

Stave Hill Ecological Park

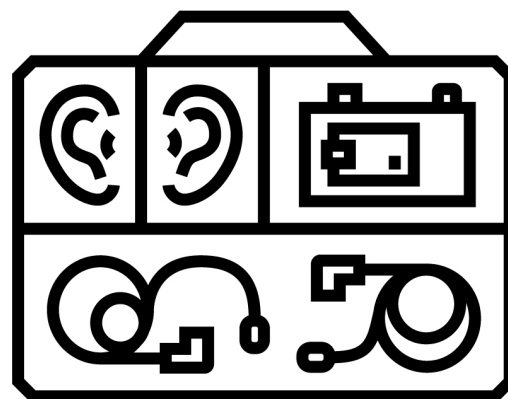
Open Microphone

LISTEN

- acousticcommons.net/streams/stave_hill_rotherhithe.html
- locusonus.org/soundmap

In the dark

7pm (dark)
 Rattling helicopter snaking across and back again before receding in a non uniform way. Seems to weave in and out, re emerging suddenly, then subsiding. Fireworks? Shots to the left echo to the right.
 Distant train shuttling carriages.
 Agitated wings clapping in leaves.
 Barking dog. Occasional robin. Much sparser than at dusk.
 11pm
 Hushed, uniform haze.



In the air

Helicopters, hover flies: sound waves impelled by wings, blades – pulsing, chopping, from high to low – along the river / on edges of shade-sunlight.
 Planes on approach to City and Heathrow airports: high turbo whine, low and medium phasing, doppler effects - pitch rising on approach, falling as planes move away. Occasional disruptions (volcanic ash, pandemic).

Indefine

The site, once flat, open, a habitat for larks, can be heard now as an ambiguous topology, with sounds coming from afar and/or bouncing/resonating closer up. Omnidirectional microphones are installed on a low vegetated roof. Roughly binaural, the streambox aims at a flat response, conveying different sounds equally.
 It says something about the lay of the land.

SITE

In lieu of an environment that surrounds human culture, .. picture an ontological field without any unequivocal demarcations between human, animal, vegetable, or mineral. All forces and flows (materialities) are or can become lively, affective, and signalling.

Jane Bennett: *Vibrant Matter*, p117

Stave Hill Ecological Park was created in 1986 from rubble infill into abandoned wet docks. It is the successor to the William Curtis Ecological Park, the UK's first urban ecology park, set up in 1977 near Tower Bridge by the Trust for Urban Ecology. It has been managed for over 30 years by Rebeka Clark and the Trust for Conservation Volunteers. In 2017 it received Local Nature Reserve status.

When construction began, the site was flat and level, with views far along the river. The design by

Lyndis Cole was intended to enfold the visitor in the landscape.

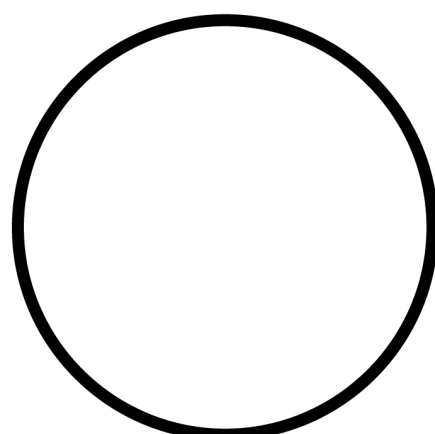
It created disorientating, meandering paths and a mosaic of micro habitats, partly by importing soil and planting trees and shrubs, partly by allowing ecological succession to take its course.

Plants appeared from the seedbed and were brought in by birds and the wind. These included native varieties and a global repository of seeds and spores, linked to the history of the docks. The site combines ecological continuity with constant works, carried out by volunteers, a single member of staff, and a few specialist contractors. Located directly across the river from Canary Wharf, and amid ongoing development, the sounds of the Park reveal a dense overlay of uses.

Listening notes from March 2021.



+51.5017°
 +0.0397°



On the ground

Traffic
 Constant low-medium drone, gear shifts. 4-stroke, 2-stroke, motors. Cars trucks motorbikes sirens.
 Sports
 Scuffing feet, shrieks, laughing, grunts. Chatter off hard surfaces. Klaxon c. 220Hz 4 strokes just before the hr and 1/2 hr.
 Steps
 Meandering paths, bonded gravel, mud.
 Works
 Shovels rakes hoggin, strimming, keys.

PROJECT

Since 2014, Stave Hill has hosted an annual sound camp and Reveil: a 24+1 hr radio broadcast, relaying sounds of the dawn chorus as it loops the earth.
 The open microphone (2019 —), drawing attention to a lesser known history of urban ecology in North Southwark, is one of a series developed with the Acoustic Commons network as part of a 3 year cooperation between FON (Cumbria),

CONA (Ljubljana), Locus Sonus (Aix-en-Provence) Soundcamp (London), HMU (Crete) and Cyberforest (Tokyo). The live streams are publicly available for listening, study and re-use.



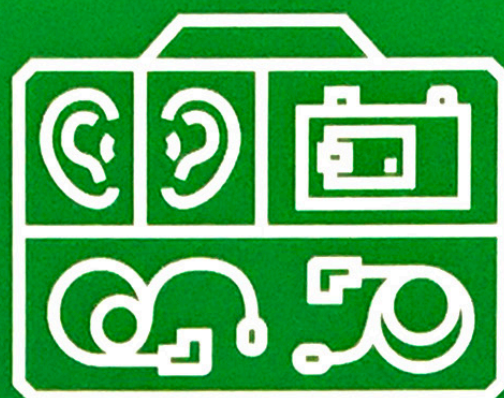
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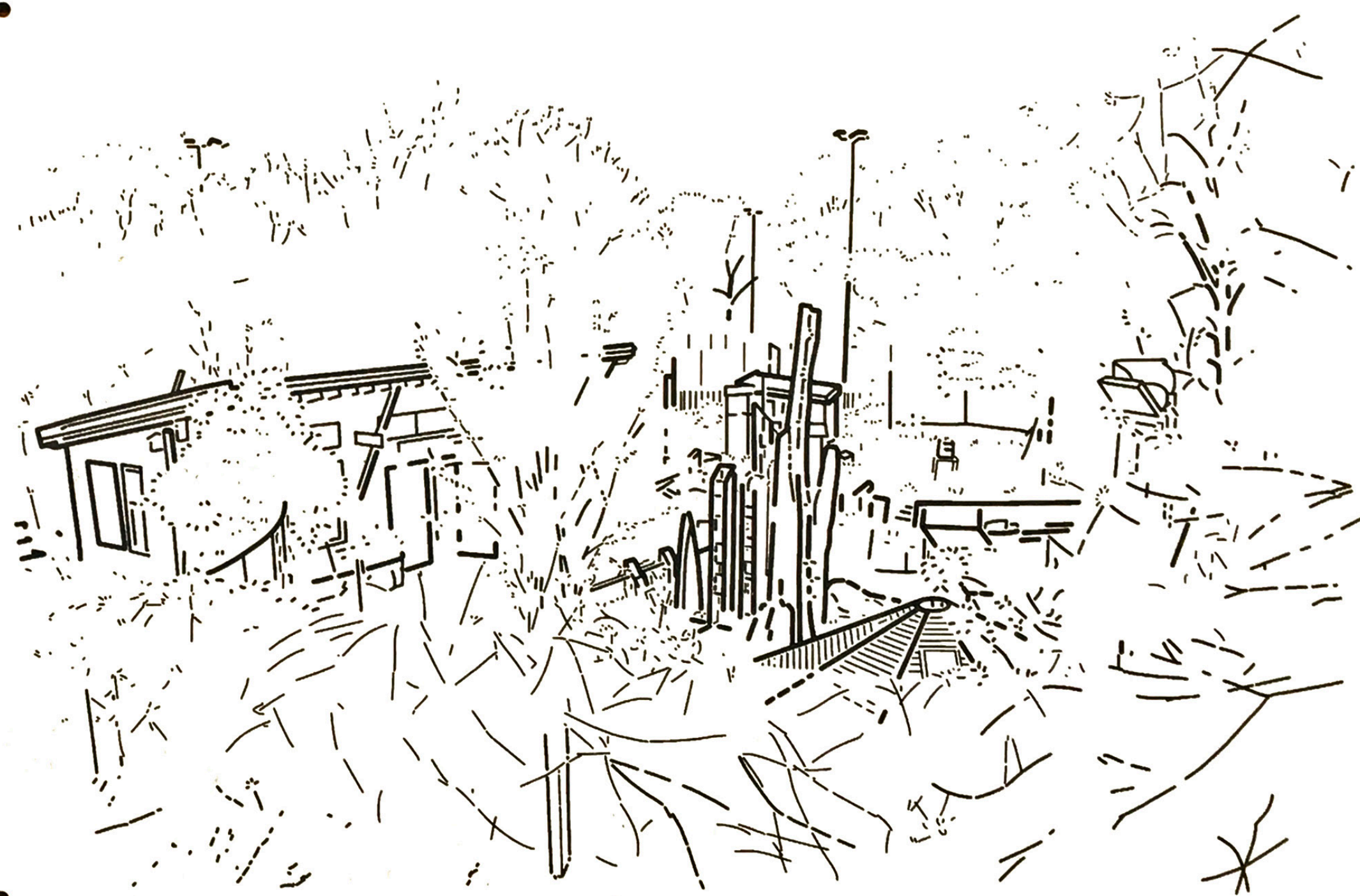
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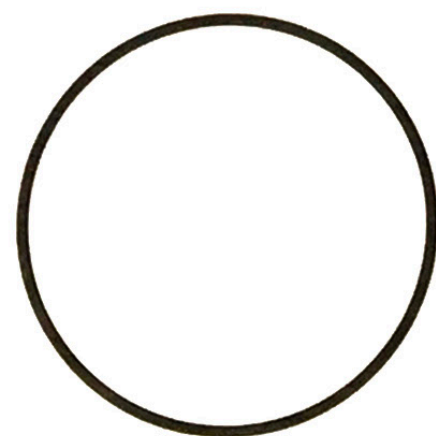
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