

Custom House HIGH Street

Custom House HIGH Street links together a series of public spaces, connecting Freemasons Road, ExCeL to the docks and across the water to Silvertown. The route is activated by a series of complementary uses and celebrates local history and identity. Shops, cafés, small workspaces, making and craft spaces sit alongside, youth facilities, employment support, learning spaces and places to exercise. These uses sit alongside existing businesses and aim to provide a different offer to visitors to the area, encouraging people to explore further.

A large stepped terrace creates a welcoming plinth and somewhere to sit whilst enjoying a drink from the community run pub and leading to the high level of the HIGH street. Shared surfaces prioritise walking, cycling, pushchairs, mobility aids and scooters. Car and van traffic is redirected to surrounding streets with a new bus gate and cycle hub at Custom House Station. An extended deck fills the gaps between current walkways and creates a shared space to play, on busy days, a place to pause on quiet days, space to run around, play ping pong or basket ball. Stretching out along the rail and power lines, a new linear park creates an ecology corridor running from Bow Creek to Beckton along Vitoria Dock Road and Seagull Lane, celebrating the long views afforded by the lines of infrastructure.

Heading south, a new canopy staddles the raised deck creating a playful approach to ExCeL, the covered arcade, a new market square, warehouse yard and outdoor performance space. Remodelled steps create seating overlooking the water and a place to enjoy the sunshine whilst playing in the fountains. A re-energised dock frontage links running and cycling routes as well as building on the current leisure uses of the water, a boardwalk and pontoons bring visitors and residents closer to the water. The new bridge link brings a connecting strand back to the ground level with views towards historic ships, Millennium Mills and the new developments in Silvertown. A heritage trail starting with a small exhibition on Freemasons Road leads down towards the cranes of the Royal Victoria Dock and onwards towards the river, the Custom House High-Street linking past, present and future.

