review, 2014) suggested that whilst the popularity of riverside living was on the increase, this type of development did little to mitigate London's housing crisis. In addition, they identified the recent trend for overseas buyers to purchase apartments overlooking the water for investment purposes only. Further criticisms included the lack of consideration for the social and economic impacts on local communities, particularly when the space along the edge is privatized, thereby reducing public access to the river. They also argued that waterside developments often failed to integrate, either architecturally or socially, with the local surroundings, including the river itself (see Chapter Seven) (Davidson, 2007; ORNC, 2014).

Underlying all of this, is the changing use of London's rivers and waterways, and by extension, the built environment along its edges. Ellis Woodman (2014) reiterated the fact that the industrial use of London's waterways ceased some thirty years ago, and whilst this could present new opportunities, the city has been slow to grasp them. He argued, that with imagination and a political will, the situation could change, particularly if new uses were to be found to fulfil the potential of the city's vital resource. The film discusses a range of options, including increased leisure and transport use, along with the prospect of expanding opportunities to live on water *Architecture and Water: Parts 1,2, 3*' (Architectural Review, 2014). This transition, along with concerns of the fast disappearing working function of the river, were seen to be at the forefront of daily life

on the tidal Thames. No longer a busy port, in which ships, barges, lighters were the lifeblood of empire and city, the river itself was largely denuded.

From an urban perspective, de-industrialization and the decline of the maritime industries are the latest developments to take place along the shores of prominent river cities both in the West and further afield. Across the globe, these prevailing conditions have once again transformed the relationship between city and river (Harvey, 1992; Breen and Rigby, 1996; Malone, 1996; Meyer, 1999; Marshall, 2001; Desfor et al, 2011; Rubin, 2011; Kinder, 2015). By the very nature of their locations, rivers and the water's edge are 'competitive spaces' creating points of tension between policy makers, development corporations and a variety of community users, a point briefly touched upon within the literature (Breen and Rigby 1996; Rubin, 2011; Pinch, 2015). There has been little mention that local communities do not necessarily benefit from these changes. Breen and Rigby cite three examples where local populations have either been ignored, as in the case of London Docklands (1980's) and Tiger Bay in Cardiff (1991) or removed entirely as happened in Singapore. Here, eight hundred bumboats were removed entirely from the Singapore River (1983) to another anchorage, ending a one hundred-and-sixty years old traditional community. Additionally, they comment that, as long as people wish to populate (in whatever form) the water's edge, "the tension between private and public interests with respect to that most public of resources will most likely increase as communities¹ seek to redevelop their waterfronts" (Breen and

¹ NB: There is an issue with the use of the word community here. There is very little evidence in their examples of community seeking redevelopment. In the main, developments are driven corporations, developers, and city or national governments as they seek to adapt to the prevailing economic and political conditions.

Rigby, 1997, p. 153). Water, they argue, is inherently a public place and a resource that should be accessible to all.

It is evident from the recent debates and the limited literature, that the edge and the river itself can be claimed by powerful forces. However, there has been limited reference to the effects that unequal power relations and territorial struggles have on the rivers and the communities they sustain, let alone the underlying role that the river plays in these power struggles (Breen and Rigby, 1996; Mauch and Zellor, 2008; Rubin, 2011; Pinch, 2014). Whilst Breen and Rigby, along with Justin Rubin, briefly allude to the emerging tensions at the water's edge, apart from Philip Pinch, (see below) there is little critique of the river (water) and the role it plays in these 'tensions' (Breen and Rigby, 1996; Mauch and Zellor, 2008; Rubin, 2011; Pinch, 2015). From the river dweller's perspective, as noted earlier, the de-industrialisation of many waterfronts had slowly begun to have an adverse impact on floating communities. This study aims to address the lack of evaluation into the problems of the transformation of the production of 'built space' at the water's edge, both on land and water, by resuming the discussion raised by Mark Gabor in 1979. This has been achieved by rethinking river dwelling as a contemporary form of vernacular architecture from an urban perspective, in order to analyse the ways in which the contemporary water's edge (on water and land) has been transformed, appropriated and contested. This approach provides an opportunity to investigate the complex urban 'riverscape' and the power relationships in which riverine inhabitants dwell. To accomplish this, in the first instance, it is necessary to scrutinize how and why the river has become a place to live and why re-purposed barges became an increasingly attractive form of city dwelling, despite the seemingly precarious nature of this lifestyle. Inherent in this proposition, is the opportunity to investigate a number

of contemporary urban issues to understand how they have impacted on life afloat on the tidal Thames.

1.3 Residential Dwelling Afloat: Locating the Research in Uncharted Waters

The phenomena of people dwelling on boats, as already noted, is not new, however, repurposed boats as a type of dwelling that offers an alternative form of housing in the city centre, has thus far attracted little scholarly interest. Therefore, the first challenge of where to situate the research had to be overcome. The following discussion outlines the rationale to locate the study within the fields of vernacular architecture and critical urban theory, and how these subsequently guided both the research questions and the research methodology.

From a non-academic perspective, there appears to have been a short spate of books published in the late 1970's documenting floating communities around the globe (Dublin, 1975; Case and Dennis, 1977; Gabor, 1979), with a later contribution, *'The Houseboat Book'*, by Barbara Flanagan (2003). The exception to the aforementioned is a book published in 1918, *'Living on a Thames Barge'* (Lonides and Atkins, 1918) that describes a first-hand account of dwelling on a Thames Sailing Barge and offers advice on how to convert a barge into a comfortable home. It cites the lack of affordable housing as the reason for doing so. Conversion and affordability are reoccurring themes within this scant literature. More recently, within the context of the River Thames, the Totally Thames Festival, in conjunction with University College London, the Heritage Lottery Fund and photographer Katherine Fawcett, undertook to document the history of eleven communities residing along the banks of the River Thames. It was an oral

history project that sought to address the fact that there was no written account of the largely unknown communities that lived on the Thames (Totally Thames, 2016).

Mark Gabor, in his reflections of *Houseboats: Living on Water* (1979), presents an overview of the differing types of crafts used for dwelling afloat. He looks at traditional junks in Hong Kong, the famous houseboats of Kashmir, as well as the more contemporary floating houses of Seattle and Sausalito, and several European examples. This supports the idea that residential dwelling on water can be considered a global phenomenon. Within a western context, he identifies redundant working boats as the main form of residential dwelling. Although these accounts were produced in the late 1970's, they highlight two key points; the variety of vessels used for living purposes and the wide range of waterborne lifestyles across the globe. Germane to this research are his descriptions of the problems faced by boat dwellers; their legal status, alongside various tensions that occurred between the authorities and water dwellers, particularly in waterfront areas that were ripe for redevelopment (Gabor, 1979). Both he and Beverly Dublin (1975) foresaw the need to document these communities, as many of them were fast disappearing. This thesis, to some extent follows in the footsteps of the aforementioned, since it seeks to explore the history of contemporary river dwelling, whilst at the same time investigating many of the problems affecting local communities on the River Thames. Given that the majority of these accounts were published in the late 1970's, it is pertinent to note that fifty years later many of the issues remain unaddressed and continue to impact on the lives of river dwellers. Arguably, a study of contemporary life afloat is perhaps a timely one, particularly in light of the ongoing problems at Chelsea.

From a scholarly perspective, living on water seems to have attracted little attention, even though several hundred thousand people around the world live on boats. (Gabor, 1997; Miles, 2016). Rudofsky (1964) and Kronenburg (2002) briefly reference a tradition of people living on boats that can be traced back to the time of Noah's Ark, but offer no further details. Limited studies can be found within the fields of vernacular architecture (Oliver, 1997; Reid, 2001), anthropology (Bowles, 2015), geography (Smith, 2007; Roberts, forthcoming PhD study), urban social sciences (Chapdelaine *et al*, 2015). A review of the literature highlights the problem of defining waterborne lifestyles, since there are many ways of dwelling on water as there are types of boat.

Generally speaking, within the literature, these differences are inconspicuous under the catchall term of 'houseboat' (See appendix A for a definition). This term makes it easy to assume that those dwelling on boats can be categorised into one form of dwelling afloat, as described, for example, in the '*Encyclopaedia of Vernacular Architecture*' (Oliver, 1997). In this publication, houseboats have been categorised as an ephemeral 'Temporary and Transportable' vernacular form of dwelling. The examples cited, concentrate on traditional floating communities within Asia. The entries provide descriptions that classify the boat types, use of materials and particular styles of decoration. In these cases, houseboats have been built to respond to the specific needs of providing shelter whilst working afloat (e.g., fishing and transportation) with both form and function responding to and conforming with ancient patterns of waterborne lifestyles.

From a contemporary perspective, a brief reference draws attention to the idea that living on water can provide affordable accommodation adjacent to major city centres,

such as Washington in the United States. There are no examples cited of people living on boats within a European context. As noted earlier by Gabor, within the United Kingdom, there are many different styles of houseboats, that range from converted ex-working vessels to modern floating homes, all of which reflect a variety of lifestyles. Appendix A provides a guide to the problem of defining the term houseboat, with the aim of introducing the reader to the broad spectrum of boat types. Within the broad range, 'houseboats', this study focuses on purposed ex-working vessels as they form the majority of dwelling types found in the communities under study (see Chapter Two case sites).

Despite these shortcomings, the category of 'Temporary and Transportable' vernacular dwellings, provided the starting point from which to consider re-purposed boats as a form of vernacular architecture. Notions of transport, refer not only to dwellings that need to be transported i.e., yurts, but also include portable 'buildings' with a hybrid function, that is where a dwelling has been fashioned within a shell created for another purpose. This hybrid type could include a vehicle, whereby the function of the exterior has remained the same, but the interior has been refurbished to accommodate domestic activities. Within the *'Encyclopaedia of Vernacular Architecture'*, this section focuses on trailers, which eventually evolved into mobile homes after the Depression of the 1920's in the United States. Robert Kronenburg (author of this section) argues that trailers, were/are an affordable alternative to housing and as such, are subject to self-build adaptations that express the aspirations and requirements of their owners. He suggests that it is this ability to make changes to one's own physical circumstances that constitutes a fundamental characteristic of vernacular design.

For the purposes of this thesis, the types of dwelling that are under discussion are ex-working vessels which have had their interiors converted for residential purposes. It can therefore be argued that they share the same characteristics. It was these similarities, not just with the material form, i.e., the vehicle, but the idea that the modifications are expressions of the people who owned them. This provided the starting point to consider re-purposed boats as a form of vernacular dwelling. With the emphasis on the material objects of ordinary people, vernacular architecture studies provided a way to explain the behaviour, along with “the ideas, values and beliefs – the culture that caused the object to come into being” (Carter and Collins Cromley, 2005, p. xiii). Studying re-purposed vessels as a vernacular form provided a useful tool to produce a new source of knowledge. It allowed for an in-depth investigation into the culture of contemporary river dwelling and provided fresh insight into the history of the River Thames as a place to dwell.

However, this one categorisation of ‘Temporary and Transportable’ draws attention to the problems of defining the vernacular, particularly from a contemporary perspective, thereby echoing the debates within the field of vernacular architecture (Upton, 1990; Asquith and Vellinga, 2006; Maudlin, 2010; Brown and Maudlin, 2012). The categorisation implies a particular interpretation of the vernacular, which suggests that houseboats have been classified according to the dominant understanding of the vernacular. This has long been associated with the evolution of traditional (this term can also refer to indigenous, folk, primitive, (Hourigan, 2015) built forms, rural or urban. In this sense, vernacular buildings are the products of non-experts, produced as a result of knowledge, and skills that have been passed from one generation to the next, along with available materials found within a particular locality (Oliver, 2006). The houseboats that

were featured in this section represented waterborne lifestyles that followed traditional patterns of life. Little mention was made of this type of dwelling from a contemporary perspective of the period. This could be due to the fact that the Encyclopaedia was published in 1979, thereby reflecting the primary approach found within the field of study at that time.

Historically, within the broad studies of vernacular architecture, the field was initially associated with buildings located in Western contexts, and characterised as pre-industrial, rural, traditional, folk, popular, indigenous, colonial and/or anonymous (Vellinga 2011). These terms underpinned the practical and theoretical approaches employed to document, describe, and categorise buildings as a means to frame regional types and forms, styles, materials, skills, technologies, and construction processes (Vellinga, 2006/7, 2013, 2017). This resulted in an emphasis on producing typologies to understand the production and evolution of particular forms (and functions) built in response to the needs of a society. Within this, the artefact is prioritised and is interpreted to comprehend the cultural and social aspects of the society in which the object was created (Carter and Collins Cromley, 2005; Asquith and Vellinga, 2006; Maudlin, 2010; Brown and Maudlin, 2012). This early emphasis on the production of traditional aspects of buildings has (to a certain extent) fuelled a long and protracted debate, as scholars continue to seek to understand vernacular architecture with the inclusion of contemporary buildings.

By the 1980's, the term vernacular had broadened to include a diverse range of building types that were not part of mainstream architecture and had expanded internationally to include Asia and the Middle East. An array of definitions, each with their own

emphasis, reflected a wide range of academic interests and discourses associated with the field of vernacular architecture (Vellinga 2011). The problematic nature of the term vernacular has been deliberated by scholars for decades, with little agreement on the definition, its use or its meaning (Upton, 1990; Groth, 1999; Blier, 2006; Vellinga, 2006, 2011; Brown and Maudlin 2012; Hourigan, 2015). During the last thirty years or so, differing interpretations, from a range of perspectives, have emerged across the scholarship. The detailed historiography of the changing nature of these discussions, along with contributions from various fields including anthropology, folklore, material culture, cultural geography, is well documented (Upton and Vlach, 1986; Upton 1990; Harris and Berke, 1997; Oliver, 1997; Groth, 1999; Asquith and Vellinga, 2006; Blier, 2006; Brown and Maudlin, 2012; Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture, The Vernacular Architecture Forum (VAF) 1982-2006; Hourigan, 2015; Cherry and Green 2019). Paul Oliver, the leading scholar in the field, articulated the precarious nature of defining the vernacular whilst reflecting on the task of producing the 'Encyclopaedia of Vernacular Architecture' (1997). He commented that the term is "rejected in some quarters, unknown in others, used by a growing number of researchers and writers within the field of building traditions" (Oliver, 2006, p.28). The idea that vernacular architecture is subject to various contradictions, influences and interests (to the extent that it has even been argued that it has outlived its usefulness) has dominated the discourse amongst prominent scholars, who have variously called for a reconsideration of the term (Upton, 1981, 1983, 2002, 2006/7; Wells, 1986; Upton and Vlach, 1986; Groth 1999/2000; Maudlin, 2010; Brown and Maudlin, 2012; Hourigan, 2015; Vellinga, 2006, 2011, 2013, 2017; Zwerger, 2019). The literature attests to continued deliberations on the definition, conceptualisation, classification, elasticity, and the porous nature of the term.

At its most simplistic level, the key issue relates to the idea that vernacular architecture is a catch all (and persistent) term that has been used to identify and define an enormous range of architectural traditions that fall outside of the canon. Viewed initially through the prism of traditional buildings, the establishment of the field of vernacular architecture studies emerged from the work of Bernard Rudofsky (1997) and Paul Oliver (1970, 1997). They brought attention to largely unknown building traditions from around the world. Oliver, argued for an inclusive approach to architecture, one that recognised the appropriateness of studying the diversity of building traditions. He continued to suggest that they are “architectural expressions of the societies that produced them” and as such deserve the same recognition as buildings designed for the elite (Vellinga, 2017, p.5). According to Marcel Vellinga (2017) this line of argument was essential in making known the existence of a built heritage that had hitherto been largely ignored.

Daniel Maudlin (2010) and Mike Christenson (2011), however, suggested that ideas of tradition and traditional buildings are only one aspect of a larger field. They argued that contemporary scholarship has evolved to address both the problematic nature of the term and called for the expansion of the boundaries to include ordinary modern buildings and processes. Subsequently, different definitions have emerged, that (broadly speaking) on the one hand emphasize ‘traditional’ architecture and on the other ‘ordinary and everyday’ architecture. According to Christenson (2011), it is the synonymous dual nature of the term (which can be traced back to original usage in 1857) that has led to an array of approaches, methodologies, uses, and meanings. (This is exacerbated by multiple interpretations from different organisations within the field

itself i.e., the Vernacular Architecture Forum (USA), the Vernacular Architecture Group UK, IASTE, Southeast Asia and Oceania).²

A common feature of the contemporary debate has been to move away from “the latent primitivism that characterises the discourse... and historical entrapment” (Vellinga, 2006/7 p.126). This has been driven (in part) by the desire to move beyond the persistent association and stereotyping of the term with people whose material traditions have appeared unchanging and timeless (Groth, 1999/2000).

Adding to the debate, Marcel Vellinga has also suggested that consideration should be given to how old, and new building traditions, intersect to create present day vernacular architecture. He argues, that instead of focusing on the historical production of buildings, their adaptation and re-use for contemporary purposes via human agency needs to be considered (Vellinga 2006/7). He therefore advocates extending the term to include regenerated/converted buildings (such as Dutch windmills used as restaurants, Cumbrian barns or Borneo’s longhouses used as homes/hostels) that combine the traditional with the modern, thereby acknowledging the importance of change and re-use within a contemporary context (Vellinga, 2006/7). Despite the change of use from their industrial past, these are seen to be “distinctive cultural expressions of people who live in or feel attached to a particular place or locality, or indeed help to constitute the local architectural dialect” (Vellinga 2006/7 p.124). The

² See Vellinga (2011) ‘The End of the Vernacular: Anthropology and the Architecture of the Other’. *Etnofoor*. Vol, 23, No. 1, pp 171-192 for an in-depth discussion on vernacular definitions. He describes a range of definitions used by key scholars within the field e.g., the architecture of the people and how this differs from that of the elite, formalised or industrialised buildings (Oliver, 1997,2003, 2006); vernacular of the common, ordinary, everyday (Upton and Vlach, 1986; Heath 200). He draws attention to how different emphasis can prompt an array of uses of for the term, with (e.g.,) some focusing on social contexts and others regional specificity. However, no matter how the term is used, he identified a commonality which suggests that vernacular architecture is both understood “as a homogenised category in distinct opposition to other forms of architecture” that focuses primarily on the process of production.

dynamic or processual nature of buildings is not lost on Brown and Maudlin, who quoting Heath, suggest that “all architectures should be understood as incomplete, shifting, and transient. Architecture, including vernacular architecture, is responsive to people, place, and tectonics over time” (Heath in Brown and Maudlin, 2012, p. 354). Thus, it is argued, that buildings are not just a physical form, but cultural and social constructs that are related to the wider changing economic, political, ecological, and technical conditions.

Despite Klaus Zwerger’s (2019) assertion that the disagreements of the term are ongoing, there does appear to be a broad consensus between scholars (e.g., Paul Oliver, Marcel Vellinga), who on the one hand, are influenced by the idea that the vernacular is associated with building traditions (be they old or new), and on the other, those who have been influenced by the ‘ordinary and the everyday’ and the work of Henri Lefebvre and Michael de Certeau (e.g. Del Upton and Daniel Maudlin (see below). Both perspectives seem to suggest that the boundaries are constantly being redefined, beyond traditional buildings to embrace either modern ‘traditions’ or contemporary ‘ordinary everyday’ buildings and places.

“Re-Imagining the Vernacular: Dwelling at the Thames Edge”, the title and approach taken within this thesis, does capture the essence of these arguments within the field of vernacular architecture, i.e., the need to move beyond houseboats being viewed from a traditional perspective (Oliver, 1997). From a practical perspective, barges were historically traditional maritime working vessels. However, they were often dwellings too, with the owner, family and crew often living aboard in limited quarters. Today, they have been re-adapted from their industrial past for contemporary use. To understand how the traditional use intersects practically with a barge’s conversion for present-day

residential purposes, this thesis re-imagines the vernacular to examine the processual and dynamic nature of this transformation. This is achieved by drawing upon the theories of the 'ordinary and the everyday' (see next section). In this way, as suggested by Vellinga (2006), the study critically engages with the present, rather than focusing on the past, as a means of exploring and expanding new ways of documenting the contemporary cultural identity of those live afloat on the River Thames.

The following discussion outlines the rationale for the interpretation and use of the term within this thesis by drawing upon the theories of the 'ordinary and the everyday'.

As noted in the previous section, pertinent to this discussion are the scholarly discourses that have challenged conventional understandings of the meaning and use of the term vernacular within the field of Architecture during the second half of the 20th century. Recent debates have argued for a more inclusive view of the nature of the vernacular, whether urban or rural, suggesting that traditional built forms are only one aspect of the vernacular, therefore this conventional emphasis needs to be reconsidered. Within the fields of Architecture and Urbanism, practitioners and scholars have argued to broaden the definition of vernacular architecture to allow for the inclusion of contemporary everyday built forms and spaces (Upton, 1990; Groth, 1999/2000; Oliver, 1997; Oliver 1997; McMurray Adams and McMurray, 2000; Asquith and Vellinga, 2006; Maudlin, 2010; Brown and Maudlin, 2012).

According to several scholars, (Harris and Berke, 1997; Maudlin 2010; Brown and Maudlin, 2012), these attitudes began to change in the late 1980/1990's as new theoretical foundations within architecture and urban planning were revolutionised by the works of Henri Lefebvre (1977), and Michel De Certeau (1974). The discourse of the everyday, found in their work, influenced the ways in which the activities and values of

ordinary people could be understood and interpreted, from an architectural and urban perspective. Lefebvre's concept of 'the ordinary', centred on the study of material settings and the practice of everyday life. Whilst allusive and difficult to define, broadly speaking, everyday life encompasses "real life, the here and the now, its sustenance, clothing, furnishings, homes, neighbourhoods and the environment" (Lefebvre in Upton, 2002, p.708). Lefebvre's idea of the concrete and real material life, the humble, the ordinary, along with the anonymous, chimed with those that studied buildings and landscapes. Ideas of the ordinary and the everyday began to shift the very boundaries that delineated both the study and the type of buildings within the fields of architecture and urbanism (Guillery, 2010; Maudlin, 2010). Revised definitions of the vernacular began to incorporate notions of the everyday, thereby allowing the vernacular to be interpreted as the architectural language of the people. According to Maudlin (2010), this loosening of the meaning enabled ideas of the vernacular to be more fluid. It allowed it to be used to include any number of commonplace-built forms across time and space; from Victorian terrace houses to twentieth century caravan parks, kit houses to the informal shanty towns of Mumbai.

No longer restricted to recording and describing traditional buildings and landscapes, these ideas enabled the vernacular to include mundane buildings. The term vernacular, therefore, can be understood as buildings created by ordinary people, out of a common set of social practices, activities, and values, and can be used as a way of comprehending how and why people appropriate/dwell within a particular locale (Maudlin, 2010). In other words, the experience of what people do in their everyday life included, not just the construction of buildings, but their relationship with the wider society, use over time, and how they relate to other buildings within the landscape (Hayden, 1997).

Theories of the everyday revolve around “the precise ways in which everyday life is experienced and the specifics of its relationships to other aspects of life and landscape” (Upton, 2002, p.707) Therefore, from an architectural perspective, the creation of buildings is not just about form and function, built forms express a series of complex social and cultural relations that embody the human values and activities of the people who produced and inhabit them (Oliver, 2006).

This more expansive interpretation began to allow for the study of the vernacular to include contemporary everyday buildings; the old and the new, industrial, re-used, re-imagined, hotels, retail malls, converted shipping containers, etc. Maudlin and Brown (2012) take these ideas a step further, to suggest that the vernacular should not be limited to known urban or rural landscapes, but include anonymous places: under bridges, roadside verges, and even parking lots. Furthermore, they call for the inclusion of buildings that are expressions of individuality, citing outsider art earth ships, roadside diners, to name but a few.

Echoing the wider debate, the example of houseboats highlights the problems of categorisation and the need to extend definitions of the vernacular. Therefore, the research seeks to question the idea that houseboats, particularly within a Western context, can be understood within one category such as ‘Temporary and Transportable’. To do this, the study endeavours to follow the current trend within the scholarship of vernacular architecture, namely: to broaden the notion of the vernacular by reconceptualising re-purposed boats as ‘ordinary dwellings’ that have been adapted from their historic industrial use for contemporary purposes. The study investigates the practices of everyday river dwelling to determine the experiences, practices and

processes that have resulted in people choosing to dwell afloat. The idea of the everyday is explored critically to discover how the vernacular can be re-imagined and (re) interpreted within a contemporary urban riverine context.

1.4 Vernacular Struggles within a Riverine Context

To achieve this, the identification and analysis of the contextual and dynamic processes (Vellinga, 2006; Maudlin, 2010;) associated with living on the water are contingent upon attempting to review how the river and its edge can be understood as an 'ordinary everyday land/riverscape' and as place in which to reside. This thesis reorientates the river as a place to dwell (rather than work). It examines the conflicting uses, meanings, and imaginaries of the riverscape, to explain how and why there is an increase in demand for dwelling afloat, despite the ongoing difficulties faced by river dwellers. The reconsideration of the river from this perspective, examines not only the precise ways in which ordinary life on the river is experienced, but seeks to investigate the specific tensions that seem to be part and parcel of this way of life. According to Henri Lefebvre, the nature of everyday life is a complex contradiction in terms. He believed that daily life comprises of moments of routine, monotony and oppression, alongside acts and moments of festivity and playfulness (Upton, 2002) Optimist or pessimist depending on one's interpretation, the duality of daily life is inescapable,

Everyday life is both a colonised setting of oppression, banality, routine, passivity, unconsciousness and the locus of an ultimate reality and source of potential liberation: there is something extraordinary in its very ordinariness (Lefebvre quoted in Upton, 2002, p.712).

The experience of daily life consists of forms of oppression that result in tensions and conflicts that are constantly changing, but within this process lies the potential for new

transformative ideas to emerge. Drawing upon the dual nature of everyday life, this study sets out to examine the evolution of river dwelling. It investigates the extent to which living on the River Thames can be understood as a “world of conflicts, tensions and cracks, that by the same shifting ground (*or flowing river*) has the potential to open new potential “(Harris and Berke, 1997, p.28). Given the lack of scholarly precedent, this research seeks to chart a new course, by constructing an analytical framework that facilitates an enquiry into the river as an ordinary land/riverscape in which people live and go about their daily lives.

The literature advocates a loosening of the definition, allowing a reconceptualization of vernacular architecture that moves beyond traditional built forms to include any number of everyday forms across time and space (Maudlin, 2010; Brown and Maudlin, 2012; Hourigan, 2015). It acknowledges that buildings are more than their physical elements, that they are cultural and social constructs, produced as a result of economic, political, technical, and ecological conditions: reflecting complex relations between both people and the built environment (Oliver, 2006; Heath, 2007; Brown and Maudlin, 2012). Given that the basic premise of vernacular architecture is to explain these relationships, the broadening of the definition to be more inclusive of everyday contemporary forms, is not enough to comprehend the wider context in which these relations evolve. The re-imagining of the vernacular is contingent upon an inclusive analytic framework to analyse the built form, usage, and processes, to interpret the complex relations between people, power, and buildings. (Kellet and Napier 1995; Adams and McMurray 2000; King, 2006/7; Vellinga, 2006; Maudlin, 2010, Hourigan, 2015). This framing of the vernacular is then used to determine the extent to which river dwelling, as a form of spatial organisation, does or does not codify power relationships

within a riverine context, and the extent to which life afloat challenges existing power structures.

This approach was inspired by the work of Abidin Kusno (2020), who in his examination of the architectural history of the vernacular in Indonesia, proposed that the vernacular is not singular. He suggests that it is relational, and whilst this concept is not new, he refocuses the idea to operate within a set of interrelated power relations. Within this he proposes that the marginalised in society often struggle for recognition and/or survival, particularly within the context of the built environment and capitalist modernisation. In taking this stance, he creates a matrix that includes five lines of inquiry, which he uses to interpret the vernacular as a site of contestation. The five spheres include the Politics of the State, Capitalism and Commodity, Memory and Everyday Life, History, Subjectivity and Difference, The Spiritual and the Ecological. The interactions of the differing spheres are analysed to evaluate the interrelationships of the various actors and the extent to which they contribute to the creation of the vernacular as a site of contestation. He proposes that by reframing the vernacular in this way, it becomes associated with contemporary struggles, rather than traditions that are handed down from the past. He suggests that from this perspective, “the vernacular is most productive when it engages with struggles of the present...” (Kusno, 2020, p.5). Implicit in this understanding, is the agency of people in producing their own environment.

This is not dissimilar to the view held by Adams and McMurray (2000), when they suggest in *‘People, Power and Places’* that by analysing struggles over the built environment, power relationships can reveal fresh insights into the ever-changing social relationships. Whilst they cite examples of the middle classes taking the initiative to

create environments that are suited to their own needs, they suggest that implicit in this process is the production of alternatives to the dominant modes social and cultural power. The usefulness of these two perspectives is that they allow for the vernacular to be understood, not only as a contemporary built form, but by expanding the definition to reframe it within a set of power relations. This allows for a discussion that centres on the ways in which in the architectural language of the people can be interpreted to resist the dominant modes of production, along with the forces that shape that relationship.

To understand the power relations within the context of the river as a place to live, a review of the scholarship associated with rivers was carried out.³ Despite the approaches from various academic disciplines, specific literature into the relationship between urban rivers and the built environment is limited (Wylson, 1986; Adler and Guerci, 2018; Way, 2018). However, it was possible to gain some general insights, into rethinking the River Thames within an urban context. No matter from which perspective rivers are discussed, in general, they refer to their integral role in the rise and development of civilisation(s).

The key point that can be drawn from the aforementioned, for the purposes of this research, is that as societies seek to adapt and appropriate this natural resource for their own purposes, so do the wide range of roles and meanings attributed to rivers change over time. These can be attributed to two factors; firstly, the constantly evolving discourse that shapes human attitudes toward the natural environment and how this influences the dynamic relationship between human imagination, the built

³ Chatterjee, 2011; Castonguay and Evenden, 2012; Coates, 2012; Greenaway; 2012; Knoll, Luebken and Schott, 2017; Mauch and Zellor, 2008; Monks, 2006; Rademacher, 2011; Strang 2004; Wylson, 1996; *Zeisler –Vralsted, 2014*).

environment, and the river. Secondly, the constant physical alterations, adaptations and transformation of rivers and their edges emerge are as a result of the ambitions of differing power relations that reflect the specific prevailing economic, social, cultural and political conditions through time and space. In other words, they are continually being reshaped by changing interests, values, and ambitions.

More importantly, is that rivers and their edges have clearly been reimagined, appropriated, and transformed again and again; through time and space, by dominant political and economic forces, whilst being contested by other groups. All of these are highly visible expressions of power that have contributed to the continual refashioning of the bond between the river and the built environment (Wylson, 1986, Moore and Lidz, 1994; Cusack 2012, Greenway, 2012, Monks, 2006; Adler and Guerci, 2018, Way, 2018). Key to this research is the of idea space and ownership at the water's edge and how it can be claimed by dominant forces, political interests and contested by other interest groups (Cusack, 2012). In this case, river dwellers. Within the context of the River Thames, the latest riverfront developments are testament to the fact that once again rivers and their edges are being reimagined and appropriated as the city is reconstructed to adapt from an industrial to a post-industrial world. Set against this background, the study set out to examine the struggles in relation to the wider processes of transformation and change taking place along the banks of the river.

By rethinking the river and its edge from an urban perspective, the research draws upon ideas from Henri Lefebvre, in conjunction with critical urban theory, to investigate the tensions at the water's edge. The aim is to offer fresh insights into the river as a place, in other words, as an ordinary riverscape, in which people dwell and go about their daily

lives. To achieve this, the following discussion outlines the rationale to create a framework that combines the field of vernacular architecture with concepts from critical urban theory. This provides a way to understand the dynamic power relations and how they have impacted on the experience of river dwelling. The value in this approach, is that it allows for an investigation into the ways in which the river, its edge (both on land and water), have been imagined, appropriated, transformed and contested.

1.5 Vernacular Architecture and Critical Urban Theory

Addressing the vernacular within the context of struggles, concepts from critical urban theory have been employed to create a framework that seeks to integrate an understanding of boats as dwellings. It also seeks to expose the dual nature of the lifestyle, along with the wider structural contexts that have influenced the evolution of river dwelling on the River Thames. The study draws upon Kusno's idea of a matrix, to bring together differing lines of inquiry to investigate the nature of life afloat. In particular, to examine the extent to which the struggles encountered by river dwellers are an inherent part of this particular lifestyle, and if so, why and how they have impacted on the production of the river as a place to dwell.

Theories from Critical Urban Studies and in particular Henri Lefebvre's ideas from his key works the *'Production of Space'* (1974) and the 'right to city' in *'Writings on Cities'* (1996) are utilized to investigate and analyse the power relations that have influenced the production of the river as a place to dwell and how this process has changed over time. Henri Lefebvre's (1901-1991) social theories on urban space have influenced a generation of scholars across various disciplines, including David Harvey (Geography),

Manual Castells (Sociology), Peter Marcuse, Mark Purcell (Urban Planning), Neil Brenner (Planetary Urbanism), Chris Butler (Law), Michael Leary-Owhin (Urban theory) to name but a few. As a neo-Marxist sociologist and philosopher working in France during the late 1960's, his reflections on urban space continue to resonate and influence contemporary understandings of the city from a wide range of perspectives.

Lefebvre's work both analysed and critiqued post war urban modernity under capitalism, arguing against the detrimental impacts of renewal and transformation on the experience of daily life. Focusing his attention on the production of space and the idea of 'right to the city', he drew upon the Marxist idea of the political-economic model of capitalist production to understand how space is produced (Lefebvre, 1974, 1996; Harvey, 2013; Butler, 2012; Leary-Owhin and McCarthy, 2020). He advocated that space is both a product and a process through which complex economic, political, and social relationships are produced and reproduced. Central to his theorisation is the class-based construct that emphasises the dialectical nature between domination and resistance that exists in societies (Stanek, 2011; Harvey, 2006, 2012; Maudlin and Vellinga, 2014). He argued that space is not just a geographical or physical location, instead it contains a multiplicity of dimensions that are socially produced as a result of the complex relationships and interactions that prioritise particular forms and structures that impact on how space is used in everyday life (Lefebvre, 1974; Butler, 2012; Zieleniec, 2018).

Under capitalism, space has become the dominant mode of economic production to serve the interests of the of the powerful, as they seek to own and control and dominate the use of urban space to suit their own needs. Under these conditions, space becomes subject to conflict, as citizens seek to resist, appropriate or contest space according to

their own values and needs (Zieleniec, 2018). According to Michael Leary-Owhin the defining feature of Lefebvre's work is the importance of understanding the political and ideologically driven "power relationships and the linkages between the everyday, the state, and the private sector" (Leary-Owhin, 2016, p.6). Inherent in this approach, is the ability to explain the complexity of how space is produced.

The knowledge of the production of space is utilised to understand the inequalities of spatial production, and how the consequences of modern capitalist conditions impact on the experience of everyday life. At the same time, Lefebvre is resolute in his rethinking of the city beyond the confines of capitalism, viewing it as "as a work of creative collaboration between its inhabitants" (Butler, 2014, p.140). The 'right to the city', in this sense, is an idea and a possibility, a way of reimagining urban space beyond the control of capital. He believes inhabitants should be meaningfully engaged with the creation of a city that suits with their needs. David Harvey has interpreted this right, to mean; a 'right to claim some kind of shaping power over the processes of urbanisation, over the ways in which our cities are made and remade and do so in a fundamental and radical way" (Harvey, 2013, p.5). For this to happen, Lefebvre insists that a revolution is necessary; one that requires acts of resistance and creation, with inhabitants rising up to reclaim and appropriate space in the city.

For this reason, his theories on 'right to the city' and the production of space, are relevant to understanding the experience and struggles of daily life on the river that fall within the broader contemporary context of dwelling in the neo-liberal city. Although it is not possible to claim that river dwelling equates to his idea of a revolution, his work makes it possible to expose the problems created by neo-liberal capitalism, whilst

offering fresh insights into the alternative ways in the city is produced. By engaging with the struggles experienced by river dwelling, through the lens of Henri Lefebvre, it is possible to provide new insight into the relationship between the vernacular and the built environment.

In addition, the persistent nature of the struggles are evaluated by employing Lefebvre's spatial triad (Lefebvre, 1974) as a research tool. It is used to identify the dialectical nature of the relationships that exist between the 'lived' experience of river dwellers and the wider processes of urbanisation. In his theorisations on the production space, Henri Lefebvre, sought to establish a conceptual triad to explain a complex set of spatial relationships and interactions between three different dimensions of space. The spatial triad, presented in 'The Production of Space' (1974), has been interpreted and used by scholars in diverse ways (Harvey, 2006; Davidson; 2007; Keddie, 2012; Zieleniec, 2018; Murrani 2020). For the purposes of this research, the interpretation of the different dimensions has been adapted from Lefebvre (1994) and Leary-Owhin (2015),

Spatial practice (Perceived Space) has three main elements 1) the physical, material city and its routine maintenance 2) major urban redevelopment in the context of existing neo-capitalist and state power structures; 3) routines of daily that conform with official representations of space (Leary-Owhin, 2015, p.5).

Representations of space (Conceived Space) – the official, rational, intellectualised of conceptions of urban space. These are produced by planners, urbanists, architects, and engineers. These are the dominant representations of space that take different forms including plans and strategy documents, maps, and master plans (adapted from Lefebvre, 1994, p.38-39 and Leary-Owhin, p.5).

Spaces of Representation (Lived Space) comprises of two key elements: 1) urban space as directly lived by inhabitants and users, informed by their own cultural practices, and use of the space. 2) It is a space that the imagination seeks to appropriate and change in ways that are counter to the dominant representations of space (adapted from Lefebvre, 1974, p. 38-39; Leary-Owhin, 2015).

The interactions between the three dimensions, operate simultaneously, and are dialectical in nature (Lefebvre, 1994). The interplay of the relations between these different dimensions are fundamental to Lefebvre's explanation of the social use and production of space (Butler, 2014). These are reinforced by his multi-layered description of social space. Simultaneously, space comprises of the means and forces of production, it is both a political and ideological instrument of control. At the same time, space "contains potentialities - of works and reappropriation ...which by putting up resistance inaugurates the project of a different space" (Lefebvre, 1994, p.349). Inherent in these last two points is how space can become "the site of political struggle and human creativity..." (Butler, 2014 p.42). The emphasis on struggles and human creativity concurs with the main aim of the research; that is to understand the struggles encountered by river dwellers within the wider context of neo-liberal domination and resistance. The spatial triad has therefore been employed to analyse the interactions and social relations between the material form, everyday life and the wider neo-liberal political economy, and these modes and forces of production they have impacted on the lived experience of river dwellers.

1.6 'Right to the City' and the River: Waterfront Struggles within the Discourse of Neo-Liberal Domination and Resistance.

Underpinning this trajectory, is the work of two scholars, Jasper Rubin (2011) and Philip Pinch (2015), who both consider urban water/waterfront struggles within the broader discourse of neo-liberal domination and resistance within an urban planning context. Combined, their approach provided the foundations of a framework that could be used to analyse the struggles that have occurred on the river and their relationship to the neo-liberal transformation of the built environment along the banks of the River

Thames. The following summarizes the rationale used to employ concepts from critical urban theory to investigate the ways in which resistance and politics are part of the struggles of everyday river life.

The task of critical urban theory is twofold: on the one hand it seeks to investigate the forms of domination associated with the modern capitalist crisis (as they perceive it), whilst simultaneously seeking a path towards resistance and alternative post capitalist forms of urbanization (Brenner, Marcuse and Mayer, 2012; Harvey, 2013). These ideas were drawn upon to engage with the exposure of problems confronting urban societies, in this case river dwellers, from the neo-liberal elitist interests and how these might be addressed to take into account the changing needs and demands of those who inhabit the city. (Harvey, 2012; Marcuse, 2009; Brenner et al, 2012; Harvey, 2013). By rethinking the river and its relationship with the city within the wider context of ownership of the 'built environment', it is possible to examine the way in which the contemporary water's edge (on water and land) has been transformed, appropriated, and contested. This approach provides an opportunity to investigate the complex urban 'riverscape' and the power relationships in which riverine inhabitants dwell.

Jasper Rubin (2011) and Philip Pinch (2015) focus on urban water and their edges in an attempt to unravel the contradictions of urban riverine/waterfront developments. From a planning perspective, they situate their arguments within the broad discourse of neo-liberal domination and resistance within a citywide context. They do so by drawing on Henri Lefebvre's (1996) and David Harvey's (2012) ideas of the 'right to the city'. Given that there are many different interpretations of the phrase, before examining the applicability of Pinch and Rubin's work for the purposes of this research, it is worth citing the essence of the meaning according to Mark Purcell,

Most agree that it is the everyday experience of inhabiting the city that entitles one to a right to the city, rather than one's nation-state citizenship. As a result, most also emphasize the importance of the use value of urban space over and above its exchange value. Currently, in almost every city in the world, the property rights of owners outweigh the use rights of inhabitants, and the exchange value of property determines how it is used much more so than its use value. And so, in almost all its forms the right to the city is understood to be a struggle to augment the rights of urban inhabitants against the property rights of owners (Purcell, 2013, p. 142).

Peter Marcuse (2012) proposes that the 'right to the city' is an idea that engages with the exposure of problems confronting urban societies, because of pressures from the neo-liberal interests. It attempts to posit how these might be addressed to take into account the ever-changing needs and demands of those that inhabit the city. The idea of investigating the problems that have confronted (and continue to do so) those that live on the river, is an engaging way to proffer fresh insights into the reasons why and how people choose to live on the river, and the extent to which the river can be considered an ordinary, everyday 'land/riverscape/ place.

The value of following in the footsteps of Pinch (2015) and Rubin's (2011) responses to the consequences of neoliberal urbanism, is that they have both implicitly (Rubin) or not (Pinch) drawn on the ideas of the 'right to the city' within a riverine context. Rubin concentrates specifically on the transformation of urban space along the water's edge and how this has been transformed and exploited by the dominance of exchange value over use value. He looks at how the tensions between the opposing interests manifest themselves in the built environment. By drawing attention to the struggles of interest groups, Pinch on the hand, reveals how it is possible to challenge the dominant claims on the function and meaning of the River Thames.

Rubin, drawing on both Harvey and Lefebvre, discusses the idea that neo-liberalism favours exchange value i.e., the market, capital accumulation and property, over above use value within the inhabited city. It is the difference between exchange value and use value that creates an opposition or tension that results in struggles between the two forces. He suggests that whichever one prevails represents the dominant interest, and eventually becomes fixed in the built environment. Rubin analyses urban forms associated specifically with port cities to demonstrate how the water's edge has been transformed over time by the imperatives of capital. On the waterfront, when shipping dominates, capital is invested in the required infrastructure (port architecture, wharves, piers, warehouses) which supports and facilitates the flow of goods and commodities. De-industrialisation on the other hand, leads to a decline in land values and the search for new forms of development and capital to transform the water's edge once again, this time into a sea of luxury apartments, offices, and restaurants. He argues that open space and access to the water require a different kind of investment that emphasises use value i.e., public interest. Thus, he puts forward the idea that the character of the water's edge at any moment in time can be understood as a struggle between "exchange value and use value" (Rubin, 2011, p. 146). This analysis is invaluable, in that it introduces the concept of the neo-liberal transformation and domination in terms of the tensions that exist between exchange value and use value. It informs us how this manifests itself in relation to the built environment at the water's edge. In other words, the imperative of capital dominates the built form along the water's edge.

Pinch focusing on the River Thames, emphasises the 'cracks' in the neo-liberal system i.e., resistance to neo-liberal practices to demonstrate how urban struggles reveal the

aspirations of ordinary people in relation to the actual use of the river. Central to his argument, is the idea that the river needs to be understood as a 'social space' and what that means for urban societies and individuals. He advocates that by paying attention to the river as a campaigning space, allows for a more subtle sense of the mediation of neoliberal urbanism. He examines tensions arising from specific urban issues, including riverside development. In particular, how it effects community development (i.e., Coin Street – real estate land being given the local community by the GLA in the 1980's, Chapter Five) both on and offshore (Nine Elms – the removal of houseboats from the view in front of a new development) and the ongoing struggle of gaining and maintaining public access to the Thames foreshore by removing and replacing river staircases.

This research combines the ideas from these two authors as a useful way of conceptualising the river and its edge. They provide the basis for a critical framework from which to investigate and address the complex urban issues as they relate to life afloat. Whilst Rubin (2011) seeks to introduce the idea of the dominance of capital and elite interest along the water's edge of the declining port in San Francisco, Pinch foregrounds urban struggles and tensions to reveal the aspirations of ordinary people within the context of the River Thames. Both are set against the backdrop of neoliberal elitist riverside urban transformation.

Following in their footsteps, critical concepts from the 'right to the city' have been chosen as the idea represents the power and agency of ordinary people. It expresses a viewpoint that citizens have the collective right to inhabit, use and appropriate space. In other words, to produce and use space according to their needs, wants and desires (Zieleniec, 2018). Whilst Paul Oliver, a prominent scholar within the field of vernacular

architecture, is not advocating any form of rights, his definition of the vernacular in part chimes with the ideas of producing space to meet with the needs of a specific group:

Vernacular architecture comprises the dwellings and all other buildings of the people. Related to their environmental contexts and available resources, they are customarily owner – or community built utilizing traditional materials. All forms of vernacular architecture are built to meet with the specific needs, accommodating the values, economies, and ways of living of the culture that produces them (Oliver, 2006, p.30)

In this way, the 'right to the city' can be used to aid the interpretation of the new (contemporary) form of vernacular, by investigating the extent to which they, the river dwellers, create and 'build' dwellings in the physical environment of the water to suit their own needs.

This thesis examines how river dwellers appropriate space, and the extent to which different types of resistance are implicit in this way of life, in response to the dominant modes of dwelling in the city. Critical concepts from 'right to the city' are employed throughout the thesis to consider, on the one hand, different aspects of daily life afloat, and how ordinary inhabitants periodically appropriate space under the conditions of neoliberalism. On the other hand, they account for and measure the different ways in which resistance by inhabitants and politics (a key aspect of underpinning Lefebvre's work on the 'right to the city'), are part of the struggles of everyday river life. The key critical concepts used, (discussed in detail throughout the chapters) are appropriation of space as a means of resistance and difference, social movements, participation and self-management, and exchange/use value.

However, these concepts in themselves do not explain the persistent pattern of conflict as noted in the introduction. Therefore, the study employs Henri Lefebvre's spatial triad (1974) to identify the varying power relationships and how they manifest themselves. This made it possible to evaluate the inter-relationship between the wider process of change and how they have impacted on the daily lives of river dwellers, and the extent to which they have influenced the changing nature of life afloat.

1.7 The Research Questions

The questions have been constructed in such a way make be possible to examine the dual nature of river dwelling on the River Thames. On the one hand they allow for an in-depth study of the phenomena of living afloat by considering the experiences, practices, and processes of everyday life of on the River Thames. On the other, to investigate the consistent problems associated with life afloat. The intention behind the questions is to offer new insights into the extent that living on the river can be interpreted as a form of resistance, one that embodies the wider processes of change and how re-purposed boats relate to the latest transformation of both the river and the built environment along its banks.

- 1. How and why did re-purposed boats become an alternative mode of city dwelling?**

Drawing upon the concept of Henri Lefebvre's notion of everyday, the ordinary, and the 'right to the city', this question allows for an examination into the appropriation of re-purposed boats. It seeks to uncover different aspects of daily life afloat, and to

investigate the extent to which the River Thames in London can provide an alternative mode of city dwelling.

2. What are the forms and moments of resistance used by river dwellers to challenge the dominant economic and political powers?

Different moments of resistance and creativity over time are investigated to examine how and why a pattern of tensions have arisen between different river communities and those in authority. Case studies are employed to consider the struggles encountered by different river communities in order to understand the key problems they face, along with the identification of the key actors involved in either supporting or opposing river dwelling.

3. How are contemporary urban demands changing the role of the river and impacting on river communities?

This question seeks to establish the nature of the relationship between the river and the built environment along the edge of the Thames (on land and water) and how this has impacted on different water-based communities. It aims to understand how and why urban rivers have been transformed throughout history by different power relations and imaginations in response to the prevailing economic, social, and cultural conditions. It seeks to outline the wider historical and contemporary context for the urban problems that have arisen because of recent maritime de-industrialization and consequential neo-liberal urbanization along the banks of city rivers. The theories of Henri Lefebvre provide a critical framework that situates the research within the discourse of neo-liberal domination and resistance to investigate the demands of modern urbanization along

the banks of rivers (on land and water) and how these impact on the contemporary role of the urban river, and in turn river dwelling.

4. How can local communities influence the narrative to provide new urban and social opportunities within a riverine context? (i.e., for dwelling and urban/public space)

This question aims to provide fresh insight into the ways in which the river and its communities, have (and continue to) provided alternative urban (dwellings) and social (public) opportunities in response to the adverse neo-liberal demands of urban development made upon the Thames, London's iconic river.

1.8 The Significance of the Thesis

This research contributes to knowledge by bringing together the fields of vernacular architecture and critical urban theory with Henri Lefebvre's theories of space, in order to investigate the phenomenon of dwelling on the River Thames. Re-purposed boats have been reconceptualized as a form of vernacular architecture, to examine how London's iconic river has been re-imagined and appropriated to provide an alternative space to live in the city. The outcome of the research has been to construct a new perspective of the river as an ordinary place to dwell and to demonstrate how the politics of space have shaped the identity, culture, and historical evolution of those who reside on the tidal Thames. The thesis introduces the idea that (in this case) the water's edge can be conceived as a space of tension between the elite (authorities, developers, luxury apartment owners) onshore interests (exchange value) and communities that live on water (use value). Moreover, it highlights the role that the river (water) plays in those tensions. It is the contention of this study to argue that the dominant onshore private

interests have been (and still are) challenged and resisted by a contemporary form of vernacular architecture. This is in response to a clash in values, as both parties attempt to claim the same space at the water's edge.

1.9 Structure of the Thesis

The following section outlines the structure of thesis by providing a brief overview of each chapter and the key points they address. Chapter One has introduced the research context by describing both the problems and the potential for living on the River Thames. The rationale to combine the fields of vernacular architecture and critical urban theories with the social theories Henri Lefebvre, in order to address the problem of where to situate the study, has been introduced to the reader. The research questions have been individually described to outline their purpose in driving forward the study. Chapter Two engages with the methodology and the design of the research methods. The aims of the project are followed by an explanation of research philosophy that underpins the study. Chapter Three assesses the historical evolution of river dwelling to understand how and why re-purposed boats, along with the river have been appropriated as an alternative form of vernacular dwelling. Chapters Four to Six, presented in chronological order, focus on the case sites. They each contribute a different perspective of the struggles encountered by communities to claim space at the water's edge and retain the 'right' to remain on the river. Themes of community resistance and contentious politics are examined in Chapter Four. They demonstrate how competing demands over access, ownership, use and space at the water's edge have impacted on the lives of river dwellers at Tower Bridge Moorings. The following chapter illustrates how a small group have influenced the processes of urbanisation by recently building their own mooring on one of the most turbulent stretches of water in

the centre of London. Chapter Six attests to the idea that the processes of gentrification have taken hold on the river with the wealthy now displacing long term river residents. This claim is investigated through the ongoing campaign of one London's oldest river communities, "We are a Community not a Commodity" for their right not to be evicted from their homes. Chapter Seven addresses research questions two and three by reviewing the different types of resistance used to challenge the dominant ways of dwelling in the city. The underlying problems associated with river dwelling are related to the wider process of urbanisation to evaluate how these have impacted on life afloat. The concluding chapter summarises the main findings and discusses them in relation to the research questions, along with their relevance to their fields of vernacular architecture and critical urban theory. The chapter ends with suggestions for further research.

2. Methodology and The Design of the Research Methods

2.1 Introduction

Underlying the key research questions, is an undertaking to understand how people, power and place intersect within a riverine context. To achieve this outcome, the research has been designed to examine differing aspects of living on the river Thames, including the allure of dwelling on water and why people choose this way of life. It sets out to investigate how and why life afloat remains a precarious form of city dwelling, resulting in many tensions, even though demand is on the increase. Furthermore, it seeks to consider the processes of change that have produced this alternative urban lifestyle (form and daily practice). This chapter outlines the key aims, followed by an account of the how the research strategy been designed to answer the key questions. It explains the rationale for adopting a mixed methods approach, and how this has been adapted to suit the needs of being on the water, rather than the land. It describes the main case sites and the reason for their inclusion in the study. Drawing primarily, but not exclusively, upon methods found within the field of vernacular architecture, the justification for their inclusion is outlined (Carter and Collins Cromley, 2005). The methods, including the field work, the gathering of architectural documentation, interviews, and the creation of an archive, are discussed in detail, to contextualize how and why river dwelling remains a precarious form of city dwelling, despite the increase in popularity. The chapter concludes with an overview of the ethical considerations needed to conduct the research.

2.2 Key Aim

The key aim of the study is to investigate the struggles encountered by different communities and to use these as a source to evaluate how re-purposed boats, people, power, and place intersect at the water's edge. The purpose of this is to understand the evolution and contradictory nature of river dwelling along the banks of the River Thames in London.

2.3 The Case Study Strategy

The case study approach has been used as a strategy to underpin the design of the research. This offers several advantages, particularly where there has been little prior scholarship of a particular topic (Yin, 2013). Exploratory in nature, it allows for several lines of enquiry to be combined by utilizing a range of mixed methods in tandem with the development of theoretical framework. This helps to guide the collection of data, the relationship between the methods and the analysis and the interpretation (Yin, 2014). By drawing together the fields of vernacular architecture and critical urban theory, the design of this qualitative study seeks to contribute an alternative perspective to the study of contemporary vernacular architecture. Responding to calls within the field of vernacular architecture by scholars Kellet and Napier (1995), Adams and McMurray (2000) Oliver (2006), King (2006/7), Vellinga (2006) and Maudlin (2010), the research strives to create a framework that address a series of questions analytically, rather than focusing solely on descriptions of the building/boat itself. According to Thomas (2019), the usefulness of employing a case strategy is that it makes it possible to construct a narrative that excavates, elaborates, and explicates both practically and theoretically the phenomenon under study.

Addressing the vernacular within the context of struggles and resistance theoretically, the study draws upon Henri Lefebvre's, 'right to the city' and notions of power relations to interpret the 'real life' nature of life afloat. The aim is to analyse the extent to which the struggles encountered by river dwellers are an inherent part of this lifestyle, and if so, why. The value of employing a Lefebvrian lens to the problem is that it provides a means to analyze the critical role that power relations play to explain how people, power and place intersect. Three lines of inquiry have been identified to carry out the investigation in line with the aims of the research. Firstly, to evaluate the experience(s) and practices of daily life afloat on the River Thames by utilizing concepts from the 'right to the city'. Secondly, to document the tensions and creative responses, and to identify the nature of the problems encountered between river communities, the authorities and how they relate to the transformation of built environment along the water's edge. Thirdly, to identify the dominant economic and political processes of power and ascertain how they impact on the social and cultural life of dwelling on the river. These areas of investigation have been undertaken within a critical Marxist framework, which has led to embedded assumptions regarding the nature of domination and resistance throughout the thesis. Given the persistent nature of those in power toward the river dwellers, and the strength of their resistance, it seemed appropriate to use a framework that "theoretically assumes that oppression and domination characterize the (*research*) setting (Rossman and Rallis, 2003, p.106). It is an approach that has influenced both the direction and outcome of the research. Despite this assumption, it must be noted that the research makes it clear that domination and resistance are not binary oppositions "locked in some perpetual dance of control" (Keith and Pile, 1972, p.2). On the surface, a critical Marxist perspective suggests an oversimplification and narrow

conceptualization of power and resistance, with the latter implying emancipatory actions against the hegemonic neo-liberal state (Hughes, 2020). Within the wider context, the revolutionary cries of the 'right to the city' imply that capitalism is the common 'enemy' and that citizens should 'rise up' in response to the adverse impacts of neo-liberalism and modern urbanisation on people's daily lives (Lefebvre 1996; Brenner *et al*, 2012; Harvey 2013). While the concept of resistance as oppositional to power has been used throughout the thesis, a Lefebvrian lens also demonstrates that domination and resistance are embedded in an inseparable entangled web of power relations, in which both citizens and those in power believe they can change things (Sharp *et al*, 2000). It also suggests that these relationships are not static; they change over time and can be constraining as well as accommodating. The struggles encountered by river dwellers have been interpreted to represent expressions or markers of resistance (see Chapter Seven), thereby making it possible to analyse how river dwellers are able (or not) to have the capacity to shape their daily lives.

The undertaking to implement the case study strategy is a way to ensure that there is balance between empirical evidence and theory, thereby moving away from mere description, the traditional approach to documenting vernacular architecture (Upton and Vlach, 1986; Glassie, 1990; Oliver, 1997; Carter and Collins Cromley, 2005; Journal *'Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture'*, 2000 and 2003). The gathering of different types of data, aimed to provide converging lines of evidence, is used to safeguard the robustness of the findings, effectively allowing the 'data' point to the same 'facts' (Yin, 2014). The mixed methods were specifically chosen to examine different aspects of dwelling on the river. They help to provide fresh insight into the complex urban issues that impact on the experience of river dwelling in the city. The study traces the tensions

across time, to identify the problems relating to the persistent patterns of conflict. These form the basis of the analysis and interpretation. The evidence gathered from the employment of different methods is evaluated, along with the wider contextual economic, political, social and cultural factors, to provide an explanation as to how and why certain processes have occurred and the ways they have impacted on the subject under study (Rossman and Rallis, 2003).

2.4 The Case Site – The Tidal Thames

The primary reason for choosing the River Thames as a case site, was to document the evolution of river dwelling between 1937 (the first record of people residing on the River Thames) and 2019. Different types of repurposed ex-working boats, used for residential purposes, were chosen for the study because they are the most popular type on the tidal Thames (Gabor, 1979; Pereira, 2016). The tidal Thames, opposed to the non-tidal Thames, runs through the heart of the city of London. It flows 68 miles, from Teddington Lock to the North Sea, via the Thames Estuary. Changing character along the way, its dominant features are strong currents and a high tidal range. Twice a day, the tide rises to a maximum of seven metres, with the outbound flow taking between four and five hours, and the slower inbound tide up to nine hours (Copas, 1997). As the river ebbs and flows, the water and its banks provide differing conditions and land use. At low tide, mud flats and beaches are exposed along differing sections of the river. At high tide, the river rises to street level, in some places temporarily covering the road.

According to the Port of London Authority (PLA), the tidal River Thames is home to more than twenty-four residential moorings (Figure 2.1), known as enclaves (Appendix D),

with most of them located upstream from Vauxhall (Trimmer, 2020, Field Interview, 029, Sutton). This study focuses on three floating communities that have their own distinct 'village' characteristics.

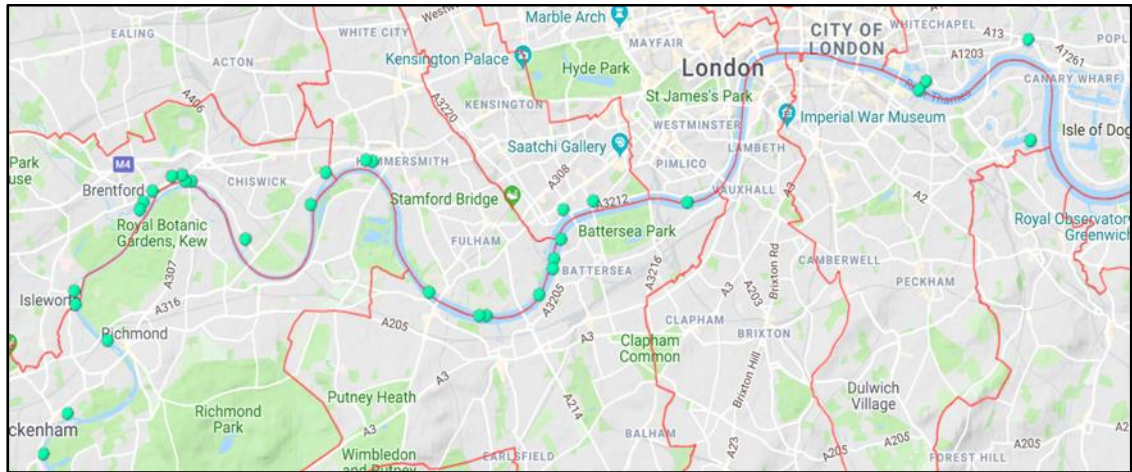


Figure 2.1. 'Residential Mooring Enclaves along the Thames'. Courtesy of the Port of London Authority

Whilst no communities are alike, the main characteristic they share is their physical attachment to the water's edge. Permission to moor up, in the form of a River Works Licence, is required by the Port of London Authority. Further approval maybe needed from the adjacent landowner. The licence is issued by the Port of London Authority (PLA), the authority with overall responsibility for the management and operation of the tidal Thames. The PLA is the statutory body that is governed by the 1968 Port of London Authority Act. A self-financing corporation, its key charge is concerned with navigation and safety along the length of the Tidal Thames. The PLA owns ninety-five per cent of the riverbed between Teddington Lock and Southend, with the Crown owning the remaining five per cent. It does not own any of the riverbanks; they operate under separate riparian ownership(s). There are other strategic bodies that have an interest in managing different aspects of the river i.e., the Environment Agency, various Local Authorities with a planning interest, and the Mayor of London's office. Both the north and south banks of the river come under the jurisdiction of fourteen different local

authorities between Richmond to Greenwich. Each one has their own approach to planning, conservation, and policies in relation to the river.

An in-depth study of each community was not practical, but since eleven communities were interviewed for the Totally Thames documentary '*Life Afloat*' (2016), this has been drawn upon for the study. The study focuses on three floating communities that have their own distinct 'village' characteristics. The first two are located within the Pool of London, a stretch of the river that runs from London Bridge to Limekiln Creek. It is a part of the river that is acknowledged to have previously been at the heart of London's maritime empire. (Ellmers 1998; Ellmers and Werner, 2008). Tower Bridge Moorings is located approximately half a mile downstream from Tower Bridge (Plate 2.1). It is on the south side of the river, adjacent to Bermondsey Wall West. The privately owned mixed-use mooring was established in the mid-1980's. The site consists of approximately thirty former working vessels that provide homes for around one hundred people. Opposite, on the north bank, lies Hermitage Community Moorings (Plate 2.2). Co-operatively owned, the mooring provides accommodation for nineteen historic boats (plus two visitor moorings) and has approximately fifty inhabitants.

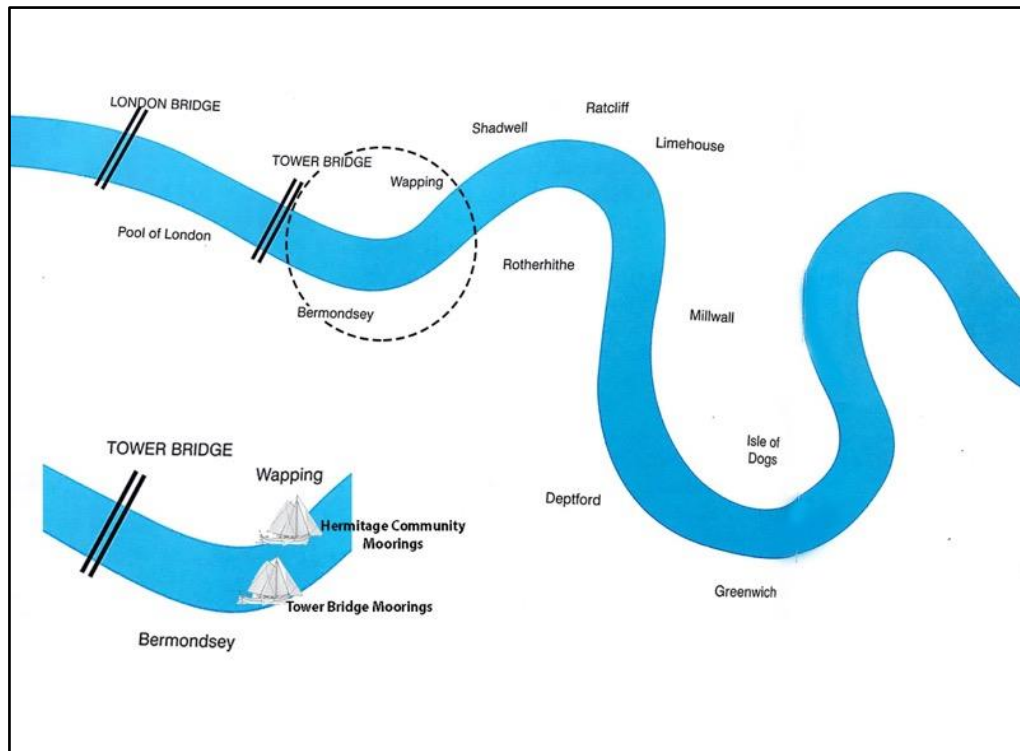


Figure 2.2. 'Pool of London, Hermitage Community Moorings/Tower Bridge Moorings'.
Adapted from Craig et al 2009.

These two sites were chosen for a variety of reasons (Figure 2.2). Both, in their various ways, had been challenged by various systems (political, economic, environmental) to provide themselves with a place to dwell on the river. Each one represents a different stage within the evolution of living afloat (discussed in Chapters Four and Five). However, they are interrelated since the founding members of Hermitage Community Moorings (build completion 2009) previously resided at Tower Bridge moorings. Given the relationship between the two, along with their differences and their similarities, it was felt that they represented aspects and pertinent moments of community life on the River Thames.

Both moorings have very similar types of vessels. Whilst Hermitage insists on historic ships as part and parcel of membership, Tower Bridge does not, but it does prefer ex-working boats that are “ship-shape” (Lundquist, 2018, Field Interview 016, Sutton).

Likewise, they both have a commitment to opening the moorings to the public several times a year. Tower Bridge Moorings periodically makes their floating gardens available to the public, and Hermitage promotes the maritime history of the Thames via its charity, Hermitage River Projects. In addition, both have a ‘public’ space which can be used by their respective community members and are accessible to the public for special events.



Plate 2.1 *'Tower Bridge Moorings. South Bank, The Pool of London, Tidal Thames'* (2016) Sutton S



Plate 2.2 *'Hermitage Community Moorings. North Bank, The Pool of London, Tidal Thames'* (2016) Sutton S

Although it was not my original intention to include more than two mooring sites for in-depth study, a year into the research I became aware of the problems that were beginning to occur at Cheyne Walk Moorings, Chelsea, where residents being threatened with eviction. Chelsea Houseboats (Plate 2.3) is one of, if not the oldest river communities, with people living on board since the 1930's (Totally Thames, 2016). Given its longstanding history and possible demise in its current form, it seemed appropriate to include the struggles that this community were experiencing.



Plate 2.3 'Chelsea Houseboats, Chelsea Reach, Tidal Thames' (2020) Sutton S

However, unlike the previous two sites, access was through a personal introduction to a resident who (at that time) lived on the mooring and was instrumental in organising the campaign to save the community (Plate 2.4). I conducted several interviews with him over the life of the PhD as he updated me on the evolving situation. In addition, I tracked the campaign both on social media, twitter along with the high- profile press coverage, both print and TV.



Plate 2.4. 'Chelsea Houseboats Twitter Campaign' (2019) Courtesy of Chelsea Reach Boat Owner's Association

These three sites, along with those mentioned in the *Totally Thames* documentary, afforded the opportunity to examine in detail the daily life of dwelling on the River Thames. Although it could be argued that this way of life is on the margins of city dwelling, it does not exist in a vacuum. As previously mentioned, all moorings are attached to the river's edge, suggesting a relationship between those on land and the water. Therefore, to place this type of lifestyle within the wider context of living in the city, a range of methods were drawn upon to ascertain the wider social, political, economic, and cultural processes that produced this particular type of dwelling and how it had evolved over time.

2.5 Mixed Methods - Perceiving the Water's Edge: A View from the River

A variety of methods, from both the study of vernacular architecture and urban studies, have been employed to provide fresh insight to view the land from the river. In the case

of the former, the methods suggested by Carter and Collins Cromley in '*A Guide to the Study of Ordinary Buildings and Landscapes*' (2005) have been adapted to suit the needs of being on water rather than land. These include a reconnaissance survey; the gathering of architectural documentation by recording details of specific re-purposed boats, photographing details of the dwellings both interior and exterior, and measuring the spatial dimensions of the moorings and their immediate surroundings. Additionally, they advocate analysing the buildings within the context of the wider landscape. In this case, it includes the re-purposed boats, the river and the water's edge to which the moorings are attached. The relationship between the three provided the basis to analyse and interpret the evolving relationship between river dwelling, the river, and the built urban environment. The very limited literature (mainly from within the humanities and social sciences) presented by Cusack (2012), seeks to examine the ways in which the water's edge has been represented, re-imagined, appropriated and transformed across time and space to demonstrate how "ownership may be claimed for dominant national or political interests that maybe contested by different ethnic or social groups" (Cusack, 2012, p.1).

Although these ideas of ownership, appropriation and transformation are essential concepts, explored throughout the research within the framework of 'right to the city', the perspective advocated by Tricia Cusack, views the water from the land. In order to utilize these ideas, within the context of river dwelling, the conception of the water's edge has been re-orientated to view the land from the water. To that end, the design of the research drew inspiration from new methods being developed within Urban Studies at University College London. The publication in 2016 of Ben Campkin's and Ger Duijzing's '*Engaged Urbanism*' serves as a prompt to encourage "an experimental turn

in urban studies” (Campkin and Ger Duijzings, p.1). The authors argue that “within cities, each urban site with its own conditions and issues needs its own distinctive method of exploration”. In other words, its own methodological toolbox to “capture the variety and dynamism of urban sites across time and space” (Campkin and Ger Duijzings p.3). Whilst they seek to break with the predominance of visual methods, to introduce phenomenological experiences as a method of exploring the city, this research has been designed to utilize both visual and embodied experiences to view the land from the perspective of being on water.

Tricia Cusack points out in *'Riverscapes and National Identities'* (2010), that a riverscape delimits not only the way in which a river is viewed, but the part which is actually seen. This in turn raises the question of who is looking and from what viewpoint. Citing the work of Arjun Appadurai, she draws attention to the idea that the suffix “-scape” denotes a ‘perspective construct’ which implies an understanding or reading of something that is influenced by the viewer’s historical and political situation. She suggests that implicit in the term riverscape, is the notion that a particular perspective has been constructed to suggest that how a river is viewed, along with the meanings attributed to it, depends upon how it is regarded by a specific cultural society at a particular historical moment in time (Cusack, 2010). This riverscape perspective has shaped the field work and methods that are described in detail in the following section.

2.6 Methods in the Field/on the River

The field/river work was divided into three phases. During Phase I, preliminary investigations were carried out in 2016-2017. The core of the field work, Phase II, took

place in early 2018, with subsequent follow up visits. Phase III consisted of returning periodically to London throughout 2019/early 2020 to carry out additional interviews.

2.6.1 Field/River Work – Preliminary Phase I – On the Water

Although not officially part of the research, a visit to Myanmar (2016) afforded the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of issues relating to life afloat from a different perspective. The Moken, a semi nomadic people, traditionally lived on boats (usually) in the Andaman Sea from September to April. This was followed by a period on land during the monsoon season. During this time, they lived in houses built on stilts.



Plate 2.5. 'Kabang': Traditional Moken dwelling boat' (2016) Sutton S



Plate 2.6. 'The Andaman Sea' (2016) Sutton S

According to a variety of sources, the Moken way of life was fast disappearing (Plates 2.5, 2.6). Many were being forced by the Government to live permanently on land (Smillie, 2014; Survival International, 2015; Sutton, 2016). This trip, along with prior influences, resulted in a pattern of investigation that led to, and provided, a way into thinking about issues and problems from the perspective of being on the water. The aim was to develop a critical understanding of the powerful dynamic forces that shape the water's edge. Within a global context, rivers, in particular urban ones, have been transformed throughout history by differing power relations and imaginations; predominantly in response to prevailing economic, social and cultural conditions (Wylson, 1986; Breen and Rigby, 1996; Cusack, 2010; Desfor, Laidely, Stevens, and Schubert, 2011; Chatterjee, 2014; Adler and Guerci, 2018). To understand how these ideas might apply to the research, time was allocated to exploring these relationships within different contexts. To achieve this, several trips were made to experience different types of rivers. These included a variety of trips on the Thames (tidal and non-tidal river), the Elbe in Hamburg, the Potomac in Washington (Vernacular Architecture Forum: Potomac 2018 – A Shared Heritage- Rural and Urban Experience on the Banks of the Potomac), the Dart in Devon, the Helford, Cornwall, and the Orwell to visit Pin Mill, home to a small community of river dwellers, in Suffolk (Plate 2.7).



Plate 2.7. 'Airbnb Visit to Pin Mill Houseboat Community, The River Orwell, Suffolk' (2017) Sutton S

The first phase consisted of ascertaining a good working knowledge of the historic and contemporary built environment along the water's edge. This helped to develop an understanding of the relationship between dwelling, the river itself, and the water's edge (Carter and Collins Cromley, 2005). The purpose behind this was to establish the relevance of the connection to the edge, and how this relationship related to the wider transformation taking place along the banks of the Thames as a consequence of maritime de-industrialisation.

Two river expeditions were undertaken, one on the Elbe in Hamburg, the other on the River Thames. These trips afforded the opportunity to view and compare the built environment along the water's edge and the relationship with their respective rivers. In Hamburg, I stayed on a boat and travelled as much as possible on both public ferry and city cruise boats. A few weeks later, I undertook a similar journey in a small craft, drifting down river from the Tower of London to Canary Wharf and back again. A comparative analysis of the two cities was useful, to consider how and why particular developments have occurred within the two contexts. Historically London and Hamburg have much in common as major port cities; their rivers playing a key role in the evolution and creation

of wealth, power, and global prestige. They both appear to have similar problems: lack of affordable housing, poverty, and social deprivation. Although people are allowed to live on the Thames in boats, seemingly they are not in Hamburg.

These two voyages provided the means to begin to question the contemporary nature of the relationship between the city and the water. They demonstrated the different approaches to the transformation of the water's edge and how this impacted on the role of the river. This comparison was a crucial step in finding a way in to consider the relationship between urban space, the river(s) and how it was produced at the water's edge in London. The experience of exploring the banks of the river, spending time on the water, and viewing the similarities and differences, prompted a series of questions that would establish a method to investigate how and why the transformations had taken place.

2.6.2 Re-Photography – and the Changing Nature of the Built Environment along the Thames. Looking at the land from the water.

The second method included the collection and use of a variety of visual sources to ascertain specific geographic and historic contextual information that detailed the changing nature of the built environment along the Thames. I concentrated on panoramic images, a traditional method used by artists to document both river and its banks and date back to the early 17th century (Craig, Diprose and Seaborne, 2009; Inglis and Saunders, 2018; Snell, 2013). From a contemporary perspective, the work of professional photographers and filmmakers provided invaluable insight into the transformation of the both the river and its banks e.g.,

<http://www.panoramaofthethames.com>.

Unusually, they captured the view from the water to the land. Re-photography, or repeat photography of the same site, was the method used to document the changing role of the river between London Bridge to Greenwich also known as the Pool of London.



Plate 2.8 'Tower Bridge, Moorings, 1937, 1997, 2008' (2009) Craig, et al, p. 200

This is the same part of the river in which Tower Bridge Moorings and Hermitage Community Moorings are situated. The project 'London's Riverscape: Lost and Found: A

Photographic Panorama of the River from 1937 to Today, took place between 1988 and 2008. Drawing inspiration from an original 1937 panorama⁴ the photographers sought to “capture the intricate relationship between the river and city” and how it had changed in the intervening years (Craig, Diprose and Seaborne, 2009, p7; Ellmers, 1988).

Re-photography is a useful tool to map land use and trace what has survived architecturally, along with the changes that have taken place over time (Klett, 2004; Wells, 2011). The images offer an overview of the key epochs of change, demonstrating how the edges have been repeatedly transformed by dominant political and economic interests, from the maritime empire and its decline to the present day. The material manifestation depicted in these images articulates both the social and economic changes that have taken place over time and how they have impacted on the role of the river. Although the images could not fully explain the processes of transformation, the evidence offers a comparison between fixed points in time and space. They provide a useful window from which it is possible to start examining the reasons behind how and why the changes have occurred (Klett, 2004). The key significance for this research is that the images foreground a view from the river to the land, recording the changing topography to understand the changing contextual and spatial relationship between built environment and the river. In addition to examining the work of professional photographers and film makers, I made several trips, independently and on specific architectural tours of the Thames. The aim was to re-photograph the rapid developments and note the differences between the last images taken in 2008 by Craig et al, which for example exclude Hermitage River Moorings. These trips were made on

⁴ Commissioned by the PLA. The image is highly unusual in that it has been taken from the water to the land to record a world afloat which has now gone (Ellmers and Werner, 1988).

a variety of small and larger craft and enabled me to shoot pictures from the water to the land and at water level to gain similar perspectives to photographs taken in the past. This made it possible to compare changes over time, particularly in terms of the scale and pace of developments along the banks and how they impacted on the water.

These differing views from the water were undertaken in the initial phase of the field work and considered in conjunction with the scant literature on the subject. This first phase relied heavily upon 'viewing' methods to reflect what can be 'seen' in order to critically think about the historic and contemporary urban development of the river (both practically by being on the water and comparing my experience with the image taken by previous photographers and film makers. The next phase focused on generating architectural documentation, to record in detail, the daily life of river dwelling. Living on water, however, does not exist in isolation to the rest of the city and therefore it was instrumental to uncover the differing 'unseen aspects' of the wider forces that influenced this type of dwelling (Riley, 1997). This was achieved by conducting a series of interviews and collecting a range of archival sources to gather a wide range of perspectives from institutions and organisations involved with the river.

2.6.3 Field/ River Work: Phase II Gathering the Data

Most of the field work in this phase was work carried out in early 2018, over a period of three months between January and March, with subsequent visits taking place on regular basis. I stayed on Barge Elizabeth (1910, Dutch sailing *Klipper*), located at Tower Bridge Moorings, Bermondsey. The fieldwork included gathering the architectural

documentation, conducting interviews with boat owners and a variety of organisations that and an interest in the river.

2.6.4 Phase III – Ad Hoc interviews

Throughout 2019/20, I returned to London for a series of ad hoc interviews. The main purpose of these was to follow up on themes that had emerged, and to discuss my findings with various people to ensure that my results are accurate and credible.

2.7 Generating the architectural documentation

Photographic documentation, including a survey form given to boat owners at the time of the interview, focused on the conversion process, by identifying the boat type, age, and construction, how and when the conversion took place. The survey form, adapted from Carter and Collins Cromley (2005), recording a building (Appendix F) included detailed records of the interiors and exterior of the boats, along with a description of the ship's historic features. The information was supplemented with photographs (taken either by me or the owner) and other relevant historical information (ship documents). The spatial relationship of the boats to the mooring site(s) and the connection to the river edge, were also considered. This was achieved by using satellite images and in the case of Hermitage, a site drawing. It was not possible to map Tower Bridge Mooring due to the complex construction of walkways and gardens. Relevant contextual maps were sought to depict the site in which the communities are situated (both on land and water) and how they relate to the land i.e., the cultural landscape or in this case the riverscape.

In addition, an overall analysis of the surveys established some additional useful points in relation to why people chose re-purposed boats. Historic ex-cargo working ships and boats were the most popular forms used for residential purposes, thereby echoing Gabor's (1997) and Scott Pereira's (2016) identification of the main styles used for residential purposes along the Tidal Thames. It also identified the fact that the most common type is the Dutch Barge, of which there are many varieties, such as Luxe Motors, Dutch *Klippers*, and *Tjalks* (The majority of ships on both Hermitage Community Moorings and Tower Bridge are Dutch Barges of one type or another). Interviewees (from the field work) suggested several reasons as to why this maybe so. Firstly, the Dutch have a much stronger tradition of preserving their maritime heritage, including all types of barges. Secondly, at the time of writing it is/was much cheaper to go Europe and select from a wider range of available boats. Finally, given that most Dutch barges have hulls that are made of steel, their longevity is more robust than say English Thames Sailing Barges, which are usually made of wood, and require a larger financial commitment for upkeep. More significantly, the survey did reveal the passion that boat owners had for the history of their boats. This manifested itself in various ways; the preservation of various original features on the vessel, trying to restore maintain the exterior as an ex-working vessel where possible, and finally, sharing their stories. Nearly all owners had some form of documentation relating to the boat's history from official records to photos and were keen to share this knowledge relating to the historic life the vessels.

2.8 Interviews

The interviews, along with the architectural documentation, are a central part of the qualitative investigation (Rossman and Rallis, 2003). Their main function is to contribute

in-depth information on aspects of daily life afloat along and to proffer an understanding of the variety of organisations/institutions that have an interest in the river. The latter interviews helped to identify the key players and to establish insights into the nature of various relationships (economic, political, social, and cultural) and how various authorities impacted on contemporary dwelling on the river. This section discusses considerations in relations to access and the interview types.

Before going into the details of the interviews, it is important to articulate the background decisions as to why three types of interviews have been included and how the questions were constructed. As already mentioned in the introduction, in 2016 Totally Thames interviewed several boat owners from eleven different communities along the length of the river to produce the 'untold story' of life afloat. Given that it was part of the original intention of this research to document the history of river dwelling through interviews, it seemed inappropriate to attempt to interview all the same people again. However, I did interview seven people (see Appendix C, Interviewee Participants). After several discussions with the then project manager, it was agreed that I could draw upon the Totally Thames transcriptions for my research. However, this was not to be, as they had been placed with the Geoffrey Museum, which was just about to close for renovations. Access for research purposes was not possible. However, within a very short space of time, all the recorded interviews were placed online on the Totally Thames website. This allowed me to listen to all the interviews and draw upon them in conjunction with those that I subsequently conducted. The audio interviews (<https://soundcloud.com/thamesfestivaltrust/sets/life-afloat>) were utilised as a repository of 'raw data' and treated, for analytical purposes (see 2.8.1), in the same manner as the interviews that I conducted in the field. Prior to the fieldwork, I listened

to the oral history interviews from each of the communities, in conjunction with attending the exhibition and viewing of the documentary 'Life Afloat: A History of the Floating Villages on London's Tidal Thames' (September 2016, Waterman's Park, Brentford. Currently available on Vimeo <https://vimeo.com/44000248>). The eleven communities include: Battersea, Bermondsey, Brentford, Chelsea, Chiswick, Hammersmith, Isleworth, Nine Elms, Richmond, Wandsworth, Wapping.

Using thematic analysis (see 2.8.1), three key themes emerged that subsequently informed the construction of the field work interview questions, the survey form, and the design of the research. Firstly, the enthusiasm and importance of converting boats from a working to a residential space. Secondly, almost every community had had some form of struggle with the authorities, the extent of which, I had not fully been aware of until this point. Thirdly, the motivations for dwelling on the river seem to concur with Grabor's findings (1979), I considered these to be very pertinent, given that he was writing some fifty years earlier. In order of preference, the reasons why people chose to live on water than on land included: "river life, a passion for boats, economy, privacy and community spirit" (Grabor, 1979, p.95). More generally, the main theme to emerge were concerns associated with issues of affordability, from both a historic and contemporary perspective.

The interviews for the field work comprised of a set of pre-figured open-ended questions, to which the participants could freely respond (Rossman and Rallis, 2003). I conducted five in-depth interviews with boat owners. I did this by preparing a series of questions in advance of the semi-formal interviews (Appendix B). These were carried with three ship owners on Hermitage and two at Tower Bridge moorings. The interviews

sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the conversion process (the material aspect of life afloat) along with an understanding of the routines and rituals of daily life on the river. This included gathering evidence as to the motivations, pleasures, problems and future challenges of owning, re-purposing, maintaining, and living on a boat in central London. Additionally, I interviewed a founding member of Hermitage Community Moorings, as well as the owner of Tower Bridge Moorings. I interviewed one member of Chelsea Houseboats on several occasions. Informal conversations took place with other boat dwellers across both and other moorings. The participants were chosen to represent; a barge that was currently undertaking some renovation works; a couple who had lived on the river for over twenty years in various locations and on various types of boats; a young couple with children who were born onboard; a couple who had no previous background of living on the river or sailing but embraced river life; and a lone female barge owner. All the interviews were carried out on the boats, with everyone voluntarily agreeing to participate. For the purposes of analysis (see 2.8.1.), I revisited the Totally Thames oral history interviews, to combine and cross reference the narratives of ten individuals from six different communities (see appendix B) with the interviews that I had conducted.

The third type, and most of the interviews conducted during this period, were with a range of organisations that had long- standing connections with the river and/or river communities. The aim was to identify the key players and institutions involved with the River Thames. A total of nineteen interviews were conducted, with the interviewees being chosen to represent a variety of different perspectives and relationships with of the river. The prepared semi-formal questions allowed for impromptu responses and were designed to gain an insight into a broad range of relationships connected with the

River Thames. The questions were underpinned by topical (themes to emerge from the Totally Thames interviews) and theoretical issues relating to the changing role of the river from a variety of perspectives. Key topics explored the relationship of the organisation to the river, identification of the key challenges and opportunities in relation to the river, the growing trend of people wishing to live on the river; the lack of mooring space to satisfy demand; the idea that the river is a public space belonging to Londoners (Appendix B).

I contacted the participants directly, either by telephone or email (Appendix C). All interviews took place at the relevant offices of each (or a place of their choice) participant. Interviewees included planning authorities, architects, estate agents, The Thames River Society, Totally Thames, The Port of London Authority, The Rivers and Canals Trust, The Residential Boats Association, The Maritime Heritage Trust, and the Museum of London (whose curators played a key role in producing two books that re-photographed the transformation of the Tidal Thames). All had a specific interest in the river. A total of twenty-nine semi-formal interviews were carried out and recorded using a professional sound recorder along with an iPhone for backup purposes. They were all professionally transcribed between June and July 2018.

2.8.1 How and what did the interviews achieve?

Section	Chronology Patterns of Change	Themes 'Aspects of Dwelling' <u>The Vernacular</u>	Issues/Relationships 'River Relationships' includes Key Players/Bond between River/City Space	Critical Urban Aspects/ Context/Theoretical Discourse
Data	Case Studies	Survey/Photographs/Interviews/Archival Sources (Media/Print/Film/Video), Re-photography		
I	60/70/80's Historic Overview Survey, photos, interviews, re-photo	The Material Dwelling Barges/ex-working Conversion/Re-purposed	River Thames Neglected Space	Maritime de-industrialisation Processes of post- industrial transformation/ Impacts/affordability in the city centre.
ii	2000-10 2003 Tower Bridge 2008 Hermitage Interviews, Archives, Policy	The Community Space/The Moorings Community Under Threat Lifestyle Choice Community Solutions Co-operative/ New model/Residential Mooring.	River as a Source of tension (s). 'Politics of a view' 'Value' of the river/ extraction by developers/ apartment owners/estate agents. Policy/ Management	Right to the city concepts. Property rights above all else. Exchange Value/Use Value, power relations, Identifies key players, problems with the housing market, alternative dwellings, Community Resistance – Power of working together' – 'hearts -desire'/having a say.
iii	2010-18 Waterman's park 2017 - Chelsea Houseboats Interviews, Twitter, Media, Policy	Riverscape/Environment Physical River/A place to dwell. Passionate about living on the river/skills/knowledge Risk/Responsibility versus No Legal Rights on water. Community not Commodity	Physical Reality v Image Riverscape now consumed Boats (focus on interiors) Luxury Lifestyle/acceptance River rat to Luxury Lifestyle Mirror image of luxury on shore dwelling. Role of developers/Policy/Management change	Legal Rights/Housing Act Commodification of Space Regeneration Gentrification Community Resistance Housing Crisis
iv	Loss of character of river/way of life/the ability of communities to fight back/alternative city dwelling. (Whose) Right to the River? 11.3.19			

Plate 2.9 'Detail Chronology/Themes/Discourses' See Appendix H (2019) Sutton S

The interviews were coded according to specific emergent themes and theoretical considerations related to answering the main research questions. The coding was conducted manually (Plate 2.9) and in doing so identified repeat patterns that could then be grouped together to devise a set of candidate themes (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The thematic categories to emerge from the river dwellers included different aspects of daily life (the identification of practices relating to the routine of daily life on the river), the importance of community, skills and knowledge relating to the river, details of the conversion process, along with a range of realisations and motivations for living on the water. The importance of the historic nature of the boats and how this manifested itself was also key, along with concerns over the

transformation and the changing nature of the river. Another important category came out of discussions suggesting that the river was now becoming gentrified because of the increasing costs associated with that lifestyle. The lack of rights was also a major issue, particularly for those living at Chelsea. Specific tensions between various players were also highlighted. One unanticipated theme was that of a sense of loss in connection with the river. This manifested itself in several different ways; the need to try and protect this way of life, a loss of the spirit of the river i.e., a different way of living in the city along with the loss of the city's maritime heritage. Attention was also drawn to the importance of maintaining and living in historic ships as a way of preserving them. From the differing categories, three key themes that were identified:

1. Different Aspects of Daily Life Afloat.
2. Issues associated with living on the river including lack of security/ gentrification and affordability.
3. Recurring tensions/struggles.
4. A Sense of Loss

These were subsequently cross referenced with other data sources including the architectural documentation, and archival material, to identify common themes across all the data to both affirm and corroborate their validity and subsequent interpretation (Rossman and Rallis, 2013).

2.9 Archival material

Over the course of the PhD, a range of media articles, including print, documentary films, social media (blogs, twitter, websites (see bibliography) and relevant planning documents were gathered to form an archive of material relating to the tensions experienced by different communities. This made it possible to compile a history of the

experiences of river dwelling and provide insight into the politics that influenced the evolution of river dwelling (Wingen and Bass, 2008). The purpose of collecting this type of data and compiling an archive was to analyse the content, thereby making it possible to track and map the issues from the 1970's until the present day. Given the importance of understanding these tensions, they were mapped using in the main, media sources between 1986 and 2019. Each one has been catalogued as follows (Table 2.1) and can be found in the Appendix G.

Date	Source	Tensions/Perceptions	Location	Agencies involved	Issues/Campaigns/ Tactics	Solution
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Table 2. 1 'Mapping the Tensions (Appendix G)

These sources identified key conflicts, the main players, riverine campaigns, and tactics. I analysed the contents by looking for key words, images, and themes. They were mapped chronologically to record the key tensions, how they were resolved, how they changed over time and the role that the river played in these tensions. Together they reveal a set of working power relations between various authorities and river dwellers. Additional information has been collected from estate agents relating to the marketing and selling of residential boats. The images and text were analysed to identify the way in which contemporary re-purposed boats were portrayed. I read several planning reports from local authorities, including *'The Port of London Authority 2016 Thames Vision for the next thirty years'*; *'The Thames Landscape Strategy'* (2002, 2008) along with planning documents from the mayor's office (as they relate to the river) to understand the role of the various planning authorities.

2.10 Museums and Exhibitions

I visited several archives, including the PLA's archive held at Dockland's Museum, to view newsletters and accounts for 1937, 2000, 2008, as per the re-photography dates, to gain an insight into the historic workings of the PLA. In addition, I viewed the materials of Richard Rogers' *'Inside Out Exhibition'* (2013) organised by Rogers, Stirk Harbour and Partners. Part of the exhibition featured a range of ideas submitted by architects in an open competition, calling for new ideas on how the river could be developed in the future with a particular emphasis on community use. Teams were asked to produce new ideas in which the river could be transformed to reflect the changing economic, social and culture issues (Romer-Lee, Studio Octopi, 2018, Interview 007, Sutton). This type of data contributed to an understanding of the wider processes of change and how the post war redevelopment of the built environment along the Thames impacted upon the river.

2.11 Synthesis, Analysis, and Interpretation

The synthesis, analysis and interpretation of the data is a multi-layered process. It has been achieved by triangulating the data (photographs, thematic interviews, archival material) and utilizing Henri Lefebvre's spatial triad in conjunction with core concepts that are situated within the discourse of the 'right to the city'. In the first instance, the data was synthesised chronologically to document the struggles relating to each of the key case studies to identify the issues, key players how they the relationships have changed over time.

The key themes to emerge from the thematic analysis of the data were then grouped into three lines of enquiry according to specific theoretical headings, 'Lived Space, Perceived Space, and Conceived Space (Table 2.2) and used to uncover and analyse the

differing power relationships between daily life afloat, the struggles and tensions, and their relationship with the built environment along the water's edge. In turn, these were related to the processes of change that have been identified from both the data and corroborated by mapping the tensions.

In addition, the research utilises the concepts from 'right to the city' as an interpretive tool to account for and measure the data, thereby making it possible to narrate the different ways in which river dwellers appropriated the river as a place to dwell. An examination of the individual case studies, along with the in-depth recording of the different tensions, resulted in a pattern of ongoing conflict and resistance in which the water's edge emerged as a site of contestation. Focusing on the production of space at water's edge, Henri Lefebvre's spatial triad (1994) was used to analyse and interpret the power relations that occurred between the 'lived' experience of dwelling on water, the clash of perceptions (perceived space) that resulted in water's edge becoming a site of conflict, and how these were connected to the dominant political and economic forces of urban transformation (conceived space). This approach has revealed a pattern of change that offers original insight into the relationship between the processes of urbanisation and how they have impacted on both the evolution and changing nature of river dwelling.

The Water's Edge		
Lived Space	Perceived Space	Conceived Space
The Vernacular Experience Aspects of Daily Life	Struggles/ Tensions	By those in authority/power
Cultural values: - Community, relationship with the river - Maritime history - Economics	Differing perceptions of the The River and the Water's Edge: - Investment purposes - Affordability - Legal Status	Transformation of the built environment: - Riverside Development - Changing role of the river - Policy, Planning, Regulation
Processes of change: Urban transformation, regeneration, financialization of the housing market, gentrification.		

Table 2.2 Themes/Triangulating the data: Different Lines of inquiry at the Water's Edge

The triangulation of the data, in conjunction with the theoretical adaptation of the spatial triad and core concepts from the 'right to the city', underpin the structure of the thesis. Organised chronologically, and focusing on a specific case study, each chapter explores a particular struggle in conjunction with theoretical concepts and discourse(s) from the 'right to city' to demonstrate how the power relationships have manifested themselves. In addition, different aspects of life afloat are explored throughout the thesis to illustrate the variety of ways in which individuals and river communities have been able to appropriate space at the water's edge (Chapter Three, the material form and re-purposed boats, Chapter Four, the importance of community, Chapter Five vernacular know-how, Chapter Six the river as a vernacular landscape on which to live, lack of legal protection). Chapter Three takes a slightly different approach, as it explores the background to the evolution of river dwelling rather than a particular conflict.

2.12 Ethical Approval

The design of the research conformed to the ethical guidelines set out by the University of Plymouth's *'Research Ethics Policy'* (2015). These principals included informed consent, the right to withdraw, confidentiality and debriefing procedures. The following details the key ethical considerations that were necessary to carry out the field work: informed consent, confidentiality, and positionality. Informed consent was sought from each participant (Appendix E).

2.13 Access and Positionality

My positionality, from both a practical and academic perspective, has influenced the design and nature of the research. The experience of living on the Thames, provided the both the context (the river and its edge) and the topic under investigation. As a former river dweller and resident of Hermitage Community Moorings (HCM), I needed to reflect, in my role as qualitative researcher, on how to make the familiar unfamiliar in order to present a balanced overview of the life afloat. My positionality included both an insider's (emic) experience of living on the river, and an outsider's (etic) view of the different river communities Thames (Rossman and Rallis, 2003). The familiarity with life afloat granted me access to different communities despite not having had any relationship with either Tower Bridge Moorings or Chelsea Houseboats prior to the project; therefore, in this sense I was able to gain new insight into the ways in which people resided on the river. Moreover, given that "reflexivity is an interactive and cyclical phenomenon, not a linear one" (Roseman and Rallis, 2003, p. 50), it took some time to realise that the idea of viewing the river's edge from the water as a way of interpreting the relationship between land and water had slowly been evolving over the

years. The following chapter will start to unpack that journey in the context of the research.

3. A River in Transition - The Tidal Thames

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the phenomena of life afloat and its evolution on the River Thames. It considers the historical context, in which barges were re-purposed into dwellings to provide an alternative way of living in the city. This is achieved by considering how and why people began to live on the river and the socio-economic conditions that created this vernacular form. In the first instance, drawing upon Sharon Zukin's (1987) *'Loft Living'* as a comparison, re-purposed boats are situated within the broader context of maritime de-industrialisation. The study suggests that the decline of the port city led to the availability of industrial maritime 'raw spaces'⁵ which included working vessels, derelict warehouses, and piers on and along the banks of the Thames. Framed against ongoing housing problems associated with living in the capital, it charts how a neglected riverscape led a small group of city dwellers to appropriate and reimagine the 'empty' river as a place to live.

The findings demonstrate that living on boats, particularly in the early stages of the phenomena, not only fell outside of the mainstream ideas of city housing, but also showed that this form of dwelling was produced by people for themselves; key characteristics of vernacular architecture (Harris and Berke, 1997; Oliver, 2006; Brown and Maudlin, 2012). This chapter aims to establish the idea of river dwelling as a

⁵ 'Raw space' a term used by Sharon Zukin, in *'Loft Living'* (1989) and is also used by Anna Versteeg in the film *'Living on Water'*. In both cases, they discuss the use of DIY to convert 'raw spaces' that are empty ex-industrial spaces that had yet to be converted into liveable spaces.

“differentiated experience” (Brown and Maudlin, 2012, p.352). By exploring the evolution of repurposed boats as dwellings, it will suggest that they are an alternative vernacular type of contemporary housing. The concept is used to interpret how and why life afloat evolved, not as a conscious plan, but has been produced as “something different” on the margins of the city (Harvey, 2013, p. xvii). The study also seeks to explain how and why, in the early days, living on the river offered a social and economic alternative; one that was in opposition to and resisted the dominant homogenised modes of living on land. Both the river’s edge as a place to dwell (the experience of living of at specific location), and re-purposed boats (the material expression of dwelling), are examined to provide fresh insight into the everyday forms, practices and values associated with life afloat (Oliver 2006; Brown and Maudlin, 2008).

Consistent with ideas from the ‘right to the city’, the concepts of difference and appropriation are employed specifically, to identify how ‘differential space’ manifests itself both geographically (at the water’s edge) and materially (re-purposed boats). The analysis of the historical evolution of life afloat aims to provide evidence of how the river’s edge became a site of difference as a place to dwell; one that according to Henri Lefebvre:

...arose on the margins of the homogenised realm, either in the form of resistances or in the form of externalities... what is different is, to begin with, what is excluded: the edges of the city, the shanty towns, the spaces of forbidden games... (Lefebvre, 1974, 1991, p.373).

In this case, the neglected water’s edge had outlived the original purpose that determined its form and function. It became vacant “and susceptible of being diverted, re-appropriated and put to a purpose quite different from its original use” (Lefebvre, 1974, 1991, p.167). In the ‘cracks’ along the water’s edge, there resided the potential

for ordinary inhabitants to collectively assert their needs and aspirations, thereby producing a differential space (Butler, 2014; Leary-Owhin, 2015, Leary-Owhin and McCarthy, 2020).

From a Lefebvrian perspective, the concept of appropriating space does not just apply to collective action. It covers a wide range of practices, both shared and individual, that allow people to reshape, adapt, or modify “space on various scales, from a nook in the house to urban territory” (Stanek, 2011, p.87). According to Lefebvre, to appropriate space materially means to inhabit space and to have some shaping control over the conditions of one’s own existence. Inhabiting is the practice or art of dwelling; it is a creative work, one that enables individuals to organise and transform space according to his/her own tastes and patterns, in a way that conforms with their own cultural model (Stanek, 2011). This notion of dwelling is not dissimilar to Paul Oliver, who considers the “double significance of dwelling: dwelling as the activity of living and residing and dwelling as the place or built form which is the focus of the residence – which encompasses its manifold cultural and material aspects” (Oliver, 2003, p.15). The material forms and practices are examined to interpret how this type of vernacular architecture has been produced to meet with the specific needs (both practical and cultural) of river dwellers.

In order to determine how boats have been re-appropriated as a different form of dwelling space, the processes of modification of the converted vessel, are described to examine the extent to which owners are able to determine and control their own living space. Examples were gathered from the data to illustrate the appeal of living on the water and how and why working boats are transformed into a hybrid contemporary form of dwelling. The principal data sources were the survey form, re-photography (to

provide contextual background material), photographs of ship interiors and exteriors, ship's documentation, and interviews (with boat owners and previous Totally Thames interviews). The interviews revealed the various factors influencing people's choice to suggest a) the reasons behind the growth of this lifestyle and b) how the attributes associated with living on barges are linked to the idea of dwelling as a form of appropriation (Lefebvre, 1996; Perla Korosec-Serfaty, 1985 cited in Wallis, 1991, p.159). By taking this approach, the data supports the case that re-purposed boats have been transformed into contemporary form of vernacular architecture; a form that flows against the norms of city living, and by doing so answers the research question: How and why did re-purposed boats become an alternative mode of city dwelling?

Drawing upon the methods outlined above, this study hopes to extend the prevailing knowledge of dwelling on water within the field of vernacular architecture. Currently, they are documented from a non-Western perspective, as a vernacular form of dwelling associated with traditional lifestyles. They are portrayed as live/work boats that follow age-old patterns of waterborne living, to suggest a form and lifestyle that is both ephemeral and transient (Oliver, 1997). By way of contrast, this thesis suggests that from a Western perspective, re-purposed boats are primarily residential dwellings that have evolved in response to housing problems. It is proposed that the notion of appropriation constitutes a 'differentiated experience' of city dwelling, one that offers a contemporary interpretation of the nature of residing on boats; challenging the idea that they are an 'ephemeral and transportable' form of vernacular architecture for those with a transient lifestyle (Oliver, 1997).

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section assesses the historical evolution of river dwelling, within the wider context of maritime industrialisation; evidence of the changing character of the river is provided by a discussion on the demise of the working role of the river. Drawing upon examples of specific barges, the second section examines the process of converting an industrial barge. The third, analyses the appeal and demand for life afloat.

Alongside the main working functions of the river, the Thames is also 'home' to a small, but growing number of people, who choose to dwell on the water within the city centre. According to the Port of London Authority (PLA), the tidal River Thames has twenty-four residential moorings along its length, the majority located upstream from Vauxhall (Appendix D). Although dwelling afloat on the River Thames is not a recent phenomenon, (Lonides, 1918; Gabor, 1979), until recently, there has been little documentation of how and why people have chosen it as a location to live. In 2016, Totally Thames undertook an oral history project to record the memories of those who live afloat on the tidal Thames (Totally Thames, 2016). Utilizing oral history interviews, archival material and photography, the project captured the essence of daily life on the river. It encompassed both individual barge owners and their respective communities and catalogued the changes that have impacted on this way of life. In the process, not only did the project succeed in documenting a way of life that can be traced back to the 1930's, but it also alluded to the changing relationship between dwelling on water and the river. The content from the documentary '*Life Afloat*' (2016), and interviews from the website '*Totally Thames Afloat*', have been used in conjunction with data extrapolated from a variety of methods to examine the evolution of life afloat. The aim

is to contribute a more in-depth understanding of how and why re-purposed boats have evolved into an alternative mode of dwelling within the city centre.

3.2 Evolution of Living on the River Thames: The Demise of the Working River and Traditional Sailing Craft

Drawing on specific examples from the eleven communities documented by Totally Thames, examples of re-purposed boats (from the 2018 field work) and the conversion process are examined to demonstrate how and why working boats are converted into a form of contemporary vernacular architecture. The various factors influencing people's choice to dwell in them are also evaluated, to suggest reasons behind the growth of this lifestyle. Increased demand for this form of dwelling is linked to the wider processes of de-industrialisation. By focusing on the evolution of the repurposed boat as an 'ordinary', though alternative type of housing, this chapter establishes the idea of river dwelling as a 'differentiated experience'. In doing so, it provides the foundations from which to explore the complex contemporary nature of life afloat.

Broadly speaking, the history of living on the river has evolved both geographically and chronologically over several decades. The first record of people residing on the water can be found in the Richmond upon Thames Electoral Register 1937 (Totally Thames, 2016). Boat dwelling at Richmond and Chelsea began during the nineteen thirties, followed by Isleworth and Chiswick in the nineteen forties, with Brentford following a decade later. According to respondents, the main reason for this sudden surge, was the chronic shortage of housing in London caused by World War II bombing. This had left thousands of people homeless and swathes of the city temporarily uninhabitable. After

the war, it also became necessary to find housing for returning service men and women.

As one respondent in the Totally Thames interviews remarked,

The mooring I grew up on was established by the Church to create homes for returning service men and women. That was their bit for Britain to support and create low-cost housing (Postle, 2016, Totally Thames, Chiswick).

Local Authorities and the Church responded to Government requests for help to alleviate the situation, providing alternative types of accommodation, which in this case included the provision of moorings. During this formative period, several of the mooring residences were situated near or within working boatyards such as Chelsea Yacht and Boat Company, Kris Cruisers, and Riverside Yard Isleworth, or next to industrial sites, as in the case of Brentford, where the boats were moored up alongside the old gasworks. The Church on the other hand, made moorings available at the end of several gardens and/or river frontages. Meanwhile in Richmond, there appears to have been a mix of moorings, with some residents living at the end of Duck's Walk (residential/parkland area), and others dwelling at the Riverside Slipway. Mooring arrangements differed between communities. Whilst some had agreements with the owners of the boat yards/landowners, others squatted alongside piers, wharves, and industrial sites. During this early phase of river dwelling, most of the interviewees deemed life afloat to be very primitive. It was neither comfortable nor chic, but it did provide a solution to a particular problem.

The establishment of these moorings, in or near boat yards, or on Church owned land, is important, because it provides a record of the response by the authorities and individuals to supply and find alternative solutions to the housing shortage in London. Additionally, whilst there is some evidence that a variety of houseboats and Thames

Sailing Barges resided both at Chelsea and Richmond from the 1930's onwards, and after the war (from 1946). In the latter period, decommissioned landing craft and motor torpedo boats returning from the Normandy Landings became available for alternative usage (Pereira, 2016). These vessels were bought up, by the Chelsea Yacht and Boat Company, converted and sold "to people desperate for housing" (Totally Thames, 2016, Chelsea). By the mid 1950's fifties, Chelsea Moorings, located at Cheyne Walk, was full. It is considered by many to be the original houseboat community on the River Thames (Totally Thames, 2016, Chelsea).

It could be argued, that whilst there is evidence that a few residential boats existed prior to the war, the sale of the Admiralty craft, coupled with the shortage of post-war housing, began a trend for converting redundant vessels into alternative forms of dwelling that still exists today. This early development of life afloat was followed by a period, from the late 1950's until the 1980's, that saw the demise of the working river and the disappearance of traditional commercial craft. This in turn led to an increase in vessels available for conversion purposes.

By the 1970's, the traditional working Thames Barges and Lighters, once common on the river during the 1960's, had all but disappeared (Murrell, 2016, Totally Thames). Robert Simper (1997), documenting the collapse of waterborne commercial traffic along the length of the Tidal Thames, recognised as early as the 1950's, that sailing barges carrying freight could not last much longer. The demise of cargo barges, designed to carry and deliver goods along the waterways, both in the UK and Europe, including Holland, Belgium, and France, echoed changes that were taking place, not just on the River Thames, but across the wider global maritime industry. Despite this, during the

late 1950's, he recounts a journey made on a Thames Sailing Barge *Xylonite* in which the upper reaches of the river were still commercially active. For him, it was the traffic on the river that made it an alive and exciting place to be. Barely a decade later, he reports that as he sailed up the Thames, he passed miles and miles of empty silent wharves; evidence that the prevailing industrial domination of the Port of London and its relationship with the river was about to be swept away and changed forever (Simper, 1997).

Changes in both cargo types and ship technology were about to have a profound impact on the maritime trade that had underpinned and sustained both the Port and City of London for well over one hundred and fifty years. Changes began to occur when coal was no longer a major source of power and bulk cargos. It was the backbone of the maritime trade, traditionally carried by working barges. As a consequence of their demise, these vessels began to be replaced by container ships. According to both Simper (1997) and Stone (2017), the river's industry fell like a house of cards, leaving in its wake, not only derelict docks, and infrastructure, but a surplus of redundant barges. These changes were not just happening in London, as Di Murrell (Totally Thames, 2016, Interviews) commented, they were taking place throughout Europe and more specifically in the Netherlands. As early as the 1960's the Dutch government was encouraging barge skippers to move larger quantities of freight in even bigger vessels. They were paid to dispose of their smaller barges in favour of larger vessels. For would-be boat dwellers, this became a valuable source of surplus Dutch Barges for conversion, but for the traditional maritime industry, it underlined that the demise of working boats was not just of concern for the Port and City of London.

The Totally Thames interviews suggest that it was not just a question of the availability of surplus barges that led to people choosing to live on the river. It was also the opportunity afforded by redundant maritime industrial spaces and infrastructure, that provided the mooring locations. In most cases, communities were established alongside old waterside industrial sites (Nine Elms Gasworks, Battersea Power Station, Wandsworth Distillery, a coal depot, and redundant water works), and or near/within working boat yards. In the case of Tower Bridge Moorings, the site had previously included waterside warehouses wharves that had been used by ships to deliver foods and spices (Lacey, 2016, Totally Thames). The Port of London, once so vital to the city and the country, was by the 1970's in a state of decline. With the last docks closing in the 1980's, the 19th century docks, wharves and piers, that had been at the heart of London's maritime empire and central to its economic predominance, lay empty. The port had been badly bombed during the war, and what remained of its infrastructure was out of date. Coupled with the general move toward urban de-industrialisation, and more specifically, the advent of containerisation, it was inevitable that the shipping industry would move out of the city and downstream to the deeper waters of Tilbury. Not unique to London, this was part of an international change in the way maritime trade was conducted. It affected major port cities across the world and was caused by expanding levels of demand. This necessitated a change in technology; principally the development of containers to move freight. Container ships reduced labour costs and turnaround time, and could transfer greater quantities of goods more efficiently, both on and offshore, and they rapidly transformed the shipping industry (Breen and Rigby, 1996; Mayer, 1999; Quartermaine, 1999; Lewis, 2003; Rubin, 2011; Stone, 2017).

As the built environment along the riverbanks was giving way to these external forces, so too was activity on the river, leading to a rapid decline in its use for industrial purposes. Comments from interviewees, individuals working on the river, journalists, and architects, have over the years referred to the quietness and the neglect of the river; how in effect, the city had turned its back on the Thames,

How quiet the river is compared to what it used to be (Pickles, 2018, Field Interview 002, Sutton).

I think the river was generally neglected and not thought much of (Totally Thames, 2016, Hope Pier).

[...] and then of course the river was taken over by containerization, and a lot more went on lorries, and the river went dead. This river must be the deadest river in Europe. It's a shame because it is a lovely river and it should be used a lot more (Duggan in Bode, et al, 2015, p.25).

It is uncertain whether it is a front or a back, the 'heart of London', as the architect Richard Rogers has called it, or the gap between two edges, of the northern or southern parts of the city. It is magnificent, but also quiet and sometimes neglected...It has a redundancy that comes from London's not quite knowing what to do with it... (Moore, 2016, p.117)

Re-photography, sources documenting the decline of the Port of London, indicates that by the early 1990's the maritime trade no longer existed (Ellmers 1988, Ellmers and Werner, 2000). The River Thames had seemingly become an empty space, affording the opportunity to dwell on water without attracting too much attention, particularly from the authorities. There was not, however, an organised or concerted effort to transform either barges or redundant industrial spaces. Rather, the process was a piecemeal and informal solution to a housing problem for a small minority of city dwellers looking for cheap places to live. During these early years, although rents theoretically had to be paid to the PLA, the ambivalence of the authority towards those that lived on the river was reflected in their attitude towards collecting their dues. Until the 1990's, interest in, and

the value of living afloat, were so low that the PLA adopted a policy of Retail Price Index (RPI) adjustments on an annual basis (PLA, 2011). It was a cheap place to live, and in some cases where boats were squatting, rents were neither solicited nor proffered. This changed in 1995, when an increase in river dwelling was noted, and it was decided that the PLA should take a more commercial approach. They did this by using surveyors and adopting market-based valuations.

In the early years, between the 1970's the early 1990's the PLA did not take a particularly commercial approach to its River Works Licences for residential use because there was limited interest in living afloat, hence the value of the Licence was fairly low. The department managing the licences was administrative rather than commercial and the PLA's resources were focused on other more significant business areas at the time. There were standard rates based on linear feet; for example, a charge of £275.00 for a vessel up to 70 ft in 1987 (PLA, 2011, p.3).

It needs to be made clear that whilst there was a gradual increase in numbers dwelling on the river in the early years, and up until 2011, when the above the review took place, numbers were and are still relatively small. According to one resident at Hope Pier, when he moved on to his boat in 1982, there were approximately two hundred and fifty residential boats mooring on the river (Wren, 2018, Field Interview 003/026, Sutton). Even by 2011 the numbers had only gone up to 274 (excluding Tower Bridge Moorings, which has approximately thirty barges, is not included in the table).

While in the early days, at least, the city and the authorities appeared to have turned their back on the river, their attention was firmly on the transformation of the built environment along its banks. In 1981, a consequence of containerisation, the Government of the day set out to transform the de-industrialized facilities of the Port of London into a post-industrial city. It began with the wholesale re-generation of

Docklands and the creation of Canary Wharf, eventually extending along the eight and half miles of river frontage. It was not only a vast new financial centre, but also included acres of luxury high rise private residential developments, and the conversion of wharves, docks, and warehouses (Brownhill, 1990; Bird, 1993; Malone, 1996; Foster, 1999; Craig, Diprose and Seaborne, 2004). The re-use of industrial property for residential purposes during this era has been analysed by Zukin (1989), Hamnett (2007) and Keddie and Tonkiss (2010). Focusing on the conversion of lofts in both New York and London, they argue that the development of lofts for dwelling purposes are a physical manifestation of the need to find alternative uses for commercial property, which needs to be understood within the wider processes of urban transformation from industrial to post-industrial land use.

As a consequence of de-industrialisation, cities across the globe have undergone major transformations of the built environment at the water's edge. Economic restructuring processes have led to the large-scale closure of industrial sites within city centres in Barcelona and Rotterdam, Baltimore and New York, Singapore, and India, particularly the Sabarmati Riverfront, Ahmedabad. (Breen and Rigby, 1979; Meyer, 1999; Harvey, 1992, 2000; Chatterjee, 2014). Within this context, if changes to the built environment on land are the physical counterpart to the processes of economic and social change, then to what extent can the conversion of redundant working boats be considered in the same light as the re-use of lofts as dwellings? Can they be understood as a material form that embodies, or at least in part represents the maritime de-industrialisation and the decline of the working river? The following compares the similarities between the re-purposing of industrial spaces on both land and water and considers how and why they were transformed into residential dwellings.

Nick Lacey, architect, and owner of Tower Bridge Moorings, considers their conversion into residential barges in the same light as warehouses,

When their commercial use life comes to an end, they can very easily be converted, upgraded in the sense of being providing with insulation etc to make very good accommodation, just as an old warehouse makes a good home or an office. I look upon the conversion of working vessels as almost a parallel to finding new uses for old buildings, so I think there is quite an interesting comparison there (Lacey, 2016, Totally Thames Interviews).

However, both Zukin (1989/2014) and Hamnett (2007) point out that the re-purposing of buildings is not inevitable but are contingent on demand for this type of 'raw space'. In New York, the industrial spaces of the garment manufacturing sector offered spaces that appealed to artists for both living and working purposes. The rise of loft living was the result of the availability of industrial spaces that could be renovated cheaply, with individuals using their own time, money, and labour. Zukin then links the creation of the loft as a studio come residential space, to the rise of the art market and the cultural services sector.

The different types of data (boat survey record, photography, interviews, field research, 2018, Totally Thames Interviews 2016, and the Totally Thames Documentary Life Afloat, 2016, along with written sources Gabor in particular) have been interpreted to suggest that the evolution of river dwelling came about as a consequence of the declining port city, which in turn, led to the availability of 'industrial type' spaces, including vacant or abandoned warehouses, docks and piers which enabled people to moor up and live. At the same time, a plethora of redundant working vessels provided the opportunity to dwell on an all but neglected river. Occupancy, for the purposes of dwelling, ranged from

squatting along the banks at riverside industrial locations, to semi-formal or formal arrangements with individual boat yard owners. Just as lofts were appropriated by artists for their 'raw space' and provided a cheap alternative form of dwelling in an unattractive part of the city, so too did the redundant port and its associated buildings, result in a change of use of these derelict spaces and vessels. Parts of the river can therefore be understood as being appropriated for residential purposes in much the same way as their on-land loft counterparts. However, whilst this might explain the context in which river dwelling evolved, it did not elucidate on why people should choose this lifestyle. Therefore, the following section, examines the appeal of living on water to demonstrate the different factors that influence people's decision to live on the river.

3.3 The Converted Vessel as a Dwelling

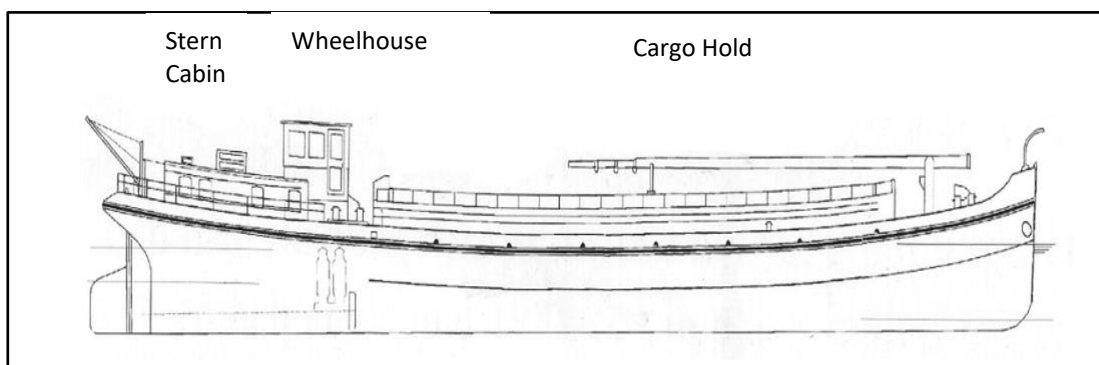
The availability, along with the fact that there were inexpensive to buy, afforded people the opportunity to adapt vessels into suitable dwellings was noted by one resident recounting the early years of living on a boat,

It was easy, as there were so many craft available, the tenders, the Thames Barges. Trade was at an end and there were many available which made lovely homes (Murrell, 2016, Totally Thames).

The appeal of living in a re-purposed barge and the material expression of river dwelling, is explored by considering in detail the converted space and why it has the potential to afford a home. The findings are drawn from the barges residing on the Tidal Thames at Tower Bridge Moorings and Hermitage Community Moorings. This section describes the conversion of a barge into a residential dwelling. It argues that this hybrid form, one that retains its vehicle exterior, whilst adapting the interior for living accommodation, is a

contemporary form of vernacular architecture, that offers a ‘differentiated experience’, or an alternative form of dwelling in the city. Utilizing specific examples from the field work (empirical field research conducted in 2018 by myself) and *Totally Thames* (2016), the layout of the repurposed barge is examined to identify the key features of residing afloat. This includes examining the residential space afforded by converting the cargo hold, the stern cabin, wheelhouse (threshold), engine room, and the fixtures and fittings. This is followed by a discussion on the process of conversion and the importance of maintaining the difference between the exterior and interior, both in terms of function, and the aesthetics of the vessel’s former trading life.

By the late 1970’s, Gabor (1979) had identified a range of working vessels in England and Holland that had been converted for residential use. They included Thames Sail Barges, Lighters, Dutch Barges (e.g., Figure 3.1), Fishing boats and retired Naval launches (Appendix A). A survey of vessels undertaken during the fieldwork (2018), alongside the *Totally Thames* interviews (*Totally Thames*, 2016), indicate that, except for the Thames Barges (see Appendix A for the reason why Thames Barges are no longer popular), these types remain the favoured vessels for dwelling purposes. For this reason, a mix of sailing and motorised Dutch Barges, and a Thames Lighter, have been chosen as examples.



**Figure 3.1. ‘Maxime, (1931, Holland), Dutch Barge: Luxe Motor, Length:23.1m, Beam: 4.5m.’
Courtesy of Hermitage Community Moorings**

3.3.1 Interior Space

Traditionally, the interiors of Dutch Barges would consist of a main cargo hold, an aft (stern) cabin providing accommodation for the skipper and his family, a wheelhouse, and an engine room (lux motors). For conversion purposes, the cargo hold area offers an extremely adaptable space. It is usually insulated, lined with wood, and made into the main living (saloon), dining and kitchen area. Additional cabins (sleeping berths) and bathrooms are usually found towards the bow (front of the vessel). The area is of course constrained by the envelope of the vessel. The type of space available is illustrated in images in Plates 3.1 and 3.2.



**Plate 3.1. 'Maxime: Converted Cargo Hold into Main Modern Living Area Saloon, Kitchen, Dining Area' (2018)
Courtesy of the owners**



Plate 3.2. 'Maxime: Modern Forward Cabin' (2018). Courtesy of the owners.

A recurring feature found amongst Dutch Barge owners, is the desire to maintain (where possible) the original features of the stern cabin (the one in which the skipper and his entire family would have lived in). Plates 3.3/4 provide an example of the original stern cabin on Maxime.



Plate 3.3 'Maxime: Skipper's Original Aft Cabin circa 1930's' (2018) Sutton S



Plate 3.4. 'Maxime: Skipper's Original Aft Cabin. 'Cupboard' with bed inside' (2018) Sutton S

3.3.2 Fixtures and Fittings

For many owners, the interior space is a mix of practical modern living, combined with an aesthetic that includes original features wherever possible. In the case of Maxime, the original back cabin included not only the built-in sleeping 'cupboard' (Plate 3.5/3.6), but also the original fireplace, additional cupboards, and dresser, alongside a small 'cubby'/ kitchen with a sink.



Plate 3.5 *'Maxime: Stern Cabin/Kitchen, Original tiles and port hole fittings'* (2018) Sutton S



Plate 3.6 *'Maxime: Stern Cabin/Original Dresser'* (2018) Sutton S

If it is not practical or possible for owners to source or replace original items, most try to maintain the essence of the original, by finding items that are either from the same period or at least had some form of maritime provenance (Plate 3.7). These can include port holes (Plate 3.8), wood burning stoves, lighting, and wash basins. The importance

of these objects in maintaining a connection with the past is discussed below, in the conversion process.



Plate 3.7 'De Walvisch, (1896) Dutch Klipper Interior cabin: In Keeping with the ship's history reproduction foldaway washbasin and porthole' (2018) Sutton S



Plate 3.8 'Nooit Gedacht (1927), Port Holes instead of windows. They are constructed to prevent water entering the vessel' (2018) Sutton S

In terms of utilities and services, most vessels maintain a capacity to be as self-sufficient, as a necessary requirement for setting sail. Water is stored on board in a tank and is

pumped around the vessel, whilst waste is (should be) stored in a black water holding tank. Electricity is supplied by an onboard generator or can be taken from a land-based connection when the vessel is moored.

Wheelhouses often double up to provide additional interior accommodation. In many cases they provide the main entrance (threshold) into the vessel (Plate 3.9), however its key function is to house the steering and navigational equipment (Plate 3.10). As in the case of *Maxime*, the structure is often portable and can be taken down for the barge to sail under low bridges. The wheelhouses are usually connected to the main living spaces via a set of steps (Plate 3.11).



Plate 3.9 '*Maxime: Collapsible Wheelhouse*' (2018) Sutton S

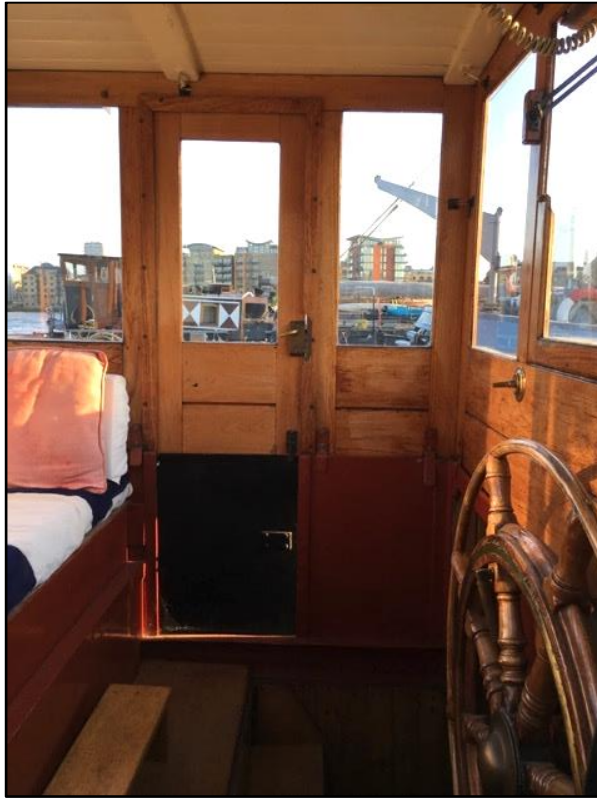


Plate 3.10 *'Maxime: Wheelhouse Interior/Threshold Entrance to the barge'* (2018) Sutton S



Plate 3.11 *'Maxime: Steps leading from the wheelhouse to the main accommodation'* (2018) Sutton S

3.3.3 Vessel Exterior

Although the vessels under consideration are those that have come to the end of their working life, barge owners usually aim to maintain the original appearance and function of the vessel's exterior. Of course, for many, it is a practical issue in terms of being able to sail and maintain the barge in working order. However, the importance of the historic nature of the ship is often also a fundamental part of ownership (see discussion below) and in some cases a condition of residing at a specific mooring. Key external vessel features, in particular, include the original hatch boards (Plate 3.12), which are then covered with a tarpaulin (not original) that covers the cargo hold area, anchors, winches (Plate 3.13), the sailing rig (where appropriate) and lee boards (used in a similar way to a keel).



Plate 3.12 *'Maxime: Historic Exterior Original Hatch Boards covered with tarpaulin'* (2018) Sutton S



Plate 3.13 *'Maxime: Historic Exterior Original Anchor Winch'* (2018) Sutton S



Plate 3.14 'De Walvisch (1896) Dutch Klipper with Dutch monument status'
Note the lee boards. Courtesy of Zatorski A

3.4 Modification by owners and the process of conversion

Although it is now possible to buy a working boat that has been fully converted and adapted for modern dwelling, the interviews suggest that, for many, converting a barge is a fundamental part of owning a vessel. A discussion highlighting the processes of conversion, provides a more nuanced explanation of the relationship between the attraction and demand for the distinctive lifestyle choice of residing afloat. Several common factors emerged to reveal the allure of converting a barge into a home. As early as 1918, Lonides pointed out that,

A sea-going vessel is a real home, a property with privileges attached, and a solution to a difficulty (Lonides, 1918, p. xiii).

Among the respondents, the attraction of buying an unconverted boat was high. They felt, as the owners, that they were responsible for determining the outcome of their own living space in response to individual aspirations, tastes and budget. Most regarded the undertaking as a project, requiring a financial commitment and a personal

investment of both time and labour. A common misconception was the amount of time needed for the process. One respondent claimed that his boat was in a perpetual process of conversion since there was always work that needed to be carried out. Whilst many cited an ambition to complete within a year, in reality, it often took several years. It all depended on the time and money available. The process of working sporadically, in step with personal circumstances, seemed to be the norm. Therefore, other than personal ambition, taste, finances, and safety requirements⁶, there are no restrictions (i.e., building regulations) on how an individual might set about converting the space. Moreover, the fact that the space is highly adaptable and flexible, offers the potential for it to be designed to suit individual lifestyles, an aspect highly valued amongst owners (Plates 3.15/16).

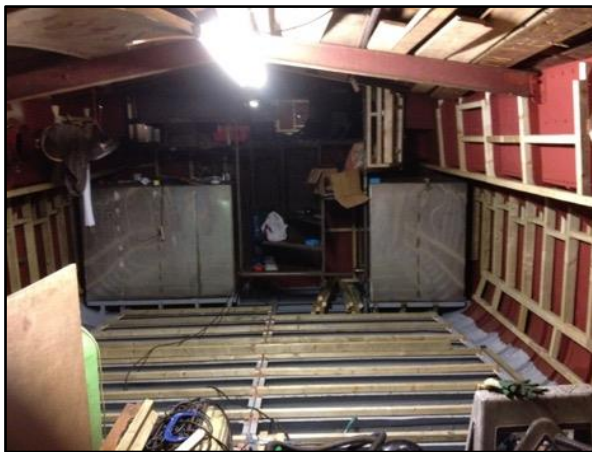


Plate 3.15 *'Nooit Gedacht (1927) Luxe Motor. 'Raw Space'*. Courtesy of Huddleston J

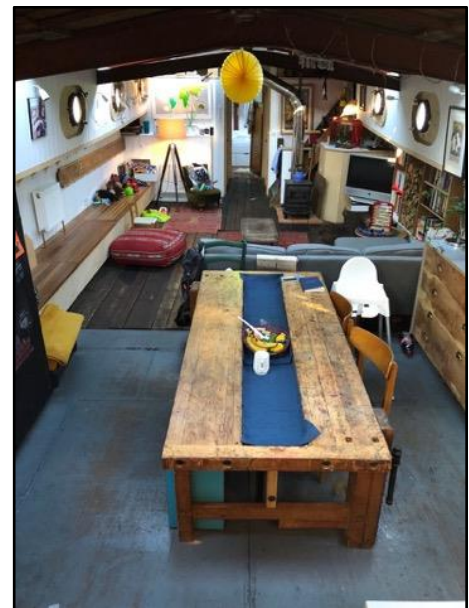


Plate 3.16 *'The Converted Space: Modern living room and kitchen area'* Courtesy of Huddleston J

However, labour does not just consist of an idea of self-build, design and transforming the interior. An essential requirement of the process is a willingness to engage with the

⁶ Since 2012 it is mandatory for powered vessels to comply with essential minimal safety legal requirement via the Boat Safety Scheme. A certificate includes inspection and compliance of fuel, electrical systems, fire extinguishers, LPG systems.

practical elements of day to day dwelling afloat, which are a major difference between life on board and that on land. It could be argued that those afloat have a heightened awareness of the consumption of the basic utilities needed for dwelling purposes. Part of the conversion process requires individuals to acquire an intimate knowledge of how each of the utilities: water, heating, and electricity operate and impact on daily life. These include the regular emptying of waste tanks, filling up water tanks, and checking ropes. Lack of attention to these tasks can quickly result in adverse consequences. For example, a major concern throughout the winter months is the potential for the water in the tanks to freeze, leaving residents without water for cooking, washing or toilets. Practical engagement with the knowledge and workings of all the vessel's systems has a financial benefit, in that it reduces the dependency on tradespeople to carry out routine maintenance.

Conversion is not just about modernising the space and its qualities to provide home, equally important (and a common factor amongst barge dwellers in general) is their passion for 'old boats'. This manifests itself in various ways and could be distinguished in both a practical and romantic sense. On a practical level, as already noted, the aim of maintaining the historic exterior is usually fundamental to the working of the ship as a sailing/motoring vessel. The historic element is maintained, not just in terms of the physical barge features (both interior and exterior), but as a form of continuity with a bygone era; these vessels provide a multitude of connections with various aspects of a now distant maritime past. For many boat owners, dwelling on board is seen as a way to preserve their boats for posterity (to the best of their ability): ensuring a new lease of life for valuable historical artifacts that would otherwise have been scrapped after being decommissioned. This passion for preservation manifests itself in various other

ways, such as owners maintaining or recreating the physical authenticity of the vessel where it is achievable, affordable, and practical,

You know they weren't originally from this vessel, but they are originally off another vessel ... you know they have got provenance... these are genuine cargo lights.

We have put bits of other history into the ship, I mean it's not its own history.

But it's about kind of keeping it, well in keeping as an idea, again, as a fluid thing because you don't want to live in a museum (Zatorski, 2018, Field Interview 018, Sutton).

I think, you know, boats have that lovely sort of fluid kind of history [...] having those imagined stories, even if we don't know the true history of this particular vessel, I think through clues and observation of various things around the boat and on the side the original boat we can picture ideas and we have inherited lots of stories about other vessels of this age. So, I think you always have a sense of some kind of legacy within the vessel when you have a historic boat.

Some of the stories are so fantastic, you don't want to examine them too closely (Cottis and Timms, 2018, Field Interview 017, Sutton).

Tracing the history of the vessel according to respondents is important, in that it gives a sense of inheriting a particular past, and thus a continuity with former maritime connections (Plate 3.17). This often involves acquiring any manner of historic documents that can be passed from one owner to another, along with oral stories of a ship's past.

This connection with the past does not apply just to boats. Zukin suggests that loft buildings reflect a deeper occupation with space and time; the idea that industrial space is romantic, in that it harps back to the loss of a bygone era. She suggests that the loft structures reflect a time when 'form still identified place rather than function' (Zukin, 2014, p.59). Furthermore, industrial spaces are more interesting than post-industrial apartments and offices with the physical structure of their facades, constructed

between 1820-1880, adding to their appeal. Although the development of loft living in London in the 1980's came about under a completely different set of circumstances, Hamnett and Whitelegg (2007) point to the role of the historic architectural features (Art Deco in this case) that contributed to the appeal of new ways of living. They argued that these newly converted residences presented an unusual opportunity for a particular lifestyle to be associated with the building itself.

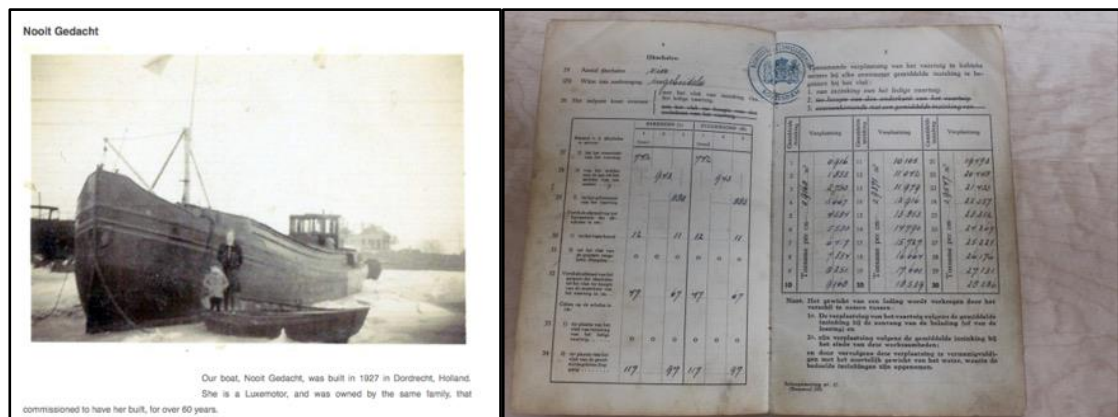


Plate 3.17 'Nooit Gedacht (1927) Historic photographs and documents acquired with the barge'. Courtesy of Huddleston J

It could be argued that the passion with which owners associate themselves with the maritime history of their vessels, demonstrates the romantic appeal of connecting them with the bygone era of a maritime past, in this case the loss and transformation of the working river. The allure of dwelling afloat is not just about the space available. Living in a converted historic vessel presents an alternative and unusual lifestyle, one that is associated with the vessel and the particular place, in this case, the river setting. On a more practical note, maintaining the historic nature of the vessel, usually requires a willingness on the part of the owner(s) to acquire a particular set of skills and knowledge that relates to both their barges and the wider riverine environment. Importantly, the romance of living afloat does not just dwell in the past, the idea of freedom, the ability to set sail and travel away at any time, is strong allure. Although interestingly, for many

dwelling on boats in the city, this more often than not remains a dream rather than a reality.

Economic factors are also key determinants in choosing to live afloat. Converting a vessel for residential purposes, in response to the ongoing issue of dwelling in the city centre, has been, and remains, a decision that has financial motivation. During the early 1960's/1970's, boats were reasonably cheap to purchase, which encouraged conversions. Latterly, costs have increased. Many suggest that the conversion process today requires considerably greater personal financial investment than previously. Moreover, loans and mortgages are now rarely available, for either buying a residential boat or for covering conversion costs. Additional costs, once avoided by being 'off the radar' or provided cheaply, such as mooring and service charge fees, are now (in some cases) charged at a premium. However, despite this, living on the river is still seen as a more affordable option. A major consideration of those interviewed for the purpose of this research, when thinking about living on the water, was the comparison with the cost of living on land in central London. The space afforded on board will always be cheaper than its equivalent on land, in central London, where a two-bedroom flat can cost up to 1.2 million pounds. The appeal of owning a home in order to be able to work, with relative ease of access to employment, and life in the city, is a key factor in the choice to purchase a boat. For the majority of boat owners interviewed, it is the only available option to own an affordable home within the city centre.

Well, it's not much cheaper but we certainly wouldn't be able to live in SE1 if it wasn't for being on the moorings (Huddleston and Pullen, 2018, Field Interview 021, Sutton).

However, unlike living on land, the amount spent on boats cannot necessarily be considered an investment. Living on water can be associated with several risks, from one's boat sinking (if not properly maintained), being hit by another vessel, through to the possibility of eviction. Without a mooring, most converted boats substantially lose their value.

3.5 The Appeal and Demand of Life Afloat

The overview of the evolution of river dwelling, combined with an examination of the appeal of conversion, suggests that whilst the attraction of living afloat is a combination of factors, the foremost reflection on this form of dwelling is that it provides a solution to the difficulty of finding a place to live in London. This overarching issue of affordability, caused in part by the housing crisis, has forced people to seek alternatives; one of these is to live on the water. However, what is also evident, is that this type of lifestyle only appeals to a minority of people. Even though boat owners can fashion a life according to their individual preferences, have the flexibility to design their own living spaces, and the freedom to come and go at will, dwelling on a boat is often hard, and insecure. A survey cited in Gabor (1979) offers interesting reading, in that it identifies the social characteristics of river dwellers by vocational breakdown (Table 3.1).

River Dwellers by Occupation	% of residents	River Dwellers by Occupation	% of residents
Artistic	10 %	Engineering/Technical	16%
Managerial/Civil Service	10%	Skilled Trades	10%
Teacher/Nurse/Social Worker	12%	Sales/Public Relations	9%
Clerical	9%	Student	4%
Unemployed /Retired	4%	Other	10%

Table 3.1 'Vocational Breakdown of River Dwellers'. Compiled from Gabor, 1979, p.96.

I think it is fair to say, that the assumption that life aboard attracts ‘unconventional and transient’ people, is probably fuelled by the media (these assumptions are examined in more depth in the next chapter) and based on the notion of a bohemian lifestyle of those that resided at Chelsea in the early years. Then, as now, it is far from the norm. Although it has not been possible to obtain contemporary accurate demographic data, the field work carried out during this study, confirmed a range of vocations and ages.

Gabor’s 1979 survey listed the reasons for choosing to live afloat in order of preference. He found that they included: a love of river life, interest in boats, economic necessity, a desire for privacy, but also for community spirit. (Community and river life are aspects of dwelling that are examined in the following chapters). The survey concluded that the houseboat dweller is not a wandering nomad with no job, living in a badly maintained boat. On the contrary, he/she is a ‘useful citizen’ living on the river through his/her own choice, staying in one place, “maintaining the boat and contributing to society through work” (Gabor, 1979, p.96). Evidence from examining the evolution of dwelling afloat and the conversion process, indicate that this remains the case today. The recent interviews (conducted during the field work in 2018), suggest that there is perhaps one major difference from the original survey; housing and affordability are consistently cited as a key factor (over and above other reasons), as to why people move on to the river. It is clear, that the urge to seek alternative modes of affordable dwelling, in no small part, predominates over the joys of converting and/or maintaining the vessel, and its associated lifestyle.

In summary, the findings demonstrate that owners attest to the enjoyment of the DIY nature of converting and maintaining their 'raw spaces'. They strongly identify with the historic attributes of their dwelling, which in turn are associated with romantic ideas of both past and present notions of freedom. While the large open interiors of converted vessels allow for individual personalisation, barge owners largely prefer to preserve their historic exteriors. This maintains the practical function of a working vessel, but also establishes a connection with the maritime past, thereby creating a hybrid form of dwelling. Re-purposed vessels are not the only type of transport to be converted into a dwelling. It is interesting to note in this context, that the concept of a vehicle providing a form of dwelling is discussed in detail by Alan Wallis (1991) in *Wheel Estate: The rise and decline of mobile homes*. Tracing the evolution of mobile homes over the period of sixty years, he examines the processes that have influenced their form, use and meaning. Starting with the 1920's/1930's he outlines the major innovative changes that by the late 1950's had transformed travel trailers into mobile homes. Like ex-working boats, they provided an alternative form of dwelling in response to a demand that conventional forms of housing were unable to meet. Prior to the modern boxy type of mobile home, travel trailers were a type of housing built like a car. In both cases, the hybrid nature relates to the external physical characteristics of the vehicle or vessel, with the liveable aspects of a home being provided for internally. According to Wallis, during the development of the trailer from a (primarily) camping space to housing accommodation, the manufacturers intentionally associated new innovations with the Industrial Age. They borrowed ideas from shipping, railroads, and airplanes as they strove to produce a model that could be lived in all year round. Over the years, they evolved from trailers into dwellings, albeit ones that happened to be mobile. By the

1970's, twelve and half million Americans were living in converted trailers, with specialist manufactures predominant in their transformation into mobile homes.

However, despite similarities, such as the need for cheap accommodation, and the innovative repurposing of previously used space, the phenomena of living on ex-working boats differs in many respects. The numbers involved are much smaller, and the commercialisation of the repurposing process is largely absent. Technologically, dwelling on boats has not particularly evolved. Almost universally, boat owners undertake their own conversions (although there are small companies who now specialise in this area). However, in terms of unconventional housing, they do share similar traits, i.e., modes of transport, use and perceptions. Neither boat nor trailer are a house in form, yet they both provide an alternative form of residence, in response to housing problems. They provide a type of shelter which is mobile, but more latterly depend on having a place to park (in the case of mobile homes) and to moor up (in the case of the river Thames). In addition, (as will be seen throughout the thesis), perceptions towards those that live in these types of dwellings has changed over time. The contradictory status of both trailers and mobile homes is a problem shared with river dwellers on the Thames and will be discussed in some detail in the next chapter. Vehicles as homes, have often been a source of conflict and prejudice. Concerns over their appearance and safety are pre-dominant among local permanent residents. The alternative dwellers are often seen as a blight on the neighbourhood and liable to impact on housing prices. According to Wallis, the unconventional status of trailer dwellers and their lifestyle, in the early days, was seen to be "a threat because it is different" from the norm (Wallis 1991, p.21). However, over time, as the status of this type of dwelling became more regulated, perceptions changed, and it became more acceptable.

Nonetheless, a key attraction in purchasing these mobile forms, such as trailers and ex-working boats, was and remains today, their relative affordability and availability opposed to other forms of housing. Ex-working boats that have not been modified, remain an inexpensive option to buy, and can still be repurposed relatively cheaply, utilising the owner's skills. In the case of trailers, Wallis (1991) suggests that in the early days, where the transformation of the vehicle into home was carried out by the owners, that the aim was to both personalise the living space and make it more acceptable. Furthermore, he advocates that adaptability is fundamental to the experience of dwelling. In the case of residing on board a boat, it is perhaps possible to extend this notion of the dwelling experience. Here, it is not just a case of being adaptable and or flexible, dwelling requires a commitment from owners to a lifestyle that necessitates an engagement on a daily basis, with both the interior and exterior of their homes and the environment in which they dwell. Therefore, it is a 'differentiated form' of dwelling; one that is far from passive, and conforms to the idea that the act of dwelling is a form of appropriation which consists of,

[...] taking control of, becoming familiar with, investing with meaning, cultivating, and caring for, and displaying identity with a place or an object (Perla Korosec-Serfaty, 1985 cited in Wallis, 1991, p.159).

The connection between appropriation, and its association with identity and place, is explored in more detail in the coming chapters. In this case, however, appropriation is seen as an act of dwelling, and is summed up by the following comments,

Living on your boat you are committed to staying afloat, all the work on your boat is substantiated by the state of your boat, sink or swim. (Postle, 2016, Totally Thames Interviews).

We definitely poured three quarters of our heart and soul into this boat and if we left there would only be a quarter of us left. (Jamie and Frankie, 2018, Field Interview 021, Sutton)

In this way, both ex-working cargo boats and the water's edge, demonstrate how it was possible for a group of people to materially appropriate ex-working boats and the river as a place to dwell. Inhabiting, as suggested by Henry Lefebvre, is a creative work, one that enables individuals to organise and transform space according to his/hers' own tastes and patterns, in a way that conforms with their own cultural model (Stanek, 2011). The river, on the other hand, as a place to live, can be understood, not in the sense of owning it, but "making it as an *oeuvre*, making it one's own" (Lefebvre in Stanek, 2011, p.89).

By examining the elements of converting a vessel into a residential space and looking at why this form and the practices associated with this lifestyle are attractive to a small number of city dwellers, the characteristics of life afloat suggest that it is very different from an 'ephemeral existence' for transient people. It is one that requires a considerable commitment to the physical/material nature of the home, thereby making it possible to reside, and create an alternative space (*an oeuvre*) to remain within the capital.

3.6 Summary

Ostensibly, the hybrid nature of the dwelling is fundamental to the attraction of living on a converted barge. This particular 'differentiated form' of dwelling, is one in which it is possible to fashion lifestyle practices that both incorporate and meet with the notions of freedom. These are expressed in a variety of ways; the flexibility to determine one's own living space (the interior), with the freedom to come and go (the exterior as a

functioning vessel) as one pleases (although the interviews suggest that the majority tend to stay in the same place for most of the time (At Chelsea the majority are static). These factors, in turn, meet with the ideals, form (re-purposed boats) and daily practices (life afloat) that combined solve the problem of affordability.

By tracing the evolution and the growth of various enclaves alongside the specific nature of dwelling afloat, it is possible to suggest that whilst both the appeal and the demand are directly related to the difficulty of housing in London, it can be argued that the process of converting working boats falls into a tradition of converting industrial and commercial sites for post-industrial use. However, the extent to which the supply of redundant vessels and associated disused maritime industrial sites fuelled demand is difficult to determine.

The usefulness of comparing this type of dwelling with *'Loft Living'* by Zukin (1989), is that she argues that the appropriation of old urban forms needs to be understood within the context of the wider processes of change, from industrial to post-industrial land use; that is by finding new uses for unoccupied or under occupied buildings. Accordingly, lofts can be understood as the physical counterpart of the economic and political transformation of city centres. These findings suggest that while the authorities turned their back on the River Thames in favour of post-industrial re-development along the riverbanks, a small group of city dwellers, in an ad hoc fashion, appropriated both redundant barges and a neglected river as a 'space(s)' in which they were able to take control. Here, in response to a particular difficulty, they created a 'different' vernacular form of dwelling and lifestyle that suited their needs; one that resisted the dominant modes of dwelling in the city.

Just as lofts are the physical counterpart that reflects structural changes in urban, national and international economics (Zukin, 1989), it is proposed that re-purposed vessels could be considered the physical counterpart of maritime de-industrialisation. They (in part) embody the transformation of the industrial to post-industrial river, by providing a home for approximately one thousand residents. Of course, due to the very small numbers, river dwelling is clearly on the side-lines of these processes of change. However, it was exactly here, on the fringe, that in response to encroaching demands on the river and its banks that the edge became charged with both tensions and possibilities,

...land was beginning to have a value which began to impact on those that dwelt on the river. Suddenly people were threatened with evictions and therefore began to organise themselves on an ad hoc basis as the situation began to change (Taylor, 2016, Totally Thames Interviews).

This chapter has concentrated on data that has illustrated the material aspects of dwelling afloat. In the process, it has argued that the act of dwelling afloat is a form of appropriation and resistance which has enabled a small group of people to produce an alternative mode of dwelling in the city. Ideas of resistance are further developed in the following chapters, by looking at the wider forces of change that began to impact on the everyday lives of river communities. Focusing on the community aspect of life afloat, the following chapter analyses the campaigns and tactics involved in the fight for the right to remain afloat. This in turn, reveals the complex nature associated with contemporary river dwelling and life on the edge.

4. Rivers of Resistance: Community Dwelling on the River Thames

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined the idea that repurposed working boats, used as dwellings, evolved in response to a shortage of housing in London and as a consequence of maritime de-industrialisation. It was argued, that during the early years, scant attention was paid to either the river or those that lived upon it. Likewise, the wharves, warehouses, and industrial power plants along its banks, lay silent and abandoned. However, when the built environment along the water's edge became the focus for urban regeneration, the situation began to change dramatically. The Totally Thames respondent in the last chapter, drew attention to a key issue that was to impact on river dwellers; land along the riverbanks had begun to incur a new value. To make way for new riverside developments, several communities were threatened with eviction and felt compelled to organise themselves (Totally Thames, 2016). Increasingly, river dwellers found themselves at odds with the authorities. This resulted in a series of conflicts that can be traced back to the 1970's, and have been ongoing ever since (Hansard, 1975; Totally Thames, 2016).

This chapter examines the possible threat and loss of floating communities on banks of the River Thames by investigating the tensions that have occurred along the edge of the river. This is achieved by analysing and interpreting the data from the interviews (field research and Totally Thames), along with a range of media articles and planning documents within the context of the case studies. It is hoped that by drawing upon different methods to gather different types of data, it has been possible to uncover the key actors and how the differing power relations impact on river dwelling.

Drawing on specific sites the analysis evaluates the river's edge as a site of urban struggle to suggest that whilst the banks and the river have been re-imagined, appropriated, and transformed time and again by dominant economic and political forces, these changes have not gone uncontested (Tonkiss, 2005; Pinch, 2015). This is achieved by moving the focus away from the individual dwelling to include the immediate surroundings, in this case the moorings, as means of uncovering the complex inter-relationship between habitable boats and the water's edge. Despite individual buildings remaining at the heart of Vernacular Studies, the advantage of studying houses within their landscapes is that it is possible to reveal the broader issues that are related to the type of dwelling and its connections with the wider society (Hayden in Groth and Bressi 1997; Hudgins and Collins Cromley, 1997; Carter and Collins Cromley, 2005; Oliver, 2006). Therefore, the mooring (understood here to be the equivalent of the neighbourhood) around which community life centres, is considered alongside a more in-depth investigation into a range of issues associated with river dwelling to unravel why life afloat is often and continues to be a precarious existence.

Ideas that shape communities take various forms, but manifest themselves particularly in what they build, utilise, and maintain (Hudgins and Cromley, 1997). Within the context of the Thames, the moorings are significant structures that shape the routines and experiences of daily life and the community itself. The interviews suggest the idea of living as part of community is a key factor in choosing life afloat. Therefore, as a prelude to the detailed case study, both the tangible and intangible elements are examined as a means of identifying the key characteristics that contribute to the notions of community life on the river. The aim is to provide the background behind how river

dwellers define themselves through their buildings (boats and moorings) and immediate riverside surroundings (Hudgins and Cromley, 1979). This will be used to address the community aspect of life afloat, a reoccurring theme found across the data. The following examines how community practices shaped by the spatial layout of the moorings bind people together sufficiently strongly to propel them to take collective action in defence of their homes when necessary.

This is followed by two case studies that are investigated to uncover the specific forms of contestation and resistance that arise between a range of competing interests. Drawing in the first instance upon Charles Tilly and Sydney Tarrow's (2015) idea of "contentious politics", defined as "interactions in which actors make claims that bear on someone else's interests leading to co-ordinated efforts on behalf of shared interests [...] (Tilly and Tarrow, 2015, p.7), the analysis considers the various competing claims. The conflicts in which river dwellers have been involved are scrutinized by studying the site(s) of contention, a detailed examination of the specific claim(s), the actors involved, the repertoire of actions taken i.e., the tactics of resistance and the outcomes to illustrate how competing claims represent struggles over urban space and the politics of everyday life (Tonkiss, 2005).

The analysis of this form of contentious politics provides insight into not just the specific tensions that have taken place but also hints at the wider processes of change that lie behind them. The findings demonstrate how a particular group, in this case river dwellers, have struggled in response to a range of competing demands that have impacted on their daily lives in an attempt to achieve some control over their own urban environment (Prujit 2007, in Domaradzka 2018). By studying the history of the urban

conflicts and how they were/are resisted it could be argued that riverine communities politicise urban space, in this case the river's edge, in terms of ownership, access, uses and meanings (Hayden in Groth and Bressi, 1997; Tonkiss, 2005).

By taking this approach, the themes of community resistance and urban struggles are investigated to address the limited literature that critically evaluates the impact of urban waterfront transformation on local communities. The findings highlight and assess a range of issues that both challenge and resist the rapid dominant development along the banks of the River Thames. It is the contention of this thesis to propose that by evaluating the river and its banks as site of urban struggle, it is possible to identify a pattern of conflict that represents the changing role of the river in response to a range of urban demands, which by extension, have ultimately changed the relationship between the city, the built environment, and the river. Moreover, it demonstrates that these struggles are indicative of the complexities of city dwelling in which the various interests have competing visions of city life that can be the mainspring for political action (Lefebvre, 1996; Hayden, 1997; Tonkiss, 2005; Harvey, 2013; Leary-Owhin and McCarthy, 2020).

4.2 A Sense of Community on the River

According to one respondent, the idea of community on the River Thames can be understood in two ways. On one level, there is a general community of all people that live along the length of the tidal river and have occasionally come together in an ad hoc manner to solve particular issues, for example when the PLA increased mooring fees (Wren, 2018, Field Interview 003, Sutton). In addition, community refers to individual

enclaves in which a group of people live together. Comments gathered from the interviews suggest that a major appeal of this lifestyle is the shared experience of living on a mooring and how this in turn reinforces a sense of community that is often lacking on the land.

The idea of community is a complex and multifaceted concept and is associated with many different meanings that reflect a variety of research methods and approaches (Bauman, 2001; Crow and Mah, 2012; Delanty, 2003; Thorns, 2002). Therefore, to provide some insight into the idea of the meaning of community within a riverine context, the research draws upon a study that examined ideas of how to apply an understanding of community within a similar context. Some of these ideas are then combined with the literature from the field of vernacular architecture in order to outline how the concept of community has been used within this research.

In 2015, four Masters' students undertook a study of Houseboat Living on the Seine. They investigated the conditions that contributed to the idea of community amongst houseboats at multiple locations along the Seine. They examined the relationship between a shared sense of identity that is attached to a particular place and the associated lifestyle. The findings established a typology of houseboat spaces i.e., from single moorings to enclosed ports and enclaves, that reflected a diverse range of community experiences. They examined different approaches to the concept of community within the field of sociology as means of determining the factors that created a shared sense of place. Whilst they concluded that it was not useful to rely on one definition, they did draw out some commonalities that were useful in corroborating their empirical work. They identified key elements that could be used to define

communities and in doing so pointed to both the inter-relationship between neighbourhood and community. Their study interpreted the neighbourhood to be a geographically and physical area that delineates the territory in which a community resides. Within this, communities are “networks of people who share common ties, a sense of belonging, common mores, values and norms” (Chapdelaine *et al*, 2015, p.3).

Within the field of vernacular architecture, territory is not just associated with neighbourhoods and landscape, but also includes an understanding of the different ways in which buildings play a role in defining communities. An important theme within the scholarship is to examine how buildings and their spatial organisation convey the identity of a community sense of self (Carter-Hudgins, Collins Cromley 1997). This study, therefore, limits its understanding of community to include both buildings (barges), a delineated and a defined territory (the mooring), the social structure/network of the those living on a mooring, factors effecting social ties (or bonds), and how these relationships fostered a common consciousness, or sense of purpose, that made it possible to take collective action in the face of eviction (Thorns, 2002).

The following attempts to capture how the spatial layout of the moorings frames and relates to the structure and practices of social life afloat, as a means of engendering a set of common values and aspirations shared by river dwellers to create a shared sense of community.

Drawing upon these terms, it is possible to briefly interpret the importance of community within the context of the River Thames as a means of understanding why it is a major draw for people choosing this lifestyle and the key factors that contribute to

the very strong ties that bring people together to act collectively particularly in the face of external threats to their way of life.

Interviews conducted as part of this research project (Field interviews, 2018) as well as those by Totally Thames (2016) and a survey cited in Gabor (1997) suggest that the idea of living as part of a community is a significant factor in choosing to live afloat. The following comments provide a sense of why this might be so,

...people living on boats have a lot in common and therefore form a kind of vibrant community perhaps more readily than in other forms of housing (Lacey, 2016, Totally Thames, Life Afloat Interviews, Tower Bridge).

I love the community as well and you get that vibe straight away (Pullen, 2018, Field Interview 02, Sutton).

I guess there's probably a hundred people living here. So, in a big block of flats you might have a hundred people and I reckon you might know your immediate neighbours. I'd say we probably know 90% of the people that live here (Huddleston, 2018, Field Interview 021, Sutton).

...a real sense of family and community is another appeal to living on boats, you do get to know your neighbours very well, there is a sense of safety to that. London is quite a hard place to live in, so if you can move some-where and get that sense of community, and get to know your neighbours, I think that is quite unusual (Totally Thames, 2016, Life Afloat Documentary).

If, as these comments suggest, the type of dwelling is a key feature of the commonality that both attracts and binds river dwellers together alongside notions of knowing one's neighbours, what other factors contribute to the establishment of community life?

Dolores Hayden (1997) points out whilst the dwelling itself is the basic form of habitation, they are often clustered together to form neighbourhoods; in the case of the River Thames, boats are grouped around moorings, which form the physical structure around which community life is centred. According to the Port of London's website, the

majority of those living on the river, live in enclaves on moorings along the banks of the Thames. Although there are differing models, in the main the physical mooring structure lies at the heart of community existence and is inherent to the nature of river life (there are examples of communities where the boats moor alongside the bank and therefore do not have a central mooring structure).

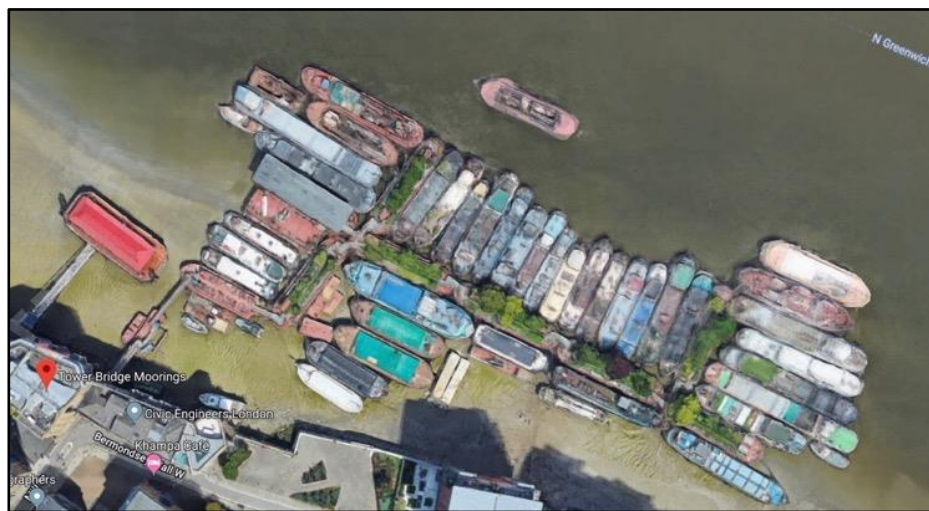


Figure 4.1 'Tower Bridge Moorings. Note how the garden barges (green) aka as collar barges provide the backbone of the moorings, the physical structure for barges to moor alongside'. Google Earth Images accessed January 2020.



Plate 4.1 'Hermitage Community Moorings, Wapping. The pontoons provide the physical structure, the neighbourhood that enables the boats to moor side by side' Courtesy of Hermitage Community Moorings

To reside on the river, it is necessary to have obtained a licence from the PLA that grants permission for a mooring. The issuing of licences is complex and outside of the bounds of this study. However, to obtain a licence the site must have access to land, and then depending on the circumstances, there are several ownership models that determines who holds the licence. The length and cost of the licence and security of tenure for instance differs from mooring to mooring. Access to the shore can also complicate matters, in that, ownership of the land can be held by a third party, the Riparian Owner. The land may have to be leased with typical ownership including private property companies, church estates, and/or the local council. Access can be through a boat yard, a private garden, or various points along the Thames Path. A gateway and a gangplank are the physical structures that connects water to land.

There is no one typical mooring, however in the main, the physical structure consists of pontoons (Plate 4.1), (or as in the case of Tower Bridge Moorings, collar barges (Figure 4.1) that enables several barges to berth alongside and a bridge that connects to the land. They are equipped with the necessary utilities which provide access to water, electricity, and telephone for residential use. In several cases, the mooring houses some form of community space, that can be used by members for personal and or social/events (see individual case studies). Additional facilities can include bike parks, kitchens/showers for visiting boats.

Based on the interviews, the following describes the experience of dwelling on various moorings to suggest that the spatial nature of the mooring contributes to the social dimensions of community life. It could be argued that this contributes to a sense of a

cohesion that underpins this way of life in a variety of different ways. Although the moorings cited in this thesis have different forms of social structures in the way they are governed, including private ownership and community owned, common to both, the interviews suggest a strong sense of social interaction. This assumes many forms and operates at various levels but seems to be founded upon an overwhelming sense of friendliness and camaraderie amongst river dwellers. As noted earlier, in the first instance, the commonality of boat ownership underpins this form of social cohesion,

You cannot leave boats alone. So, when you have anything to do with boats you are dependent on other people, you do need to have people to back you up the whole time (Totally Thames, 2016, Life Afloat Interview, Tideway Village).

“If one boat moves, we all move,” (Plate 4.2) says Teresa Lundquist, who manages the moorings – an observation testament to the closeness of the community here. Although Teresa is quick to point out that it’s not intrusive. *“Everyone maintains their privacy, so it’s a very good balance”* (Lundquist, (2016) Totally Thames Life Afloat Interviews, Tower Bridge Moorings).



Plate 4.2 *‘If one moves, we all move. Comment by Lundquist T ‘(2018) Sutton S*

The nature of being tied to a berth requires people to consider their neighbours on a daily basis. This can range from checking each other's ropes to helping neighbours come and go from a particular mooring, to sharing nautical knowledge and maritime expertise. These physical demands give rise to both shared practices and the creation of body of knowledge (nautical and practical) that both necessitates and enables shared interaction between inhabitants. On some moorings this extends to the sharing of individual resources, including the swapping of skills, which can range from providing childcare for one another to exchanging plumbing for carpentry. Of course, social life differs from community to community. Interviewees comments, however, allude to a high level of social interaction. This includes helping neighbours, a notable number of social events, individual community rituals and open days for the public in which everyone is expected to help.



Plate 4.3 'Tower Bridge Moorings: Community Space - The Arts Ark'. Courtesy of Lundquist T, Moorings Manager.

Just as there is no one typical mooring so there are no typical residents. In 2011, a PLA survey found that people from all walks resided on the river, which seemingly helped to contribute to the sociability of river life,

Yeah, it's really nice that everyone of all different ages and backgrounds all hang out together (Pullen, 2018, Field Interview 021, Sutton)

The community may be close, but it is also diverse. We have the Noah's Ark of professions here," says Teresa with a smile. Doctors, journalists, photographers, IT people, a chef, and a famous novelist (Lundquist, 2016, Totally Thames, Life Afloat Interviews, Tower Bridge).

In some cases, shared ownership of the mooring can add to the identity of a community particularly where members manage and maintain the moorings themselves, thereby taking all responsibility for the day to day running of the site. It could be argued that the somewhat transient nature of life afloat seems a contradiction in terms, with living on barges appearing to be the anthesis of a community life. The aforementioned infers that both the form and fabric of the mooring, along with the social bonds, underpin a strong sense of community. Moreover, it is these factors that attest to a sense of cohesion which is based on the sharing of common values centred around not just dwelling afloat but the aspirations of many river dwellers to locate themselves within what Barrett describes as an *"old fashioned community which is something that London is losing. We are in the centre of the city but in many ways, it is like living in a small village"* (Barrett, 2003, p.4). These contemporary accounts articulating the importance of different aspects of community life, seem to concur with Gabor (1979). He comments on the strength of social cohesion found within floating communities is a key element that empowers them to *"vigorously defend their space; they are at their best when taking on the establishment"* (Gabor, 1979, p.7).

Taking on the authorities for a variety of reasons has been a key part of river life since the early 1970's and is still ongoing today. Whilst the various conflicts have been alluded to in both this research and the Totally Thames interviews, there has been no systematic review of either the types of struggles and how they manifest themselves, or the causes underlying them or how they have changed over time. A key part of the research was to

chronologically document the conflicts that have occurred over. This was achieved by creating an archive of media sources. A detailed analysis of the different sources pointed to a pattern of tensions that have occurred on the River Thames between river dwellers and the authorities from the 1970's to the present day (Appendix G). Crucially, by analysing the tensions, the findings suggest that whilst individual community problems may have been resolved, river dwellers remain vulnerable to the vicissitudes of the prevailing authorities. Drawing upon media sources, official planning documents and interviews, the following cases are examined in detail to proffer a deeper understanding of the complex nature of this lifestyle. The data from the methods chosen, in conjunction with the specific case studies, bring to the fore fresh insight into the types of issues encountered from a range of competing interests and perspectives, the causes, the campaigns, and how individual conflicts have been resolved.

Although various communities along the River Thames have resisted the possibility of eviction since the 1970's the two included here are representative of a range of issues that have been part of life afloat for many river dwellers. The case of Tower Bridge Moorings provides an in-depth study into the complexities of living on the river from a variety of perspectives. Nine Elms and Tideway on the hand draw attention to developer's attitudes towards river dwelling.

4.3 Contentious Politics along River's Edge: The Claims and the Campaigns

The two mooring sites are examined chronologically between 2003-2011, to unravel the issues that are constant throughout and those that have changed over time. The analysis considers the various competing claims, the resulting campaigns of resistance, how they

were expressed, tactical choices and the repertoire of actions taken, wider support and how the goals of the collection action were achieved. Combined, these differing aspects of the claim(s) ultimately reveal the effectiveness (or not) of various types of resistance, but as Tilly and Tarrow point out “claims do not happen randomly, they take place in response to and from surrounding regimes, cultures and institutions” (Tilly and Tarrow, 2015, p.111).



Plate 4.4 'Tower Bridge Moorings: upstream towards the City' Courtesy of Lundquist, T Moorings Manager



Plate 4.5 'Tower Bridge Moorings: downstream towards Canary Wharf' Courtesy of Lundquist T Moorings Manager.

Tower Bridge Moorings, one of the oldest river communities, is located approximately half a mile downstream from Tower Bridge on the south side of the River Thames adjacent to Bermondsey Wall West, part of St. Saviour's Dock Conservation Area (Plate 4.4/4.5). The privately-owned site, comprising of a series of ground anchors and chains in the riverbed, was acquired in the early 1980's which according to the owner has been in existence since the first half of the 19th century. Prior to the 1970's Bermondsey was an industrial area that lay heart of the London's maritime trade. During this period small ships were still very much part of river life as they came and went delivering food stuffs including spices. After a period of industrial decline and disuse during the 1980's and 1990's, the neighbouring derelict warehouses (built c. 1850-1890) were converted into luxury apartments, offices, and restaurants, thereby preserving the character of the area whilst retaining a strong relationship with the river (Southwark Council, 2003, St. Saviours Dock: Conservation Area: Conservation Area Appraisal).

The history of the site accommodating commercial vessels for a variety of purposes can be traced back to the 19th century. The wharf originally owned by the W.H. Downing and Son family was a shipbuilding yard occupied by shipwrights and boat builders (Ellmers and Werner, 2000, p.144). Photographs document the fact that barges were constantly moored on the foreshore for commercial purposes. Later photographic images depict the decline in use of the site for lighters during the 1960's/1970's along-side the derelict warehouses.

The mixed-use mooring consisting of (now) some thirty former working vessels is home to around one hundred people, including barge owners as well as those who rent (usually) a room in a barge. Most of the barges are historically significant and are from

all over Europe. Popular types include Dutch Barges (both sailing and motor), Thames Barges and Lighters, Selby Barges, and a Humber Keel.



Plate 4.6 ‘Collar Barge with roof garden’ (2018) Sutton S

The infrastructure consists of nine-collar barges, which are converted Thames Lighters (Appendix A). The roofs have been made into gardens with walkways that are interconnected to individual residential barges, storage barges, community spaces, such as the Arts Ark (Plate 4.3), a communal area for social gatherings and events, a cycle park, and the shore. They have been especially designed to expand and contract with movement of the river.

An article in London’s Landscape Newsletter describes the moorings as a “superb example of river based urban regeneration”. The author, Lucinda Blythe, mentions that she was captivated by the “quirkiness and inventiveness” of the moorings suggesting

that is a “thoroughly contemporary space, with sustainability at its heart” (Blythe, 2013, p.8). At the same time, she points out that the very existence of the moorings has been under threat since the early 1980’s.⁷ In her concluding remarks she highlights the possibility of London losing a unique floating site on the River Thames as the owner prepared to battle yet again with the Port of London Authority.

In July 2003, local residents, whose apartments overlook the river, claimed that the barges impaired their view. Persistent letter writing resulted in gaining support from Southwark Council’s planning department who also took issue with the mooring (Barrett, 2003). From Southwark council’s perspective the moorings were in breach of planning with the key issue centred on whether a commercial mooring can simply be switched to residential use. Support for this view came from the Port of London Authority who contended that moorings not only needed planning permission but a licence as well (Barker, 2003). More specifically they argued that the barges compromised the safety of commercial vessels navigating the river (Barrett, 2003). Enforcement notices were pinned onto the masts of the barges thereby giving the river dwellers a three-month eviction notice.

The claim(s) involved several parties each with differing and conflicting assertions. On the one hand the owner of the site was in opposition with the authorities, including the local council’s planning department and the PLA, over the legal interpretation/understandings of the physical mooring site which comprises of a series

⁷ The evidence for this study has been drawn from exclusively from the Appeal Inquiry (solely to highlight differing perceptions over the same space) held between 2nd March and 20th July 2004, and the final Appeal Decision given by Mr. A. Kirby, Inspector for the First Secretary of State.

of anchors and chains that are attached to the riverbed. Competing interests were expressed by both residents on land and on water with the former wishing to protect their views of the river. They expressed anger at the intrusion of the barges within their view of the river and the noise from the moorings. On the other hand, river residents, lacking any form of rights or security wished to continue living on the water, which they argued proffered a solution to the affordability of dwelling in the city. Moreover, community life offered the benefits of living in an old-fashioned village, the nature of which was fast disappearing under the weight of London's rapid urban regeneration, particularly along the banks of the Thames. Centre stage is the river itself which on the one hand, onshore residents claimed their right to an interrupted view of the river, which enhanced their investment values of their property. On the other side, according to the riverine community, the 'spirit of the river' which included the presence of the historic barges as dwellings, was in danger of being lost and turning into an empty space other than minor commercial traffic and leisure boats.

The specifics of the claim are rooted in the legal perceptions of the riverbed and the moorings in addition to the question of whether the site required planning permission to convert the moorings from commercial to residential use. This alongside competing claims of the presence of the moorings themselves in relation to the river, resulted in a series of tensions between different users. It was these tensions that ultimately drove each of the parties to set in motion a repertoire of actions, which according to Tilly and Tarrow (2015) include a range of collective interventions that brought attention to the claims from a variety of perspectives.

From the owner's perspective, he pointed out that the physical moorings are not readily understood in legal terms, which in turn led to various disputes with the authorities. House prices and views are the key concerns of residents who lived in the waterside apartments who resisted the idea of a floating community. Their complaints were two-fold arguing, firstly that their view of the river had been impaired, by some referring to the riverine community in rather derogatory terms such as, 'water rats', and a 'floating gypsy camp', suggesting that "Buyers feel they bought their flats for a riverside view and now they haven't got it" (Nick Stanton Southwark Councillor in Barrett, 2003, p.3).

This perspective was supported the local council who also argued that the boats "are visually detrimental to the surrounding area" (Barret, 2003, p.3). The second allegation, backed by local estate agents, proclaimed that the investment in the riverside apartments was at risk. They suggested that the view of the barges obstructing the river view could devalue their homes by as much as ten per cent as the boats were regarded as an eyesore. These claims were in opposition to the position of the river dwellers who argued that they could not afford to live in London if it were not for the moorings. Riverside apartments sold for around £400,000.00, ten times the cost of a barge. Affordability was a key issue for river residents who felt that although they lived and worked in London, urban regeneration had led to a shortage of affordable housing, "We have been priced out of the property market" (Barret, 2003, p.3).

However, whilst life afloat may proffer a solution to the affordability of city centre living, unlike other house dwellers, those that live on the water have no security of tenure, nor legal protection or rights which inevitably leads to insecurity (Williams, 2004). This is compounded by the fact that there is a shortage of residential moorings in London, and therefore if evicted, it would be hard to find alternative residential locations for each of

the barges. Notwithstanding these issues the river dwellers felt that their way of life was worth fighting arguing in favour of the moorings as a place to call home. Additionally, residents felt that not only did boats belong on the river they also created a sense of communal life which was in danger of being lost in London:

Living on a boat is a way that you can be a part of an old-fashioned community, which is something London is increasingly losing. We are in the centre of the city, but in many ways, it is like living in a small village (Williams, 2004).

Residents also felt strongly that this way of life exemplified the 'spirit and nature of the river'. They wanted to maintain a maritime spirit that they felt was dying out. Slowly, they argued, the River Thames was becoming a place that people either viewed, crossed over, or was used by a handful of leisure craft.

The differing claims, each with their own experience and vision of this urban space, led to a series of actions that were driven by a set of competing interests in which the river played a crucial role. These competing claims attest to the different tensions that can emerge between river dwellers, the authorities and those that live on land. The mechanism of resistance to the dominant powers is examined by exploring the campaign that the residents mounted to highlight their predicament.

Together, the moorings resident's association, along with the owner, set out to refute the claims against them. The 'Save the Moorings' campaign included raising the profile of their plight in the media, along with garnering support from both the public and local Bermondsey residents, high profile individuals and political support from the local Liberal Democrat MP, Simon Hughes and the then Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone. Political support for dwelling on the river was grounded in notions of lifestyle choice and diversity. The politicians sided with the local community to save the diversity and

liveliness of the boats as they add to lifestyle choices and bring colour and life to the river (Inquiry Appeal, 2004).

Working together, the different tactics underpinning the campaign resulted in the right to a process of mediation, and the right to appeal, which delayed the eviction notices whilst the matter went to a Public Inquiry. The Inquiry took place between March and July 2004 and in September 2004. It found in favour of the Moorings thereby quashing the eviction notices. The Inspectorate granted planning permission for a mixed purpose site including “residential, business, barge repair, mixed live/work and for the berthing of vessels during the course of navigation and the retention of attachment of tyre beds” (Inquiry Appeal, 2004, p.22). However, the permission was subject to specific condition that adhered to planning compliance and needed to be completed within a specified timeframe.

Finding in favour of the moorings, the Inspectorate’s conclusions clarified and resolved some of the claims but not all. Given that this case exemplifies a range of issues that impact on river dwelling the following takes a more in depth look at the various outcomes and opinions of the Inspectorate. These in turn shed light not only on the complex nature of living on the water and but also began to draw attention to the range of competing visions on the role and meaning that the river within a post-industrial urban context. The underlying elements of the campaign were those that exposed the problems associated with the wider issues of urban regeneration within a riverine context. The transformation of the built environment along the banks of the river now began to replace the derelict and disused industrial maritime buildings with new luxury apartments and offices. This in turn raised the question of increasingly unaffordable

housing in London. To complicate matters whilst the riverbanks were beginning to attract the attention of the planners and developers as prime sites ripe for redevelopment, an examination of these tensions suggest that the River Thames, which had been ignored by both the authorities and developers alike up until now, began to emerge as part and parcel of the contestations.

In the last chapter it was suggested that because of maritime industrialisation there was a decline in use of the river for industrial purposes. This led to several prominent commentators, including architects (Graham Morrison, Clive Wren), journalists (Rowan Moore), the then Mayor of London Ken Livingstone, photographers (Mike Seaborne, Charles Craig, Graham Diprose), and museum curators (Alex Werner and Chris Ellmers), advocating that the city had turned its back on the Thames:

...the river is a "bit like the family dog", familiar, loved but a bit neglected. It suffers from administrative neglect (Travers, 2016)

...but generally speaking, I think the river was neglected and not really thought much of (Wren, 2018, Field Interview 003, Sutton).

An examination of the claims and campaigns indicate that not only was the role of the river in a state flux, but that it was, emerging as a source of conflict. The claims demonstrate that differing relationships with the river i.e., legal and planning issues, a place to dwell, a view, and an investment, have resulted in competing perceptions over the river, its use, and its meaning. The tensions that arose between the moorings, the authorities, and the private apartments owners, highlight issues of tradition versus change as new uses were sought for built environment along the banks of the Thames which by extension included the river, with the "redevelopment of the old port areas altering the bond between city and water" (Malone, 1996, p.2).

The 1960's decline of the Port of London was reversed in 1981 by the then Conservative government implementing a programme of regeneration financed with free market policies and supported by changes in planning policy (Malone 1996; Breen and Rigby, 1996). The analysis suggests that the problems encountered at the moorings were part and parcel of the rise in power of private property interests with the change in character along the banks of the Thames altering the relationship with the river. This in turn resulted in both the water and its edge becoming a 'competitive space' thereby creating points of tension between policy makers, development corporations and a variety of community users (Breen and Rigby, 1996; Rubin 2011).

The findings suggest that the redevelopment of the river frontage resulted in market led residential property interests, with the support of the local authority, attempting to dominate the relationship between the city and the river. To achieve their aims, they attempted to displace the local floating community, which according to both Breen (from the perspective of developing waterfronts across the globe) and Gabor (1997), the loss of floating communities was not unusual as the drive to develop waterfronts for the benefit of private developers gathers pace. The evidence from these findings, concur with both authors that tensions arising from competing interests with respect to water, the most public of resources, is likely to increase (Breen and Rigby 1996; Gabor 1997).



Plate 4.7 'Modern Life: Bike Park' (2018) Sutton S

4.4 The Outcomes – Tradition versus Change

In this case, the moorings highlighted issues of tradition versus change that embroiled new uses for the built environment alongside issues ownership of the riverbed and the demise of its historical usage. The situation reflected different imaginaries for the re-use of the obsolete maritime buildings that lay along the water's edge combined with differing visions of the role of the river in the post-industrial city. From the PLA's perspective they highlighted issues of ownership in relation to the riverbed and questions of licensing. The local authority asserted that the site was a change of use, and therefore they tried to evict the river dwellers under the auspices of the site not

conforming to planning requirements. Whilst the owner achieved the right for the moorings to remain, work had to be undertaken to ensure that the site conformed to various conditions including the change for residential purposes. Additionally, the moorings had to conform with planning guidelines. Although the apartment dwellers could not have their private view of the river taken into account, the problems of noise

and privacy were addressed by the mooring's owner having to somewhat restructure to the moorings to comply with separation rules.

From the river dwellers perspective, it was recognised that their daily lives revolved around community life. It was similarly seen that the boats and the moorings themselves contributed not only to the river view, but also provided a focal point of interest that was a welcome distraction from the modern flat developments. i.e., it was agreed that the moorings were an integral part of the wider river scene. "They do provide a maritime flavour close to arguably the historic heart of maritime centre as a trading nation, which has not been lost through conversion to residential use" (Appeal Inquiry, 2004, p.14). In addition, the Inspector noted that their "character and appearance are "ad hoc, individual, and even unexpected" (Appeal Inquiry, 2004, p.14).

The moorings offered an affordable place to live in the city centre coupled with the sense of belonging to an old-fashioned community neighbourhood. Although this point was not specifically considered during the proceedings, the Inspectorate understood the impact of his decisions on the local community. He therefore considered their right to live in their homes, alongside the impact of removing the barges from the site with all the ramifications that would have on their rights to their chosen lifestyle. The Inspector recognised that any decision he undertook would impact personally on those that lived on the river. Their position was considered within the context of the European Convention of Human Rights Act and a deliberation on the idea of 'home' and how it related to those that dwelt on the river. The pertinent points of the Act include the right to your lifestyle, and a right to enjoy you existing home peacefully. Protocol 1, Article 1 protects the right to enjoy your property peacefully, while Article 8 includes the right to

respect your private and family life, which cannot be taken away by a public authority without very good reason.

By highlighting their plight via the media, alongside garnering political support of both the London Mayor and their local MP, residents and the mooring's owner gained the support and encouragement that enabled them to protect the community's way of life. Their ability to organise and lobby empowered them to challenge not only the authorities but the perceptions of those that considered this type of lifestyle to be an unacceptable form of dwelling.

Ultimately by tracing the various elements of the campaign it has been possible to examine in detail differing experiences over the use and meaning of a particular city space, which in turn have alluded to a wider range of urban problems, including affordability and the destruction of neighbourhoods within the city centre. This suggests that the unifying elements of the campaign and the differing perspectives have exposed problems that relate to and are a consequence of rapid urban regeneration within the specific context of river i.e., the transformation of the built environment along its banks. The replacement of the maritime buildings with luxury apartments and offices are part and parcel of the broader economic and political transformation of the post-industrial city. These, alongside the social impacts, will be discussed in more detail in section 4.5). The following briefly examines the conflict and riverside development from a slightly different perspective. In this case, access to the land at the water's edge that became contentious, although the community were in possession of all the necessary permissions.

In 2010, Tideway Village with their neighbouring residents from Nine Elms Pier (Vauxhall, South of the Thames) joined together to ward off St. James Property Development Corporation. These two small thriving communities had begun to populate the old disused gas work sites at Nine Elms during the 1980's, with those at Tideway Village occupying a nearby dock. Although both sites are next door to each other, they are two distinct separate communities. The former was set up in 1992 after protracted legal undertakings with several of the boat owners coming together to take ownership of the site to provide safe access, the pontoon moorings and generally manage and grow the moorings.

Tideway Village was founded in 2001 after the necessary approvals had been obtained, in this case, permissions were needed from the Riparian owners, i.e., the old coal works, Wandsworth Council for planning consents, the PLA and the Environment Agency. However, even after having set themselves up within the bounds of riparian rules and regulations, some ten years later both communities found themselves at odds with St. James Property Development Corporation (subsidiary of Berkley Homes) as the Tideway Estate was sold to the developer. Specialising in building riverside luxury properties, the company had already successfully evicted river dwellers from another site. Here, they tried to replace the two communities with a floating garden as part the development site, thereby offering amenable river views to the new inhabitants of the luxury apartments. The developers had held a consultation with the local onshore residents but had neglected to invite the river residents who were excluded from the process. The two communities joined together to resist potential eviction from a site in which they were legally occupying. As residents of the river, they wished to know why they were being made homeless, as surely the barges added to the character of the area. They also

wanted to know if any alternative sites for relocation were being offered. They argued that their two riverine communities offered the only form of affordable housing within the locality.

The claims again were complicated. At Tower Bridge Moorings, the ownership of the riverbed and the legality of changing the use of the mooring from commercial to residential underpinned the problems. In this case, although the legality of dwelling on the river had been established back in 2001, St. James now owned the two-foot concrete wall on the riverbank that enabled access to the moorings. So, although the community had a formal agreement for the right to moor up, suddenly they could not access the shore because the ownership of the river walk had been sold onto to new landowners.

As in the earlier case, the Tideway river residents set about fighting for their right to stay. Likewise, the campaign tried to raise awareness of their plight in the media, lobby MP's and the local council. Tactics to garner support included a petition that was handed into the local authority which gained well over 2000 signatures, the establishment of a blog, a campaign action day, and hosted open days in which the public could interact with boat owners. The campaign also found support from the Mayor's Office, who once again "recognised the unique nature of the houseboat communities" (Totally Thames, 2016, Nine Elms).

One of the boat owners conceived a publicity stunt to deliver a petition to the chairman of the development company. Dressed up as the Cadbury's Milk Tray man, he delivered a petition to argue that the boats attract a form of amenity value. Furthermore, the two communities drew up alternative plans to include the boats alongside the gardens,

I want to show how one can turn the dock into a harmonious, aesthetic, garden and water life feature, whilst retaining the boats. St James's original idea was to replace us with a large floating island. We will attempt to take the initiative to show what a special space this could be with Berkeley's help (Daily Express, 2013, p.2).

Eventually the developer gained planning permission for the site on the condition that provision was made for the barges to remain at the site.

4.5 Resistance from the water: the river as home versus the interests of property investment

These two examples are indicative of people and institutions with differing perceptions of use and ownership making a variety of demands on the same space within the city. In this case, the river and its edge are the site of contention between differing imaginaries of not just the built environment along the banks, but that of the river as well. The claims in both cases highlight a series of actors, actions, and tactics of resistance from all parties with their competing claims resulting in political action over space and power along the lines of division and difference within the city (Tonkiss, 2005). Resistance centred on issues of ownership, from anchorages on the riverbed, to river views, to land ownership at the water's edge. It reflects both the economic and political forces relating to the transformation of the built environment along the banks of the Thames that have led to a social change in use. Emerging from a time when the maritime industries prevailed with capital investing in the necessary structures (wharves, piers, warehousing etc), de-industrialisation led to the search for new forms of development and capital in the form of luxury apartments and offices. Despite the power of the dominant neo-liberal forces assisted by both developers and planners, by analysing the struggles, it is possible to reveal the aspirations of ordinary people. The

case studies demonstrate that it is possible to challenge the dominant forces and appropriate space at the water's edge (Rubin, 2011; Pinch, 2015).

By examining the sources and types of conflicts and the resulting forms of collective action, it has been possible to identify the key challengers, the opponents, and the role of the various parties involved. This has led to the identification of the key issues that underpin the various claims, suggesting that riverine communities reproduce a specific form of political agency that politicizes urban space (Tonkiss, 2005). This is expressed in the form of specific issue related campaigns and tactics that links "the claimants, the object of the claim and a public of some kind" (Tilley and Tarrow, 2015, p.111). In both cases the two riverine communities fought to remain and live on the water. This was achieved by enlisting the help of the media to garner wider support from both the public and politicians. In both cases a range of tactics including performances were undertaken to raise the profile of their plight, the aim of which was to find a way of creating an emotional connection with a wider public audience for their respective predicaments.

According to Tilley, these groupings can be understood as social movements i.e., collective action by groups sustaining campaigns related to specific claims, that utilize a range of repertoires that advertise the claim, the networks using a range of tactics to achieve their aims. Dwelling on the river has grown organically with different communities responding to differing conditions over time therefore it is not possible to suggest that they form a cohesive social movement. However, the evidence suggests that individual communities and their respective struggles do mirror the changing nature of urban conflict(s). Given their claims and actions, they could be considered as one of the many increasingly diverse and fragmented forms of urban movements that

have emerged in response to city inhabitants coming together to collectively achieve their goals. In particular, in the aftermath of post-industrial development and increasingly in response to the neo-liberal policies of the late 1980's that had had a negative impact on local communities (Mayer, 2012). In the case of river dwellers, the various enclaves have not come together in response to the range of claims made against them, however over time, most communities along the banks of the River Thames have been compelled to engage with issues that are urban at their core and reflect the problems that impact on their daily lives within a specific locality (Domaradzka, 2018).

According to Totally Thames, from a riverine perspective, collective action can be traced back to 1974, when barge owners began grouping together to stop developers removing them from old industrial sites to build offices and apartments. Coincidentally (or not) it was around this time that saw the emergence of social movements and the introduction of collective action connected to issues of housing and rent increases. Although the idea of social movements and their definitions have changed over time, more latterly they have been referred to as urban movements. These are essentially groups of inhabitants that joined together to resist powerful forces with the aim of achieving some control over their urban environment (Brenner et al, 2012; Castells, 1983; Domaradzka, 2018; 1983; Hamel *et al*, 2000; Harvey 2013; Tonkiss, 2005). In other words, they have taken collective action in response to issues that have emerged with the aim of a protecting a particular space or place. According to Tonkiss such controversies include the lack of affordable housing, the growing privatisation of public space and gentrification. She argues that urban challenges are becoming increasingly political in response to the imbalance between stakeholders and matters of diversity.

In some ways, perhaps it should come as no surprise that river dwellers in central London have come under pressure. Philip Pinch's (2015) article points out that London is at the very centre of neoliberal urbanisation and market led residential and commercial redevelopment and investment, a sizable proportion of which is taking place along the banks of the London's iconic river frontage. He comments on how the water's edge has been privatised at the expense of other claims, in terms of river usage, meaning and identity in the wake of the rise of luxury apartments and warehouse conversions that have accompanied grossly inflated riverside land values. He identifies waterfront regeneration schemes as key spatial expressions of the social and economic restructuring that can be considered a global success story for neo liberal urbanism.

However, whilst he supports the idea that these development schemes are built forms and expressions of power, along with land ownership and the paramount rights of property, he advocates that these city transformations have not gone uncontested. They are resisted by various groups who challenge established uses and rights over ownership to make embodied claims of freedom of the city or in this case the river.

Whilst the idea of the city has long been considered a terrain of urban struggles in a variety of forms, in which citizens attempt to appropriate specific space(s) and/or place(s) there has been very little study of the water's edge as site of contestation. The inclusion of riverine communities seeks to readdress this balance. River dwelling within this specific context can also be understood within the wider context of who and what the city is for, and as such is a matter of diverse social, economic, and cultural concern:

...these competing claims open up conflicts over space and power, with lines of division and difference in the city as different people's rights result in conflict over the meaning and use of public space (Tonkiss, 2005, p.63).

However, this thesis attempts to extend Tonkiss's idea to suggest that it is not just the built space at the water's edge that is the site of urban struggle, it is increasingly the river itself which is becoming the object of political space as well as the medium.

At the heart of the scholarship that critically evaluates global urban struggles is the continual question that asks; what type of city do people want to live in? (Brenner et al, 2012; Harvey, 2013; Minton, 2017). In both these cases the answer is in part provided by the communities themselves and the politicians who supported the riverine communities and moorings as places to live. Living on the river offers an affordable lifestyle in opposition to the ever-increasing unaffordability of living on land which is exemplified by the rapid development of the luxury apartments. Additionally, moorings offer a place to live in the city centre which by common default endeavours to replicate notions of an old-fashioned community, and thus a sense of belonging. This is something that for many is difficult to find in the rapidly changing city. Today, Tower Bridge Moorings, for instance, is a thriving community that has withstood the test of time. As Teresa Lundquist, the moorings manager points out,

The mooring of this kind is a special place, it is not just the location; One hundred people living on the boat, including cats and children. They all have one thing in common, the love of water, the river, the sea. People arriving when they are young, (renting) they have then gone on to buy their own boats, and now returned and are having their own families. (Lundquist, 2016, Totally Thames).

Moreover, within the wider context of urban transformation, both the (then) Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone and the Liberal Democrat MP believed that the city and its river

should reflect a diverse range of lifestyles to ensure that they (the city), and the river do not become sterile spaces. As suggested by Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diana (1999) and borne out by the findings, particular lifestyles can and do frequently become the stake of conflict and citizen's rights. The right to remain on the river provided the call to arms in which the river played a crucial role. Additionally, according to Domaradzka, the role of urban activism can act as a source of identity and belonging for urban dwellers, possibly replacing the disappearing traditional structures of family or close-knit community support. The adverse impacts, including the homogenisation of lifestyles and the deteriorating quality of urban life, along with the scale and the pace of city transformations has resulted in all manner of conflicts and concerns resulting in a rise of urban activism (Harvey, 2013).

The proactive response by inhabitants to the problems associated with city transformation lies at the heart of Henri Lefebvre's and David Harvey ideas associated with the 'right to the city'. They both argue that citizens need to act together in the face of the negative impacts of neo-liberal urbanism. Lefebvre, in 'Writing on Cities' (1996) called for inhabitants to oppose the domination of the logic capital that lay behind the transformation of cities. The 'right to the city' is on the one hand a protest, and on the other, an idea, a possibility, a way of rethinking urban space beyond the control of capitalism and one in which inhabitants are meaningfully engaged within a web of social connections. The traditional city had been eliminated by uncontrolled capitalist development paying no heed to the social, political, or environmental consequences. His critique on the transformation of urban life centred on the negative consequences impacting on the daily lives of citizens. The destructive nature of urban renewal includes the homogenisation of the city as it seeks to absorb all differences, the alienation of

people from the processes of urbanisation which in turn led to fragmentation, segregation, and inequality, with little attention being paid to the needs of the people. The 'right to the city' is therefore a cry and a demand; the urban is all around us and for Lefebvre that is what constitutes revolution, one that requires acts of resistance and creation, when inhabitants rise up and reclaim space in the city (Lefebvre, 1974, 1996, Brenner, Marcuse and Mayer, 2012; Harvey, 2013; Purcell, 2013).

David Harvey (2013) in his criticism of neo-liberal urban models advocates a revolutionary call to arms suggesting that the strength and the power of the dominant capitalist forces, along with their exploitative structures, must be overthrown and replaced. The adverse impacts of modern urbanization have resulted in increasing polarization of distribution of wealth which are "indelibly etched into the spatial forms of cities" (Harvey, 2012, p.15) around the globe (Zukin, 1993; Tonkiss, 2005). The hegemonic protection of private property over the last thirty years has resulted in dividing and segregating the city into different spatial zones. Against this background Harvey, questions whether it is possible to reshape the city in a different social image to that given by the dominant powers of authority (developers, corporate finance, the state) thereby giving rise to an urban alternative. For him the alternative is underwritten by a right to the city as a "means to claim some kind of shaping power over the processes of urbanization, over the ways in which our cities are made and remade and do so in some fundamental and radical way" (Harvey, 2013, p. 5).

Since the 1990's there has been a rise in urban activism with people seeking to address the detrimental impacts of neo-liberalism on the deteriorating quality of everyday life. People have joined together around shared objectives to oppose a range of issues

including affordable housing, neighbourhood destruction, an increase in the privatisations of space, gentrification, social exclusion, and marginalisation; all problems that impact local life in a myriad of ways and affect the contemporary experience of being in the city. As notions of urban identity and belonging are becoming harder to sustain in the face of the wider processes of change, urban initiatives, focusing on needs and conflicts, have arisen to protect specific places and spaces. According to Harvey the rise of urban activism, in the form of oppositional alternative practices, is evidence that people are trying to reshape the city in a different social image from those in power.

In this case it is not possible to distinguish which came first i.e., boat dwellers came together to form an enclave in response to threats from post-industrial regeneration or they lived in communities that then responded to specific problems. Nonetheless, seemingly the identity of river residents is predicated upon specific characteristics and commonalities of life afloat which it could be argued, in turn strengthens social cohesion amongst boat owners in which the willingness to take collective action to preserve their way of life is part and parcel of community identity and life on the river.

4.6 Summary

In this chapter the conflict between different groups has been evaluated to understand the issues confronting the two river communities threatened with eviction. The underlying tensions that, according to Gabor (1979), are part of the insecurities of living on the river, were investigated to identify how urban demands were impacting on river the daily life of river dwellers. This was achieved by describing in detail how and why specific competing claims resulted in political action, the purpose of which was to

identify the key actors involved, the actions taken and the tactics of resistance. The research indicates that, key to the river dwellers success was a strong sense of community which empowered both groups to act creatively and mobilize themselves to take political action to counter and resist the challenges they were facing.

The findings suggest that the struggles centred on issues of ownership from anchorages on the riverbed, to river views, along with the river as an affordable place to dwell. They reflect both the economic and political forces that have led to a social change in the use of both the water's edge and the river itself. These issues are directly related to the transformation of the built environment along the banks of the Thames in conjunction with the decline of the working river. Patterns of use both along the banks and on the water itself during the period, indicate that the river was in a state of flux in direct response to the processes of change that were impacting on its role within the city from industrial to post industrial use. Despite both the opposition and the attempts of the authorities to evict the river dwellers, the inspectorate found in favour of the moorings (with caveats) and the river dwellers. He argued that re-purposed boats as dwellings reflected not only their setting, once heart of the nation's trading empire, but in addition they offered an important flavour of the maritime past. The barges contributed to the diversity of the riverscape and the experience of the conservation area.

The analysis of the competing claims resulting in political action over space demonstrates how power attempts to impose itself on space along the lines of division and difference with the city (Tonkiss, 2005). However, by reinterpreting the water's edge as site of urban struggle it has been possible to extend Fran Tonkiss's idea that it is not just the space, in this case the water's edge, that is the site of urban struggle, but

increasingly the river itself is becoming the object of urban spatial politics as well as the medium. This is supported by the identification of a pattern of conflict that represents the changing role of the river in response to a range of urban demands. The research proposes that by extension these demands have ultimately changed the relationship between the city, the built environment, and the river. It demonstrates that these struggles are indicative of the complexities of city dwelling in which the various interests have competing visions of city life which can be the mainspring for political action (Bird, 1993, Lefebvre, 1996; Brenner, Marcuse, and Mayer, 2012; Harvey, 2013; Domaradzka, 2018). Viewed within this light it could be argued that community dwelling on the river offers a form of urban dwelling that exists to resist the dominant forms of socioeconomic transformation of the city, particularly along the banks of the river.

The experiences of living on the mooring outlined in this chapter, promoted a small group to take matters into their own hands, and find a way to take control and address the problems that they had faced. The next chapter explores how they came together to collectively define a common goal that enabled them to act “and take control of their own environment” (Foster, 2008) to achieve their desire to live on the River Thames.

5. Re-imagining the Vernacular: The 'Right' to Dwell on the River

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter considered specific tensions, between river dwellers and those in authority, to demonstrate how power attempts to impose itself on space at the water's edge. This chapter considers the power of resistance and investigates how it is possible for river dwellers to have their say in the urban processes that shape their lives (Lefebvre, 1991, 1996; Harvey, 2013). Focusing on Hermitage Community Moorings (HCM), the case study examines the spatial layout of the mooring, along with data from interviewees (HCM residents), planning documents, HCM archives, and the film 'A Sense of Place' (Kew, 2011). The data is presented and interpreted through the lens of Henri Lefebvre's ideas on the 'right to the city' to reveal how a group of people acted collectively to "take control of their own environment" and appropriate an urban space (on the water) that met with their needs and desires to live on the river (Foster, 2008).

This chapter also considers the extent to which this form of vernacular, and its associated practices, demonstrate how it was possible for a small group to claim some influence over the processes of urbanisation. It examines how they were able to gain the right to city space, urban life, and the right to participate and engage directly with the production of space (Lefebvre, 1991,1996; Harvey, 2013; Leary-Owhin, 2020), to build a community mooring at the water's edge. This is achieved by combining the fields of Vernacular Architecture with the contemporary discourse of the 'right to the city', to interpret river dwelling within the context of ongoing urban struggles. The aim is to

provide fresh insight into the ability of ordinary people to shape their world, through building and dwelling, but also through urban politics. This thesis proposes that notions of 'agency' and empowerment, are inextricably linked to the ways in which people can participate in the processes of urbanisation, their right to the city and their ability to take control of their own (self-built) vernacular environment. It goes on to explore the role of knowledge, in this case vernacular know-how, as a form of political agency (Awan, Schneider and Till, 2011). Within the very specific context of the River Thames, it attempts to establish the extent to which it was possible for the members of Hermitage Community Moorings to challenge the authorities and win some ground over the 'dominant' political economic hegemony.

According to Marcel Vellinga (2006), the ways in which vernacular knowledge and experience may be used to respond to the challenges of the 21st century, has not received much discussion (Asquith and Vellinga, 2006). He argues that in response to the problems of urbanisation, mass consumption and the internationalisation of power and wealth, there is still a lot to be learnt from the knowledge and experience of traditional vernacular builders around the world. However, his emphasis is on what can be gleaned and appropriated from the achievements and shortcomings of vernacular traditions, and how they may be adapted to meet with these issues. This brings into question notions of 'traditional' know-how within a contemporary context. This thesis contends, that just as the emphasis on the vernacular is no longer about the past, so should notions of knowledge inherent in the production of the vernacular be updated according to changing needs and times (Wright, 2003, p.170 in Chang and Huang, 2005). The chapter explores the idea that knowledge is not necessarily handed down, or reliant

on past traditions, but instead needs to be constructed and re-produced by local communities who wish to participate in the contemporary production of space.

The first section of the chapter discusses the themes of appropriation and participation in relation to ideas associated with the 'right to the city', and how these might apply within a riverine context. It does this against the background of the lack of rights for river dwellers and seeks to understand the complex nature of living on a boat. As noted in the previous chapter, boats are legally seen as chattels and not property. Boat owners therefore do not have the same legal protections as those on land, even though their vessels provide them with a home. By way of contrast, this is followed by a detailed spatial examination of the mooring is undertaken as a means of demonstrating how it is possible for a community to take their future into their own hands by re-imagining how to appropriate space and build a new model community mooring; one that aims to address issues of insecurity of river dwelling and allows members to take control of their own environment. Built to meet the needs of a specific group, it will be seen that the mooring directly responds to the local environmental contexts and available resources, utilizing (where appropriate) traditional technologies. Customarily owned and community built, the physical structure and organisation of the group accommodates the values, economies, and ways of living of the community that produced it (Oliver, 2006). The analysis considers the similarities between Heritage Community Moorings and other community groups, that have taken matters into their own hands to find ways of dwelling in response to housing challenges. The discussion identifies common traits, shared with other land-based examples, that have culminated in alternative ways of producing space (Awan, Schneider and Till, 2011). The chapter concludes by utilising concepts from the 'right to the city' to interpret the role that vernacular knowledge or

'know-how' can play in resolving the underlying struggles and providing alternative solutions or imaginaries that respond to the challenges of living on the river.

5.2 The 'Right to the City' on the River

Although the main issue for river dwellers is the lack of rights and security of tenure, the concept of the 'right to the city' is not about addressing the problems associated with individual legal rights. Despite the myriad of interpretations, the umbrella term has the capacity to be utilized both theoretically and practically in an attempt to address the growing urban problems that have arisen as the result of de-industrialisation. It can be understood as both an intellectual idea and political ideal, a campaign slogan, and an administrative tool. The idea has been applied both theoretically and practically by scholars, activist groups and adopted by organisations such as UN (UN-Habitat, *New Urban Agenda working for a better urban future*, 2010) and UNESCO (2006), in response to a range of groups seeking alternative ways to dwell in the city (Marcuse, 2009; Harvey, 2013; Purcell, 2013; Leary-Owhin, 2020; Minton, 2017). Common to all, is the focus on the inhabitant or user of urban space, and an agreement that "the experience of inhabiting the city entitles one to a 'right to the city' (Purcell, 2013, p.142). Inspired by the work of Henri Lefebvre (1996), who initiated the concept, the expanding scholarship and diverse initiatives argue that the right to the city is a "means to claim some kind of shaping power over the processes of urbanisation, over the ways in which our cities are made and remade and do so in some fundamental and radical way" (Harvey, 2013, p.5). In other words, the right to urban space is the right to have some say in its production, to "change and reinvent the city in our hearts desire" (Harvey, 2013, p.5). The premise is based on principles of democratic control and participation

and is in response to the capitalist production of space, which according to Harvey implies some form of opposition or resistance. In *Rebel Cities* (2013), he poses the question; How can this be achieved in the twenty first century? This thesis re-orientates that question to consider the ever-changing needs and demands of those who inhabit the city and how the 'right to the city' may apply to the everyday experience of those that dwell on the river (Harvey, 2013; Brenner, Marcuse and Mayer, 2012).

Ideas pertaining to the 'right to the city' have not been used by any organisation or activist group associated with the river. Instead, the concept has been applied here as a tool to investigate and interpret both the problems and the possibilities and/or new imaginaries associated with river dwelling within an urban context. This has been achieved, in the first instance, by engaging with the exposure of problems or struggles confronting river dwellers (last and next chapter). This chapter utilizes the concept to examine the extent to which it has been possible for communities on the river to achieve some shaping over their environment to claim their "right to the oeuvre, to participation and appropriation" and to collectively create their city-oeuvre" (Lefebvre, 1996, p.174). Guided by the concepts of the right to participate and the right to appropriate urban space, the case study considers how it has been possible for a group of river dwellers to reimagine and engage with the production of their own built environment. Empowered by the experience of previous political struggles, the collective imagination of the group sought to forge a new 'spatial imaginary' to produce an alternative model of river dwelling. The following examines the vision and the practicalities that enabled the group to construct a new community mooring to suit their own imagination, needs and desires. Drawing upon Simin Davoudi's (2018) definition, that spatial imaginaries are

...deeply held collective understandings of socio-spatial relations that are performed by, give sense to, make possible and change collective socio practices. They are produced through political struggles over the conceptions, perceptions and lived experience of place... (Davoudi, 2018, p.101).

This chapter describes how the struggles of the past and the present made it possible to re-shape the future. The findings are evaluated to assess the ways in which the group were empowered to take control and claim their 'right to the city', and collectively produce their own '*oeuvre*' on the water's edge.

5.3 Built to Meet Needs: A New Imaginary - The Case of Hermitage Community Moorings

Just as the struggles encountered by river communities have evolved over time, in line with changing urban demands, the need for affordable housing, and demands of developers, so too have the solutions to the problems. Community control of moorings on the River Thames can be traced back to the early 1970's, with different models of ownership evolving in response to specific needs and environments. By the late 1980's however, as riverside developments began to affect communities on the water, the "fragility of things like mooring rights and permissions started to become more of a concern" (Totally Thames, 2016, Community interviews). River dwellers had recognised the need to group together in different ways to anticipate and counteract a wider set of problems. Today, there are now several different models of community moorings on the Thames. Although, these may differ in terms of structure and management, a common thread, is that community ownership has benefits for the members beyond the provision of security of tenure. It has fostered a collective responsibility that has seen residents democratically manage and maintain their moorings. This, along with a shared passion for living on boats on the river, has culminated in a high level of neighbourly

interaction. According to residents, these values, rooted in principles of self-management and collective participation, contribute to a strong sense of community, often lacking on land. Despite increased community ownership of moorings, the next two decades became a test of survival as the threat of eviction became more prevalent. Many of these communities tried to evolve in response to particular circumstances and whilst some succeeded, others failed. Meanwhile, the opportunity for people to develop a new mooring site of their own was becoming increasingly rare. However, one group of river dwellers managed against all odds to achieve this. In 2009 they celebrated the opening of a purpose-built mooring, Hermitage Community Moorings (HCM) (Plate 5.1) 300 metres down-stream from Tower Bridge. (Cottis and Tymms, 2018, Field Interview 017, Sutton). It had taken this group of dedicated barge dwellers six years to complete and was the first development of its kind on the River Thames for more than a generation. At the time it was seen as a model and a milestone for the future of river dwelling and a triumph for those seeking the right to live on the river in the city (Cottis and Tymms 2018, Field Interview 017, Sutton).



Plate 5.1 'Hermitage Community Moorings' Sutton S

The founding members of HCM, who had previously lived on Tower Bridge Moorings, had a collective experience of being involved in the campaign for the right to remain on the river (Cottis and Tymms, 2018, Field Interview 017, Sutton). This, along with the lack of security, the threat of eviction and the ongoing conflict, provided the inspiration for them to imagine how they might take control of their own destiny and create a secure environment that suited their own needs. Aspirations from the outset were driven by strong ideas of community, predicated on a shared a passion for living on the river and an interest in historic ships. In 2004, bound by their recent experience of dwelling at Tower Bridge Moorings and their direct engagement with the issues facing the community (last chapter), they embarked on a unique project with a “naïve optimism” (Cottis and Tymms, 2018, Field Interview 017, 2018, Sutton). Utilizing a range of complementary skills, it would take six years of struggle, perseverance, and hard work, for their vision, to create a new type of community mooring, to become a reality.

As with any project, there was no linear way forward, instead various factors came together at different points in time. There were several key elements that contributed to the success of the establishment of Hermitage Community Moorings. Given the history of conflict between river dwellers and those in power, the group felt that it needed to think differently. Instead of fighting with the various planning authorities and the Port of London Authority, they choose to work with them (Wainwright in Kew, 2011). However, as one member pointed out, it is often very difficult for river dwellers to understand and access the various maritime structures, personalities, and networks on the river. These include a multitude of managing authorities, complex riparian issues of ownership, law and customs (on land and water) and long-standing families who still work on the river and are seen in some quarters as ‘the guardians’ of the traditions and

maritime skills of the Thames. The involvement of HCM members in the public inquiry at Tower Bridge enabled them to build directly upon this experience to create a new network of knowledge and support.

This in turn allowed the founding group to engage with the necessary processes and procedures, authorities, organisations, and individuals (e.g., PLA, planning, lawyers, the Maritime Heritage Trust, the wider local communities) needed to build a new mooring. Although they were not a radically politically group, they were prepared to find the means to take action and challenge the status quo i.e., work with the authorities to find a way to change their situation.

As they were forging these relationships, the founding group were also cognisant of the ongoing changes to the working life of the river. They saw that apart from commuter clippers, tourist boats, waste barges, and the occasional cruise ship, few boats were using the Thames. This, coupled with the fact that access to the river for the public had become circumscribed due to development along its banks, meant that a large part of the port's maritime heritage had been swept away. These observations led them to contemplate how they might re-introduce, or at least preserve, some of the Thames maritime past for themselves, and at the same time make it available to the wider public to create something that had a meaning and use beyond themselves.

It was the group's passion for living on the river in historic boats, that introduced them to one of the Thames' most prominent personalities, Peter Duggan, who had worked on the river since the early 1980's (Kew, 2013). Born in Wapping, and one of the last old school Watermen, he is an expert on the river's maritime history and links with the past:

We're all born and bred on the river, we're family basically...well used to be...your brothers and fathers used to apprentice you as a waterman or lighterman...years ago. That what we all started off as: watermen, lightermen, journeymen, and we became tug skippers, mates. And then of course the industry was taken over by containerisation, and a lot more went on lorries, and the river went dead. This must be the deadest river in Europe...It's a shame because it's a lovely river and it should be used a lot more (Larsen, 2015, p.25).

Perhaps it was in recognition of this sense of loss, that he empathised with the group's cause and agreed to sell them the tug anchorage that he owned in front of Hermitage Gardens. It was his way of leaving a positive legacy for the inhabitants of Wapping (Lydiat in Kew, 2011). Spurred on by this opportunity and combined with a vision and commitment to secure their own future, the group set out to 'create their own oeuvre' along the water's edge at Wapping (Plate 5.2). Although they had not secured planning permission, they decided that it was a risk worth taking, and one that enabled them to draw upon their own skills, develop their new-found networks and set about turning their dream into a reality. The following description of the site, the structure and the planning process outlines how they set about the project.

5.4 The Development of the Project

"You cannot buy water" (Versteeg, 2018, Field Interview 010, Sutton). While the Crown Estate owns the riverbed, it is leased to the Port of London Authority who in turn manage the river and the foreshore up to the high-water mark. It is they who are the managing authority and they alone who issue licences for people to work and live on the river. The founding group had bought the commercial licence that belonged to an anchorage, on which there were a couple of pontoons that enabled boats to moor up. However, they still had to gain planning permission for change of use for the site, from

commercial to residential use, and negotiate access to the land opposite to put the necessary infrastructure in place to build the desired mooring.



Plate 5.2 *'Reimagining the dwelling space'* (2011) Courtesy of Kew D

Although there was support for the project from Tower Hamlets, the PLA, and the local population, the application was submitted against a backdrop of hostility from those who owned the luxury apartments overlooking the river. Many of these residents were vehemently against any form of development by (who they termed) 'river gypsies' in front of their apartments, as they feared it would spoil both their views and investment. At this time, both the founding group, the river authorities, and the planning regulators, were on a learning curve together, since the proposed mooring was the first to be developed in a generation. Because it was to be physically connected to the water, the riverbed, and the land, all of which were and remain a legal grey area, councils were struggling to unravel the complications of this type of project (Foster, 2008; Thomas, 2015). As one member pointed out, the water's edge has always been a fascinating legal

point and had long been the cause of dispute between river dwellers, developers and local authorities.

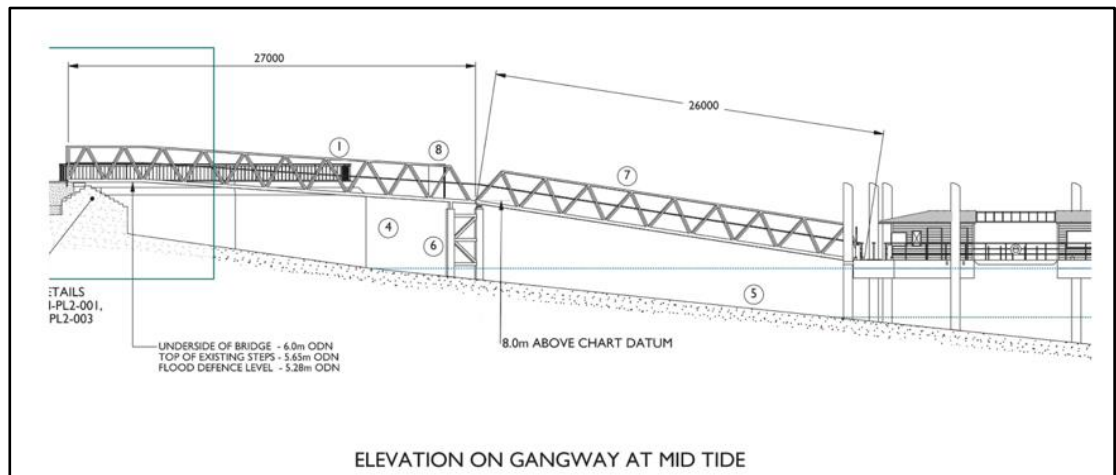


Figure 5.1 'Where the water meets land: The Gangway' Courtesy of HCM archives

It could be argued that the connection between the vessel and the water's edge, personifies both physically and metaphorically, the relationship between land and water, river dweller and authority. The years between submitting the application in 2004, and planning being granted in 2007, were (among other pressing needs) spent understanding this conundrum of how the river meets the land; where one begins and the other ends, and what licences and consents were applicable for something that is coming from the water and trying to attach itself to land (Foster, 2008). As seen in the last chapter, and to be discussed in the one to follow, the actuality of the connection between water and the edge can, and often does, determine the nature of the relations between river dwellers, authorities, and developers. This is the space in which tensions over issues and perceptions of ownership are played out. In this sense, it could be argued that the physical connection to the edge (Figure 5.1), whether bridge, gangplank rope or chain, represents a space of negotiation. In HCM's case, despite the technical challenges and complex negotiation it resulted in a positive outcome that allowed the project to go ahead.

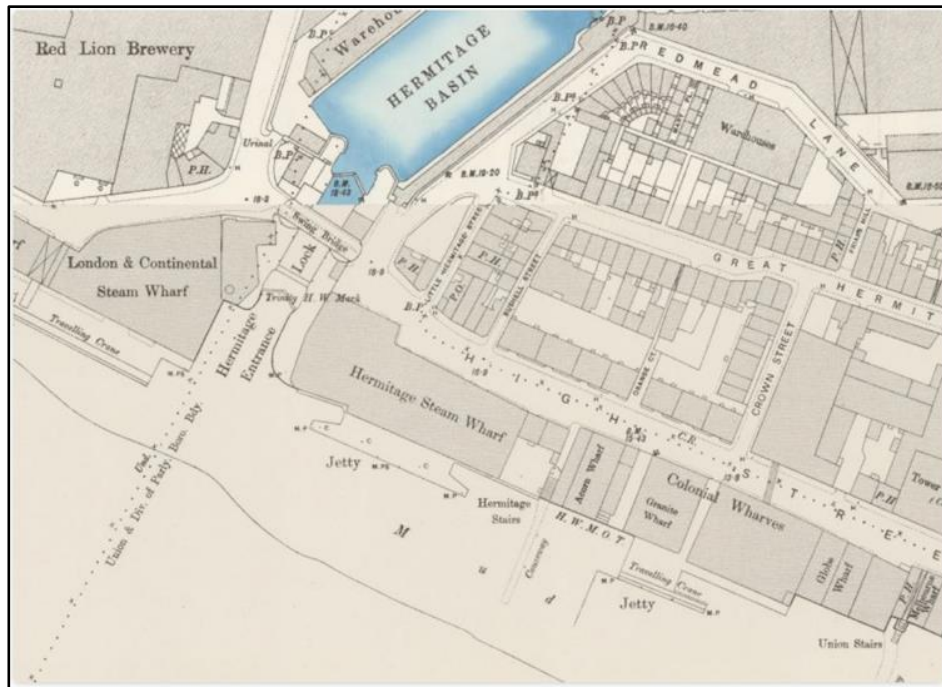


Figure 5.2 Ordnance Survey Map, Hermitage Stairs (1896) Courtesy of HCM Archives

Historic research by the founding group had established that Hermitage Stairs, opposite the mooring site, was and remained a public highway, and lay under the jurisdiction of the borough of Tower Hamlets (Figure 5.2). It was therefore to this land-based authority that they had to apply for a Street Works Licence to enable them to connect to the land, and to onshore service provision (electricity, mains water and telephone). On the waterside, permission from the PLA in the form of a River Works Licence similarly had to be obtained to insert the pontoon piles into riverbed.

As with any development on land or water, planning permission was only the beginning. Combining the skills of the group, including an architect and several artists, they set out to construct an infrastructure that could safely accommodate residents, the public and leisure craft. Into the mix, were the necessary calculations of how many families and their vessels were needed to make the mooring financially affordable and be able to collectively carry out the self-build. It was eventually agreed that another ten boats were

necessary to make the project viable. Having convinced the authorities that they were capable of building a high specification mooring, the project then came together in a series of layers. Once the necessary licences had been obtained, they still needed to find new members and persuade them to take a leap of faith to join the project (even though at this stage the founding group's collective vision was nothing but an empty space in the water, Plate 5.2). After that, the technical challenges of designing and constructing the pontoons, attaching the site to land, building the pier house, and positioning the vessels got under way.

Accommodating the vernacular needs of the group, the design of the infrastructure needed to respond to the environment. The site is located on the Upper Pool of London, in one of the most turbulent parts of the river, with prevailing south westerly winds. It is a reminder that the natural environment running through the city is not always amiable and is a force of nature that needs to be respected. It was obvious from the beginning that the physical character of the river was too demanding and therefore not suitable for 'static' houseboats (the type that can be found at Chelsea Reach and are discussed in the next chapter). Additionally, given that navigation rights take precedence on this stretch of the Thames, it was therefore agreed at the outset that all boats needed to be seaworthy, robust and to be ex-working boats. It was also decided that all members should be trained and certified with the necessary sailing and navigational skills.

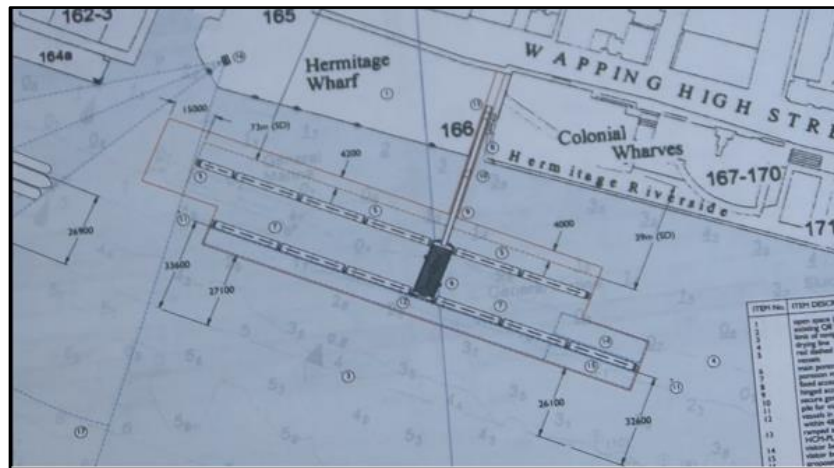


Figure 5.3 'Layout of Moorings'. Courtesy of HCM archives.

All of this in turn influenced the design and layout of the moorings itself; four mooring arms with a central Pier House were designed for vessels to be able to manoeuvre safely and easily (Figure 5.3). Throughout the process, advice was sought from people who had long been connected with the river and were happy to impart their knowledge to ensure that the specification would meet with the gruelling physical demands of the location. This further bonded the community to the wider river community. To that end, the bespoke pontoons, and pilings, that would make up the four arms, were designed to accommodate nineteen residential and two visitor berths.

Out of necessity, the construction and installation of the main structure was contracted out to specialists. The founding group managed the project and were involved in every element of the build, including overseeing the construction, the installation of the pontoons and piles, and materials used throughout (Plate 5.3).



Plate 5.3 'Bespoke pontoons: Getting to know the location of every nut and bolt' (2011) Courtesy of Kew D

Once the pontoons were in place, the community, now with its full complement of members, came together to construct the Pier House, a central feature of the moorings design. The 'barn raising' endeavour, (Plate 5.4) was the activity that finally 'glued' the members together and gave them a feeling of ownership that enabled them to collectively take control of their own destiny (Versteeg, 2018, Field Interview 010, Sutton). It was at this moment, that the reality of the founding groups vision came into view, with the ideals of community ownership enshrined by a self-managing co-operative and to which all residents were committed through their membership agreement.



Plate 5.4 'The Barn Raising Moment' (2011) Courtesy of Kew D

Central to this model, was a collective sense of purpose, whereby all members were responsible for all aspects of managing and maintaining the mooring. In other words, everyone contributed to the 'spatial imaginary' which, according to Davoudi (2018), meant that everyone played their part in the daily practices, in this case, the operations and management of the mooring. The sharing of the responsibility included both risk and investment, in terms of labour and resources (Oliver, 1986). It involved residents taking in turns to be on the management committee, attending regular residents' meetings and sharing annual maintenance duties. When the founding group were seeking new members, they were primarily concerned about what skills or attributes individuals could bring to the project to ensure success of the mooring and the community. The co-operative model in turn allowed for everyone to have a say, with rules being introduced or changed by consensus (Kew, 2011). All the major decisions in relation to the processes of housing production were in the hands of the group (Thompson, 2020). From design, through to construction and completion, all members shared the financial responsibility. The legal structure of the co-operative enables notions of dweller control to be underpinned by a set of values that embody collective ownership, self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, and equity (Awan, Schneider, Till, 2011). In turn these values resulted in a high level of commitment, to both community living, and the particular place (Ward, 1979).

As previously mentioned, the group, out of technical necessity, had to engage engineers, and private professionals (lawyers and planners) however, they facilitated rather than dominated the processes of production. In this case, dweller control, and therefore power over the production of their housing, remained firmly in the hands of the co-operative in which all members participated (Ward, 1976). For both Ward and Turner, advocates of people having the freedom to build, both supported the idea that “housing is best managed by those who dwell in them” (Turner quoted in Awan, Schneider, Till, 2011, p.202; Ward, 1976).

The design of the mooring with its common spaces, including the central location of the Pier House, and the four pontoons, gave each member at least three immediate neighbours. However, membership was not just about hard work, the Pier House provided a social space for members to gather and celebrate personal and communal rituals. Daily life, space and management structures coalesced to promote and contribute to a sense of community.

5.5 A Shared Maritime Vision: Private and Public Space - Key Factors Relating to the Success of the Project

Central to the success of the project, was the group’s realisation early on in the project of the need to share their vision and gain support from a wide range of agencies to participate in the processes of production at all levels.

The case study reveals several inter-related factors that contributed to the success of the project.

1. A collective sense of purpose (discussed in the previous section).
2. Maritime Aspirations – a shared vision
3. The need to acquire new knowledge to participate in the processes of production.

Whilst it was the collective sense of purpose, based on notions of self-organisation, that drove the project from inception to completion, there was a recognition within the founding group, that they alone could not achieve their vision. Building on water is a complex matter and therefore they needed not only the co-operation of the local onshore community and the authorities, but support from a wide range of agencies, who either provided the necessary knowledge (legal, financial, navigational, environmental knowledge of the river, etc) and/or shared their maritime aspirations.

The idea of creating a residential mooring for historic working boats was not just a practical response to living on a turbulent stretch of water, but an aspiration to recreate a form of maritime heritage that had long disappeared from Wapping (Werner, 2018, Field Interview 011, Sutton). As mentioned earlier, during the planning process, there was much opposition to the development of a mooring, but this was equally countered by a great deal of support from the local Wapping community, many of whom had a direct relationship with the river. Many remembered it as a working river, as a childhood playground, or had friends or relatives who had worked on the docks, on the river, or the riverside industries. Local residents empathised with HCM and shared in the common vision of having historic ships back on the river in Wapping. The shared spatial imaginary that drew HCM members and the local community together, assisted the case for the establishment of the mooring. At the same time, it solidified both the meaning

and identity of the mooring within the local context of Wapping's maritime past. In other words, "it is through the collective agency of spatial imaginaries that certain places are called into being and given identity and meaning (Healy, 2006, in Davoudi, 2018, p. 101).

The decision by HCM to only allow historic boats for dwelling purposes, (private space), on the mooring provided the public with a visual reminder of the river's maritime history. In a small way, it reintroduced a variety of working ships back to Wapping; a reminder of the sheer scale of the maritime port and the cargo ships that used to ply up and down the river. The vision held by the group afforded a glimpse into that maritime heritage, long gone, but remembered and participated in by the original residents of Wapping (Kew, 2011). It offered the potential to reconnect the local community with the dominant role that the commercial river once played in the lives of those that lived and worked on it.

The social and cultural bonds between the maritime imaginaries of the local population and Hermitage were further embedded into the build, by providing a space that could be accessed by the wider public. Although, the construction of a central Pier House is very much about the community itself, it also functions as a 'public space'. This is in step with the original maritime aspirations of the group to connect with the onshore residents of Wapping and wider community groups in the area. As part of the Section 106 planning consent, the moorings are periodically required to open to the public to provide access to the river in a variety of ways. This requirement is managed through a charity set up by members called Heritage River Projects (HRP), which embodies the social and cultural values of the community. It is funded by revenue accrued from letting the Pier House and the visitor berths. Schools and the local communities in Wapping are

encouraged to use it either for their own purposes at a reduced cost or for programmes initiated by HRP. The charitable aims remain rooted in the idea of promoting knowledge and understanding of the Thames, including its history and ecology. Educational initiatives are instigated to improve navigational skills, promoting, and celebrating the cultural heritage of the river and perhaps most importantly “to encourage, facilitate and promote the use, preservation and restoration of historic vessels” (Thomas, 2015). In the early days, it even facilitated a mooring space for the river’s last ‘eel boys’, a base to ply their traditional trade. Overall, by opening to the public for specific events, the Pier House provides a rare space that allows the public access onto the river itself. The idea that the building could produce some form of independent economic benefit that extended beyond the membership was a model that the group were keen to develop and one that as far as they were aware did not exist anywhere else onto the Thames (Foster, 2008).

At the time the original HCM members were imagining the mooring, very few ships and boats were utilizing the river, other than the tourist boats, regular Cory waste barges, and the occasional cruise ship. Maritime aspirations that held a vision to repopulate the river with working boats were upheld by the new community, which required all members to have an historic ex-working boat, barge or ship that complied with the Barcelona Charter, a widely accepted standard for preserving and restoring historic vessels. A glimpse into the maritime past of Wapping is captured by the variety of vessels on the mooring, including Dutch Barges dating back to 1885 (sailing and motor), a Norwegian Coaster (1916), an English Medway Coaster (1964), a Humber Barge (1954), and a Goole Billy Boy (1915). As far as I am aware, whilst other moorings, particularly Tower Bridge moorings, prefer their boats to be maintained to reflect the characteristics

of their working lives, there is no requirement to do so. The celebrations to mark the completion of the mooring that took place in 2009, marked the realisation of a vision that the founding group had worked long and hard to realise. The twin objectives to construct a residential mooring that reflected the maritime heritage of the location had been achieved; historic working vessels had been re-introduced to the area. At the same time, the Pier House acted as conduit between both the river and land communities of Wapping, by hosting various maritime activities delegated to the charitable side of the mooring. This reinforced the maritime aspirational nature of the build, a residential mooring that could both benefit members and the wider the community on land and water. They had reimagined and built a 'place to live, to be, to create our sense of place' (Lydiat, in Kew, 2011).

5. 6 The Power of Knowledge and the Knowledge of Power

The creation of the moorings (the built form) captured a 'moment of creativity' - demonstrating how it had been possible for a group of river inhabitants to appropriate and modify space to serve the collective needs and possibilities of a particular group (Lefebvre, 1996). Its spatial layout and design, a collaborative and socially driven concept, provided a solution that addressed the issues of insecurity associated with living on the river, and as a means to provide affordable housing. Notions of community and the practices of everyday life were enshrined in all aspects of the build, whereby river dwellers were empowered to realise their version of dwelling in the city. However, as noted by one of the founding group,

Some people have the idea that you can build a structure put people in (on) it and you have a community. I don't think that is the case (or) why our community works. People think on all kinds of levels, practically, socially, financially, short term and long term. (This is) how a community works, and

how you manage that is an organic process that everyone has been part of...
(Versteeg, 2018, Field Interview 010, Sutton).

What the interviewee is alluding to here, is the necessity of the group to come together to participate at all levels in the processes of production to appropriate a particular dwelling space. Implicit in the statement are notions of participation, and self-management, fundamental concepts of 'right to the city' that enables citizens to participate in the processes of urbanisation. According to Henri Lefebvre,

the 'right to the city' implies and applies a knowledge: one that is a knowledge of the production of that space. By implication, this knowledge is key, if citizens are to participate and engage directly with the production of space (Lefebvre, 1996, p.195).

However, knowledge or know-how, as demonstrated by Hermitage Community Moorings and noted by Paul Oliver (1996) is not a single phenomenon; it is intimately bound by shared cultural values, the specific needs of the community, and the local environment in which it resides (Oliver, 1986). In the past, these elements embraced what was known about a dwelling, building or settlement and included knowledge that had been inherited. It is assumed therefore that that vernacular know how, collective wisdom and experience, has been developed and handed down through the generations over a long period (Oliver, 1986). By way of contrast, this study suggests that despite the group having a particular understanding and awareness of the maritime aspects of dwelling on the river (material form and daily practices), the specific know-how that would enable them to realise their aims to build a new mooring did not exist. In order to produce a contemporary vernacular dwelling, the findings highlight the necessity for the Hermitage group to acquire a new know-how from a variety of sources. In addition, it suggests that the process is dynamic, as the complexity of the project increased in

scope, so they needed to collectively acquire the know-how to fit both the evolving needs of the task, and the community growing around it.

The necessary know-how included a knowledge of the natural environment, (climate, seasons, topography, and maritime hazards) of the site, the technological specifications (materials and construction methods) and the skills needed. The findings suggest that in the 21st century this must now extend to understanding the ways in which it is possible to access, participate and engage with the necessary authorities, or as Henri Lefebvre suggests “enabling them to appear on all networks and circuits of communication and information and exchange” (Lefebvre, 1996, p.195). In the case of the mooring, the original founding group needed to seek out and ‘produce’ their own specific know-how or knowledge, if they were to achieve their goal to re-imagine river dwelling and take control of their own vernacular environment. An analysis of the findings suggests that participation in the processes of urbanisation is not just one ‘thing’, indeed, various levels of ‘participation’ both in terms of the lived experience and knowledge of different types were key to achieving their vision. The analysis identified several layers of participation, that contributed to the success of the project.

For the founding members, direct engagement in the struggles that they had encountered at Tower Bridge Moorings, (see previous chapter) provided an introduction into the political implications of life afloat (Cottis and Timms, 2018, Field Interview, 017, Sutton). The conflict between the authorities, onshore residents, and the river community, exposed them to the issues of (the lack of) security and affordable dwellings, but also made them ‘alive’, a term noted by Ward (1976), to the precarious nature of river dwelling. These events brought the group together to discuss the ways

in which they could take matters into their own hands and find a way to take control of their living environment. By definition new spatial imaginaries are in part “(...) produced through political struggles over the conceptions, perceptions and lived experience of place...They are infused by relations of power in which contestation and resistance are ever present” (Davoudi, 2018, p.101). The experience of the injustice, (as they perceived it) motivated them to collectively ‘re-imagine’ a model of river dwelling; one that had the possibility to transform their lives by producing a secure and affordable way of living on the river.

At the same time, the inquiry alerted them to the opportunities, constraints, and possibilities available to them.

So, it was on the back of that public enquiry for our landlord that we realised why don't we do something ourselves, with all the kind of experience, contacts, and knowledge we have kind of gathered (Versteeg, 2018, Field Interview 010, Sutton).

This possibility, along with a glimpse into the mechanics of the planning processes, which had in turn identified several key players, as suggested in the quote, provided the inspiration, or spatial imaginary, to take action to counter the pre-existing problems associated with living on the river.

Participation, in this type of conflict and thus knowledge gained, is only attainable through direct involvement with the forces that have the power to impact on the lives of the group. By implication, it is not something that can be taught, rather it is part and parcel of a particular lived experience (Awan, Schneider, and Till, 2011; Ward, 1979). The experience of the public dispute, and public enquiries, led the group in turn to adopt a mode of self-management. This was clearly another form of participation, which

entailed organizing themselves, making decisions and difficult choices. In other words, to formulate a collective action that would eventually lead to the creation of Hermitage Community Moorings, the direct product of a 'moment' of conflict and struggle.

The group were cognizant of the fact that they had had a glimpse into the inner workings of the authorities, in relation to necessary permissions needed to live on the river. Equally, they were aware that they would need to configure a substantially greater body knowledge, along with wider networks of support with a variety of levels of co-operation, if they were to succeed in building a new mooring on the River Thames (Pinch, 2015). Not only did they need to fully understand the system (which itself was in flux as to the nature of residential moorings) and how it operated, they needed to find a way to "work it" (Ward, 1979, p.127) to participate and engage with all levels of the process. This could only be achieved by acquiring the necessary know-how on how to gain support by campaigning for their cause, along with the wherewithal to participate in the processes that would enable them to accomplish their vision; to self-build the first purpose community owned mooring in a generation.

The group were well aware that in the past river dwellers were repeatedly at logger heads with the authorities, and often wished to remain below the radar. They decided from the outset to do something different. Rather than fight with the authorities, they took the decision to negotiate with them. The political experience encountered at Tower Bridge Moorings was the transformative event that paved the way for them to draw upon contacts that would enable them to initiate their own social network. Even though they were trying to reimagine a new way of dwelling on the river, they understood from the outset that they needed to be part of the system (Awan, Schneider, and Till, 2011,)

that regulated residential boats on the river, not outside of it. They needed to be able to access and engage with the authorities, at the same time as obtaining the support and assistance from a range of agencies, (including local river and land communities), to acquire the necessary know-how and support that would enable them to participate in the planning process. According to one of the members of the founding group, they knew at the outset that they needed to adapt to ensure that there were not just a group of people looking for a place to put their boats, but a “well-informed articulate group. Well prepared, able to talk, negotiate – licencing, legal structures, finances” (Wainwright, in Kew, 2011).

This statement is an acknowledgement, that in order to produce their vision of dwelling at the water’s edge, and to counter the status quo, i.e., river dwellers fighting with the authorities, the ability to negotiate was essential if they were gain to agreement from the authorities to build their own mooring. This could only be accomplished by equipping and mobilizing themselves to understand the processes connected with river dwelling, as means to participate in the system on equal terms. They needed to become expert citizens, i.e., they needed to ‘find/produce and acquire the necessary skills and knowledge. The comment is revealing in that it also acknowledges that the group could not act alone to build the enterprise. It reinforces the idea that “buildings and spaces are part of dynamic context of networks” (Aswan, Schneider, and Till, 2011, p.28).

Furthermore, it reveals a recognition on behalf of the group that the knowledge gained via their newly created web of social connections was a crucial factor underpinning their ability to collectively access and participate in the processes of urbanisation. The findings suggest that implicit in the decision to “do something different” (Wainwright in

Kew 2011) and work with the authorities, the group recognised that collective action depended on the ability to negotiate and articulate their vision. In this way, they were able to reconfigure and appropriate space at the water's edge, in a manner that would enable them to take control and construct their own dwelling environment.

Self-autonomy, empowered by these actions, lies at the heart of both the community and the approach to the project. This manifests itself in the spatial layout of the mooring and the self-management of the co-operative, both of which allow the community to have collective control over its own living environment. A sense of ownership which includes control over finances, self-responsibility, community confidence, along with active participation in the decision-making processes are inculcated into the daily lives and therefore the lived experience of the mooring's inhabitants (Thompson, 2020). The strength of the co-operative is that it offers a form of protection, a means by which to resist and mitigate against external challenges (Baily, 2020). Embedded in the structure are values that depend upon self-reliance, a belief in their own abilities and a commitment from the members to a community life afloat.

The findings suggest that participation at all levels led to the 'know how' necessary for self-management, which in turn empowered them to appropriate space at the water's edge and build a specific structure that would meet with their needs and create a new community. They were a group of river dwellers who realised the possibility of creating their own '*oeuvre*' to have some say in the shaping of urban space, and to re-imagine the river as space on which they could dwell. In addition, the case demonstrates how buildings (even moorings) are not just about form, style, techniques, but are part of a "dynamic context of networks" (Awan, Schneider, Till, 2011, p.28). Placing the

production of the mooring in its broader social context, it is a shared enterprise that depended upon the contribution of a range of agencies, professionals, and individuals.

Drawing upon the concepts from the 'right to the city', it has been possible to demonstrate the tangible means by which the group were able to participate and engage directly, with the different processes of production, and the means by which they were able to appropriate space at the water's edge as a place in which to dwell. Born out of an earlier struggle, the case study emphasises how it was possible for a group to access, occupy, make their ideas known, and appropriate urban space within a riverine context. According to Henri Lefebvre this is possible when citizens have,

'The right to information, the right to use multiple services, the right of users to make known their ideas in space and time of their activities in the urban area; it would also cover the right to the use of the centre (Lefebvre, 1991, p.34).

The findings suggest that know-how (a combination of information, and access to various services via a social network) or "knowledge is key, if citizens are to participate and engage directly with the production of space" (Lefebvre 1996, p.195). From a contemporary perspective, know-how or knowledge is a crucial means of empowerment that allows inhabitants to "claim some kind of shaping power over the processes of urbanisation in a fundamental and radical way" (Harvey, 2013, p.5). The newly acquired knowledge, facilitated the group's ability to share their vision, navigate their way around the system, and take on the authorities by negotiating on equal terms. It was perhaps not radical, in Henry Lefebvre's and David Harvey's revolutionary sense, of fundamentally changing the system, however, the creation of the mooring did produce an 'alternative' way of conceiving and building a community mooring.

The founding members certainly became politically 'alive', they did 'rise up' and resist, in the sense that by looking at, or taking a different approach to dwelling on the river they challenged the dominant narratives within the context of London's 'waterspaces' (Pinch, 2015). Through the spatial imaginaries of the group, they did succeed in constructing a unique purpose-built mooring; one that allowed them to remain on the river in the heart of the city and not be forced to move elsewhere. They met the challenge of building a mooring from scratch, in one of the most turbulent river locations, without interfering with the precedence of navigation rights or antagonising the land-based river dwellers (who ultimately came to recognise the value of having historic ships on the water). They also demonstrated that with a willingness to collaborate, it was possible to produce an outcome that resulted in the creation of a safe environment, which did indeed transform the lives of members. The co-operative model allowed the membership to take control of the 'ownership' of the license, which allowed them to live on the river. This was the factor that directly addressed the key problems associated with the security of tenure issues, and the provision of affordable dwelling in the city, which in the past (and continues, see next chapter) fuelled the precarious nature of life afloat.

In summary, the group demonstrated that despite the complex nature of competing interests associated with the River Thames, it is possible for a non-commercial entity to pool resources and take collective political action. They empowered themselves to counter and gain some ground over the dominant system, by seeking out the necessary 'know-how' to build a major structure on the river that enabled sustained relationships on both land and water. In short, their actions provided them with the political agency

needed to intervene and make a difference to a pre-existing state of affairs (Giddens in Awan, Schneider, Till, 2011). It was a form of resistance initiated by the inhabitants, and as such is a key feature of Henry Lefebvre's vision that it is possible for inhabitants can gain 'the right to the city', even though he gave no indication of how this might be achieved, a major criticism of his work (Leary-Owhin and McCarthy, 2020). Whilst their actions did not bring about any radical reforms of river dwelling, they did achieve what today is regarded as a model of community dwelling on the Thames, thereby making it possible for others to follow in their wake.

It is now recognised, by both the city planners and the Port of London Authority (London Plan, 2019; The Vision for the Tidal Thames 2035, 2016) that residential barges can and do add to the diversity and vibrancy of London's waterways. Furthermore, in the mayor's new London Policy (Waterways, Section S1 16, 7. 84), provision has now been made for the possibility of new moorings to be built. In addition, the River Thames Society has recommended that local authorities should consider residential moorings within local planning opportunities and constraints (Pickles, 2019). Perhaps more significantly, it has been recognised that the model of community-owned moorings, operating on a non-profit basis, could provide affordable river dwellings and by extension contribute to relieving the problems associated with increased demand (London Assembly, 2013). It is not possible to attribute these changes directly to the actions of Hermitage Community Moorings, but it is reasonable to suggest that they were a crucial waypoint in the recognition today, that residential moorings are, and should be, accepted as an integral part of London's waterways, part and parcel of daily life on London's iconic river.

5.7 The 'Right' to Dwell on the River

Although there are still no legal rights of protection for those that live on water (see next chapter), by drawing on concepts of the right to the city, both the analysis and interpretation expose the possibilities of empowerment to resist the dominant neo-liberal forces of capitalism and profit. The findings suggest, that in this case, 'agency' resided in the group's belief, that fundamental to their 'struggle' was the need to take 'ownership' by re-imagining the right to dwell on the river. By taking matters into their own hands, their vision enabled them to mitigate against the vagaries of private interests, by negotiating directly with the PLA for the license that permitted them to build and live on the river. This was the crucial factor that enabled them to create a model of dwelling that replaced the need to make a profit. The security of tenure directly benefited both community members and the wider public at large. As one member suggested, not having to make a profit, opens possibilities of doing things very differently. Whilst this thesis accepts that living on the river is not for everyone, the struggle that resulted in the creation of Hermitage Community Moorings is testimony of how it is possible to 'look at the world' in a different way, to re-imagine something that met with their desires.

Out of that moment of struggle, the spatial imaginaries of a small group of river dwellers 'erupted' because of a desire to create an alternative mode of dwelling that that would challenge the spatial injustice that had impacted on their way of life (Harvey, 2013; Davoudi, 2018). The awareness of the political implications of their situation, led the group to take a proactive and practical response to their problem, thereby revealing a moment of resistance on the water's edge (Pinch, 2015). However, the evidence

suggests that the ability of ordinary people to take matters into their own hands, is a struggle in itself; people who take action to build their 'spaces' are very much in the minority. Going against the norm, they must find their own way of engaging with an economic political system that does not particularly encourage self-help or self-build. Although Harvey suggests that the groups everywhere are pushing back, they are in the main disparate, uncoordinated, and are few and far between (Harvey, 2013; Minton, 2017). Struggles are rarely co-ordinated, even within the context of the river, by their very nature they are "historically dynamic, not always coherent, and frequently transient in character" (Pinch, 2015, p.287).

Within the UK, community action or pockets of resistance in response to housing shortages and affordable housing (see next chapter) have a long history dating back to the late 19th century. Cracks in the system, or moments of resistance have included squatting, self-build, co-operatives, and co-housing. Early examples include the Plotlands in Southeast England (1870) and the plot lands of Shepperton (1920-47) where the council allowed a few pieces of land to be built on land that fell outside of the planning system (Szczelkun, 2020). The post-war period (1945-6) saw the growth of the squatter's movement in response to the housing shortage, with ex-service men and women in particular occupying empty military camps, disused, houses, school buildings and hotels (Ward, 1979). By the late 1970's, after much negotiation, self-build emerged as a way of providing affordable housing. Although architect led, Walter Segal 1980's self-build experiments provided a means of the dweller/user to control their own environment. Co-housing and private housing, with residents sharing in communal facilities (Awan, Schneider, Till, 2011; Festival of Architecture, 2020), co-operatives and

housing associations, are all different forms of dwellings built in response to people's desire to take matters into their own hands.

Within the context of the River Thames, just as river dwellers have been fighting for their right to remain on the river, so have their landed counterparts had a history of community action to resist the actions of commercial developers and local authorities. In the late 1970's, residents came together to oppose the development of a hotel and offices on the thirteen-acre site around Coin Street, on the south bank of the Thames (Plate 5.5). Their alternative vision centred on a plan that gave priority to people's housing needs and community facilities. In 1984, after a seven year long political campaign, they won the support of the Greater London Authority, with their struggles resulting in the right to buy the land for one million pounds. The campaigners were then able to establish the 'Coin Street Community Builders', a company limited by guarantee.



Plate 5.5. 'View of the Coin Street development from the river' (2019) Sutton S

Of course, the scale of the Coin Street venture is very different, but like Hermitage, their income is used to deliver its public service objectives. As a housing association, managed

on the lines of a co-operative, it gives primacy to the needs of local residents. In addition, part of their remit is to deliver a programme of community activities, education, and the arts. They, like Hermitage, also recognised that development along the Thames had resulted in local communities being denied access to the river and wanted to make it possible for all to enjoy the river. In their case this was achieved by establishing a river walkway, and the creation of a newly created riverside park, Bernie Spain Gardens (coinstreet.org accessed 20/3/20).

They were not alone, with the redevelopment of Docklands in the early 1980's, (see Chapter Seven) several other communities came together to take political action, as a means of putting forward their own visions/plans in response to the ambitions of those in power. Common to all, is the ability of ordinary people to respond to the spatial injustices imposed by the authorities, developers, and planners. Motivated by the political implications of the redevelopment of their localities, they all proffered new imaginaries, that were in stark contrast to those of the neo-liberal capitalist producers of space, who for the most part had totally ignored the needs of local people. Local communities had imagined "a totally different kind of place out of the unequal mess of globalising and urbanising capital, going wild" (Harvey in Davoudi, 2018, p.105). Both on river and land, people found themselves in a situation where they were either being evicted or were forced to move out of the area. They all shared a willingness to self-organise for their 'right' to articulate their vision and take part in the processes of urbanisation. In all cases, the struggles found expression through the long years of campaigning. Crucial to the success of this, was a willingness to collaborate, and the ability acquire the necessary know-how to negotiate and participate in the political processes, and those of the built environment, (from construction through to

management). It was this combination that resulted in the inhabitants creating their own versions of the city.

5.8 Summary

Through the lens of the 'right to the city', the Hermitage case study has been interpreted to suggest that this type of vernacular river dwelling has been produced to meet the needs of a particular group. Empowered initially by their political struggles, the founding group produced a collective urban imaginary for an alternative way of dwelling on the river. This was achieved by adapting and acquiring, rather than inheriting, the necessary 'know-how'. They negotiated a re-imagined vernacular way of life on the river; one that respects the agency of individuals, but ensures that the form and structure, (boats and moorings) pay tribute to the maritime traditions of the Thames. This in turn has allowed them to take control of their environment and reproduce a vernacular fit for 21st century river dwelling; one that is able to provide security as means to mitigate and resist the challenges of the dominant demands of urban dwelling to return a profit. The case study of Hermitage Community moorings, along with the other cases cited, suggests that their collective actions did reveal pockets of hard-won forms of resistance. Going against the flow, it seems that it is still possible to take on the system and win some ground. However, as the next chapter demonstrates, trying to change it in favour of community over profit, is in itself, an ongoing struggle.

6.Re-appropriation of Life Afloat: Commodification on the River Thames

6. 1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the water's edge, examining the way in which it is possible for river dwellers to take control of their own environment and build a mooring that responded to their needs. With creativity and resourcefulness, a small group of people reimagined the right to produce and appropriate space; one that met with the demands and values of its inhabitants. Moving away from the edge and onto to the water itself, the following considers the extent to which the river dwelling has become part of "everything in the city" that is reducible to economic exchange i.e., "to a marketable commodity" (Purcell, 2013, p.149). River dwelling is investigated from different perspectives, to evaluate whether it has become part of the relentless process of profit driven urbanisation (Brenner, Marcuse, Mayer 2012). It seeks to establish, if this is so, how it manifests itself within a riverine context.

This is achieved by investigating the competing narratives that seek to produce different imaginations of the river as a place to live. It examines the changing perceptions of river dwelling and how these have again resulted in conflict between river communities, developers, and planners. Close examination of the disputes and the moments of contestation are evaluated to assess the ways in which, the vernacular form (boats and moorings) and the practices of everyday life on the river, have been/are being re-appropriated for commercial gain. The findings suggest that whilst dwelling on the Thames has become more desirable, the ensuing increase in demand has led to a new

set of problems for long term river residents. The assumption that river dwelling is now regarded as an asset (by some) ripe for economic extraction, has ironically created a situation whereby living in a re-purposed boat is no longer an affordable alternative option. Instead, this hitherto bohemian life is being transformed into an attractive marketable form of city residence, often reflecting life ashore rather than life on board. Several of the interviewees, supported by an analysis of the data gathered from a variety of media articles, including print, film, and videos, allege that this problem has resulted in the gentrification of living on the Thames. The claims that the super-wealthy are now displacing long term river inhabitants are examined to identify how the processes of commodification and gentrification may have impacted on this type of vernacular lifestyle. An analysis of different marketing materials, along with a discussion of the reasons behind the removal of the inhabitants at Waterman's Park, aim to evaluate the extent to which the processes of gentrification are beginning to impact on the production of space within a riverine context. These claims are scrutinised (section 6.4) by drawing upon the scholarship of leading gentrification scholars Mark Davidson and Loretta Lees (2005) to assess the findings in relation to the core elements of the root causes of the processes of gentrification; "the re-investment of capital, the social upgrading of the locale by incoming high-income group, landscape change and direct or indirect displacement of low-income groups" (Lees et al, 2010, p. xv). It is hoped that this approach will offer fresh insights into how the processes of gentrification are perhaps no longer confined to the land but have now possibly extended onto the water.

The data from a range of methods, along with a descriptive analysis of two pertinent case studies, is synthesised to assess the extent to which the processes of commodification have taken hold on water. Interviews, newspaper articles, along with estate agents' brochures and a review of boat interiors, are put forward to offer fresh insight into the changing nature of this waterborne lifestyle. This chapter also includes comments from Chelsea Houseboat's twitter campaign. This social media site was set up in conjunction with the residents' website to raise awareness and support for their cause. By following the campaign, it has been possible to keep up to date with various developments and follow residents' reactions. Interpretation of the data draws upon Davidson and Lees's definition of the causes of gentrification (discussed in section 6.4) to suggest that the changes are being driven by economic and political imperatives that emanate in physical and social changes, and that these are indicative of the processes of gentrification. The analysis supports the findings articulated by interviewees and referred to, particularly on twitter, that the disputes are symptomatic of an ongoing trend of commodification and re-appropriation of river dwelling by the wealthy. The thesis argues that gentrification is threatening the very existence of this type of vernacular dwelling; not just the built form (boats), but the associated practices of everyday life.

The first case study examines the disputes between the houseboat residents at Chelsea Reach and the new owner of the mooring, a luxury property developer. The second, considers Waterman's Park, Brentford, a site owned by the local borough council which has recently evicted several houseboat owners to build a marina as part of Hounslow Council's long-term regeneration strategy. The discussion and analysis, draws upon the work of prominent gentrification scholars, Lorretta Lees and Mark Davidson, to examine

the findings as a means of determining the extent to which river dwellers concerns about gentrification on the River Thames are justified. Despite the extensive academic literature on the subject, gentrification on the water appears to have eluded scholarly examination.

6. 2 Community not Commodity - The Ongoing Case of Chelsea Houseboats

This section examines in detail how one of London's oldest river communities is under threat as their lifestyle and place of abode is in the processes of being commodified by a private developer. It explores the history and application of the legal loopholes that allows those in power to exploit river dwellers who, unlike their counterparts on land, have no protection under the Housing Act 2004. However, these practices are not confined to the private the sector. In the case discussed, it is the Borough Council of Hounslow that recognised the commercial value of river dwelling, and after a long conflict evicted a group of river dwellers who stood in the way of their regeneration plans.



Plate 6.1. 'Chelsea Houseboats' Courtesy of Chelsea Reach Boatowners' Association

Currently home to one hundred people, the sixty houseboats at Chelsea Reach moorings are considered to be London's first floating community, dating back to the 1930's. Moored adjacent to Cheyne Wharf at Chelsea Reach, the site is located on tidal flats on the north bank of the Thames between Lots Road and Battersea Bridge. The boatyard has always been operated by the Chelsea Yacht and Boat Company (CYBC), it is one of the oldest in London and still part of this residential site. After the Second World War, the owners bought and converted a variety of decommissioned Landing Craft, Motor Torpedo Boats and sailing barges which had been used in the Normandy landings. These conversions were then sold to people seeking an alternate place to live in response to the chronic housing shortage in London at that time. According to the Totally Thames interviews, several of these original residents chose to live afloat as a cheap solution to dwelling in the city. What began as emergency shelter "quickly became the fashion" with the by now bohemian boat dwellers contributing to London's diverse communities (Totally Thames, 2016, Interviews; Thames Landscape Strategy, 2002). During its

lifetime, the mooring, along with the boatyard changed hands several times, with the latest owner purchasing it in 2016. The residents had attempted to buy and manage the moorings themselves but failed in their undertaking.

The key difference between Chelsea moorings and the others on the Thames, is that apart from a few barges, the converted ex-military craft are static, and rarely leave the site. If they need to move, another vessel is required to assist them because they have no means of propulsion. The community refers to their vessels as houseboats and herein lies the paradox of life afloat; a dilemma that has left one of the oldest communities vulnerable to exploitation. After almost a hundred years in existence, the residents found themselves under threat from the new owners whose ambitions are to develop the moorings. Although no formal plans have yet been presented, the threat of eviction and increased charges for most residents forced the community to mount a high-profile campaign against the owners in 2018.

According to the campaign details, fourteen (originally eighteen) residents were threatened with eviction for allegedly not complying with requests from CYBC for owners to have their boats surveyed within a specific time period. According to the *'Community Not Commodity'* website and supported with interviews conducted for the research, eighteen boats were given thirty days-notice to have their boats surveyed out of the water; failure to comply would result in the termination of their licences. Given that the period commenced prior to Christmas, the timing of the notice caused problems for the majority of the owners. Due to the lack of boatyards on the Thames, booking surveys or works usually requires several months advance planning. Static boat owners are also dependent on the availability of the towing companies and the state of the

weather and tide. Whilst one boat managed to comply within the time period, and three more a month later, the company served eviction notices to the remaining fourteen residents who had been unable to arrange surveys between Christmas and New Year. Ignoring the licence termination notices, the remaining boats, none the less, completed their surveys within the following few months.⁸

Despite this, CYBC refused to withdraw the terminations, and accused the boat owners of trespassing. In addition to this, the company increased the mooring fees beyond the means of many residents. Moorings fees are complicated, but (full details can be found on the website) broadly speaking, the situation in 2016 at Chelsea is that each houseboat pays an annual mooring fee, and an annual maintenance fee, and further upfront fee for a fixed term ten- year mooring licence. The fees are calculated by the length of the boat and are determined by market rates and reviewed every three years. However, under the new ownership the annual mooring 2017 was increased by 22 per cent whilst, the ten-year licence mooring licence was set to rise by 300-1,160 per cent on the 2015 price. The impact of the increase in fees that are unaffordable for many of the residents, is threatening the community, which according to the website '*Community not Commodity*' has "long been among the most diverse and distinctive in London". The campaign slogan reflects resident's concerns as their way of life (boats and daily practices) is potentially being transformed into a commodity for economic gain.

⁸ Boats are taken out of the water every few years for insurance purposes, although practices differ between companies, most vessels are taken out of the water every seven years to complete a survey for safety and insurance purposes.

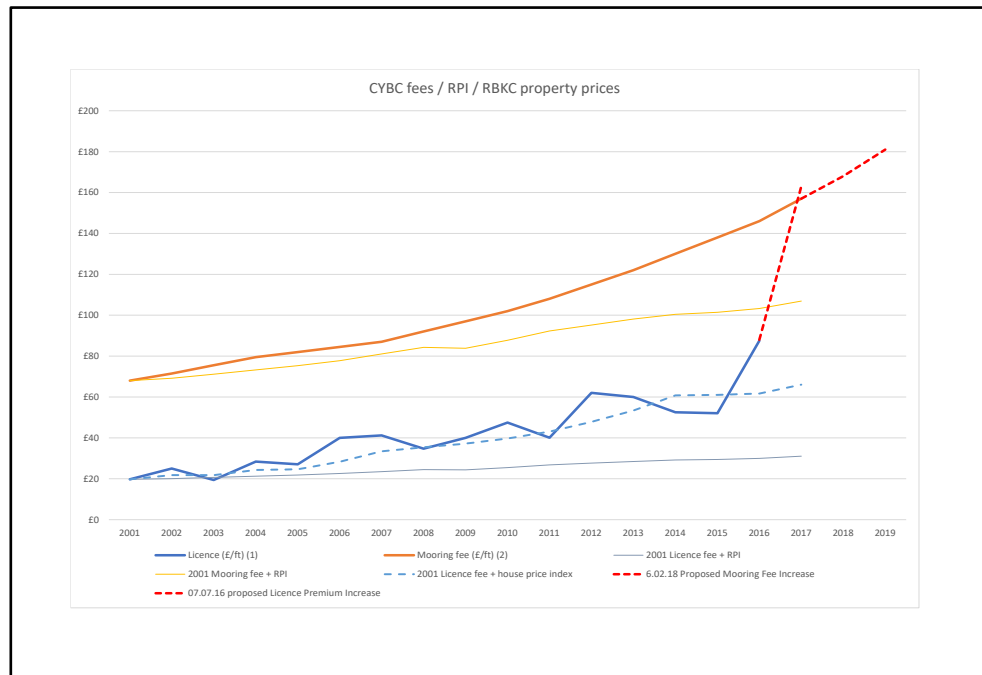


Table 6.1. 'CYBC fees 2001-2019' Courtesy of Chelsea Reach Boatowners' Association

6.3 The Lack of Legal Protection

The effect of such a drastic fee increase impacted on residents in a variety of ways (Hanrahan, 2020), not least upon their health and well-being. The ongoing insecurity associated with their homes became a stressful part of daily life. The residents believe that the increases are above and beyond current market rates and are unaffordable for many of them. Rightly or wrongly, it soon became clear that they had no protection under the current law (as they would have had if they lived on land) and no mechanism to challenge the owners outside of private legal action. As a result, not only were the residents' homes, way of life and community under threat, but should they be evicted, they would be forced to remove their homes (vessels) from the moorings which of course would not be possible if they lived on land. As discussed, the majority of houseboats were constructed specifically for this location and have no means of propulsion, therefore moving to an alternative mooring would prove difficult. Given the rarity of mooring spaces in the city it is, unlikely that they would find a new home.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, boats for dwelling purposes are not considered property in the same way as their counterparts on land, and therefore their rights are not protected. Boat owners have no security of tenure under the statutory Housing Act 2004, despite many requests over the years. The earliest mention in Hansard dates to October 1975, when the issue was brought before Parliament to introduce legislation protecting the needs of residential boat owners (Hansard, 1975). This was refused based on the complexities of the legislation and difficulties of implementation. In 1979, the issue was raised again by the then Liberal Democrat MP, Vince Cable, citing the same issues. It too, failed to gain traction.

Twenty-six years later, in 2005, a full consultation on the key problem facing residential boat owners was undertaken by the then Deputy Prime Ministers' Office. This came about as a result of the passage of the Housing Act 2004, where it was mooted that the Bill be amended to include those living on water be given the same rights as caravan owners. Michael Portillo MP argued that the rights secured for caravan dwellers are now regarded as a basic human right, and therefore they should apply to residential boat owners. To complicate matters, whilst some considered the rights of boat owners to be a navigational matter, the Port of London Authority (PLA) argued that the houseboats are a matter for the appropriate local authority (Williams, 2004).

Although this motion too was ultimately rejected, in 2005, the Government agreed to the consultation to consider the wider issues. The *'Security of Tenure Residential Houseboats'* inquiry went ahead with the key players being asked to comment, including navigational authorities, mooring agents, residential boat owners with moorings, private harbour residents and marina owners. The key objective was to "consider

whether there is a need for occupants of residential boats at long term moorings to be given security of tenure and additional contract rights, and if so, determine the appropriate level” (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005, p.16). However, no agreement could be reached between the parties and the matter was left unresolved. The issues were brought back to Parliament again in 2019 by Greg Hands, MP for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in support the Chelsea residents. This time, the Government argued that residents were protected under the Consumer Rights Act 2015, (in terms of mooring agreements) and the Protection from Eviction Act 1977. In the case of the latter, boat owners could approach the appropriate local authority for assistance. To date, neither of the Acts have proved effective offering little in the way of reassurance to the Chelsea residents.

Despite these various attempts to introduce some form of regulation for those without legal protection, the problems associated with the security of tenure, along with potential increases in fees, have left boat owners open to exploitation (Pickles, 2019). In the case of Chelsea Houseboats, the community felt that their only way forward was to take private legal action against the owner of the moorings, and to build support for their case with a high-profile media campaign ‘Community Not Commodity’.



Plate 6.2. 'Gathering petition signatures' Courtesy of Chelsea Reach Boatowners' Association

Our community has lived her happily for decades, and we believe that this it's part of what makes Chelsea special. All of us are already paying the market rate for our moorings, and we believe that doing so should give us a right that's already protected in law for homeowners on dry land: the right to remain in our homes. This is all we are campaigning for. We are acting to protect our homes and pursue our rights to them by whatever means necessary within the law (chelseaboats.co.uk).

Residents' fears brought them together to co-operatively contest and challenge the behaviour of the new owners (Plate 6.2). The fear of eviction, affordability and the unpredictability of rising charges were further aggravated by the issue of security of tenure for the right to moor, as the company put forward plans to increase mooring fees. After a long and ongoing media campaign, including print, television, social media, and a petition signed by over ten thousand people, the residents' resorted to legal action in the High Court. Their aim was to challenge the practice of charging licence fees in addition to moorings and maintenance fees. At the time of writing (early 2020) the Chelsea Houseboat owners lost their case but have been given the right to appeal.

Apart from the extraction of additional fees to remain at the moorings, residents also feared that these tactics were part of a longer-term strategy by CYBC to drive several boats off the moorings (by untenable mooring or eviction) to replace them with 'super yachts' that can be sold for higher prices to an international clientele. Although the company has refuted these allegations, there is some supporting evidence to suggest that resident's anxieties are not unfounded. According to two interviewees, who wish to remain anonymous, and one media article (Fisk, 2014) this is not the first time the company has been accused of exploiting the lack of statutory rights to remove river dwellers. Prior to purchasing the mooring at Cheyne Wharf, the owner's acquired Cadogan Pier, which is downriver from Cheyne Walk on the Chelsea Embankment. A working pier, it provides a river bus service that connects the area with the City of London and beyond, it is also home to a very small community of residential dwellers. Fees here were also increased, and several residents served with eviction notices citing a variety of reasons. One of the victims accused the company of using divide and rule tactics thereby reducing the possibility of the residents uniting as they feared that they were being forced to move to make way for the mega yachts of the Russian Oligarchs (Fisk, 2014). Although a lawyer was consulted it was clear that there was no help available and therefore these residents had no choice but to move on (Fisk, 2014). The company refuted the accusations on their website, stating that their aim was to regenerate the pier along with a programme of improvement for residents. They also denied that they were trying to introduce super yachts to the mooring. It is impossible to verify the truth of the claims on either side, however, the situation once again highlights the lack of protection for those that live on boats.

Three years later in December 2017, (three months before several houseboats at Chelsea were required to leave, and the start of the Chelsea Houseboats campaign) two luxury houseboats were offered for sale. They featured prominently in the London Standard, the Daily Mail, and property magazines including Ideal Home and London Property South. More significantly, they were also publicized in Mansion Global (part of the Barron Group, New York) a digital platform specializing in the global luxury real estate market for an international audience, which also owns publications such as *'Marketwatch'* and *Financial News*. One of its articles, *'Living on the Thames: Two Luxurious Houseboats for Sail'*, promoted two floating mansions, the historic, 'Flagship' priced at £2.5 million, and the newly built, 'Walter Greaves', for £2 million. Bearing in mind its upmarket clientele, the article emphasised the houseboats were 'an affordable alternative' to similar views and locations on land and pointed out that sales on the river had increased by 50% during the past five years. One of these is moored at Cadogan Pier and the other 'temporarily' at Chelsea Reach. Although the owners of CYBC have denied introducing super yachts to the moorings, these articles would suggest otherwise.

'Private Eye' reported that the boatowners were deliberately being priced out of their moorings with 'huge hikes in mooring fees'. The unattributed article refers to a business prospectus seen by the Eye, that was seeking investors to build and sell seven new houseboats for £6 million pounds each, with no mooring fees included in the asking price. In addition, it says "that as the moorings fees increase to reflect their central London locations several boats will leave voluntarily" (Private Eye, 2018, p.39).

It is not within the remit of this thesis to comment on the 'facts' of the claims. However, by citing a variety of sources and presenting them together as part of a case

study, the situation at Chelsea is significant, in that it highlights the problems associated with the lack of legal protection. The current conflict raises the question, yet again, of how is it possible, forty-five years after first being raised in Parliament, that river dwellers still have no protection for the security of tenure? This is an ongoing problem that has yet to be resolved, despite calls by individuals, communities, and the River Thames Society. This issue is not just for those who live on the Thames but is relevant to residential boat owners throughout the UK.

(<https://kanda.boatingcommunity.org.uk/boats-are-homes-demo-and-flotilla-london-24th-25th-may>).

Living on the river is evolving, with demand increasing rapidly and therefore many, including the residents and the Thames River Society, suggest that the time, once again, has come for river dwellers to have rights in law. It could be argued that this gap in the legislation is providing an opportunity for river dwellers to be exploited for commercial gain. Without security of tenure, residents are at the behest of the operator (s) and the conditions that are imposed upon them. In this case, the owner is attempting to extract financial gain out of every aspect of this type of dwelling. This is summed up by one of the residents as Chelsea,

...they (the property developer) see something as lovely as this, they come along and think ah, I can make money out of that, by taking advantage of being able to remove residents as they have little protection (Chelsea Houseboat Resident, Hanrahan, 2020)).

The residents of Chelsea were not the only community facing problems on the river. In the same year that they started their campaign '*Community not Commodity*', another group, upstream at Waterman's Park, lost its long running battle to remain on their

mooring in Brentford. To the cost and dismay of long-term river residents along the Thames, it is now clear that it is not only private developers who are seizing the opportunity to 'make money' from this lifestyle. Whilst the circumstances between the two cannot be compared, the issues of rights have once again resulted in legal action, except this time it was against the local authority. Proposals had been drawn up by the Hounslow Borough Council back in 2014 to build a new marina as part of its vision to regenerate the 'up-and-coming' area, by improving the look of the waterfront. Under the new proposal, the council would own the new marina, and cover the construction costs, whilst the mooring fees would be shared with the Port of London Authority (as is usual in the granting of the licence). An agent would be brought in to manage the site.

During the consultation process (2016) both local on shore residents and boat owners challenged the plans along with the projected costs of £5.45 million. They also put an alternative plan for a mooring that could be built at a considerably lower cost. They considered that their design was more respectful of the local environment and included the possibility to open the moorings for public access. Not only were these rejected, but the remaining boat owners also (some had already moved on) were issued with eviction notices and accused of trespass.



Plate 6.3. 'No Mooring at Waterman's Park' (2018) Sutton S

Two years later, after a bitter campaign, once again resulting in private legal action, the boat residents lost their case alleging harassment by the council (Plate 6.3). The river dwellers were forced to move on. The ex-residents publicly warned that from now on only the wealthy would be able to afford the moorings fees. They claimed the new marina was the latest site of social cleansing and would contribute towards the gentrification of the Thames (Pilat, 2017; Bloomfield, 2018).

In the case of Waterman's Park, the council argued that the boats were unlawfully moored and (unlike their Chelsea counterparts), did not pay mooring fees or council tax. In addition, it was claimed that the boats themselves were not fit for purpose. From the residents' point of view, they asserted their right to stay, claiming the mooring was their home. This was rejected as they had no legal entitlement. Just as the residents at Chelsea Reach believed they were under threat for commercial gain, the residents of Waterman's park also saw themselves being removed as part of a scheme to transform the area for economic purposes. It was the borough council, in this case, who wished to clear the moorings so that they could build a new marina, that would, according to Councillor Curran, "smarten up the riverbank and provide fresh impetus for Brentford's

ongoing regeneration programme” (Cumber, 2016, p.2). Furthermore, it intended to regulate this stretch of water and bring it to the market (Hounslow's Regeneration, Economic Development Strategy, Annual Report Nov 2017, p.15). Once again, river dwellers without rights had been evicted without legal recourse other than private proceedings. After a long and protracted battle, the last boat departed Waterman’s Park on 21st August 2018.

The significance of the struggles encountered by these two communities lies in the comments made by residents and highlighted by many others (in the field interviews); that people were being displaced as a means to gentrify dwelling on the River Thames. Even if residents were not directly removed, as in the case Chelsea, their campaign, *‘Community Not Commodity’* reveals how their way of life is potentially being transformed into a commodity to suit the needs of the super wealthy. The common thread that runs through these cases is despite communities having lived for many years on the river, the lack of legal protection has contributed to their eviction. The ongoing struggles against powerful market forces and their agents, to resist their removal, have proved futile in these cases of Waterman’s Park and is ongoing for the Chelsea residents.

The findings suggest that the displacement of boat owners has been driven by the imperatives of economic gain. On the one hand, the interests of a private developer in the case of Chelsea, and on the other, a public body, Hounslow Borough Council’s whose desire was to incorporate Waterman’s Park into its regeneration strategy for Brentford. The following section aims to further investigate the warnings by river dwellers to assess the factors that could be attributed to the process. It examines the evidence to indicate how it might be possible to consider that the displacement of residents was/is an

instrumental factor in paving the way for the re-appropriation of this lifestyle for economic gain. It will endeavour to suggest that the struggles experienced by river dwellers are part of a trend to transform the once bohemian waterways into expensive real estate to extract the maximum financial gain, both from the built form (boats and moorings) and the landscape (riverscape as a place to dwell) in which this type of dwelling is located.

6.4 Re-Appropriating the Vernacular

If, as suggested by Keddie (2012) and Lees et al (2010) gentrification is associated with processes relating to economic, social, and spatial restructuring on land, the following section considers how it manifests itself on the river. It examines how the vernacular, boats, moorings, and practices of river life, are being re-appropriated, commodified and repackaged as an 'affordable alternative' for extremely wealthy patrons. The first case study looks at how a private developer at Chelsea Reach is re-producing boats (the built form) to mirror onshore luxury apartments. The second considers the involvement of the public sector in upgrading a riverside mooring at Brentford. Both examples require significant investment of capital and are marketed to a higher income group. The interiors of the two houseboats associated with Chelsea Yacht and Boatyard Company (CYBC), along with the promotional material are considered as examples to illustrate ways in which the bohemian lifestyle has been being transformed to resonate with values and beliefs associated with luxury living.

The first case considers the sale of two residential boats through the internationally renowned estate agents Knight Frank. Flagship is a re-purposed cargo boat built in Holland in 1915, and Walter Greaves is a recently commissioned luxury houseboat. As previously mentioned, both boats roused considerable interest in the press. On the market for £2.5 million, the media claimed that Flagship was Britain's most expensive houseboat, with Walter Greaves not far behind at £1.75 million. The language and the images used to market the boats were identical to those used in the sales brochures of high-end properties on land. Their accommodation was described in terms of en suite dressing rooms, sky lounges, outside terraces, and spectacular views of the river throughout. In Flagship's case, marketing materials advertised, that leading interior designers were employed to completely refit Flagship.

Although the brochures made small references to Flagship's historic past, and the Walter Greaves' nautical design, the boat characteristics, such as decks, portholes, engine rooms and wheelhouses were absent. Instead, the design of the boats has been purposely compared to modern high-end dwellings. Apart from the river views, there is little connection or mention of the physical element of the river itself.

Given that many live-aboard boats are re-purposed or commissioned, it could be argued that these two boats have been produced to offer an upmarket version of river dwelling, and apart from their price they are not particularly significant. However, the 'removal' of any resemblance of boat like features, suggests that this form is being reproduced to suit the needs of a specific market. The marketing in both cases strongly emphasizes the contemporary cultural and historical connections associated with the metropolitan area of Chelsea such as the Flower Show and the Kings Road. In the case of Flagship, moored

at Cadogan Pier, it is said to be located in the 'heart of Chelsea' with similar language being used for Walter Greaves. Both text and images firmly locate the houseboats in the heart of Chelsea rather than on the river itself.

By way of contrast, the marketing for the Walter Greaves, emphasises the historical connections between Chelsea and the mooring. The developer's website, CheyneWharf.com, points out that the boat was named after the renowned artist, Walter Greaves, who lived and painted at Cheyne Wharf for many years, and whose father both owned CYBC and was boatman to J.M.W. Turner. This not only directly associates the boat to a lineage of well-known artists, all famous for their relationship with the River Thames, but firmly connects it historically with Cheyne Wharf. The suggestion throughout is that potential buyers will have access to a rare opportunity to live in one of London's most exclusive addresses and home to many famous people. This is a further replication of the strategy used by developers to promote new luxury riverside dwellings similarly connecting to historic figures associated with the river and/or the history of the Thames itself (The London Dock Development is a notable example).

According to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Local Plan (2019), Chelsea has the highest land prices, and thus, house prices in the whole of England (Local Plan, 2019, p.29). In 2014, the median sale price for a house was £1,198,500.00. This is coupled with the fact the residential demographics indicate that it has the highest proportion nationally of residents who are employed as managers, directors, and senior officials. One of the key strategic issues for local authority is to protect local uses and

those that are important to the vitality of the borough from potential loss to the higher values commanded by residential use (Local Plan, 2019, p.40).

Although there is little that the local authority can do to help protect the residents of Chelsea houseboats (residents themselves recognise wider issues take precedent over their plight i.e., Grenville Tower), it could be argued that the loss of affordable riverside dwelling to hybrid luxury houseboats is relevant, and at odds with local authority plans. By converting and commissioning the luxury boats to compare with high end properties on land, ordinary boats used as homes are potentially being lost or re-appropriated to extract the highest return from this type of vernacular dwelling. Ironically, they are marketed as an 'affordable price' all be it for the very wealthy (Mansion Global, 2017). By re-positioning the houseboats, with the use of iconic images and literature, they are now associated with the 'land', or vice versa with Chelsea (now) located on the river itself, according to the website. Either way, the dwellings have been placed within the distinctive built environment of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea rather than the immediate neighbourhood of the moorings. These along with the community, and to a certain extent the river itself has been entirely overlooked. There is nothing to associate the dwelling with actually being on water. Consequently, it could be said that this form of dwelling has been mobilised by the developer to foster elite values of consumption by revalorizing this particular form vernacular dwelling and the practices of everyday life embedded in this way of life. The proximate space of the moorings, the connection with the physical aspects of living on water and the community have been erased to reproduce a space for elite consumption.

It could be argued that these two examples are the extreme rather than the norm. However, the question is to what extent do they represent a growing trend that is transforming river dwelling from an affordable alternative solution for ordinary people, to one that now offers a more economical way for the super wealthy to live in the most expensive borough in the England? At the beginning of this thesis, it was posited that historically living on the river was seen as an alternative, 'cheap' form of marginalised dwelling that existed on the edge of the city centre and took root in the 'cracks', or spaces along the neglected riverbank. River dwelling existed 'under the radar' and was very different to living on the land, due to practical differences such as the tides, the weather, shore access and nautical considerations of the vessels themselves. The findings emphasize several concerns that are either directly or indirectly related to the situation at Chelsea. The two key issues that were raised are inter-related and present ongoing challenges for river dwellers; the successive upward direction in costs, are changing the nature of life afloat, which by extension, is adding to the fears that the processes of gentrification have now permeated onto the water.

6.5 The Experience of Daily Life: The Tide in the City

To pretend that living on water is the same as to living on the land, whereby boats are being treated as apartments on the river, is something that goes against the flow. This is a cause for concern as problems occur when boats and the riverscape become (in some cases) increasingly enmeshed with the property market. The chair of the River Boat Owner's Association (RBOA) was adamant that "boats should not be seen as flats on water" given that the daily practicalities of residing on water are very different from living in a property on land (RBOA, 2018, Field Interview 090, Sutton).

The lifestyle re-produced for elite consumption seemingly erases the alliance between the natural environment and river dwelling. From a habitation perspective, the river is an ordinary/everyday vernacular riverscape on which people choose to live. It is a dwelling choice predicated on the recognition of the physical nature of the water and how this determines the experience of daily life (Gabor, 1979). Those who live on the water need to be aware of the symbiotic relationship between man and the specific qualities of the natural environment to provide a home (Meinig, 1979); a 'tacit knowing' of the ordinary riverscape is an essential component of river life. For most respondents, the changing cycles determining the rhythm of daily life is a key factor that contributes to the experience and choice of living on the river in central London. Even though the tidal characteristics of the Thames can be a challenging environment in which to live, interviewees appreciated the differing qualities of the river, in all its forms, by recounting the various ways in which their daily routines were affected by the natural flow of the tide in the city.

Living in an urban environment that can sometimes be wild and very elemental was an allure that added to the experience of living on water. The differing points of the tide, particularly between high and low water, together with the exceptionally fast ebb and flow of the Thames, affects daily routines in very specific ways. The high tide rises by seven meters to almost level with the road, where according to some, at certain times there can be a sense of the vessel riding on top of the waves with the sheer volume of water making it a turbulent and choppy experience. The daily rhythm of tidal flows emphasizes the changing textures and power of the water that are tightly bound to cycles of the moon, the seasons, the prevailing winds, fluctuating weather patterns and

the light. These are very physical differences between water and land, along with the ongoing and often intense exposure to the elements.

They were often cited as a major reason for choosing waterborne living over land; a quality of life otherwise lacking in the city. Notwithstanding the fact that the dwelling itself has been built to function within its floating context, vessel owners described the need to have a proactive and knowledgeable working relationship with the river. This entails a respect for the natural forces, along with an understanding of the nuances that can change the daily characteristics of the river, the ebb and the flow, the eddies, the flood tides, along with the neaps and springs and the navigation of vessels. Attachment to a mooring needs constant, often daily attention, as boats need to flex in accordance with the prevailing weather and tidal conditions. Some maybe moored alongside floating pontoons, others chained to the bottom and/or they can lie across the water, roped together in a vast pontoon of boats.

To live with these elemental variances, practices of daily life necessitate that river dwellers acquire the skills and the know-how to respond as the need arises (i.e., several of the interviewees recounted 'emergencies' that arose in response to particular tidal/weather conditions). People are actively engaging with the specific environmental conditions of the river as means of appropriating the water as a space on which to dwell. The ongoing working relationship make it possible to engage with practices of everyday life that respond to the exposure of the physical elements of the riverscape including the potential hazards along with the possibilities of joy and delight of the tidal routines. A land/riverscape as place on which to dwell, play and engage with the natural environmental or in the words of one of the respondents:

It can be a wild place and it isn't like living on land, no matter how much some pretend it is...it is quite wild just walking to the mooring, quite an adventure, and the boat itself, depending on the size of course, tends to rock around...you are more exposed than you are in most properties on land (Wren, 2018, Field Interview 003, Sutton).

This comment expresses a concern felt by many that a new reality is emerging whereby the physical symbiotic relationship crucial to living on the water is beginning to be ignored or even circumnavigated. In the case of Chelsea, the vernacular, dwelling and bohemian lifestyle have been re-appropriated to offer an 'affordable solution' to living in the city for the super wealthy; one that directly mirrors both physically and symbolically the expectations of a living in a high-end property along with a lifestyle that 'pretends' to be living on land by erasing the reality of river dwelling. This has been achieved by re-producing both the built form (boat) and the lifestyle. It is a practice that disregards the fundamental tenets and values of river life, such as community and the practicalities of living on water, by replacing it with values associated with living on land. Before speculating as to whether this a growing trend in which the problems at Chelsea are indicative and/or represents a significant moment in the evolution of river dwelling, the following returns to the redevelopment of the moorings at Waterman's Park in Brentford to consider additional evidence to support the case that the forces that have driven gentrification on land have now moved onto the water.

If the demands of private development are driving the changes at Chelsea, the following section returns to the previously mentioned at Waterman's Park, to consider in more detail the motivation behind the public sector removing boat owners. In the case of the London Borough of Hounslow, as the Riparian owners, they argued that in order to move forward with the new marina development they required vacant possession of the old

mooring. They stated that the existing mooring, the edge of the river and the adjacent land, had no planning permission, even though it was being used to provide permanent residential dwelling since the 1990's and therefore the boats were moored without consent.

The new planning proposal included the creation of a twenty-six-berth mooring, with parking and landscaping of the adjacent park. According to the plans, the key objective was to generate a positive capital receipt from the moorings by providing "new good quality mooring spaces" (1.2 Planning Application) and serve as a catalyst to remove the existing unauthorized boats and introduce regulatory compliance. Given that this is the public sector, the necessary consultations were undertaken and although the various objections were considered, they were subsequently overruled. From the existing residents' perspective, their key objections included the actual design and cost, £5.45 million, which was considered excessive for the size of the new moorings. They did proffer an alternative, less costly and more environmentally friendly design, but this was rejected by the council.

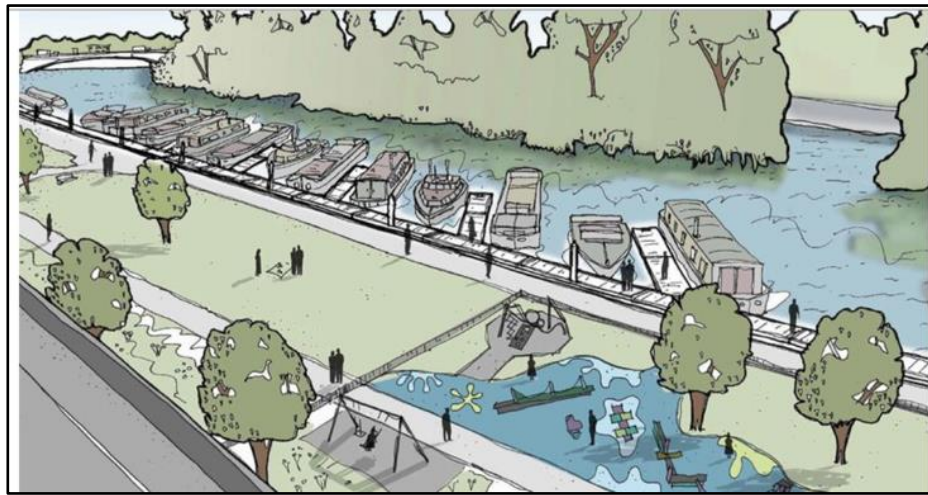


Figure 6.1 'Hounslow Borough Council Plan Mooring Plan'.
Courtesy of Cumber R, *My London*, 2016.



Figure 6.2 'Alternative proposal put forward by river residents'
Courtesy of Cumber R, *My London*, 2016.

The strongest criticism ironically came from the local Brentford Council (as opposed to the Hounslow Borough council) who pointed out that a substantial amount of the costs had been attributed to the removal of the current residents moored at the site. They argued that this was “contrary to both common humanity and to government policy” which actively encouraged more moorings (Planning Application, 2016, 5.10). Their support for the residents is worth noting in detail as many of the arguments sum up the key problems and can be traced back those that were encountered by those engaged in the conflict at Tower Bridge Moorings(Chapter Four),

It should be recognized that the boating community is comprised of an extraordinary eclectic mix of diverse members of the community, from self-employed artisans to highly skilled paid professionals...The scheme effectively 'sanitizes' the area, restricting the use of the moorings to those in a position to afford the artificially inflated costs. All communities need housing provisions catering for all income levels if they are to be vibrant, interesting, and sustainable. Moorings provisions allow for that. It not only appeals to all income levels but is affordable to all income levels. The Council has a duty of care in this respect that over-rides any perceived imperative to maximize potential income from every one of their assets (Planning Application, 2016, 5.10, Brentford Council Comments).

The council were accused of trying to gentrify the area, given that it was thought unlikely that the incumbents would qualify for a berth at the expected new market price. As previously mentioned, the residents lost their court case, and have since left the site. From the council's perspective they have achieved their aim to regulate this stretch of the river and bring it to market which was clearly identified in the Borough's Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2016-20, Objective 3, Place Making, Priority 3.9. p.66). The moorings are one of several waterside sites to be regenerated in Brentford.

6.6 Commodification on the River

The protracted problems encountered at the two sites attest to competing narratives and values with different imaginations of the same place and have resulted in conflict between the key players (Keddie, 2012). At Waterman's Park, river dwellers viewed themselves as a legitimate long-standing community, fighting to maintain their way of life, to remain in place and avoid eviction. Hounslow Borough Council, on the other hand, was keen to remove (as they perceived it) a group of trespassing squatters and their untidy boats, who stood in the way of the council, realizing its long-term regeneration programme (Osborne, 2018). At Chelsea, as the new owner seeks to

maximise profit, the increased fees are potentially making river dwelling unaffordable for many of the long-term residents. In both cases, the lack of security of tenure has been exploited by the council and the developer as a way of removing people from their moorings. The case studies allude to the manner in which the economic and political processes are impacting on both the spatial and social dimensions of river life; the findings document how the vision conceived by those in power, conflicts with the culture and social, economic practices of those who have lived in communities on the river for decades. They also highlight how the drive towards a maximum return on capital has resulted in the re-appropriation of the vernacular (built and practices) in favour of the production of distinctive residences that are increasingly becoming unaffordable for those on 'normal' incomes. These competing narratives have led to long and costly contestations for all parties in response to the potential fear of higher costs resulting in loss and displacement of individuals along with removal of local communities.

The key findings to emerge across the data (interviews, case studies and newspaper articles, marketing materials) suggest that the changes encountered at these two sites could be indicative of a trend that represents a sense of loss (this manifests itself in different ways) which is a primary concern for many river dwellers. The introduction of higher prices, with the general move 'upmarket', is displacing people with 'normal' incomes and smaller boats (Pickles, 2018, Field Interview 020, Sutton) from the river. Others have suggested that as some boats are now viewed as investments, the 'battered old boats' with charm are being replaced by modern 'cruiser' types for luxury living. This is changing not only the nature of life afloat, but the ambience of the river itself. The overarching sense of loss is tinged with irony, as it was recognised by many of the

respondents that it was the 'mavericks' who had made the river a desirable place to live in the first instance, by moving into the 'the cracks' at a time when the rules were few and no one else was interested in the river as a place to call home. A strong theme to emerge, was the possibility that this way of life could be under threat. The actions of developers and the authorities were increasingly viewed as an attempt to gentrify dwelling on the river as they recognised the 'lucrative possibilities' to maximise profits (Osborne, 2018). This in turn, has led to deeper concern that gentrification has now moved onto the river and suggests the possibility that dwelling on the River Thames has now become part of "everything in the city" that is reducible to economic exchange (Purcell, 2013, p.149). If as this study suggests, that the commodification of urban space has now extended onto the water, it is a subject that has eluded academic enquiry. The discourse relating to the wider processes of transformation and change that have taken place along the banks of the river have remained firmly on land (Davidson and Lees 2005, 2007, 2010; Hamnet 2009; Keddie; 2012; Minton, 2017).

The following discussion draws primarily, but not exclusively, upon the work of prominent gentrification authors Lorretta Lees and Mark Davidson, (their extensive scholarship, empirical work and approach to gentrification provides insight into how the processes have impacted along the banks of the River Thames, 2005, 2007), to evaluate the claims that gentrification has moved beyond the confines of the city onto the water. The discussion commences with the changing nature of gentrification and the extent to which this type of dwelling could (or not) be understood within the classic use of the term. It then follows in the wake of Lees's expansion of the definition, to focus on the core elements of the process of gentrification (see pp 237-241) to analyse the extent to

which the changing nature of life afloat including the river is driven by the processes of urbanisation.

6.7 The Changing Face of Gentrification

Gentrification is a contested and complex phenomenon that has evolved over the years and bears little resemblance to the original meanings proposed by Ruth Glass, who coined the phrase in the early 1960's when writing about the urban and social changes taking place in London. The classic characterisation of the term described the transformation of old working-class neighbourhoods by the middle classes. These groups moved into a particular area, and either renovated and/or refurbished the original houses, which in turn led to the creation of desirable places to live. Once this process starts, it continues until the majority, if not all, of the original inhabitants have been displaced. By this stage it has irrevocably changed the social character of the neighbourhood. According to Glass, (Glass in Lees *et al* 2010) it is an inevitable consequence of the changing demographic, economic and political pressures facing the London at the time.

Over the past fifty years, the discourses relating to gentrification have evolved into a field of study within its own right. With no agreed definition, the term has mutated and been modified. No longer solely concerned with the rehabilitation of individual neighbourhoods, the concept has been extended to encompass both urban and rural locations. Along with this, has been an expansion of different forms of the built environment implicated in the processes of gentrification. More recently, scholars have turned their attention to rethinking gentrification from a global perspective (Lees and Philips, 2018).

Initially, theoretical perspectives evolved to identify and examine the causes that precipitated the processes of gentrification. Following Ruth Glass, key scholars such as Neil Smith, David Ley and Chris Hamnet (in Lees, Slater and Wiley, 2008) have examined the causes from two different perspectives. On the one hand problems associated with the production of the built environment. On the other, causal explanations that sought to understand the attributes of consumers. Smith (in Lees *et al* 2008) drew upon theories of uneven capital development to focus on the rent gap between current and future expectations of land value to examine how the processes of production and neighbourhood transformation resulted in gentrifying an area.

Ley and Hamnet (in Lees *et al* 2008) proposed consumption explanations that sought to understand the characteristics of the consumers. Class, along with different income groups, underpinned these causal explanations and were seen as key to understanding how spatial diversification and increases in property value trigger gentrification, and precipitate the displacement of indigenous, or lower income residents.

A new wave of scholarship moved away from consideration of causes and looked instead to the impacts of gentrification on local communities and individuals. Working in a participatory manner, gentrification studies were reoriented to understand the practices of resistance (Lees *et al* 2008; Lees *et al* 2018), (a re-occurring theme within the literature) and the ways in which groups have sought to counter different types of displacement.

Recently, attention has turned to the planetary nature of gentrification, with a proliferation of literature suggesting that gentrification has been modified once again, to become a major global force underpinning the re-development “of economies that

are dependent on the circulation of capital for commodification and exploitation of urbanising space” (Lees and Philips, 2018, p.15).

Methodologically, in 2020, a new study, ‘A Modified Gentrification and Displacement Methodology...’ (Thomas *et al*, 2020) took yet another approach to the problems of gentrification, by compiling and sharing new data sources that “capture a wider spectrum of neighbourhood change dynamics” (Thomas *et al*, p.4) to identify patterns of displacement. The aim of this, is to share data driven research with local communities and policy makers, in attempt to influence a more equitable approach to future development.

Despite the different understandings of the term, the processes of gentrification fundamentally start with the reinvestment of capital into the built environment of a particular place (Clark, 2010). This occurs at the expense of the low income and/or indigenous population, who are displaced by a higher socio-economic group, who can afford the increase in property values. This triggers the processes of gentrification (Lees, Slater, Wyly, 2008).

It is now widely accepted, within the literature and history of the complex theoretical debates relating to the evolution of gentrification, that this process can occur in a variety of different physical forms. Today, it is no longer concerned exclusively with the upgrading of single older family houses but can include the conversion of industrial sites (factories and warehouses) as well as new build apartments (Davidson, 2007; Hamnet 2009; Lees *et al*, 2010; Gibson, 2015). The meaning of the term, however, can be interpreted by different groups in a myriad of different ways. Underlying the different

approaches and interpretations is the view that gentrification is concerned with the “processes relating to profound economic, social and spatial restructuring” (Smith and Williams in Lees *et al* 2010, p.10), resulting in changes to the landscape. Lees along with Smith and Williams advocate that rather than trying to limit the term to one specific definition, it needs to focus on a range of processes that contribute to the restructuring of a particular locale. Lees has identified four key elements, which according to her are indicative of the root causes of gentrification and therefore should be included in the definition: the reinvestment of capital, the social upgrading of local by high income groups, landscape change, direct or indirect displacement of low-income groups (Lees *et al*, 2010, p. xvi). Given that the theme of gentrification emerged from an analysis of the data, i.e., it did not set out to specifically study gentrification, to test the idea within the context of the river the analysis drew upon Lees expansive definition. Each of these factors is examined in relation to the findings to assess the hypothesis that the root causes of gentrification on the river have resulted in the commodification of life afloat in all its forms and led to a polarised set of power relations. This in turn has resulted in conflict between river dwellers, the founders of this this type of dwelling, and those that are trying to reproduce it for profitable gain, by those in power.

Re-purposed boats as dwellings provide an interesting conundrum in relation to gentrification. As already noted, they are not legally defined as property, although they sold as such. Whilst they might not fit the classic definition, they do share some common features. It could be argued that since they were re-purposed from an industrial space to a residential one, usually they were redundant boats, and therefore did not displace a local population, or indeed take up any new space. Similarly, as noted in Chapter Three when people originally moved onto the river to live, they usually moored up alongside

neglected and unused wharves, barge beds and or abandoned industrial spaces that were of little interest or use to anyone but themselves. Therefore, whilst the original maverick inhabitants, converted and renovated their boats, and appropriated vacant space, they had little impact on the surrounding area or its population. Furthermore, over time, it was these river dwellers who re-imagined and redefined small pockets of space at the edge of the city to produce their own version of a local community and the attendant structures in response to their cultural own needs. This suggests that the original 'pioneers' were not 'gentrifiers' in the archetypical understanding of the term, rather they were occupying what was essentially a neglected zone, and rejuvenating /re-purposing it but they were not displacing a local population. However, today, these communities are now being indirectly or directly displaced or are in the process of being appropriated and gentrified themselves. The following examines key elements of the causes of gentrification within a riverine context.

Without access to the actual financial and demographic data information (see limitations), it is not possible to offer conclusive evidence as to the extent of the investment of capital at both sites. However, it could be argued that an increased demand to live on the river (Anon, 2018, Field Interview 014, 2018, Sutton) has stimulated the market, providing an opportunity to monetize river dwelling by investing capital from both the private and the public sector to upgrade boat types and facilities. In the case of Chelsea, if the suggestion that the developer has the support of investors is correct, then a return on their capital would be expected. The increase in current prices, including the extraction of value from the tenure agreements, along with a marketing strategy that repositions the lifestyle to appeal to a wealthy and possible global elite, are perhaps indications of an expectation of a higher return on the mooring

than is possible with the current incumbents. Likewise, the commissioning and refurbishing of the two boats commensurate with 'high end' property suggests not only a considerable investment into their production, but an expected profitable return. In the case of the Hounslow, the council were explicit that the projected £5.4 million investment of public funds allocated to the development of the new marina was part of a larger £500 million regeneration plan for Brentford that was expected to realise the maximum financial benefit of the site. In both cases, the capital investment has resulted in changes to both the moorings located on the riverscape and the type of dwelling. The new marina will replace the informal structures' and 'inappropriate boats' with a 'quality' mooring that conforms to regulations imposed by the council and the new operational management company. In the case of Chelsea, the 'Walter Greeves' and 'Flagship' are possible indications of the introduction of boat types that replicate high end property and have little to do with actually living on the water. In this sense, it is the capital investment that is reproducing the moorings and the boats to suggest that they are the equivalent to the gentrification of the built environment, as it applies to the river, and are therefore the visual spatial components of this social transformation. (Smith and Williams in Lees *et al* 2010, p.10).

However, the process of gentrification goes beyond changes to the physical form of both landscape and dwelling. The findings suggest that in the case of river dwelling, "people living a normal houseboat life are being asked to pay more and more which in the long term is forcing people off the river" (Pickles, 2018, Field Interview 002, Sutton). Little has been said thus far about the role of estate agents in the process of buying and selling houseboats. They concur however, that prices have recently increased dramatically (Day, 2019, Field Interview 027, Sutton), particularly where there is some security of

tenure on a mooring. This in turn creates value that has led developers and planners to consider residential boats on moorings to be a lucrative investment. Ironically, today the value of the mooring far outstrips that of the vessel.

It could be argued that the role of capital is a key factor driving not only the physical changes taking place on the river, but the social changes as well. In the two cases cited, the developers have commodified the value of the 'real estate,' whilst allegedly exploiting the local residents. The expectation of both the private developers and the council is to replace the lower income community groups, (in this case the middle classes defined by the occupations of those attracted to this lifestyle) with those of a higher income (the super wealthy), to generate a return on their investments. Without reliable demographic evidence, this group has been characterised by the developers target market who are perceived to have specific residential requirements thereby influencing the type of residential spaces created (Davidson, 2007); the two luxury dwellings and their connection with the metropolitan borough of Chelsea.

The disputes suggest that both direct and indirect methods of displacement have been used by those in power as a way of socially upgrading or re-appropriating the vernacular to accommodate the needs of a higher income group to provide them with an 'affordable' riverside dwelling. Ironically, it is the same market forces that drove the original pioneers to the waterside. The findings have been interpreted to suggest that the direct institutional interventions of both the public and private sectors, along with a purposeful place-making strategy, regeneration in the case of Brentford, and the housing market in the Borough of Chelsea, may have contributed to changing the nature of living on water. With urban economic and political demands driving the physical and

social changes, river life is no longer perceived as an 'under the radar' river rat existence. Instead, it is being marketed as a lifestyle, now associated with 'luxury' high end living. For those that live on the river, these changes have resulted in a sense of loss that has impacted in different ways on life afloat.

Within the context of this research the idea of gentrification impacting on river dwelling unexpectedly emerged as a strong theme in the findings and one that has eluded scholarly attention. Although there are echoes of the classical understanding of gentrification, such long-term river dwellers being replaced by those with higher incomes, the early pioneers do not seem to fit this definition even though they have repurposed industrial spaces and places. By applying the four key elements that are indicative of the root causes of gentrification within a riverine context, several key findings emerged. Principal among these, is the recent renaissance of the river, along with an increased demand for river dwelling, has produced a type of gentrification that involves the exploitation of the economic value of real estate (boats and moorings). Consequently, residents and communities are now treated as objects and not subjects, and therefore can and are being displaced (Lees *et al*, 2010).

6. 8 Resisting Gentrification

Several gentrification scholars, in particular Lees *et al* (2010) are unequivocal in that, the root causes of gentrification are associated with the commodification of urban space and the polarisation of power relations. This creates a situation whereby the forces of urbanisation can have a profound impact on local communities. The new representations of river life have been, and still are, being contested by those who

spatial imaginaries and values differ from those conceived in preparation for a new wave of inhabitants, (Keddie,2012). These struggles raise the question as to whether local communities can resist the forces of gentrification to preserve their way of life or whether, as in the case of river dwellers, they are a testament to the slow erosion and eradication of this vernacular form. The findings suggest that the struggles experienced by river dwellers demonstrate a tremendous capacity for creative and resilient responses in trying to resist the disruption and displacement to the potential causes and processes of gentrification (Lees *et al*, 2010). However, these are becoming ever more difficult, “in an era when most institutions and many individuals are committed to the idea that the unregulated market works best, and that gentrification is nothing more than a change in the equilibrium of an urban market” (Lees ,2010, p.526). The cases of Chelsea and Waterman’s Park, highlight that it is not easy to protect the more affordable types housing and make the case for “a right to a home, shelter and community” (Lees, 2010, p.526) especially when a particular group have no legal rights for their dwellings to remain in place.

6.9 Summary

It is the contention of this thesis to tentatively suggest that the changes taking place are dominated by the logics of capital and the free market. The evidence, whilst not conclusive, demonstrates that the imperatives of capital and politics are driving the processes of physical and social change that appeals to a ‘new’ type of river dweller by re-appropriating and commodifying every aspect of life afloat. Without an in-depth study, it is not possible to determine the type or scale of gentrification taking place on the river. However, an analysis of the data supports the concerns of the interviewees that gentrification is a growing trend that is now taking hold on the water. Whether or

not the relationship between capital actors, (in this case the private developer, the council, and estate agents) and the imperatives of capital accumulation (Davidson, 2007, p.492) are solely responsible for either creating or accelerating gentrification on the river is difficult to determine. The synthesis of the data outlined in this chapter point to the role of capital in commodifying life afloat for the consumption of the super wealthy. Seemingly, the “process of profit driven urbanisation and its relentless commodification and recommodification of urban spaces” as discussed by Brenner, Marcuse, Mayer (2012, p.14) in *‘Cities for People not Profit’*, has now made its way onto the water. The findings appear to validate concerns that the cultural values of the long-term river dwellers, their bohemian lifestyles, along with new representations of space, moorings, and boats, are slowly disappearing as it is re-appropriated and repackaged for high value consumers by the dominant shapers of space.

Underlying the problems encountered in this chapter are issues of affordability. For many of the interviewees, economic viability to remain in the city has been cited as a key factor in choosing to live afloat. The next chapter investigates changing notions of affordability to question the extent to which river dwelling is a necessity as much as a life-style choice and the reasons why the ‘water’s edge’ offers a desirable alternative to land based forms of housing.

7. Dwelling at the Thames Edge: An Affordable Alternative

7.1 Introduction

Utilizing the concepts of the right to appropriation and the right to participation, implicit in the conceptualisation of the 'right to the city' (Lefebvre, 196, p.174), the previous chapters examined the different ways in which river dwellers, as inhabitants of the city, attempted to claim space, and with it, the right to collectively produce their own city *oeuvre*. Throughout the thesis, these concepts have been drawn upon to help identify how river inhabitants have resisted urban injustices, as they have struggled (in various locations) to reshape the water's edge in a different image from those in authority (Harvey, 2013, 2015).

A thematic analysis of the data drawing on a range of methods including the use of architectural documentation, interviews, and archival material and in particular the mapping of tensions (Appendix G) within the context of the case studies, has identified how different communities have attempted to appropriate the water's edge and participate in the production of new social spaces on the river, in the heart of the city. Over time, these actions culminated in a pattern of ongoing struggle, in which the water's edge emerged as an urban site of contestation. This response was stimulated by differing perceptions of the use and ownership of the built environment along the riverbanks, and crucially, of the role of the river itself. It resulted in a variety of demands and competing claims over the same space within the city (Tonkiss, 2005). The case studies, covered in the preceding chapters, highlighted the principal actors, political actions, and tactics of resistance, involved in the conflicts. The different forms of resistance demonstrated the ways in which river dwellers collectively organised

themselves. It also showed how and why they engaged with the political processes required to appropriate the city space that met with their needs and did so in opposition to the dominant mode of spatial production (Lefebvre, 1996; Harvey, 2013; Leary-Owhin and McCarthy, 2020; Butler, 2020).

This chapter seeks to address the two key inter-related research questions: what are the forms and moments of resistance used by river dwellers to challenge the dominant economic and political powers and how are contemporary urban demands changing the role of the river? The aim of combining these two questions is to understand how and why this vernacular form has evolved in different ways over time to resist the dominant economic and political modes of abstract space. The forms and moments of resistance are reviewed, as means of interpreting how and why contemporary urban demands are changing the role of the river, and by extension the nature of dwelling afloat. This has been achieved by evaluating the different forms of resistance, with a view to suggesting that the root causes underlying the pattern of conflict and creativity, from the 1970's to the present day, relate to broader issues of affordability, which in turn, are connected to the wider problems of dwelling in the city.

The first section of this chapter briefly reflects on the different types of resistance, arguing that they are inextricably bound up in a complex relationship, determined, on the one hand, by the changing perceptions of the use and ownership of water's edge, and on other, with problems relating directly to issues of affordability and home ownership. It also draws upon the concepts of exchange and use value, in which the right to 'appropriation' is "clearly distinct from the right to property, implied in the idea of the right to the city" (Lefebvre, 1996, p.174). Dwelling on the river, is interpreted here

as a form of resistance, in which river dwellers, (by virtue of the necessity and need to be connected to the bank), have collectively attempted to appropriate the river and water's edge, for its affordable use value, namely, a place to dwell. This lies in contrast to the exchange value of the dominant, unaffordable mode of spatial production, in which the river, and most of its edge, has been subsumed by neoliberal capitalist elite interests (Lefebvre, 1996; Purcell, 2013; Butler, 2020; Leary Owhin and McCarthy, 2020).

The chapter considers how issues of affordability, (a theme to emerge across the findings), and house ownership are related to the wider processes of economic and political change, and how this has resulted in the capital's housing crisis (Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Minton, 2017). These processes are then more specifically interpreted, within the context of the urban regeneration of the built environment along the banks of the Thames, with specific reference to the creation of luxury riverside developments, which it is argued, are exacerbating the housing crisis (Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Minton, 2017). Throughout the rest of the chapter, the discussion centres on the relationship between these urban processes, and the impact they have had on the changing perceptions of affordability in relation to river dwelling. An interpretive analysis of the different types of resistance discussed in the previous three chapters, suggest that the relations between river communities and those in power, along with issues of affordability, have ultimately altered the dynamics of river dwelling. It is therefore proposed that the urban demands of the built environment have changed the not only the phenomenon of river dwelling but the nature of the relationship between the city and the role of river.

7.2 Forms of Resistance along the Banks of the Thames

The main case studies in the previous three chapters, have demonstrated that the appropriation of space, as a means of resistance, has manifested itself in multiple forms, which are both historically dynamic and fluid (Keith and Pile, 1997; Pinch 2015). The struggles encountered by river dwellers, have been analysed and interpreted to represent different forms and moments of resistance to reveal the aspirations of ordinary people living along the water's edge. By drawing upon the concept of resistance it has been possible to reveal the complex power nature of the power relations that impact on river dwelling. Definitions of resistance focus on practices enacted by groups as they attempt to challenge the authorities, as a means of either changing or at least retaining a set of circumstances that directly relate "societal relations, process/and or institutions" (Routledge 1997, p.360 in Hughes, 2020, p.1150). Resistance, therefore, encompasses both actions and a belief that it is possible to enact change by challenging power. Acts of resistance range from the temporary to the strategic. Some are small acts of everyday dissent; others are undertaken by groups on behalf of a particular cause. They typically manifest themselves as social movements, strikes, alliances, coalitions, or large scale anti-global protests, and promote causes from labour rights to rights to space (Hughes, 2020; Marcuse, 2009; Martin and Pearce, 2013). The idea that struggles can be directly associated with class is clearly outdated (Marcuse, 2009). Activism in the twenty first century encompasses people from all walks of life, who consciously intend to overcome a particular set of power relations. In other words, by engaging in resistant acts, they must do so consciously and be able to relate "consciousness with intent" (Hughes, 2020, p. 1150). In conjunction with a set of

practices and actions, it is not unusual for different types of resistance, to be bound up in the defence of both identity and place (Keith and Pile, 1997).

Within the gentrification scholarship, the most defined practice of resistance is the 'right to stay put'. It involves oppositional acts to modes of urbanisation that bring about displacement (Lees, 2010). Drawing upon different case studies, this research sought to contextualise different acts of resistance. The aim being to understand how networks of power relations function, and to evaluate the extent to which river dwellers have been able to influence (or not) how these have that impacted on their daily lives.

It is proposed that the appropriation of industrial spaces enabled the creation of new type of dwelling; one that resisted in the dominant modes of dwelling in the city. In addition, the chronological mapping of the tensions, documented how and why several river communities became the locus of politicisation. In response to the threat of eviction, residents were galvanised by a common set of interests to organise and take action (see below). Political responses are shown to have resulted in different types of urban activism. In the case of Tower Bridge Moorings and Tideway Village, action was taken as a means of both defending their homes and their community moorings (i.e., territories). Chelsea residents are still attempting to resist the possible negative impacts of the processes of gentrification, which many long-term residents fear will ultimately lead to their eviction by a new wealthy elite. The study has also revealed other types of resistance, expressed in the form of specific political campaigns and tactics, some of which resulted in legal action. Viewed collectively, (see below) it could be argued that these different struggles have facilitated river dwellers 'right' to appropriate the water's edge. In other words, inherent in the production of this vernacular (form and practices)

are different modes of resistance. Following in the footsteps of Lefebvre (1996), Tonkiss (2005) and Harvey (2013), this thesis proposes that life afloat is a form of dwelling that challenges the order of the city dominated by the logic of capital. Living on the river has evolved in response to the need for an affordable alternative form of dwelling, that allows for the right to difference, and the right not to be expelled from the city. In other words, dwelling on water, both in the material form and in the practice of daily river life, goes against the flow, to resist the dominant mode of city housing (Adams and McMurray, 1997).

The findings from the chapters Four to Six, have drawn attention to the existence of the different types of resistance which, it is suggested, are inherent in this lifestyle. Repurposed barges are in themselves a material form of resistance since they provide an inexpensive (relatively speaking) alternative form of dwelling. In addition, since the early 1970's, various forms of resistance have been initiated by different communities as the pressure began to build:

...very stressful because at the time, because of all the riverside development, moorings were being swept away and people moved on, and there was no no-where to live, meanwhile house prices were going up and up in London. It would have been impossible for us to move ashore at that point because we could not have afforded it (Taylor, 2016, Totally Thames).

This comment lies at the heart of the problems faced by river dwellers and points to the key theme that underpins the different forms of resistance. Despite having found a semi-informal solution to the problem of affordable city dwelling, the transformation of the built environment on land, began to impact on river dwellers. The redevelopment of the riverside meant that river inhabitants could be made homeless and forced to move on. For many, finding new moorings was impossible, and moving ashore was not

an affordable option. As the situation began to change more rapidly, individuals and communities up and down the river were either forced to move on, or fight, and many did organise themselves on an ad hoc basis in response to the threat of eviction (Taylor, 2016, Totally Thames Interviews).

From this point on, the case studies reflect the patterns of resistance that emerged amongst river dwellers and continue to the present day. The findings suggest that the water's edge had quickly become a site of urban struggle, in response to the revitalisation of the built environment taking place along the banks of the River Thames. Investigations into the problems encountered by individual communities concur with Fran Tonkiss (2005). They demonstrate how people and institutions, with differing perceptions, have attempted to make various of demands on the same space within the city, with the ensuing tensions resulting in political action. The findings suggest that underpinning the different forms of resistance are issues of affordability, and these have resulted in a consistent pattern of conflict. An analysis of the data from the case studies, the interviews, the mapping of the tensions, and the archival sources, indicate that different perceptions of river dwelling along with notions of affordability, have over time impacted on the nature of river dwelling. The following section reviews the case studies to illustrate how this manifests itself.

7.3 Urban demands and their impact on River Life: Different perceptions of affordability and home ownership

Issues associated with the urban regeneration of the riverside, began to impact on the community at Tower Bridge Moorings and Tideway, as new uses were sought on land to replace the old port architecture and infrastructure associated with the rapidly declining

maritime industry. Both conflicts were set against a background of political and economic restructuring, that sought to revalorise the riverside. This in turn, led to a rise in residential and commercial developments, in particular, luxury apartments (Davidson and Lees, 2005; Keddie and Tonkiss, 2010; Rubin, 2011). These spatial expressions, of the social and economic transformation that took place along the banks of the river, were challenged by river dwellers (Pinch, 2015). Both their form of dwelling and their lifestyle existed in tension with the ever-increasing problems of affordability of living on land.

An examination of both conflicts in Chapter Four revealed that the underlying cause of the tensions lay in opposing perceptions of dwelling on the waterfront, in which the river played a key role. On the river, the moorings and the river provided an affordable alternative. It enabled river inhabitants to live and work in the city, whilst on land, developers and investors were incorporating the river into the production of luxury apartments, built for a wealthy elite. For those who lived on the river, urban regeneration resulted in a shortage of affordable housing, which priced low-income people like themselves out of the housing market (Barrett, 2003). An examination of the struggles highlighted a range of actors, such as planners, onshore residents, and riparian owners (developers at Tideway) who attempted to protect the 'rights of property'. They were prepared exploit the lack of security associated with river dwelling and attempt to remove whole communities. The 'use' value of the river as an affordable place to dwell, in this case, was completely ignored by those in power in the pursuit of profit: "as the property rights regime works to separate land (*the river*) from the surrounding community of users" (*on the water*) (Purcell, 2013, p.149).

In both cases, the riverine communities not only became politicised, as a means of defending their homes, but also responded and resisted with collective political action. Both creatively devised a range of campaigns and tactics that challenged the dominance of the urban regeneration taking place on shore. Fortunately, with support from the Inspectorate, in the case of Tower Bridge Moorings, and the local council, in the case of Tideway Village, they won their battles and were able to remain in place.

In Chapter Five, the emphasis was on issues of affordability and security that had resulted in a creative 'moment'. A group of residents, enmeshed in the problems of Tower Bridge Moorings, were inspired to take control of their own destiny. By participating in the processes of urbanisation, they hoped to create a secure environment that suited their own needs. The group that built Hermitage Community Moorings were similarly inspired, embarking on the ambitious endeavour to mitigate and resist the problems of insecurity and affordability associated with living on the river.

Finally, in the cases of Chelsea Houseboats and Waterman's Park, where the study charted a struggle against both private and public authorities, the findings have suggested that the problems associated with these river communities can now, perhaps, be seen as early indicators of the process of gentrification. Developers and local authorities have recently seen an opportunity to financialise this lifestyle, by investing in both moorings and potentially high-end boats. This has resulted in a situation whereby long-term residents are at risk, as they can no longer afford the increased fees associated with living on the river. The findings from the previous chapter (Six) have indicated that these developments are being driven by their market potential i.e., gentrification, as a means of providing a higher return on capital invested. For the

original inhabitants, the lack of security of tenure has been exploited to evict them and make way for wealthier residents. In addition, mooring fees and other charges have been increased that are beyond the means of most residents thereby creating a situation whereby issues of affordability have resulted in residents potentially losing their homes.

Collectively, an examination of these struggles demonstrates the resourcefulness and creativity of river dwellers as they have sought and fought to maintain an affordable vernacular form of city dwelling. This is not only expressed in the material mode of dwelling, but in their practices of daily life, and above all in their ability to resist and take on the establishment when necessary (Gabor, 1997).

It is the contention of this thesis, to suggest that the changing nature of the built environment along water's edge has framed the space and influenced the character of the relationships and interactions with power over time (Rubin, 2011). As mentioned above, to complicate matters, the study has alluded to the possibility that the built environment has now been extended to include the river, which has become a key component in the struggles of the riverine communities and their right to the city. No longer a working river within a maritime context, the changing function of the Thames, from de-industrialisation to the present day, has been shown by the studies to have evolved from a neglected and polluted river to its contemporary multifunctional use as within the city (transport, leisure etc). These changes have been reflected in the tensions encountered by river dwellers, which from the beginning, have emphasised a clash of perceptions over the role of the river. During the span of the study, the unencumbered view of the river has come to be deemed a part of the investment

portfolio of property owners. On the other hand, for barge communities it has always been perceived as a rightful and affordable place to dwell.

In conjunction with the edge, the river has become the medium through which tensions relating to the urban demands of dwelling in the city are being played out. The difference between the exchange value and the use value has created an opposition, resulting in struggles between the two (Tonkiss, 2005; Rubin, 2011). Utilizing the framework of the 'right to the city', this research contends that the root causes underlying the moments of struggle and creativity relate to issues of ownership and affordability. It suggests that the 'rights of property' (exchange value) outweigh the rights, of the inhabited city, in this case, of the river as a place to dwell (use value):

Currently, in almost every city in the world, the property rights of owners outweigh the use rights of inhabitants, and the exchange value of property determines how it is used much more so than its use value. (Purcell, 2013, p.142).

Fundamental to Henri Lefebvre's discourse of the right to the city, is the idea that the capitalist system, with its attendant politics of perpetual accumulation and commodification (industrialization followed by neo-liberalism), imposes itself on the city, asserting the primacy of exchange value. The rights of property, under the various guises of capitalism, remain firmly within the control of the political and economic elite, who ultimately transform and shape cities for their own benefit. Thus, it can be argued, that the production of space is dominated by the rights of property, over all other claims, which consequently, alienates inhabitants from urban space (Lefebvre 1996; Butler,

2014; Harvey, 2006; Purcell, 2013; Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Minton, 2017; Leary-Owhin and McCarthy, 2020).

Although, in the cases cited, those in power did not always win, the dominant property rights of owners did clash with the use rights of citizens. These conflicts largely occurred when those in power tried to physically remove river dwellers and their barges from their moorings, contending that they were having a negative impact on the value of their properties and/or riverside developments. From a Lefebvrian perspective, the emphasis on property as a form of investment, in which the river enhanced the value (see below), was an attempt to erode what he called 'the right to the city' (Lefebvre, 1996). Henri Lefebvre argued that this right, is the right "to urban life, to renewed centrality, to places of encounter and change, to life rhythms and times uses, enabling the full and complete usage of these moments and places" (Lefebvre, 1996, p.179). Writing in response to problems in France in the late 1960's, he was referring to the working classes being expelled from the city centre. He contended, that claiming the right to the city, meant claiming a right to both inhabit and to participate in the production of the city.

In an attempt to claim space at the water's edge, developers, and investors, exerting the dominance of property rights, sought to separate the river and its edge from the local communities of users, (Purcell, 2013) largely by having them evicted. In other words, they attempted to commandeer the river in pursuance of the rights of property, making the river into a marketable commodity, whose function was (only) to enhance the value of their land/property. In doing so, they dismissed the everyday needs (use value) of river dwellers. It is this protectionism of the value of property as a financial asset, that underpins the central tenets of neoliberal urbanism (see below); one where capital

treats land, property, and homes as investments. According to Madden and Marcuse (2016) “housing is not produced and distributed for the purpose of dwelling for all; it is produced and distributed as a commodity to enrich the few” (Madden and Marcuse, 2016 p.10). Nowhere is this more apparent than along the banks of the river Thames.

The underlying tensions examined throughout the study, have linked living on the river with an affordable alternative to dwelling on land, with many respondents (both in the field work and the Totally Thames interviews) citing affordability as a key motivation for moving onto the water. However, respondents also noted that recently, river dwelling had become more “up-market” and less affordable (Pickles, 2018, Field Interview 020, Sutton). The following discussion assesses how the changing perceptions of affordability are contributing towards a new set of problems faced by long term river dwellers.⁹

Most respondents, along with the River Thames Society, and various media commentators, make it clear that the economics of river dwelling have changed considerably since the early days. Whilst it might still be cheaper than living on land, it will not necessarily save money over time. Boats for re-purposing, are neither more or less expensive than they were (Cottis and Timms, 2018, Field Interview 017, Sutton). However, other costs, services and maintenance obligations have increased dramatically, such as: mooring fees, maintenance fees, insurance, safety certificates, licenses, vessel maintenance, fuel and pump out facilities. In addition, for residential

⁹ Any attempt to define affordability is a futile exercise given that it has different meanings for different sectors of society. However, a recent report by the Affordable Housing Commission (2018), suggests that rather than focusing on the previously adopted measures of house prices and market rents this has now been changed to concentrate on an affordability threshold i.e., where rents or purchase exceed a third of household income, they are deemed to be unaffordable. (p.4).

moorings on the Thames, council tax is now payable. Mortgages for boats nowadays are not easily available, obliging barge owners who want to finance purchases or repairs, to take out high interest loans or pay in cash. This makes borrowing much more difficult and expensive than on land and is a significant deterrent to those on low incomes, or with low capital, to live afloat.

No, well it's not much cheaper but we certainly wouldn't be able to live in SE1 if wasn't for being on the moorings (Huddleston, 2018, Field Interview 021, Sutton).

The main point to arise from this and similar comments, however, is that dwelling on the river has traditionally allowed people to live in parts of the city that they otherwise they could not have afforded. And that despite rising costs, it did (and still does in some cases) give ordinary people the chance to remain in the heart of the city, and to be part of urban daily life (Lefebvre, 1996; Harvey, 2013).

There's no way we could have afforded a house, so it definitely was a financial thing, we knew we wanted our own home... (Zatorski, 2018, Field Interview 018, Sutton)

Other respondents also cited issues of affordability as a key motive for moving onto the water, noting that buying a repurposed barge, as a way to own their own 'home' was key to them. Comparisons were made with the unaffordability of living off the water in London, i.e., the cost of the smallest apartment. "You are getting something better (*for your money*) at the end of the day" (Zatorski, 2018, Field Interview 018, Sutton).

In 2015, Kate Palmer wrote in the Telegraph that buying a boat could be viewed as a new rung on the property ladder. She indicated that moving onto water was still cheaper than any equivalent home on land. For many people, driven off dry land by the high

price of conventional homes, buying a barge now seemed to offer a first step towards buying and owning their own home. However, two years later, (2017) Ruth Bloomfield in the Standard was advocating that river dwelling was “no longer an alternative mode of dwelling” (Bloomfield, 2017, Headline), as more and more Londoners looked to the rivers and canals to acquire better value homes. Combined, these comments are indicative of a direct relationship between river dwelling, affordability, and home ownership. Despite the evidence that more people are choosing to live on the river, it is now becoming increasingly difficult to do so, financially, and otherwise (Bloomfield, 2017).

In summary, the findings have demonstrated that dwelling on the river originally provided an affordable solution to living in the city. It is suggested that in all the cases cited, issues of affordable housing have underpinned the different forms of resistance. The interviews, along with the documentation of the struggles encountered by the residents of Chelsea Reach and Waterman’s Park have alluded to the possibility that notions of affordability have changed and as such, are impacting on long term inhabitants of the river. The costs of living on water have increased substantially. Moreover, it is suggested the relationship between boats and notions of property are serving to increase prices. Whilst the following analysis is speculative, it attempts to interpret why this may be so. It begins by examining how and why the urban demands relating to issues of affordable housing are having a direct impact, with reference to the changing nature of river life. It goes on to assess whether this lifestyle is exhibiting similar characteristics to those associated with the housing crisis, and to what extent it no longer offers an affordable means of living in the city.

7. 4 The Housing Crisis

In recent years, affordable housing has come to underpin a housing crisis that spans the globe. It impacts on all levels of society, in both urban and rural areas alike. Academics from different perspectives, (Architecture, Critical Urban Theory, Geography and the Social Sciences), along with activists and film makers (Minton, 2017; Halligan, 2019; Shrubsole, 2019; Gertten, 2019; MaketheShift, 2020) have been drawing attention to the acute problems faced by citizens worldwide, and how they are variously trying to access the housing that best suits their needs (Lees et al, 2010, 2015, 2018; Brenner, Marcuse, Meyer, 2012; Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Minton, 2017; Halligan, 2019, Leary-Owhin and McCarthy, 2020). These debates and issues are complex, and for the purposes of this thesis, the discussion is limited to a brief understanding of the underlying problems relating to the demand and supply of housing in London, and the failure of successive governments to ensure the housing market provides sufficient homes (Marcuse and Madden, 2016; Minton, 2017). Anna Minton points out that the problems of demand and supply have become ever more complex over time, as the housing market has further entrenched itself into the financial markets. She argues that both at home and abroad, the processes of globalization have become increasingly geared to the interests of investors, to the extent that housing has become divorced from the need (use value) to provide shelter. The priority of property is now given to investors, not to those who seek dwellings. Housing has therefore become a commodity to generate income, with properties built to be bought and sold, rather than to be inhabited (Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Minton 2017; Halligan 2019; Shrubsole, 2019).

This complex situation can be traced back to the 1980's and the dawning of a new era of home ownership. Margaret Thatcher (1925-2013) and the Conservative government (1979-1990) introduced the concept of a property-owning democracy and the 'Right to Buy' (Housing Act 1980) in a drive to transform the city (and the rest of the country) from a failing industrial to a post-industrial world. With the introduction of neo-liberal policies, the promotion of home ownership became central to the developing the housing market. The processes of production were driven by the free market and supported by government policy (Keddie and Tonkiss, 2010). Demand was driven by the creation and growth of a new housing market that was endorsed and encouraged by the privatisation of council houses (selling them to the incumbents), and the removal of rent controls. The state also helped facilitate the involvement of corporate finance and private developers, as the government encouraged the expansion of credit and the supply of ready mortgages (Hamnett, 2003; Harvey, 2006).

The allure of owning one's own home, and the relative ease of acquiring one, resulted in a surge in home ownership which has now become a very British obsession. This in turn, put pressure on the supply of housing stock, which eventually led to increased housing prices. Ultimately, this impacted on all sections of society, as one group began to displace the other, by buying each other out and forcing those on lower incomes to move out to the periphery of the city (Hamnett, 2003; Harvey, 2006; Minton, 2017). According to Chris Hamnett, a key factor in this process was the extent to which the growing middle classes were pushing into new areas of the city, to find affordable dwellings, particularly in the inner cities. Prices rose relentlessly, as those on the lower rungs of the property market also went in search of affordable housing (Hamnett, 2003). At the same time, strong demand from high-net worth individuals in the UK, and

increasingly from international elites, drove up prices further, making it even more difficult for those on lower incomes (Minton, 2017). In addition, the overall lack of housing supply has been exacerbated by a shortage of available land on which to build and has led to the practice of ‘banking’ or hoarding land, as a means of extracting the highest price. The value of land in general has “increased five-fold since 1995” (Shrubsole, 2019, p.231). Along the riverside, the development of luxury apartments further reduced supply, as they were never built to provide affordable housing (see discussion below) (Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Minton, 2017).

The rise in demand for ownership, along with the associated rise in prices, has become more problematic, as housing has become a key economic driver of the economy (Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Minton, 2017; Halligan, 2019). No longer homes, houses have become financial assets, driving global capitalism (Push, 2019; Make the Shift, 2020). Now, more than ever before, “the interlocking of de-regulation, financialization, and globalisation have meant that housing now functions as a commodity” (Madden and Marcuse, 2016, p.35).

These processes can be attributed to the era of the Conservative government’s introduction of neo-liberal policies. These prioritised the free market over social welfare concerns, drawing instead on economic liberalisation and practices of de-regulation and privatisation (Pinch, 2015, p.273). Neo-liberalism ¹⁰ is understood here as a complex mixture of ideology, espousing political, economic policies and practices characterised by entrepreneurship, free market, and trade with (in theory), limited state intervention.

¹⁰ For a full discussion on neoliberalism See Harvey, D. (2005) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

These structural forces drove the changes in the relationship between the economy, politics, culture, and society, along with spatial practices. The built environment was used as a catalyst for economic growth, that would transform the decaying industrial economy into a post- industrial era dominated by the newly emerging service -based economy (Hamnet 2003; Imrie, Lees, Raco, 2009).

Concomitant with the rise in the ideological justification of the free market, came the dominance and the protection of property rights and their exchange value. Housing and urban development continues to drive the processes of contemporary (and now) global capitalism to the detriment of their use value, and those that live in them (Purcell, 2013; Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Minton, 2017). Across the city, the dominance of capital and elite interests has manifested itself in the built environment, from skyscrapers to luxury apartments. Nowhere are these processes of transformation more apparent than along the banks of the River Thames. The development of London's riverside began in 1981 in the Docklands and lies at the heart of the urban regeneration that transformed the entire riverfront. That process continues today, with the growth of luxury apartments encompassing vast areas of riverside development, epitomising the global financialization of the housing market (Davidson, 2009; Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Minton, 2017).

7.5 Luxury Apartments and Urban Regeneration along the bank of the River Thames

The River Thames has seen an exponential growth in luxury riverside apartments over the last thirty years (Sudjic, 2003; Woodman, 2014; Pinch, 2015; Minton 2017). More recently, developments along the 11 kilometres stretch of the riverbank, from

Wandsworth to West Greenwich, have reached unprecedented heights, transforming the water's edge with a swathe of luxury apartments. These latest developments are a testament "to the shifting character of the late capitalist urbanisation" (Pinch, 2015, p.273) that began in the late 1970's, as cities across the world restructured their waterfronts (in particular) in response to maritime de-industrialisation. Waterfront regeneration is often espoused as part of the global triumph of neo-liberal urbanism, with cities such as London at the pinnacle of this transformation (Harvey, 1992; Breen and Rigby, 1996; Meyer, 1999; Davidson, 2009, Rubin, 2011; Pinch, 2015).

The contemporary problems associated with luxury development on the banks of the Thames, can be traced back to the redevelopment of built environment that began in London's docklands in the 1980's. Set up by the Conservative Government in 1981, and under the auspices of London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC), it was the largest urban regeneration project undertaken anywhere in Europe. The LDDC oversaw the redevelopment of 5,500 acres of desolate and abandoned docklands, including nine miles of prime derelict riverside land. Planning regulations were relaxed, high building costs were offset by tax incentives and land was made available to purchase at a fraction of its then value. The seven-billion-pound project transformed one of the world's erstwhile busiest ports into the area now known as Canary Wharf. The buildings largely comprised of luxury residential apartments, offices, and restaurants (These were not without their own problems, with issues documented elsewhere. See Brownhill, 1990; Bird, 1993; Malone, 1996; Foster, 1999; Lees and Davidson, 2005; Imrie, Lees and Raco, 2009). The LDDC changed not only the economic base of the area, but also the social composition of the population. Despite widespread resistance by local activists, (Plates 7.1/7.2) ultimately there were few benefits for the indigenous population, particularly

in relation to housing, as the prices were beyond the means of most (Bird, 1993; Leeson, 1993).



Plate 7.1 'The People's Armada to Parliament (1984-6) Different forms of protest in response to the Dockland's Development' By kind permission of the artists Dunn P and Leeson L

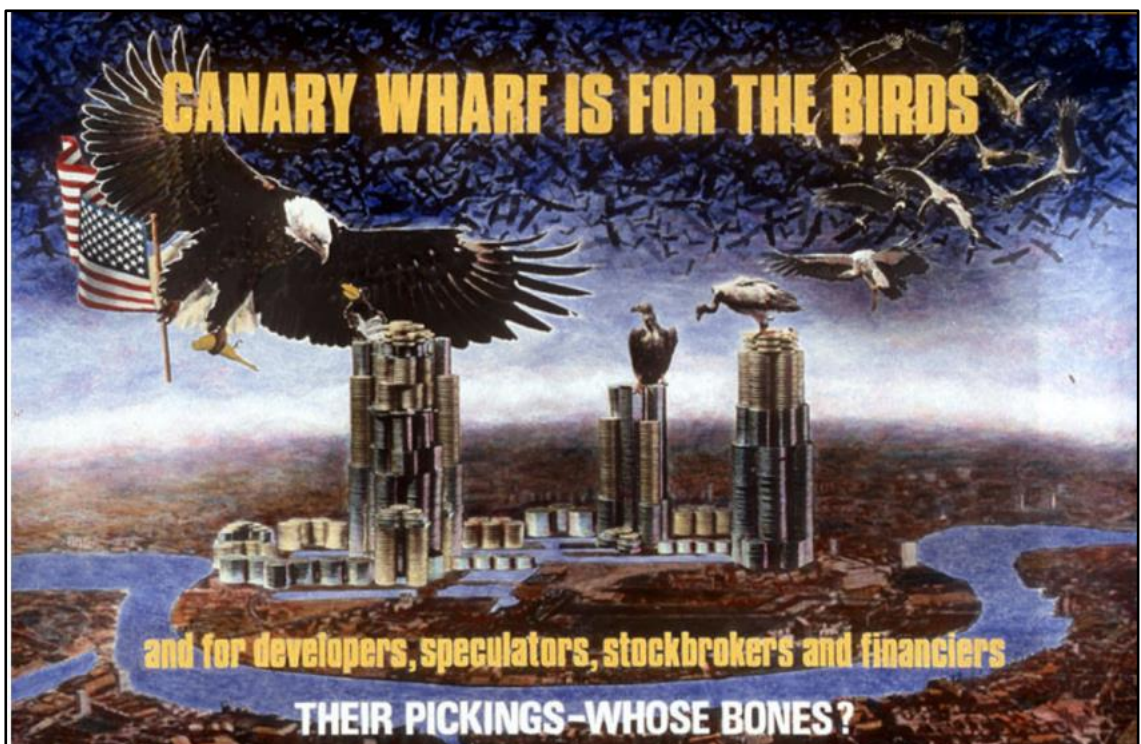


Plate 7.2. 'Docklands Community Poster Project' By kind permission of the artists Dunn P and Leeson L

The primary beneficiaries of the public investment in Docklands were property developers, the employees of the many global corporations who moved there for work, and the owner-occupiers of the new relatively cheap up-market housing (Bird, 1993). Over the last two decades of the 20th century, until the present day, the riverside (both West and East banks) has continued to be the focus for urban redevelopment.

However, as noted by Deyan Sudjic, by the early 2000's this had already led to a stark social change, as "the river has become a thin strip of affluence, existing in a bubble that has nothing to do with the city just in the street behind" (Sudjic, 2003). Writing in 2003, Chris Hamnett suggested that every former industrial riverside site had been transformed into a luxury development (Hamnett, 2003, p.221). This is despite the fact, that only one year earlier, the Greater London Authority's (GLA) 2002 Draft Plan, (Lees and Davidson, 2005) declared its aspiration to create the 'Blue Ribbon Network'. This policy framework outlined a new role for the riverside; "to facilitate the urban policy goal of both urban regeneration and social cohesion" (Davidson and Lees, 2005, p.1172). It led to the hope, that once more the river could be central to the city,

...the heart of London is its river...it is this huge and beautiful water which holds the key to revitalising the metropolis. It must once again become a cohesive element linking communities (Rogers, GLA in Davidson and Lees, 2003, p.1173).

Barely two years later, however, the hope that the riverside would provide a place for different social groups was already in question (Davidson and Lees, 2005). In reality, the banks of the river were already becoming a prime site for developers to maximise to

their profits, with the construction of luxury apartments (and office blocks) for those who could afford to purchase them (Plate 7.3).



Plate 7.3 'Luxury Apartments: 'The Bristling Balconies Syndrome' Saunders (2018). journeying along the Thames between Canary Wharf and Wapping (2016) Sutton

It was not long before riverside development became inextricably linked to the processes of globalisation, as corporate property developers, such as Berkley Homes and Barratt Homes, began building apartments that would specifically appeal to the transient elites of a global market. According to research undertaken by Mark Davidson in 2007, who examined and identified a direct relationship between gentrification and globalisation, 'global narratives' were influencing the form of urban development along the Thames. He argued that this was driven by the developers, who were building complexes specifically designed to "attract and accommodate the time-pressured lifestyles of 'non-local global' lifestyles" (Davidson, 2007, p.493). He argues that this has resulted in the creation of a 'global' form of architecture, that increasingly bears little affiliation with the architecture of the surrounding area, or any association with the local neighbourhood.

On the one hand, developers are utilising globalisation to create a new demand for riverside dwelling (2007 Davidson), whilst on the other, global capital and overseas

investors are attracted to riverside developments purely for investment purposes (Minton, 2017). What the developers neglected to do, was to provide affordable housing. More recently (2017), the inherent problems of affordability attached to these developments have been exacerbated, for example with the redevelopment of Battersea Power Station and Nine Elms. Financed and built by a Malaysian consortium (Minton 2017), the prices range from £800,00, for a one-bedroom studio apartment, to £4 million plus for a four-bedroom family apartment. Only 15 % (far less than promised in the original quota) have so far been offered as affordable housing, none of which are in the actual development itself. In short, the processes of globalisation are driving the kinds of architectural redevelopment taking place along the banks of the river Thames to the detriment of the local population (Davidson, 2007).

Whilst Mark Davidson's and Anna Minton's work provide invaluable insights into the global economic and political processes that dominate the transformation and revalorisation of built environment along the water's edge, the following discussion, moves beyond the production of the architecture. It suggests that the consumption of the luxury developments is inextricably related to the river itself. Despite continual aspirations for London's River to become a "cohesive element linking communities" and to be for the benefit of all Londoners (Rogers, in Davidson and Lees 2005; Woodman, 2014), the opposite has in fact happened in an extremely short space of time. Both developers and estate agents have now appropriated the river, physically along the banks and visually by attaching a market value to the riverside view. They have extracted a price premium from everything pertaining to the river and incorporated them into the value of the property. This is fuelling the growth of luxury apartments, to the

determinant of the local need for affordable housing, and for the right to access the river.

7.6 The value of a view and the role of the river

This thesis suggests that the allure of the view, for both developers and investors alike, is of increasing importance. Just how much value is attached to a view, is a question recently posed by Tom Dykoff (2017) in the *'Ages of Spectacle: Adventures in 21st Century Architecture'*. He argues that the ability to see the skyline, with as much vista as possible, attracts a higher price. This is particularly apposite for riverside developments, as they have been deliberately built to ensure a river view, to the detriment of other considerations, i.e., the buildings bear no relation to the river, its history, or the surrounding neighbourhood (Heathcote, 2017). This has been achieved by building apartments perpendicular to the river, which according to Graham Morrison of Allies and Morrison (Morrison, 2018, Field Interview, 005, Sutton) does nothing but 'exploit' the view, as these properties are able to attract a premium price (Plate 7.4).



Plate 7.4 'The Riverlight Development Battersea/Nine Elms' (2016) Sutton

Recent reports suggest that a view of the river has become an asset that can command an uplift on the value of riverside properties from 12% (Oxford Economic Report, 2015) to 28%. Properties next to the river, along with those that have a view, have seen significant rises in both demand and price (Table 7.1). It has been suggested that demand is being driven by a particular type of consumer, whose attraction to the river transcends the appeal of a singular neighbourhood (Cox, 2015). Buyer profiles (differing, depending on the different parts of the river) include, overseas investors, buy to let investors, and those whose principal residence is the countryside and need a *pied a terre* in London.

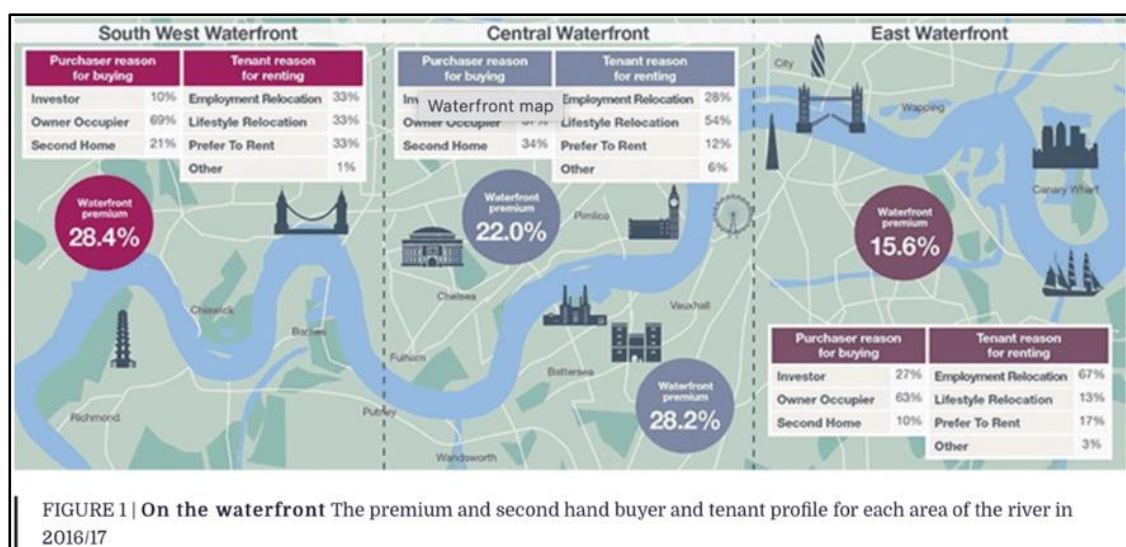


FIGURE 1 | On the waterfront The premium and second hand buyer and tenant profile for each area of the river in 2016/17

Table 7.1 'Saville's Waterfront Report, 2018' Courtesy of Saville's Research Department

In a recent report, Saville's (2018) estate agents point to the central role the Thames has always played in the success of London's economy. They suggest that, once again, the river lies at the heart of the city's fortunes, however, this time, it is the uniqueness of the waterfront living, with its associated lifestyle, that defines the contemporary role of the city's river.

This statement, along with an overview of the continual trend for the development of luxury apartments over the past thirty to forty years, firmly implicates the river in the creation of a certain luxury lifestyle; one that has become synonymous with London as a global city (Marcuse and Madden, 2016; Minton, 2017). The river has become crucial to the narrative being driven both estate agents and developers. They portray the view as part and parcel of the purchase of their riverside properties, suggesting that ownership has moved outward, beyond the physical nature of the property itself, to be directly connected, via the view, with the river. This in turn, fosters the reproduction of a particular lifestyle. A review of estate agent's brochures, reports, and lifestyle magazines, (mainly online) both pictorially and textually, reveal the constant association of 'river living' with a range of attributes, such as: uninterrupted breath-taking views, the experience of changing seasons, the proximity of the natural environment, a feeling of being part of the Thames history, and a sense of health and well-being imbibed from the timeless Thames itself. All of which are consumed through the medium of a view. Developers and estate agents alike, have therefore re-appropriated the river as a means of constructing a narrative in which the city's most natural resource has become implicated the exchange value of riverside developments and the growth of luxury apartments.

No longer a waterway on which the city depended for the exchange of commodities flowing across the Empire, the Thames has instead become a commodity itself, as it plays a crucial role in the regeneration of the city of London. After a period of neglect, due to the processes of de-industrialisation, it is possible to argue that the river has once again become valued. But to whose benefit? The Thames, now regarded by many as a

natural asset (Oxford Economic Report, 2015) is being exploited by developers for their own commercial gain, as they appropriate (mostly) exclusive use of spaces with close proximity to the water, along with the view. To them it is an exclusive financial asset. After several years of “not quite knowing what to do with the river” (Moore, 2016), it has once again been revalorised, as its “exchange value” has been extracted to the maximum, to attract new flows of international capital (Rubin, 2011) that serve the interests of the elite (Harvey, 2006). The river, which lies at the heart of the city, has not only been used to play a key role in the transformation the urban core, but has itself become a commodity and a site of consumption (Lefebvre, 1996; Rubin, 2011; Harvey, 2006, 2013).

Along the banks of the river, the dominance of the property market has taken precedence, as returns on investment outweigh all other claims (Madden and Marcuse, 2016). It is complicated by the symbiotic role that river plays in enhancing the value of riverside properties, distorting, more dramatically than other parts of city, the housing market, and in doing so, contributing to the housing crisis that is endemic in London. Against this background, the exchange value of apartments overlooking the river has created a situation whereby their use value (as a place to dwell) has been denied, for the most part, by the insatiable growth of unaffordable luxury developments.

It is argued that it is not necessary to be nostalgic about the industrial past, since our cities are continually made and remade (Harvey, 2013), but questions have been raised as to how these largely elitist luxury developments are benefitting ordinary Londoners (Architecture and Water, 2014; Marcuse and Madden, 2016; Minton 2017). Whilst rivers and waterfront developments have played a central role in the post-industrial recovery

and regeneration of cities across the world, they have often been detrimental to local communities by restricting access to the river, reducing public spaces, and precluding affordable housing.

Recently, architectural critic, Ellis Woodman, and journalist Anna Minton have begun to question the rise in exclusive developments, suggesting that they are anti-social. Not only are they deepening social and physical divisions between rich and poor, but they are contributing to London's housing crisis (Hamnett, 2003; Woodman, 2014; Minton, 2017). They suggest that over the years, the transformation of the riverside has only satisfied the demands of developers, investors, and consumers, and solely exists as a means of maximising the returns on capital-led regeneration. Latterly, the growth in luxury developments has intensified, as they have become more and more entrenched in the global property market, emphasising the necessity to respond to international demands, rather than local housing needs (Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Minton, 2017). Because of their property premium, riverside developments, along with their inflated land and property values, compound and magnify the problems associated with London's housing crisis.

In line with the critics and scholars mentioned in the previous sections, this thesis suggests that the revalorisation of the water's edge along the banks of the River Thames epitomizes the symbiotic relationship between "globalisation, deregulation and the financialization of the housing market" (Madden and Marcuse, 2016, p.35). It also argues that luxury apartments are problematic in several other key areas. They are built to attract foreign capital for those who are often seeking to buy them for investment purposes rather than homes. They are often sold overseas off plan, long before they

reach the local market, as global investors seek to find a “safe deposit box” that offers profitable returns on their capital investments (Madden and Marcuse, 2016, p.36). Given the global elite’s tendency to move around the globe, there is often has little connection with the locality, both physically, in terms of the apartments being left empty, but also economically as the high prices distort the local housing market. Priced beyond the means of local populations, this trend has exacerbated the problems of unaffordability, and is a key component of the housing crisis (Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Minton, 2017). The river, which lies at the heart of the city, has not only been used to play a key role in the transformation the urban core, but has itself become a commodity and a site of consumption.

7.7 Dwelling on the Edge: An Affordable Alternative

The findings of this research suggest that since “the water’s edge has become rather valuable” (Banks 2018, Field Interview 013, Sutton), the river and its view can now be understood to have attracted an ‘exchange’ (private) value, which dominates its (public) ‘use’ value. This has created tensions which manifest themselves at the intersection between these two opposing values. (Tonkiss, 2005; Rubin 2011; Purcell, 2013; Minton, 2017).

A review of the investigations into the struggles experienced by river dwellers, has exposed the tensions that have occurred between the two opposing perceptions of the river and its edge, and how this has changed over time. On one hand, the river plays a crucial role, as it is viewed (literally and metaphorically) as an asset that contributes to the value of property for commercial benefit. On the other, the river is perceived as

place to live that offers an affordable vernacular solution to the ongoing housing crisis in London. This riverine way of life exists in opposition to the luxury, elite, exclusive, private developments on the banks. Utilising the concepts of exchange and use value from the right to the city, the study has revealed a set of unequal power relations, suggesting that the dominance of property rights has led to the inception of different forms and practices of resistance along the banks of the river Thames. Just as in the 1980's, when Canary Wharf was regarded as *tabula rasa*, with little regard for the local community, those in power have attempted to physically remove river dwellers from the view, deeming them to diminish both the view and therefore investment value of riverside properties (Bird, 1993). The mapping of the past and present tensions (Appendix G) indicates that although the demands of the dominant powers have not always been successful, and that the symbiotic relationship of the river to the changing demands of the built environment, continue to be a significant force; one that it is argued, is now impacting directly on the changing nature of life afloat.

The following discussion considers the possibility that the increased demand to live on the river has become inextricably linked with the housing market, thereby creating a different set of problems for river dwellers. Despite evidence from the data (field interviews, archive of media sources (both print and film), and reports) that more people are choosing to live on the river (Bloomfield, 2017; Canals and River Trust, 2017), the findings indicate that river dwelling, once a source of affordable housing, has now become unaffordable to many. It assesses the extent to which urban demands have had a direct impact on the changing nature of river dwelling. It suggests that this hitherto unique way of life has begun to exhibit similar characteristics to those associated with

the housing crisis, and that it no longer offers an affordable means of living in the city for those on ordinary incomes.

Although people do rent on the river, based on the field research, it is possible to suggest that a higher proportion own their own vessels. From this, it is feasible to deduce that the ownership and investment of re-purposed boats echo two key contributing factors relating to home ownership. The pioneering instinct of the early river dwellers to convert industrial vessels into homes, was primarily a means finding a cheap form of housing in the city, that resulted in a new pattern of living on the river. However, the comments relating to home ownership, also suggest that boat dwellers are not immune from the British obsession to own a home of one's own (Hamnett, 2003; Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Shrubsole, 2019). Increasingly, particularly when a boat has some kind of security of tenure, they can be bought and sold for relatively high prices.

By 2015, an increasing trend of people moving onto the water was linked to the relentless rise in house prices (Palmer, 2015; Bloomfield, 2017). More people were searching for an affordable alternative to purchase their own dwellings. However, demand was hampered by the lack of supply of moorings, which is similar to the problem of available land in the city, where there is a relatively fixed supply of land (Hamnet, 2003; Shrubsole, 2019). It was also hindered by a rise in wealthier people seeking to move on to the river who were prepared to pay much higher prices. These prospective boat owners had the same motivation to seek affordable housing as earlier pioneers but have higher disposable incomes (interviews from both Field Studies (2018) and Totally Thames (2016)). This comparatively recent perception of barges and barge communities as a new tier of the housing market (Palmer, 2015) was already leading to comparisons

being made between the two. Data from the interviews, including estate agents, and media sources, supports the idea of a steady increase in prices, as many boats have started selling for a million pounds or more, far above their previous market rate as a boat to live on. This trend was soon picked up by estate agents, property magazines and the media, who were suggesting that waterborne living was still a cheaper alternative to the equivalent on-land. This move, in an upmarket direction (Pickles, 2018, Field Interview 002, Sutton), did not go unnoticed by developers and local authorities, who began to drive demand for elite consumption, by upgrading mooring facilities, services and boats, and replicating the comforts and amenities of life ashore, to encourage high-net worth individuals seeking a desirable affordable alternative.

Whilst there is no concrete demographic evidence to suggest that the international elite have suddenly moved onto the water in large numbers, the soaring cost of living on the river, along with the marketing brochures of estates agents, are indicative of a trend; that life afloat is now being promoted to as an 'affordable alternative' for the wealthy. Ironically, today, elite interests have in many instances, crossed the divide from shore to water, as life afloat is marketed as a chic and affordable place to dwell response to the inflated property prices on land. Along with the higher costs of buying residential re-purposed boats, there has also been a recent trend in developers taking over traditional moorings and extracting higher fees from the occupants. This was, and continues to be, the case at the historic moorings at Chelsea, where mooring fees and leases have recently increased beyond the capacity of many residents to sustain. Comments from respondents in other parts of the river allude to similar issues, where prices to moor, have become so high that 'ordinary' people can no longer afford to live on the river.

The question is, to what extent can this growth in demand be directly attributed to the rapid rise in luxury dwellings along the banks of the river? As the river has become part of the property market, it has not only become a more desirable as a place to live, but a more 'valuable' one. Hugo Cox (2015), in the *'Financial Times'*, suggests that riverside developments have had a detrimental inflationary impact, as they push up the prices in neighbouring areas. Although he was talking about land and building prices, it is conceivable that the same has happened on the river itself, with the desirability of riverside living having an inflationary impact on river dwelling itself. For those involved in riverside developments, the connection with the river has increased the value of their investments. Ironically, this study now indicates that notions of 'property as investment' have floated from the land, across the edge, and onto the water, with boat interiors and lifestyles (in the case of Chelsea) mirroring their on-land counterparts. Further research would be needed, to determine if this is the case along the length of the Thames, in the end, the boundaries of the river's edge are being blurred by the forces of capital. This suggests that these "heterotopic spaces, once created by those who lived on the edge, and full with possibility, have been (eventually) claimed by the dominant praxis" (Harvey, 2013, p. xvii). Just as capital has flowed into every aspect of land, property, and housing, with the whole system being dominated by the rights of property, so too, this has now in all probability, taken hold on the water.

7.8 Summary

It is the contention of this thesis to suggest that the increasing desirability and demand for riverside dwelling has impacted on life afloat and has, in a short space of time, become part of the property market. Whilst it was hoped, at the outset of this research,

that river dwelling could offer ongoing possibilities to dwell in the city, it too has become part of the present-day failure of the housing market to provide anywhere near the numbers of homes needed, despite the rising demand to live afloat. This failure to help facilitate greater access to the water, has affected all sections of society, as it did on land in the 1980s. Once again, lower income groups are squeezed out by other wealthier groups (Hamnet, 2003), making it impossible for those on ordinary incomes to buy their own place on the water (Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Minton, 2017). An analysis of the enduring nature of the struggles encountered by river dwellers, suggest a pattern resistance that has its roots in a group of city dwellers seeking to create their own 'affordable' dwellings in opposition to the unaffordable housing on land. The examination of the processes of urbanisation that have occurred during the post war period on the river, point to a trend suggesting that the vernacular, ex-working vessels, along with the practices of river life, have now been re-appropriated by the affluent elite. The 'use' value of river, that once offered an alternative site for ordinary people to live in, is now in the process of becoming commodified as part of the property (exchange value) of the market.

In the fleeting moments between the industrial and post-industrialisation urbanisation of the city, this contemporary form of vernacular architecture, emerged in the wake of the declining port city. However, the findings have been interpreted to allude to the possibility that the phenomena of dwelling on the tidal Thames, may well be short lived. River dwelling, along with the changing role of the river, have evolved to serve the interests of the neo-liberal city by becoming unaffordable. No longer a highway, with ships transporting goods and commodities across the world, London's iconic river, and the built environment along its edge, have become enmeshed within the processes of

globalisation. The river has once again been redefined to play leading a role in the creation of London's status as a global city. This chapter has brought together a discussion on the different types of resistance that have taken place on the river since the early 1970's. Underpinning this, is the key issue of affordability. The interpretive analysis brought to the fore the extent to which the processes of urbanisation have impacted on river dwelling and how the inhabitants are prepared to challenge and fight for their right to an affordable place to live in the city.

8. Conclusion and Summary of Findings

8.1 Introduction

This study contributes to knowledge by interpreting how the politics of space have shaped the identity, culture, and historical evolution of those who reside on the tidal Thames in London. It provides an original perspective of the river as an ordinary place to dwell. To achieve this, a dialectic overlapping of the fields of vernacular architecture and critical urban studies was undertaken. Through the lens of Henri Lefebvre's theories of space, a framework was established to facilitate a critical analysis into this unique lifestyle. In conjunction with concepts from the 'right to the city', the reconceptualization of re-purposed working boats as a form of vernacular architecture was key. This integration enabled a structured re-examination of London's iconic river; how it has been re-imagined, appropriated, and contested to provide an alternative place to live in the city. The research engaged with the river-dwellers and their struggles, in order to demonstrate the ways in which they exercised their 'right' to produce a differential mode of dwelling on the river. The outcome has provided a new insight into the power relations between vernacular river dwelling and the built environment, as they intersect at the water's edge. It is proposed that the study of repurposed boats, as a contemporary form of vernacular architecture, embodies the changing nature of the relationship between the river and the built environment along the banks of the River Thames.

The methodology employed by this research has resulted in the collection of data that has facilitated an innovative and in-depth study into the phenomenon of river dwelling. An interpretative analysis of the historic tensions suggests that they are indicative of a series of changes, in which the power relations between river communities and those in authority, have altered both the lifestyle and the dynamics of river dwelling. This new perspective was revealed through an examination of the power relations between the built form (re-purposed boats, their moorings, and the edge to which they are attached), the practices of daily river life and the forces that have influenced the production of an alternative space at the water's edge. Cumulatively, the findings from each of the research questions, contribute new insights into the way in which living on the river has evolved in response to a range of urban conditions. It is the contention of this thesis, to suggest that the changing nature of the built environment along water's edge, and its relationship with the river has framed the space at the water's edge to influence both the evolution and changing nature of life afloat on the River Thames.

This concluding chapter sets out to affirm the original contribution to knowledge by outlining the insights proffered by both the methodological approach, and the findings emanating from the research questions. This is followed by a reflection on the productive value of combining the fields of vernacular architecture and critical urban theory, to analyse the relationship between people, the built form, and place. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further research.

8. 2 Methods

A key methodological contribution to the field of vernacular architecture has been the creation of a new framework. This has made it possible to explore how ex-industrial

working boats and their maritime traditions intersect to create a contemporary form of vernacular architecture (Vellinga 2006/7). This has provided new insight into the conditions that have influenced how and why re-purposed boats have been adapted, used, and evolved into desirable residential dwellings.

Following in the footsteps of Hayden (1997), Adams, McMurray (2000) and Kusno (2020), a secondary contribution derives from the detailed examination of the tensions encountered by the different riverine communities. The mapping of these struggles, over time, has made it possible to explore the multi-layered complexities of the 'real life' practices of 'ordinary and everyday' river dwelling, and how they relate to the wider social structures (Rossman and Rallis, 2003; Yin, 2013). Initial chronological mapping, from the mid-70's until the present day, revealed a consistent pattern of conflict and resistance. To understand why this might be so, concepts found within the fields of vernacular architecture and critical urban theory were combined and applied to guide an investigation into how inequitable spatial practices have influenced the evolution of the river dwelling on the Thames.

This has been achieved by taking a case study approach, utilizing a variety of methods to re-imagine re-purposed boats as a form of vernacular architecture and to critically engage with these contemporary dwellings through the lens of Henri Lefebvre. Framing the research in this way has made it possible to produce an original in-depth qualitative study. By documenting both the dynamic and processual nature of river dwelling it has been possible to contribute new understandings of contemporary vernacular architecture (Vellinga, 2006). The ways in which barges have been converted to

appropriate space at the water's edge, extends current knowledge of the cultural phenomenon of river dwelling on the River Thames.

The decision to orientate the direction of research from the water to the land, was based on my experience of living on the tidal Thames. This perspective is a unique one and contributes new knowledge academically, practically, and philosophically to the fields of vernacular architecture and the discourse of the 'right to the city'.

In summary, methodological contributions have been achieved adopting a case study approach to create a theoretical framework combined with various mixed methods to gather different types of original data (Yin, 2013). This culminated in a complex and multi-layered qualitative study on the phenomenon of river dwelling. In addition, this interpretative critique, afforded further observations into the role of the river and its relationship with built environment, and how they both intersect with the current housing problems.

8.3 Research Aim, Objective, and Research Questions

The overall aim of the study has been to investigate the struggles, issues and challenges encountered by different communities, to evaluate how re-purposed boats, people, power, and place intersect at the water's edge. The main objective has been to understand the evolution and contradictory nature of river dwelling along the banks of the River Thames in London.

Echoing calls from within the field of vernacular architecture, the research questions were designed to realise the aim of the research by ensuring that the study probed the

complexity of the built environment in which a particular social group exists (Kellet and Napier, 1995; Hayden, 1997; Vellinga, 2006).

1. How and why did re-purposed boats become an alternative mode of city dwelling?
2. What are the forms and moments of resistance used by river dwellers to challenge the dominant economic and political powers?
3. How are contemporary urban demands changing the role of the river and impacting on river communities?
4. How can local communities influence the narrative to provide new urban and social opportunities within a riverine context? (i.e., for dwelling and urban/public space).

Cumulatively, the findings from each of the research questions demonstrate the different ways in which river dwelling, the river and its edge have been imagined, appropriated, contested and transformed. Together, they contribute to the main idea proposed by this thesis, that by examining the struggles embedded in this way of life, it has been possible to establish the role of power relations, and how the changing relationship between the built environment and the river has influenced the evolution of river dwelling.

8.4 Reviewing the Research Questions with reference to the main findings

8.4.1 Research Question One (RQ1): How and why did re-purposed boats become an alternative mode of city dwelling?

RQ1 has primarily been addressed in Chapter Three. Drawing upon the scholarship from both vernacular architecture and from the 'right to the city', it was possible to

investigate the production and evolution of this 'ordinary' form of dwelling within an urban riverine context. The reconceptualization of re-purposed boats as a form of vernacular architecture, provided a useful strategy to explore both how and why traditional ex-working cargo boats have been converted to create an alternative form of contemporary city dwelling. Concepts of the right to appropriation, differential space, and space, were used to identify how river dwellers, as inhabitants of the city, re-imagined and appropriated space (s) along the water's edge to collectively produce their own city 'oeuvre'.

The first section of Chapter Three focused on why it became possible for re-purposed to be re-used. This was accomplished by comparing the conversion of working boats to that of lofts in the early 1980's and placing their adaptation for residential purposes within context of post-industrial city transformation (Hamnet and Whitelegg, 2007; Zukin 2014). The evolution of river dwelling is further explored historically, by situating its origins within the context of maritime de-industrialization and the decline of the port city. Data was collected through a variety of methods: re-photography by professional photographers (Ellmers et al 1998, 2000), filmmakers (Inglis and Saunders, Kew, Totally Thames), along with written accounts (Simper, 1997) and interviews. These demonstrated how the demise of the working river led to the disappearance of the need for traditional commercial craft and the abandonment of industrial sites including wharfs, piers, and warehouses. The built environment along the water's edge, in conjunction with the working role of the river, had outlived its original purpose. In Lefebvrian terms, these spaces offered the potential to produce something different. They were "susceptible of being diverted, re-appropriated and put to a purpose quite different from its original use" (Lefebvre, 1974, 1991, p.167). During this period, there

was the potential for ordinary inhabitants to assert their own cultural needs and aspirations, by re-using redundant industrial spaces, on water and along its edge, to reproduce a new type of differentiated living space in an unattractive and neglected part of the city. In this sense, the re-use of ex-working barges contributes to the work of Hamnett and Whitelegg (2007) and Sharon Zukin (2014), who examined the post-industrial trend to convert redundant lofts for residential purposes.

How boats became an alternative form of dwelling was addressed in different ways. Utilizing interviews, it was established that in the post-war period there was no organized or concerted effort to appropriate and transform either barges or disused industrial spaces. Instead, the appropriation of the river as a place to dwell was a piecemeal and informal response to the shortage of affordable housing after World War II, pioneered by a small group of mavericks. Lefebvre's idea, that the act of dwelling itself can be a form of appropriation (Stanek, 2011), was applied to the re-purposing of vessels and the processes of modification and conversion by individuals. This demonstrated the extent to which owners were able to determine and control their own living space. Drawing upon the field survey and interviews, specific examples were used to illustrate the appeal and processes of re-appropriation; how it is possible by re-imagining and converting ex-cargo boats to produce an alternative (differential) form of residential dwelling that suited with the needs of river dwellers.

In summary, the key findings answered RQ1 by focusing on how and why individuals and communities (re) appropriated both ex-working vessels and space along the water's edge on the banks of the river Thames. The outcome of Chapter Three has been to provide an original interpretation of how individuals and communities living on the river

produced a form of dwelling that went against the flow of the dominant mode of city housing. This, it is suggested, enabled them to participate in the production of a new kind of differential social space(s) (Lefebvre, 1996; Leary-Owhin, and McCarthy, 2020). The re-imagining of the vernacular as an alternative place to live in the city, echoes the work of Henri Lefebvre (1996) and David Harvey (2013), who call for citizens to collectively produce their own version of city space. The findings from RQ1 contribute to the field of vernacular architecture and the discourse of 'right to the city' by documenting the different ways in which ordinary people appropriate space. Traditional maritime craft have been re-used to create a contemporary form of vernacular architecture that enabled citizens to claim their right to live and build in the city. Rather than focusing on the past, this study moves away from the focus of vernacular studies that concentrates on 'traditional' pre-modern buildings, to address the vernacular from a contemporary perspective (Vellinga, 2006/7).

8.4.2 Research Questions Two and Three (RQ2/RQ3)

2. What are the forms and moments of resistance used by river dwellers to challenge the dominant economic and political powers?
3. How are contemporary urban demands changing the role of the river and impacting on river communities?

An initial analysis of the tensions confronting river dwellers led to the key finding that drove the trajectory of this research: the water's edge emerged as a site of conflict. The two interrelated research questions were designed to incorporate two distinct lines of enquiry. Their function was to facilitate an in-depth investigation, from different perspectives, into the struggles encountered by river dwellers at the water's edge.

Utilizing the overarching construct of dominance and resistance embedded throughout the thesis, the concepts of social movements, exchange and use value (both associated with ideas the 'right to the city'), have been applied to document different forms or markers of resistance and the context in which they occurred (Hughes, 2020)

The case studies, cited in Chapters Four to Six, focused on the ways in which communities have responded to resist the various challenges they faced; how they sought to control and shape their environments by politically engaging with key players. The experiences of the residents from Tower Bridge Moorings, Tideway, Waterman's Park and Chelsea Houseboats, revealed the main causes of the conflicts, the problems, the principal actors and political actions taken. The case study in Chapter Five took a slightly different approach. It documented the ways in which a small group of people at first challenged the authorities, and then, by working with them, found a solution to address the problem finding a new location to live on the water. The key finding, in answer to RQ2 suggests that starting around fifty years ago, these actions have resulted in a pattern of ongoing resistance in which the water's edge has emerged as a site of contestation in response to the challenges that river dwellers faced. However, it also emerged, as with the case of Hermitage Community Moorings, that the nature of the power relations changed over time. They were not always confrontational or negative.

An analysis of the data, including the mapping of the tensions, interviews and a range of media reports (print, TV, Twitter, video) and policy documents, revealed that a set of unequal power relations existed between the communities that have long inhabited the river and those in authority. These were demonstrated by documenting and investigating in detail the causes, agencies involved, issues, campaigns, tactics (Appendix G), and outcomes, and presenting them in Chapters Four to Six in

chronological order. The findings have been interpreted to suggest that the dominance of property rights, evident since the early 1980's, have resulted in a series of conflicts, which in turn led to various forms of resistance by different communities. However, the matter is complex, as these issues are also bound up with changing role of the river, and how, together they have impacted on river communities in a variety of ways. In the case of Tower Bridge Moorings and Tideway, cited in Chapter Four, the community found itself at odds with the processes of regeneration, as the banks of the river Thames and the role of the river itself, were being transformed in response to de-industrialization. Nearly twenty years later, the residents of Chelsea Houseboats, (Chapter Six) have been resisting attempts to be evicted from their mooring. A detailed interviewee account, along with examination of their Twitter campaign and website, revealed that residents felt that their way of life had become commodified and repackaged, in other words, gentrified, to meet the demands of the super-wealthy. The case studies demonstrate the history of these tensions and in the case of Chelsea are indicative of their ongoing nature.

In Chapter Seven, a review of the different types of resistance concludes that underpinning the struggles, is the fundamental issue of affordability. The chapter demonstrates how this single problem has been linked, over time, to the wider processes of urban change and the problem of finding affordable housing in London. Regeneration and gentrification have led to people seek, defend and fight for affordable alternative forms of dwelling. This proposition, supported by in-depth discussion, establishes the ways in which river dwellers have collectively organized themselves and engaged with the political processes, to resist the challenges imposed on them by the authorities. The investigations identified how river dwellers, by they own agency, have

resisted urban injustices as part of their struggle (in various locations), to reshape the water's edge in a different image from those in authority (Harvey, 2013, 2015).

The findings in response to response to RQ2, concur with Kusno's proposition that "the vernacular is most productive when it engages with struggles of the present..." (Kusno, 2020, p.5). Implicit in this understanding, is the agency of people in producing their own environment. Viewed collectively, the findings from the individual contestations have shown the effects of positive determination, along with the power of collective action, to resist the dominant forces that impact on daily life. Each case study has contributed to knowledge about the ways in which river dwellers collectively organised themselves to engage with the political processes required to resist the dominate modes of spatial production in the city. Underlying these powerful forces, the spatial practices of river dwellers demonstrate how different networks of cooperation and participation, including forms of self-management, a willingness be part of a community and share resources, can be drawn upon to defend the place in which they live when necessary. In addition, river dwellers have been shown to actively seek ways to acquire the knowledge or know how, necessary to enable some shaping over their daily lives.

Drawing upon the theoretical perspectives of the 'right to the city', the findings in response to question three, have been interpreted to demonstrate how the river and its edge are perceived for their use value, since they offer an alternative affordable place to live in the city. They also demonstrate, how at the same time, these same spaces are understood by those in authority (the PLA, architects, planners, and developers), to function as financial assets. Assets that have been incorporated into the built environment to increase the property (exchange) values associated with the riverside

development along the banks of the Thames. An analysis of the competing claims over space, which include ownership and access to the water's edge, along with differing perceptions of the use and meaning of the river, suggest that the tensions are the result of clashes between the dominant exchange rights of property with the use rights of citizens (Tonkiss, 2005; Rubin, 2011; Minton, 2012; Purcell, 2013; Pinch, 2015). These ideas concur with Fran Tonkiss, who argues that conflicts can be indicative of how people and institutions, with differing perceptions of use and ownership, make a variety of demands over the same space in the city (Tonkiss, 2005). This thesis extends her ideas, to suggest that it is not just the built space that can be a site of tension. In this case, it is the river itself that has become both the object of political space, as well as the medium. The thesis supports other scholars, including Breen and Rigby (1997) and Rubin (2011), who advocate that the waterfront, along with the river itself (in Philip Pinch's (2015) case), can be claimed as a competitive space; a space of contestation that creates tensions between policy makers, the water authorities, development agencies and a variety of community users.

To this effect, by combining the answers to RQ2/RQ3, the thesis advocates that the moments and forms of resistance are directly related to the processes of urbanisation and have occurred because of re-development of the built environment along the banks of the Thames. From the river dwellers' perspective, the river has been inherently perceived for its social 'use' value. This is largely because it provided an affordable alternative means to exercise their 'right' to live and work in the city. Meanwhile, over the years, the ongoing revalorization of the water's edge has resulted in the commodification of the river. It has now become part of the property (exchange) value associated with riverside developments. For those who live on the river, the processes

of urban transformation have directly impacted their daily lives. Regeneration has led to various communities, Tower Bridge Moorings and Tideway (Chapter Three) being threatened with eviction, as developers sought to 'protect the rights' of riverside property development. Furthermore, the continued growth in luxury developments has resulted in a shortage of affordable housing on land, thereby pricing those on 'ordinary' incomes out of the housing market (Madden and Marcuse 2016; Minton, 2017). Regeneration, along with the processes of gentrification discussed in Chapter Six, has resulted in river dwellers seeking ways in which they could defend and fight for an affordable alternative form of dwelling.

In summary, by engaging with the struggles as they have been experienced by the different communities, the findings from RQ2/RQ3, cumulatively draw attention to the water's edge as a contested site. An analysis of the tensions highlights the main threads running throughout the thesis: affordability, the right to live on the river and the agency of ordinary people to resist the challenges facing them. From a river dwellers perspective, the production of space on the water originally emerged in response to the problems of finding affordable accommodation in the city. An analysis of the findings from RQ2/RQ3 contribute fresh insight into the wider discourse of urban struggles over space, and the problems encountered by citizens effected by the ongoing conditions of neo-liberalism (Tonkiss, 2005; Brenner *et al*, 2012; Harvey, 2013; Minton 2017; Leary-Owhin a McCarthy, 2020; Murrani, 2020). In addition, the work also contributes to the limited knowledge, but emerging interest, into the relationship between the built environment and the water (Rubin, 2011; Pinch 2015; Adler and Guerici, 2018; Way, 2018).

8.4.3 Research Question Four (RQ4): How can local communities influence the narrative to provide new urban and social opportunities within a riverine context? (i.e., for dwelling and urban/public space).

RQ4 sought to address how local communities can influence the narrative to open new urban and social opportunities within a riverine context (i.e., different ways of dwelling on water). The analysis however, led to an unexpected outcome, one of potential re-appropriation, loss, and decline. Prominent scholars, Oliver (2006) and Vellinga (2006), suggest, that despite a diversity of methods and approaches used for the study of vernacular architecture, the one thing they all have in common is to record the vernacular in the face of impending destruction and/or loss. This was not the intention at the outset of this research, nonetheless the study has ultimately conformed to this narrative.

Drawing inspiration from the debates discussed in the introduction (ORNC, 2014), it was hoped that the documentation of life afloat would provide ways to explore the expansion of dwelling on the River Thames in response to the housing crisis. However, in response to RQ4, the study alludes to the possibility that the phenomenon of life afloat, as an affordable alternative, may well be short lived.

The cases of Chelsea Houseboats and Waterman's Park, point to a trend that demonstrates how these once bohemian communities, their re-purposed boats, and the river itself, are being transformed into places of expensive real estate. The analysis of the causes and consequences have been examined in Chapter Six, suggest that the processes of gentrification may have now taken hold on water. These two case studies point to the changing nature, yet again, of the power relations in the production of space at the water's edge. They reveal the vulnerability of this form of contemporary

vernacular within the broader capitalist context and the processes of urbanisation i.e., gentrification and financialization of the housing market. These case studies are perhaps indicative of how river dwelling (both form and use) have been re-appropriated by those in power i.e., developers and local authorities. These findings suggest that re-appropriation, loss, and decline, in response to the interests of capital, along with the processes of urbanization, have recently emerged. Potentially, this has resulted in the probability that living on the water is no longer an affordable option for those on ordinary incomes. Whilst many of the original communities still exist, others, such as Chelsea, are in the process of being re-appropriated by the super-wealthy. The river as an 'ordinary' place to dwell, is potentially being replaced as a site for elite consumption. Boats and moorings, examined in Chapter Six, are being re-imagined and commodified by capital actors, to re-produce a type of floating dwelling that maximises financial gain. By converting and commissioning the luxury boats (all be it in small number thus far) to compare with high end properties on land, ordinary boats, used as homes, are potentially being lost or re-appropriated, to extract the highest return from this type of vernacular dwelling. Thus, the commodification of life afloat has resulted in the loss, not the potential gain, of an affordable alternative type of housing.

At the start of the research, the view taken concurred with Philip Pinch (2015), to "resist the idea that London's 'water spaces' have been rolled over by a monolithic property machine" (Pinch, 2015, p.228). Predominantly, river dwelling has been interpreted as a form of minor resistance, or an ad hoc exploitation of cracks in the system, which existed both in tension and opposition to the dominant spatial forms of power (Lefebvre, 1996; Harvey, 2013; Pinch, 2015; Leary-Owhin and McCarthy, 2020). Instead, the findings have

alluded to vulnerable nature of river dwelling as an affordable alternative. As the river space has become more desirable, so too has this vernacular form. Despite Philip Pinch's (2015) argument, that by foregrounding the different moments of resistance which have occurred in relation to the river, it is possible to "disrupt the uniform narratives and representations of neoliberalism within the context of the River Thames" (Pinch, 2015, p,274), the findings suggest that this no longer holds true.

Within a very short space of time, the findings indicate that despite calls by interviewees for life afloat to be protected to ensure that it remains affordable (Lundquist, 2018, Field Interview 016, Sutton), it too has become commodified. An analysis of the various data sources (interviews, media) suggests that it is no longer within the purview of ordinary people to live on the River Thames. This echoes the wider problems of the housing crisis within the city itself. Unexpectedly, instead of the river offering the potential for communities to influence the creation of new social and urban opportunities, this thesis has revealed a narrative, not just of reappropriation, but one of potential decline and loss. Further research would be required to identify whether this applies to all the moorings along the Thames, or just Chelsea and Waterman's Park.

In summary, the findings led to an unexpected outcome; one of re-appropriation, along with themes of loss, and decline. This in-depth examination of the evolution of river dwelling, along with the analysis and interpretation of the different moments of resistance, has led to the conclusion that despite the original intentions of research question four; to evaluate the extent to which the river could open new dwelling opportunities for affordable living the opposite, appears to be true. Life afloat, an alternative mode of city dwelling on the river Thames, has potentially been claimed by the "dominant praxis" (Harvey 2013, p. xviii). In the end, the findings seem to indicate

that these cracks in the system are moments, whereby their “use value, meaningful connection, play and collective *autogestion* by inhabitants emerge and flourish” (Purcell, 2013, p.151). However, ultimately, they are but brief and fleeting.

Cumulatively, the findings from each of the research questions contribute to the overall significance of this thesis. The study has drawn attention to the political agency of people, as it has mapped their attempts to take control and shape their own environment. It argues that the production of this vernacular emerged as a form of resistance, one that not only challenges the order of the city dominated by the logic of capital, but also respects the agency of individuals, the right to difference, and the right not to be expelled from the city.

8. 5 Theoretical and Practical Contributions to Knowledge

This research contributes to the ongoing discourse within the field of vernacular architecture and the need to be more expansive, by including studies of contemporary vernacular architecture (Vellinga 2006/7; Maudlin, 2010). Returning to an issue raised within the introduction, this account of dwelling on the River Thames demonstrates the value of reconceptualising the vernacular within a contemporary context. Moving away from the descriptive and limiting view of houseboats, that frames them within the traditional patterns of nomadic societies, this study supports the wider discourse within the field of vernacular architecture that argues for an expansion of the use of the term ‘vernacular’ (Vellinga, 2006/2007; Maudlin, 2010). It does this by suggesting that it is not appropriate to categorise houseboats as ‘Temporary and Transportable’ (Oliver, 1997) within a contemporary context. Ex-working vessels converted for residential purposes are unquestionably transportable, in the sense that they are forms of transport. However, this research has shown by looking at different aspects of life afloat

(the struggles, the material form in Chapter Three, community life in Chapter Four, knowledge and know how in Chapter Five) they do not necessarily reflect a transient existence. This is not to say that this type of existence does not occur within a Western context, it certainly exists on London's canals and elsewhere on the inland waterways of the United Kingdom (Bowles, 2015), but this study demonstrates that other residential models on water are to be found too.

Given the lack of precedent within the scholarship, it has been necessary to chart a new course, thereby making it possible to investigate dwelling on the river from a contemporary urban perspective. By broadening the concept of the vernacular to reimagine re-purposed ex-working historic boats as an 'ordinary' form of dwelling and focusing on their adaptation and re-use for contemporary purposes, it has been possible to construct a fresh approach as a means of exploring and documenting cultural identity of those who live on the River Thames from a current perspective. This has been achieved by drawing together differing perspectives both from within the field of vernacular architecture and critical urban theory to create an original theoretical framing that facilitated an enquiry into re-purposed boats and the river as an 'ordinary' form and place to dwell. Underpinning this approach was the early identification that nearly all communities on the River Thames had at some time or another conflicted with the authorities. These struggles became the focus for producing new knowledge to understand how converted barges represent the 'cultural expressions' of people who are attached to a particular locality (Vellinga 2006/7), in this case the River Thames. A new theoretical framework was devised that made it possible to critically engage with the complex processual and dynamic nature of living on water from a contemporary Western urban perspective.

Drawing upon the Henri Lefebvre's social theories of space, this thesis has focused on the role that power relations can play in the production of the space. It has achieved this by engaging with the struggles encountered by river dwellers, to provide new insight into the dialectic relationship between vernacular repurposed boats and the built environment as they intersect at the water's edge. Informed by scholars (Harvey, 2006; Brenner et al, 2012; Purcell, 2013; Leary-Owhin, 2015, Leary-Owhin and McCarthy, 2020), who engage with Henri Lefebvre's key works; critical concepts from the 'right to the city', and 'the production of space', have been employed to uncover and analyse the dialectical and processual nature of the relationships that exist between river dwellers, the material objects in space (re-purposed boats, moorings, the edge and the built environment), the role of various key actors and networks, and the wider processes of urbanisation.

By interpreting the vernacular within a set of power relations, it has been possible to evaluate the ways in which river dwelling has been socially produced and reproduced. The 'right to the city' was chosen because it represents the power and agency of ordinary people, and expresses the idea that citizens have the collective right to inhabit, use and appropriate space. In other words, to produce and use space according to their needs, wants and desires. Whilst Paul Oliver (2006) is not advocating any form of rights, his definition of the vernacular chimes with the ideas of producing space to meet with the needs of a specific group. In this way, the 'right to the city' has been used to aid the interpretation of the vernacular by examining the extent to which they, the river dwellers, create and 'build' dwellings and appropriate the physical environment of the river to suit with their own cultural needs.

Critical concepts have been employed throughout the thesis. They have accounted for and measured the different ways (social movements, participation and self-management, exchange and use value) in which resistance by inhabitants (a key aspect underpinning Lefebvre's 'right to the city'), and politics, are part of the struggles and dual nature everyday river life. The importance of different aspects of daily life afloat, (the material form, community life, tacit maritime knowledge, and legal issues), have been considered in relation to the ways in which inhabitants periodically appropriate space under the conditions of neoliberalism. Throughout, the study has demonstrated that the appropriation of space, as a means of resistance, has manifested itself in multiple forms. Detailed accounts, from the differing case studies, contribute new insights into the growing discourse of 'the right to city' to expose the ways in which urban activism has manifested itself at the water's edge, in response to the processes of urbanization. The *Routledge Handbook of Henri Lefebvre, the City and Urban Society*, published in 2020, highlights how a Lefebvrian approach, "might assist in mobilizing resistance to the excesses of globalized neo-liberalism" (Leary Owhin and McCarthy, 2020, p.i). This comprehensive overview of the applicability of drawing upon Henri Lefebvre's theories within the twenty first century and in particular the use of the concept of the 'right to city', (both theoretically and empirically) lacks any consideration of how this might happen within the context of post-industrial transformation the water's edge. The idea of the river and its banks epitomizing these excesses is featured in Chapter Seven. It contributes to the discourse by exposing how new luxury developments have come to dominate the relationship between city and water, and how this has impacted on river dwellers resisting the wider processes of urban change.

These concepts, however, did not explain the consistency or the nature of the complex relationships that lay at the heart of the argument; that the water's edge has emerged as a site of contestation. Therefore, the study utilised Henri Lefebvre's spatial triad as a research tool, to analyse the power relations taking place there.

The multi-layered dimensions of the triad have made it possible to analyse the interactions and social relations between the material form, everyday life, and the wider condition of neo-liberal urbanism, and how these processes have impacted on the lived experience of river dwellers. The different dimensions (or levels) of the triad, also provided the means to deconstruct how the dominant ideologies and values are embedded in and through, space, and the ways in which citizens negotiate the space imposed on them. It also accounts for the alternative ways in which the same space can be appropriated and produced, including the everyday forms and practices of different cultural models. The portrayal of the inter-relationship between the different elements established how they co-exist in a state of 'dialectal tension', in which the dominant power stands in opposition (but not always, see Chapter Five) to the vernacular. How these different levels might operate within a riverine context are illustrated in Table 8.1.

Dimensions of the Spatial Triad

Dimensions/or Elements	Description	The River and It's Edge: Constructed Social Space/Interplay of the different dimensions
Representations of Space	Conceived/Abstract Space	Neo-Liberal Economic and Political ideology and policy. The River: Port of London Authority – Legal/Navigational/Environmental and Commercial Governance. Riverside Redevelopment: Architects, Planners, Developers, Investors (including apartment owners) Iconic Images of the river in relation and the built environment. Exchange Value (Needs of Property Dominate)
Spatial Practices	Perceived Space – Physical Material Space Routines of daily life that Conform with official represents of space. Perceptible through the senses. Urban redevelopment in the context of neo-liberalism, state power and private companies.	The River Material Space/physical medium with a range of attributes (tide/flows etc./sustaining different life forces) Official PLA View/Navigational/ Commercial/ Tourism/Leisure/ Amity Value of the River (PLA) The Water's Edge (on land) Regeneration/ Development along the edge: Viewing/Seeing the River - Extension of Property Rights/ Investment and Premium Pricing
Spaces of Representation	Lived Space: Urban everyday experience as directly lived by inhabitants, associated with the cultural meaning of the users. Overlays physical space and values that run counter to the dominant conceived space. Imaginative and lived space. The vernacular 'other'.	River Dwelling: River as a social space (use value) of inhabitation/experience of daily life predicated daily routines/ and practices related to the physical attributes of the water. Cultural Values: Material form (re-purposed boats) Community/ Passion of boats and maritime heritage/ Ideologically – use value of river, economic alternative form of dwelling.

Table 8.1. 'Production of Space at the water's Edge'

Adapted from Lefebvre's Spatial Triad in 'The Production of Space' (1994) and Leary-Owhin (2015)

The interplay of these different dimensions can either capture the specific power relations of a moment/and or change over time.

However, the study has shown that that these relations are not static, but rather they are dynamic and change over time. Significantly, this thesis has revealed that the relationship between river dwellers and those in authority has shifted through time; directly in line with the transformations that have taken place on land. In addition, the river itself, also became inculcated into these power relations, as its function evolved

from a neglected, polluted river (at the point of de-industrialization) to its contemporary, multifunctional use.

Focusing on the critical role that power relations can play, the application of the spatial triad contributes an original understanding of the dynamic and processual forces that have impacted on the production of this form of contemporary vernacular architecture. This has made it possible to respond to the call from scholars within the field of vernacular architecture to move away from the past and produce a study that critically engages with the present (Vellinga, 2006). This research contributes to the work of Hayden (1997), Adams and McMurray (2000) and to Kusno (2020) to understand how people, power and place intersect at the water's edge from a contemporary urban perspective.

8. 6 Limitations

The limitations of this research are listed as follows:

- 1) There are twenty-four enclaves along the length the of the tidal Thames. Given that it was not possible, due to time and resources, to include them all in the research, representations from the wider river community were sought through the Totally Thames Oral history project that took place in 2016 (See Appendix B for details of communities and individual participants).
- 2) Despite various inquiries, it was not possible to access a reliable breakdown of the demographics relating to occupation and income of the population of river dwellers. It was suggested that this data could be available through local councils, however, it was outside of the remit of this research to set about this task, (a complex operation

given that tidal river is comes under the jurisdiction of some sixteen borough councils within London). It was also not possible to obtain accurate historic price comparisons.

- 3) For two reasons, this study excluded other types of living afloat in the city, for example, the canals, the River Lea, and other inland waterways on the non-tidal Thames. Firstly, living on the tidal Thames is a very different experience to the itinerant lifestyle associated with canal living. Secondly, from an academic perspective, living on inland waterways of London, and the surrounding area has been already been researched (Bowles, B, 2015).

8.7 Future Research

The future research proposals, outlined in the following section, focuses on vernacular buildings and land/riverscapes specifically to expand on the knowledge of everyday forms, practices, ways of dwelling and resistance within a 'watery/riverine' context.

8.7.1. Living on Water – 'Waterborne Practices'

In response to the calls to broaden the definition of the vernacular, it might now be possible to broaden the categorisation (Oliver, 1997) to include forms/or practices of living on water, that have been produced as an alternative to living on the land. Drawing upon the ideas of Awan, Schneider and Till (discussed in Chapter Five), of *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture*' (2011), future research could draw upon the ideas of spatial agency by expanding them to include the lived experience of those who dwell on water. Research investigating this more inclusive categorization would include traditional, contemporary and utopian examples of Western and Non-Western 'waterborne' practices. It could in turn, shed light on issues such as sustainable design (or not), the environment, the material, the social, political and the economic

conditions, that result in people taking to the water. The advantage of this approach is twofold; it would document the fast disappearing 'waterborne' traditions, as in the case of the Moken (noted in Chapter Two). In addition, it would also act as a source for shared knowledge, as people seek to find an array of solutions to several differing problems.

This type of research could contribute to an un-documented wide-ranging history that includes utopian constructions of dwelling on water, for example Buckminster Fuller's (1960's) Triton City Project Island, the contemporary futuristic 'Seasteading' project, and/or other design concepts that respond to issues of climate change and overcrowded cities. The more traditional elements could include floating villages and houseboats (Hong Kong/Vietnam/ Myanmar, Cambodia/ Lake Titicaca/Kerala, etc.) and floating markets. This would also allow for the inclusion of the different types of floating dwellings found in Holland and *Ijburg*, Africa, the USA California's Sausalito floating homes, as well of those found, for example, at Freedom Cove, Canada. All these different 'waterborne' types, practices and uses provide solutions for alternative ways (both formal and informal) of living on water, and directly respond to a range of issues on land, such as climate change, flooding, and overcrowding.

8.7.2 Ongoing Spatial Injustice

The findings have shown how struggles are indicative of the complexities of city dwelling. They have demonstrated how competing visions of city life can often be the mainspring for political action (Bird, 1993, Lefebvre, 1996: Brenner, Marcuse, Mayer, 2012; Harvey, 2013; Domaradzka, 2018; Hayden 1997; Adams and McMurray, 2000; Kusno, 2020). The original framework devised for the thesis can be transferred, to assist

future research to document and critically analyse any number of struggles encountered by different groups.

8.7.3 Gentrification on Water

In Chapters Six and Seven, this thesis explored the notion that gentrification may have now taken hold on water. However, this was a theme that emerged from an analysis of the data. It is a topic yet to be explored by gentrification scholars. As noted in Chapter Six, the scholarship within the gentrification field has shifted its focus, to concentrate on the ways in which communities attempt to resist the processes of gentrification taking hold within a particular locality. Furthermore, scholars are working with local communities in a range of ways, including innovative methods of sharing data, to provide inhabitants with the necessary information to resist and combat the negative impacts of gentrification. In response to these latest developments within the field, future research could engage with river communities to investigate the extent to which the processes of gentrification are impacting on those that live afloat. This could be extended to include both inland canals and waterways. Furthermore, a comparison with Amsterdam (a city with a long tradition of living on water) could test the global nature of this phenomenon.

8.7.4 The Urban River

An unexplored theme to emerge from the interviews suggested that the River Thames is now perceived to be London's largest, albeit difficult to access, public space. Drawing on the theories of the 'right to the city', future research could look at the 'right to the river', to investigate the validity of these perceptions. This could help to rethink how the river and the authorities could practically adapt to new possibilities of access that would

be of direct benefit to local communities. However, this topic is not restricted to the Thames. In 2021, as a direct response to changing ways of life during the on-going pandemic, conflict over the use of rivers and open water spaces within the United Kingdom has become more prevalent, suggesting the need to investigate 'the right to river/water' more fully.

"Poems have been written about it, painters have by been inspired by it, filmmakers have given it a starring role in movies" (Simons, 2019, p.5). The Thames has featured in numerous histories, fictions, plays, biographies, and more recently 'psychogeographies'. From Charles Dickens (1812-1870) to Peter Ackroyd (2008) and Iain Sinclair (2004), they have all applied their own interpretation of a river that "weaves together two millennia of history, heritage and creativity into one rich London story" (Simmons, 2019, p 5). This research has perhaps contributed an alternative perspective, as it has rethought the river as an 'ordinary river/landscape'; a place on which people live and go about their daily lives.

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Types of Floating Residential Dwellings

Many floating dwellings are often referred to as houseboats, however, this term is confusing (Plate 1). They can range from purpose- built craft including mobile and static types to gentleman’s yachts. Therefore, the following outlines the more common types that are used for dwelling purposes.¹¹This thesis concentrates solely on Converted Working boats i.e., those in which the cargo space has been modified for living purposes. Therefore, at the time of design their function was to transport cargo and were later converted for purposes for dwelling making them into a ‘hybrid’ form of vernacular architecture.

Boats Designed for living aboard

Working boats with family cabins (narrow boats/barges)
Large Cruising Boats, (gentleman’s Yachts, passenger boats,) Thames Houseboats

Converted Working Boats

Cargo space modified for living purposes (Barges/cargo ships, landing craft)
Naval ships as ‘hulks’ (training ships, hospitals, prisons)

Houseboat Definitions

“A houseboat includes any pleasure boat which is *not a launch* and which is decked or otherwise structurally covered in and which is or is capable of being used as a place of habitation (whether by day and night or the one or the other) or as a place for accommodating or receiving persons for purposes of shelter, recreation, entertainment or refreshment or of witnessing regattas or other events or as club premises or as offices or as a kitchen pantry or store place”. (Environment Agency)

“A houseboat means any vessel (other than a ship registered under the Merchant Shipping Act 1995) or any vessel usually used for navigation which is used primarily as a space of habitation, or as a place for accommodating or receiving persons for the purposes of shelter, recreation, entertainment or refreshment, or as a club premises or offices whilst it is moored”. (Port of London Authority)

“A houseboat means a boat whose predominant use is for a *purpose other than navigation* and which, if required for the purpose, has planning permission, for the site where it is moored. A Houseboat *may be used for navigation* from time to time provided it does not become its predominant use”. (Canal and River Trust)

Pereira, S. (2016) ‘*History, Heritage and Houseboats*’, unpublished presentation, courtesy of Scott Pereira, Maritime Heritage Trust.

¹¹ Dutch Barges are the most popular type of barge for dwelling purposed. They have not been included here as they appear as exemplars in the thesis.

The aforementioned definitions allude to the fact that there are many different understandings of what it is meant by a houseboat. For the purposes of this work, Gabor's (1979) understanding is more helpful. For him, the determining factor is whether the vessel is home for the individuals using it. Additionally, he considers the original design, degree of conversion and furnishings. He argues that (notwithstanding working boats with accommodation to live in) the main criterion in defining a houseboat is its primary usage. "If a boat is modified or converted appropriately for year- round living, and the people on it have established the vessel as their main or sole residence, then it is considered a houseboat." (Gabor, 1979, p.6) However, there is an issue with this term for those live on re-purposed cargo boats, they prefer to identify their homes as 'residential vessels' rather than a houseboat. For them the image of a houseboat conjures up immobile floating homes.



Plate A 'Astoria', (1911) Houseboat, Hampton; early houseboat type purpose built primarily for summer use. This type of vessel would have been towed by steam, tug, horse, or mule on the non-tidal Thames. (2018) Courtesy of photographer J. Beard.

The Thames Sailing Barge – originally a popular form used for dwelling.

Thames barges were designed to carry a variety of cargos including coal, cement, grain, hay, straw. Their working life could vary between 50-60 years. This type of cargo boat traditionally plied the East Coast of England and the River Thames. In early 1900 there were over two thousand working barges sailing the east coast and the Thames. By 1954 only one hundred and sixty remained in trade (Totally Thames, 2016).

Different types evolved over time but in the main the characteristics of this Thames Barges had common features. They were worked by a crew of two who dwelt in a living space that included a cabin beneath the aft deck and entered by a sliding hatch and a flight of steps. Interior furnishings included sleeping bunks, a bench with lockers, table, and a stove for cooking. (Chaplin, 1982, p.76)

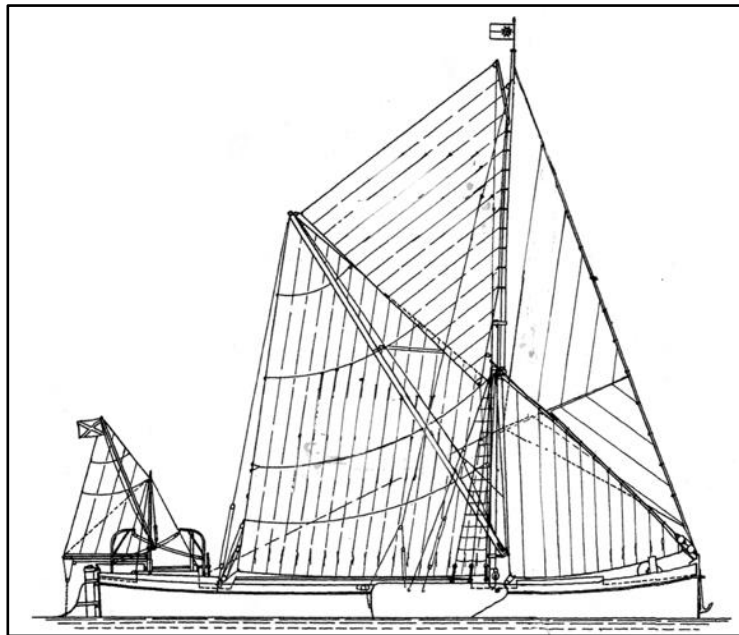


Figure A. 'Ethel Ada' (1903) Thames Sailing Barge, Length 27.3 m, Beam 6.5m, Sprintsail
 Built in Paglesham in Essex by the Shuttlewood brothers in 1903, Ethel Ada was named after the wives of her two shipwrights. She carried coal, agriculture materials and building materials. Courtesy of HCM.

Initially people chose to live on Thames Barges as they afforded generous living spaces once converted (Figure.1). However, they are made of wood and are costly to maintain plus over time they tend to rot and therefore few remain today as permanent dwellings. Cyril Ionides (1918) purchased a Thames Sailing in the early part of the twentieth century for £140.00.

Initial items needed to renovate her included timber, panelling, bath, varnish, paint, hot water apparatus, clean the boat first (Figures 2/3).

"I was able to tell myself that at last the barge looked like a home, the cabins were all furnished and habitable; the pictures were hung; even the china and the books were arranged provisionally" (Ionides and Atkins, 1918, p.93).

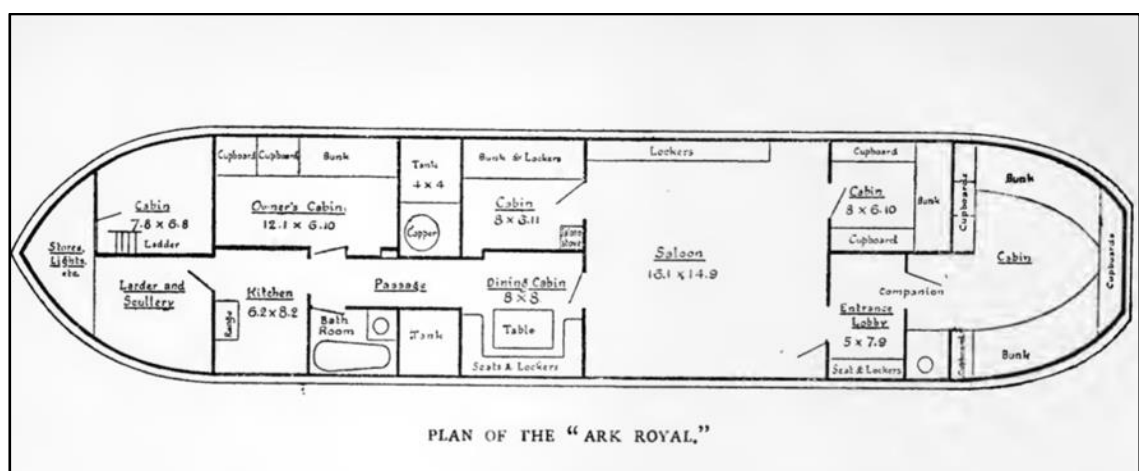


Figure B 'Converted plan of the interior' (1918) Lonides and Atkins, p.193.

APPENDIX

DETAILS OF THE COST OF BUYING, ALTERING, AND FITTING OUT THE *ARK ROYAL*

	£	s.	d.
Purchase	140	0	0
Wood, match-lining, and flooring	37	17	7
Three-ply vencers	15	3	11
Insurance during alterations, £2; Registration, £1 1s.; Changing name, £3 18s.	6	19	0
Galvanizing chain, stanchions, blacksmith's work	8	15	9
Two tanks of 400 gallons each	8	0	0
Six mahogany doors and other fittings from ship- breaker's yard	5	4	6
Pumps, bath, w.c., heating stove for bath... ..	13	16	7
Brass fittings, tools, and sundries	4	15	11
Paint and varnish	6	5	8
Rope	5	8	8
Disinfecting at gasworks: formaldehyde, etc.	4	2	6
Kitchen range, copper, etc.	6	0	0
Linoleum, wash-hand-stand, brass fittings	6	5	0
Plumbing	7	16	0
Raising main cabin-top	38	10	0
Wages: two men for four months	39	15	0
Lamps, £2 10s.; Nails, £2 3s.; Saloon stove, £2 10s. Caulking deck and buying and fixing second-hand skylight for boys' cabin	7	3	0
Brass screws, hinges, and wire rope	3	19	0
Petty cash	4	8	11
	£375	19	0

Figure C 'Repurposing Costs' (1918) Lonides and Atkins, p.190.

London River Barge (Dumb Barge or Lighter) - Originally used by Lightermen to transfer cargo from ship to shore (Figure 4, Pate 2/3).

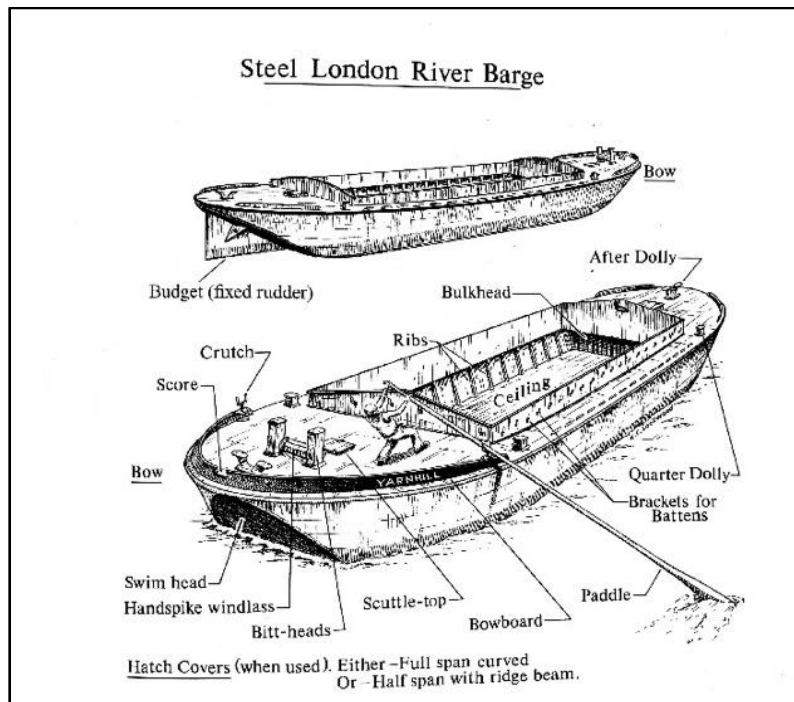


Figure D 'A flat bottom steel lighter used for carrying goods between ship and shore'. (1997) Simper, p.33. Reproduced by kind permission of the author Robert Simper



Plate B. 'Converted Steel Lighter with garden. Tower Bridge Moorings' (2018) Sutton.



Plate C. Interior, Converted Steel Lighter Tower Bridge Moorings. (2018) Sutton.

Canal Boats

"Water Ways: Becoming an itinerant boat-dweller on the canals and rivers of South East England" (2015) by Dr Ben Bowles. As an anthropologist he examined a group known as "boaters" or "continuous cruisers" (see above) who dwell on the inland waters and in particular the canals. He suggests that this lifestyle is one that privileges an "unfixed and flexible" mode of being with members considered to be outside of the sedentary order.

Interview Questions

Type One	Interview Questions with Barge Owners Topics: Material details/Conversion/Interiors/Maintenance/Skills Motivation for living on the River/ Economic of River Dwelling/ Community Life/Structure/ Future Challenges/ Opportunities
1	How long have you lived on the river?
2	Why did you choose this way of life?
3	Can you describe your home for me please? How is the space organised?
4	When was the barge converted for residential purposes?
5	What is the date of the ship?
6	How you maintain the historic nature of the barge? Are there any special historic features?
7	How would you describe (in general term) the economics of living on a boat?
8	Is it cheaper to live on water than land?
9	How does the river affect your daily/monthly/yearly life?
10	What are the key features of community life?
11	What is the management structure?
12	Is there a wider sense of community along the Thames?
13	What is the difference between living on land and water
14	What are the key challenges facing river dwellers?
15	What are the key opportunities for both the river and dwelling on it? Would you like to see more people living on it?

Type Two	Questions for organisations/Institutions involved with the River Topics covered: Different relationships with the River, the changing role of the river.
1	What is your/the organisation's interest/connection with the river? And/ or How long has it/you been connected with the river?
2	Can you explain to me your/the organisation's relationship with the river i.e., trade/protection/conservation/promotion?
3	How is this achieved?
4	What do you consider to be the key changes that have taken place on/with the river that affects the organisation and its relationship with the river. or ii)The organisation's experience of the river.
5	Can you identify what/when these changes took place?
6	What do you consider to be the key challenges that directly impact on the organisation/and or its future relationship with the river?
7	What are the key opportunities in relation to the river?
8	Several critics have argued that the River Thames is London's largest public space. Do you have a view on this statement?
9	Do you think access to the River could be/should be improved? If yes how could this be brought about?

Totally Thames Interviewees

https://thamesfestivaltrust.org/heritage-programme/life-afloat/life-afloat-battersea/	
Type Three	Themes emerged: Aspects of Daily Life; conversion, early history of river dwelling, relationship with the river, gentrification fears, affordable dwelling.
1	Community Comments referred to as Totally Thames Interviews. The website includes general comments about each community.
2	Narratives and Comments from Totally Thames interviewees that have been cited throughout the thesis - Brentford: Nikolaj Bloch, Elmer Postle, Di Murrell. Chiswick: Sue Gurney, Ali Taylor. Hammersmith: Clive Wren. Nine Elms: Iona Ramsey. Richmond: Brian Proctor. Tower Bridge Moorings/Downing's Road: Nick Lacey, Teresa Lund.
3	Comments from the Documentary 'Life Afloat'

Interview Participants

Ref	Date	Interviewee	Organisation	Consent Form	Transcription	Source Location
	Location					
001	29/8/17 At their home/ Hampton Court/	Inglis.J Saunders, J	Panorama of the Thames Film Maker	Yes	S. Sutton	OneNote
002	17 Jan 2018 Richmond	H. Pickles Chair	River Thames Society	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive T.Thames
003	24 Jan 2018 Hope Pier Moorings W4	Clive Wren Architect	Ex RBOA Chair Long term river Dweller	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive/ OneNote/T Thames
004	31 Jan 2018 Paddington Basin C&RT Office	M. Symonds Boating/ Strategy and Engagement Manager	Canals and River Trust	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive/ OneNote
005	13 Feb 2018 Office SE1	Graham Morrison CEO	Allies and Morrison Architect	Yes	S. Sutton	OneNote
006	13 Feb 2018 Euston, NW	Philip Smith Director Planning	LUC consultants Planning	Yes	S. Sutton	OneNote
007	14 Feb 2018 SE1	Chris Rommer- Lee Director	Octopi Studio Architect	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive Interviews Copy/ One Note
008	15 Feb 2018 Oxo Tower	Adrian Evans Director	Totally Thames Festival	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive Interviews Copy/One Note
009	16 Feb 2018 Hertfordshire On Boat	Alan Wildman Chair	RBOA	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive Interviews Copy/One Note
010	19 Feb 2018 Office, Wapping	A Versteeg Founder HCM	Hermitage Community Moorings	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive Interviews Copy/One Note
011	20 Feb 2018 EC2	Alex Werner Lead Curator	Museum of London	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive Interviews Copy/One Note
012	21 Feb 2018 Richmond	Scott Pereira Chair	Maritime Trust	Yes	(no interview But Power Point/History Heritage and Houseboats	OneDrive Interviews OneNote T.Thames
013	21 Feb 2018 Mortlake	Peter Banks Entrepreneur	Office, Mortlake	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive Interviews OneNote

014	22 Feb 2018 Hounslow Civic Offices	Sabina Martin Project Manager	Hounslow Council	Yes	Interview Not recorded, notes only.	OneDrive Interviews OneNote
015	07 March Office	Nick Lacey Proprietor	Tower Bridge Moorings	Yes	H. Stawicki	One Note T.Thames
016	08 March 18 Office	T. Lundquist Manger	Barge Owner Tower Bridge Moorings	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive Interviews OneNote T.Thames
017	10 March 18 On Board Albatross Dutch Barge	C. Tymms M. Cottis Founder Members HCM River Residents	Barge Owner Hermitage Community Moorings	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive Interviews OneNote T.Thames
018	12 March 18 On Board <i>De Walvisch</i> Dutch Barge	A.Zatorski River Resident	Barge Owner Hermitage Community Moorings	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive Interviews OneNote
019	13 March 18 On Board Maxime Dutch Barge	P. Weston J. Mcwhinny River Residents	Barge Owner Hermitage Community Moorings	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive Interviews OneNote
020	14 March 19 Office, W1	N. Godwyn River Resident	Chelsea Houseboats	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive OneNote
021	28 March 18 On Board <i>Nooit Gedacht</i> Dutch Barge	Frankie Pullen James Huddleston River Residents	Barge Owner Tower Bridge Moorings	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive Interviews OneNote
	2019					
022	13 July 19 Office	N. Godwyn River Resident	Follow UP Interview	Yes	H. Stawicki	
023	16 July 19 PLA Offices	Alistair Gale Director	Port of London Authority	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive Interviews OneNote
024	16 July Euston Station	Victoria Wagner Consultant	Publica Thames Cultural Strategy	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive Interviews OneNote
025	16 July On Board Norma Dutch Barge	C. McLaren River Residents Expert Sailing Thames Barges	Hermitage Community Moorings	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive Interviews OneNote
026	17 July 19 Hope Pier W4	Clive Wren Architect	Follow Up Interview	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive Interviews OneNote T.Thames
027	19 July Mortlake Cafe	N. Day Director	River Homes Estate Agents	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive Interviews OneNote
028	8 Oct 2019 Tower Hamlets Office	A .Milentijevic Planning Office	Borough of Tower Hamlets Planning	Yes	H. Stawicki	OneDrive Interviews OneNote
029	12 October 2020 Lifesize	J. Trimmer	PLA	Yes	Sally	Interview Folder

Licensed/permitted residential mooring enclaves

North Side (upstream to downstream)

Swan Island

Ducks Walk

Thistleworth Marine

Lots Ait

Victoria Steps/Kew Bridge

Chiswick Pier

Chiswick Mall (a number of individual vessels in the area).

Dove Pier

Hope Pier (Alan Sees moorings)

Rutland Moorings (two vessels)

Imperial Wharf (consent is for *pied a terre*, rather than 'full' residential

Chelsea Yacht and Boat Company/Cheyne Walk

Cadogan Pier

Hermitage Community Moorings

South Side (upstream to downstream)

Kew Marine

Kew Pier

Putney Pier

Prospect Quay

Wandsworth Riverside Quarter

Plantation Wharf

Oyster Wharf

Albion Quay

St Mary's Church

Nine Elms Pier

Downing's Road (Now Tower Bridge Moorings)

Source Port of London Authority

**RESEARCH
ETHICS
WITH
PLYMOUTH
UNIVERSITY**

Informed Consent Form

Project: Re-Imagining the Vernacular: Dwelling at the Thames Edge

Faculty of the Arts and Humanities - Fully funded studentship.

Project contact details:

Name of researcher: Sally Sutton. sally.sutton@plymouth.ac.uk

School of Art, Design and Architecture

Plymouth University

Room 112, Roland Levinsky Building

Plymouth University, Drake Circus

PL4 8AA, United Kingdom

Name of Supervisor: Dr. S. Murrani

sana.murrani@plymouth.ac.uk

What is this project about?

The research sets out to study the relationship between urban rivers and the built environment. Focusing on the River Thames the aim is to investigate the role of architecture and the way in which the river's edge has been transformed through time. It examines the influence this has on the relationship between the city, its river and how this natural resource is perceived. This is achieved by exploring the changing role of the river through the lens of the those who dwell on it. The study considers how and why boats, once part of the working river, have evolved into a popular form of dwelling. The intention is to contribute new understandings of community and creativity along the banks of the Thames.

I, confirm that (please tick box as appropriate):

- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research.
- I voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

- I understand I can withdraw up until one month after the interview without giving reasons. I will not be questioned on why I have withdrawn.
- The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained to me.
- If applicable, consent for interviews, audio, video or other forms of data collection have been explained and provided to me.
- The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me.

Please select only **one** of the following:

I would like my name and/ or audio recordings/photographs to be included as part of the study. I understand that anything I have said maybe used in reports, publications, and other research outputs and in doing so acknowledges my contribution to the project.	
I would not like my name or audio or video recordings of myself to be used in this project.	
I would like my comments/audio recordings to be included but I wish to remain anonymous.	

I, along with the Researcher, agree to sign and date this informed consent form.

Participant:

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Researcher:

Name of Researcher

Signature

Date

rigging or hulls or the ships design (associated with ship typologies). This did raise a question regarding the vernacular in relation to which type of boats sailed on the Thames, an important point, but not relevant in this case. However, the exteriors were important to note, particularly in the case of Hermitage Community Moorings. It is a requirement of membership that boats moving on the mooring must conform externally with the Barcelona Charter. This charter is the widely accepted standard for preserving and restoring historic vessels. <http://european-maritime-heritage.org/bc.aspx>. Accessed 29/11/19. As far as I am aware, whilst other moorings prefer their boats to be maintained to reflect their working lives, there is no formal requirement to do so. The original founders of the mooring felt that it was essential to maintain the external historic features of the ships for several reasons. On a practical note, all boats needed to be able to leave the mooring at short notice i.e., they needed to be fully working vessels with each member being able to sail. Secondly, given the location of the mooring within the historic dock areas of London into which goods from all the world were loaded and unloaded, members felt that this link with London's maritime past was essential contribution in maintaining Wapping's historic character. Additionally, there is little protection for maritime craft, therefore dwelling on them and maintaining them is one way to preserve historic ships that may otherwise be lost.

Chronological Mapping of Tensions played out on the river

“The river is made of these tensions and also has been... there are a lot of city tensions that are played on the river....how different sorts of people want to live in different ways. All of that is definitely played out on the River.” (E. Foster, River Dweller, 2008)

Date	Source	Tension/Perception	Location	Agencies	Issues/ Campaign/ Tactics	Solution/Added Comment/ Potential Theme
14 May 1975	Hansard Vol 892	Security of Tenure	Twickenham		Bill presented to Parliament to protect Rights of Boat Owners	Actual outcome unknown, but river dwellers still have no security of tenure (2020)
1995	Mentioned in Review of Charging Methods	PLA gave notice to license holders that a review will take place in 1997		PLA, RBOA		
24th November 1997	Hansard Petition/ Vince Cable (Accessed online)	Review of rent charges: Rent increases for moorings, insecure tenure. No consultation prior to implementation. 'Monopoly i.e. PLA setting a 'market rate' (under the 1968 PLA ACT) 234 residential craft moored on the tidal Thames.	Tidal Thames	PLA, RBOA	PLA imposing moorings charges, previous arrangement between the RBOA and the PLA based on length of boats. Rents kept reasonably low. Previously a simple system. System of tenure on the river is complex. No rights for river dwellers. PLA and the use of monopoly power. Rental income does not show up in their accounts.	Theme of Ownership/ Power and the River. River's as complex systems.

					Campaign: support of MP's to ask Gov to intervene on behalf of river dwellers.	
1986	'PLA Pricing Review'	Agreement for a rate per foot to be applied to ALL residential moored craft on the Tidal Thames, linked to RPI. Nature of houseboats changing many floating houses and bungalows appearing on the Thames.		PLA, RBOA	Charging by the length of the boat, did not take into account the living space.	Types of dwelling on the river.
24 th October 2003	'Oasis or Eyesore' River boat dwellers 'bunch of low brow degenerates' Property Week	Developer's arguing that floating communities can play a role in regeneration. (river dwellers) Urban regeneration and the shortage of affordable housing in the city center. 'Ordinary people priced out of the property market. Landside dwellers; 'feel their view of the river is impaired' ACTUAL DISPUTE: No planning permission for residential moorings. Boats ruining the view. Regulation of site.	Reeds Wharf	Apartment dwellers, boat dwellers, Estate Agents, Local Council, PLA, Local MP's	'Community' in London being lost. Boats maintain the 'spirit and nature of the river. Boats on the river long before the apartments. Apartment owners – the 'view is part of the real estate'. Historic vessels are 'part of the river view'. The river needs a use so there could be more moorings on the River. 'River feels like is it dying. Dead stretch of water.'	'Loss of community' Preserve this way of life. Converted boats add to lifestyle choices that add colour and diversity to the river. Urban regeneration and affordable housing. 'View/Aesthetics part of the 'real estate. River function: River as dwelling space (changing from industrial use) Solution: Planning permission (after public enquiry) and Mediation with local landside apartment dwellers.

						Role of Planning for Moorings.
<p>December 2003</p> <p>40 boats (32 inhabited)</p>	<p>'War on the Wharf' The Independent</p>	<p>River dwellings are compared with Gypsy encampments or an unlicensed caravan site. New apartment owners on land objecting to the 'noise of the works carried out on the river (conversion of lighter and barges) and 'intrusion' of boats to their view. 'Boats do not fit in. 'Resident's bought a 'view'.</p>	<p>Reeds Wharf Tidal Thames Pool of London</p>	<p>Tower Bridge Moorings, Southwark Borough Council, The PLA, Luxury Apartment Dwellers.</p>	<p>River Dwellers given 3 months eviction notice by Southwark B.C. pinned on to individual barges. Moorings did not have a residential license from the PLA. License: needs change of use from 'working/industrial use to residential. Also needs planning permission from Southwark. Argument For the barges staying: Landscape –(riverscape) The boats contribute to the traditional character of the river. 'Here the dock, warehouses and boats is about the only place that you can get a <u>feel</u> of what the Thames used to look like.'</p>	<p>Public Inquiry The need for regulation at the site.</p> <p>'People who work outside the rules often pioneer urban innovation." (change the narrative)</p> <p>'Power relations/networks At the river's edge.'</p> <p>River dwelling as 'other' – not acceptable to land dwellers.</p> <p>Real estate at the edge: 'view of barges devaluing worth of apartments'</p> <p>Idea of Loss to the traditional character of river without boats. Loss of diversity/ life at the water's edge.</p>

22 April 2004	'Permanent barge homes plan sinks' Sixty people living on boats near Tower Bridge have failed to get their homes legitimized.' BBC News (online access)	Southwark Council refuse to give river dwellers permission to reside permanently at the mooring i.e. boats moored illegally. Establishing a residential mooring on this part of the river was inappropriate.	Reeds Wharf	Borough Council, Owner of the moorings, boat dwellers. PLA.	Permission denied on the following grounds: The impact on a conservation area, noise disturbance and a loss of privacy.	Role of planning and appropriate moorings. Outcome: Public inquiry to take place as a result of local authority decision.
27th May 2004	'Luxury Flats take on Water Rats in the Battle of the Boats' 'floating gypsy camp' Guardian Accessed on line.	Luxury apartment dwellers V getting rid of the boat dwellers. Tradition V change Regulation v sentiment, Politics V activism Investment v lifestyle/ alternative dwelling	Reeds Wharf.	Southwark B.C. Apartment dwellers, River Dwellers.	Moorings authorized use commercial not residential. Campaign, 'Fighting for home and the continuance of a unique and vibrant community. Potential 'loss' of way a way of life. Alternative lifestyle in jeopardy.	Traditional character of riverscape and diversity. River's Edge as a site of investment/real estate. Unacceptable alternative lifestyles.
15th September 2004	'Moorings Saved; River Dwelling Wins.' London SE1 Community Website. Accessed online.	Inspector quashed eviction notices/ and grants permission for moorings to become residential upon certain conditions.	Reeds Wharf	Planning Inspector results of the public inquiry.	Part of winning argument:' Boats existed in this location accommodating permanently moored craft. The moorings contribute to the diversity of the River Thames.'	Boats – part of the character of the river. Boats as 'heritage' history of the river. Diversity on the river.
29th September 2004	'Cast Adrift; Battle on the Riverbank' Telegraph	Boat owners have no legal rights, boats owners are at the mercy of moorings managers.	3,000 or so boat owners in London	Mooring Owners, PLA, Boat Associations to	No security and no protection under the Landlord and Tenants Act. Boats are 'chattels' not really property'	Lack of Legal Rights. Real Estate on the water. (how possible when boats are not

		<p>No protection against price increased mooring fees/license demands.</p> <p>Baroness Hamwee "houseboat owners should be afforded the same rights as those proposed for 'park home dwellers'</p>		<p>help counter demands. Estate Agents. House of Lords/ Housing Bill Act of 2004. Everyone except for boat dwellers will have protection from abuse and harassment.</p>	<p>Bohemian waterways – transformed into expensive real estate.</p> <p>The moorings fees are based on current market conditions and (for example) in Chelsea is calculated by Cluttons.</p> <p>Boat owners caught between authorities, i.e. navigation issue under the PLA, not parliament, not planning,</p>	<p>property i.e. in the mooring itself that has the value)</p> <p>Demand and Supply.</p> <p>River dwelling not recognized as tenants.</p> <p>Future Solutions? Can planning help with protection??</p> <p>Moorings buy out/ HCM co-operative model.</p>
2010	<p>Tideway Boat Owners Website http://tidewayvillage</p>	<p>The intention of the Riverside Developer (St. James) was to boat dwellers from the river and replace them with a floating garden. Nine Elms – replace the existing Pier and build a new marina.</p>	<p>Tideway Village, (25 people) Battersea, Nine Elms, 20 boats 80 people)</p>	<p>St. James Private Developer, subsidiary of Berkley Homes Riversdie, Local council Wandsworth, Two local river communities.</p>	<p>Public consultation excluded the river dwellers (in Tideway) only local on land dwellers. New Marina equals higher fees. Argument of 'better quality access for the boats'. Developers making people homeless, no alternative offered (issue of alternative on the river). Right to remain housed. Campaign by boat community: Action Day Printed tee shirts Letters of support. 1,700 signatures. Use of media, Support of local M.P.s Lobbying local council.</p>	<p>Acceptance of river dwelling, image of 'river rats' died' Changing perceptions of river dwelling.</p> <p>'quality' changing the nature of the river: i.e gentrification. Rights on the river. Solution: Planning permission given as long as the boats could stay. Planning permission for new marina refused;</p>

						overwhelming response against it.
7th October 2011	<p>'Fees rise mean only the rich will live on the Thames. Playground for the rich.</p> <p>Evening Standard</p> <p>Accessed online.</p>	<p>PLA due to overhaul the river works license and calculated according to the <u>size and location</u> of the vessel due to the increasing popularity of dwelling on the river. Fees contribute to the upkeep of the river.</p>	River Thames	<p>PLA, River Dwellers, Moorings Owners, Consultants who carried out the task of determining the issues involved</p>	<p>The PLA's aim: to draw up a long-term formula for agreeing mooring fees.</p>	<p>Solution: An agreement was established after the consultation took place.</p> <p>Outcome: Many agree that relations with PLA have been easier after this. (Others of course disagree)</p>
March 2018	<p>'Battle of the Chelsea Super Yachts'</p> <p>The Sunday Times.</p>	<p>The flight for luxury homes has now switched to the water. Developer has plans to build and sell luxury houseboats priced up to £6 million each.</p>	Chelsea	<p>Boat community garnering local support, support of MP, local authority, local preservation societies, the public.</p>	<p>Developer Tactics: Eviction, Fear, trying to pick off people individually. Boat owners forced out to make way for lucrative new arrivals. Boats as 'investments' create a new market, fitted to the highest standards of Chelsea and Knightsbridge. 'Owners – ' any new boats will be characterful, well maintained and sensitive to the area.'</p> <p>Boat owner tactics: 'Community not Commodity.' Legal case, high profile media campaign, Twitter campaign, campaign on the street, over 8000 signature, building local support. Support of Chelsea Historic Society.</p>	<p>Use of Estate Agents language to sell boats, river dwelling now seen as 'luxury dwelling on the river.</p> <p>Market Demand for this type of lifestyle / Brand identification with historic Chelsea and Kensington.</p> <p>Gentrification Character of the riverscape?? (what does this mean?)</p> <p>"Boats as investments" (how does this work if they are not legally recognized as such?)</p>

<p>2nd April 2018</p>	<p>St.Tropez on Thames Telegraph</p>	<p>Super boats in Chelsea. No longer 'informal dwelling on the River. River dwelling as an investment. Backing from private investors, 'small number of new boats, sympathetically designed will offer owners the rare opportunity to lived on this incredible space on the River Thames."</p>	<p>Chelsea</p>	<p>Private investors, developer, residents, Planners powers, New Market?</p>	<p>Developer has backing from investors for his development of new boats to build and sold on the mooring. (walter greave as an example). Investors colonizing the Thames. Forcing out current dwellers by terminating their licenses and evicting them. Developer to create a set of design guide lines that will ensure any boats we bring to the market will be characterful, well maintained and sensitive to the area.</p>	<p>Creating new market? Or response to market demands? Protection of the 'Character of the area/ riverscape? Water/river as part of the real estate. Boats are now purpose built and designed by architects, interior designers as per their land neighbours.</p>
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Detail Chronology/Themes/Discourses

Section	Chronology Patterns of Change	Themes <u>'Aspects of Dwelling'</u> <u>The Vernacular</u>	Issues/Relationships <u>'River Relationships'</u> includes Key Players/Bond between River/City Space	Critical Urban Aspects/ <u>Context/Theoretical Discourse</u>
Data	Case Studies	Survey/Photographs/Interviews/Archival Sources (Media/Print/Film/Video), Re-photography		
i	60/70/80's Historic Overview Survey, photos, interviews, re-photo	The Material Dwelling Barges/ex-working Conversion/Re-purposed	River Thames Neglected Space	Maritime de-industrialisation Processes of post- industrial transformation/ Impacts/affordability in the city centre.
ii	2000-10 2003 Tower Bridge 2008 Hermitage Interviews, Archives, Policy	The Community Space/The Moorings Community Under Threat Lifestyle Choice Community Solutions Co-operative/ New model/Residential Mooring.	River as a Source of tension (s). 'Politics of a view' 'Value' of the river/ extraction by developers/ apartment owners/estate agents. Policy/ Management	Right to the city concepts. Property rights above all else. Exchange Value/Use Value, power relations, Identifies key players, problems with the housing market, alternative dwellings, Community Resistance – Power of working together' – 'hearts -desire'/having a say.
iii	2010-18 Waterman's park 2017 - Chelsea Houseboats Interviews, Twitter, Media, Policy	Riverscape/Environment Physical River/A place to dwell. Passionate about living on the river/skills/knowledge Risk/Responsibility versus No Legal Rights on water. Community not Commodity	Physical Reality v Image Riverscape now consumed Boats (focus on interiors) Luxury Lifestyle/acceptance River rat to Luxury Lifestyle Mirror image of luxury on shore dwelling. Role of developers/Policy/Management change	Legal Rights/Housing Act Commodification of Space Regeneration Gentrification Community Resistance Housing Crisis
iv	Loss of character of river/way of life/the ability of communities to fight back/alternative city dwelling. (Whose) Right to the River? 11.3.19			