

# **UNHEARD & UNSEEN**



[Ion Square Gardens, Bethnal Green, E2 7AB]

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## **Collection files**

**This folder is a summary of my methods and findings, in order. Please feel free to repeat these methods in a transitional area of your choice.**

[1]



[Equipment: Lom Geofon, H6e recorder] [Location: E2 7AB] [Date: 19.11.25]

## A form of data storytelling for liminal spaces

*A audio-visual summary of the ‘unheard’ & ‘unseen’ in transitional public spaces. A way of viewing Ion Square Gardens from a new lens.*

Ion Square Gardens is a transitional space located in East London. I decoded the unseen and unheard of the area using 2 different techniques. A geophone to capture audio and found microscopic imagery for the unseen.

These findings allowed me to experience this local, transitional space, that I viewed as mundane, as something more interesting. It gave me a completely fresh sensory impression of the area. This sequence will go through my findings and decode my process and thoughts. Please use this way of seeing as a framework to implement within liminal spaces that are personal to you.

**Introduction**



[Equipment: Lom Geofon, H6e recorder] [Location: E2 7AB] [Date: 19.11.25]

## Transitional Spaces - A Brief Overview

Transitional space occurs when private interior space meets public exterior space, creating an ambiguous and shared zone known as transitional space. The idea of the in between space is an important part of architectural thinking. Herman Hertzberger argues that the spaces between buildings can be just as important as the buildings themselves. More often, these spaces appear by accident or are created without a clear purpose, but Ion Square Gardens does have a stated function. The spatial opportunity within the area is not being used to its full potential, which is why I would argue that it can still be seen as a transitional space.

An effective transitional space supports social interaction, small acts of negotiation, and change over time. They can be viewed as areas of both risk and vulnerability, since the lack of full ownership can lead to friction between different uses and users. The uncertain and flexible nature of these areas can make them open to neglect. Ion Square Gardens feels as though it is becoming a more purposeful community space, but the way it is designed places it much closer to being a transitional one.

Historically, these spaces have shifted and adapted depending on the needs of society and the architectural ideas of the time. Previously, they were more controlled, while today the number of under defined spaces has grown at a much faster rate, and many of these cultural pockets struggle to keep up. These kinds of spaces are often overlooked by city planners and treated as left over areas. Their potential for small scale projects, community led interventions, and temporary activity is often ignored despite how much they could offer.

Although Ion Square Gardens is officially recognised as a public space, its patterns of use feel much closer to that of a liminal space. Sitting somewhere between a successful public environment and a transitional one. The pathways guide visitors through the site in the quickest possible way, rather than encouraging them to stay or gather. The absence of clear ownership, clear activities, or efforts to bring people together leads to uncertainty and mixed readings of the space.

This project aims to uncover the possibilities within the site through audio visual storytelling, bringing attention to the emotional and sensory qualities of these spaces. It explores the idea of reclaiming under defined urban areas through sensory engagement and shared participation. This work is intended to act as a tool that can be used for other neglected or poorly designed transitional spaces across the city, helping communities connect within a changing and often isolating environment.



[Equipment: Lom Geofon, H6e recorder] [Location: E2 7AB] [Date: 19.11.25]

## **Ion Square Gardens - A Transitional Space**

A park located in East London, just off Hackney Road. It's around 10,348 square metres. While Ion Square Gardens isn't a traditional transitional space, it seems to have taken on these qualities due to its location and design. It's used as a green corridor when moving between residential parts of Bethnal Green, linking to Columbia Road and Hackney Road (and various transport links). It provides a morphological break between otherwise continuous residential fabric, lacking any meaningful purpose.

Configuring the space as transitional using Kevin Lynch's Paths, Edges, Nodes, Districts, Landmarks framework. Helping classify how people perceive space within the city. Edges: The park forms a edge between Hackney Road (mixed-use) and Bethnal Green (residential district.)

Paths: Pedestrians may cut through or around the park when moving between Columbia Road and Hackney Road. This makes it part of a route network. Nodes: Although small, the park intersects small streets and footpaths. Interpretation: The park works as a local node/edge interface (another characteristic of transitional spaces).

Mapping the location and collecting points.

This project was constructed like a scientific investigation, I aimed to collect data as accurate for the whole area as possible. Each point on the map marks a spot I used the geophone to capture sound through the ground. These areas were chosen to represent a wide range of material and activity within the park, from softer natural surfaces to harder built structures. Together they form a cross section of the site that reveals the hidden movement and vibration beneath everyday experience. By selecting different textures and conditions across the park, the aim was to collect a varied set of sounds that reflect the character of the space as a whole.

**Ion Square Gardens**



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## Capturing the Unheard

This stage of the project focuses on collecting sounds that usually cannot be heard. A geophone was used to sense small vibrations moving through different materials around the park.

These are normally outside the range of human hearing, so they were converted into audio so they could be listened to and understood in a new way.

### Geophone

A geophone is usually used to measure tectonic movement within the earth. Here it was repurposed for audio collection.

It was placed on different surfaces to capture the vibration that passes through the ground, structures and objects within the transitional space. The geophone was connected to a H6e sound recorder, which allowed these faint vibrations to be turned into clear audio.

### Audio conversion method

Recordings were taken in 10 locations across the park, [roughly 2.5 acres]. Each point was chosen to capture a different material within the site. In every location, a recording of 1min 30s was taken. Two full rounds of recordings were made. The first took place during the day around [12pm] and the second round, in the evening at around [6:30pm]. This helped capture changes in the energy of the park.

Unheard



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## Capturing the Unseen

Microscopic imagery to uncover the ‘unseen’. Identified the matter of each collection location. Collected, using found imagery, 10 microscopic images of each type of matter.

The microscopic imagery in this project was created to explore the ‘unseen’ qualities of the park. At each recording location, the main type of material was identified, for example Pedunculate Oak tree bark or Mild Steel from a park bench. Once the materials were noted, 10 microscopic images were gathered for each one using sourced scientific imagery. These close studies reveal patterns, textures and material behaviour that are impossible to see at a normal scale, and they help build a deeper sensory picture of the park.

These images create a way to connect the sounds with the physical matter that produced them. It adds another layer to understanding the park by showing what lies beneath the surface of everyday sight.

Unseen

[Equipment: Lom Geofon, H6e recorder] [Location: E2 7AB] [Date: 19.11.25]

## Table

This table shows the materials identified at each collection point along with the microscopic imagery used to represent them.

1.	Grass	<i>London lawn mixture - Lolium perenne</i>
2.	Bench	<i>Mild Steel</i>
3.	Tarmac	<i>Rubber Tarmac / Wooden edging / Clay soil</i>
4.	Slide	<i>Stainless Steel</i>
5.	Hedge	<i>Hazel Hedge [corylus avellana]</i>
6.	Tree	<i>Pedunculate Oak</i>
7.	Tree Circle	<i>Dead Pedunculate Oak</i>
8.	Desire Path	<i>Stony / pebbly clay loam</i>
9.	Mud Path	<i>Asphalt (also known as tarmacadam) / London clay based soil</i>
10.	Fence/Entrance	<i>Steel - hot-tip galvanised</i>



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## Summary

This has summarised the configured system for unveiling ‘unseen’ and ‘unheard’ qualities of transitional spaces, in this example, of Ion Square Gardens. The aim is to move them away from being overlooked passive areas within public spaces.

Frequency recordings uncovered ‘unheard’ sounds within the space. This audio exposed hidden movement and activity within the space. Day and evening recordings provided two different readings of the site and showed how the character of the park shifts across time.

Alongside this, the main material at each location was identified and studied through microscopic imagery. These close up views offer another way to understand the space by focusing on the physical matter that supports and shapes it.

This visual and sonic information gathered from the site combined became a form of data storytelling, uncovering subtle qualities of Ion Square Gardens that are not usually noticed. The work highlights the potential of transitional spaces and shows how careful listening and close attention can reveal new possibilities for understanding and caring for overlooked parts of urban spaces.

This table shows the materials identified at each collection point along with the microscopic imagery used to represent them.

many  
mannus



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## Geofon Recording Images



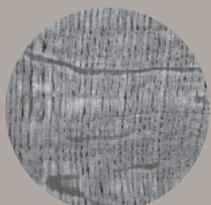
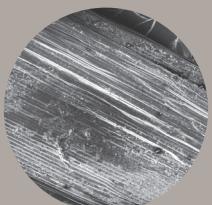
Collection Images



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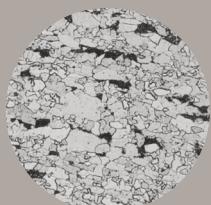
## Microscopic Images

# Microscopic Images



Location 01  
Grass  
51.53036,-0.06603  
[11:26] [18.51]

Location 06  
Tree  
51.53072,-0.06593  
[11:39] [19:02]



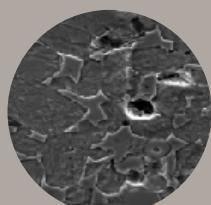
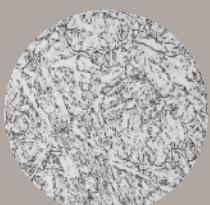
Location 02  
Metal Park Bench  
51.53035,-0.06604  
[11:28] [18.53]

Location 07  
Tree Trunk Circle  
51.53026, -0.06688  
[11:43] [19:05]



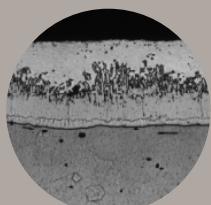
Location 03  
Tarmac  
51.53012,-0.06572  
[11:31] [18.55]

Location 08  
Desire Path  
51.53050,-0.06685  
[11:47] [19:07]



Location 04  
Slide  
51.53005,-0.06587  
[11:34] [18.57]

Location 09  
Exit (left)  
51.53077, -0.06679  
[11:49] [19:10]



Location 05  
Bush  
51.53070,-0.06584  
[11:38] [19:00]

Location 10  
Exit (right)  
51.53076, -0.06678  
[11:51] [19:14]