**Sadiq Khan:** The biggest investment in education and culture in more than 70 years.

**Tamsin Ace:** There were four buildings on the waterfront at East Bank and then we have UCL East who are just dotted behind the London Aquatics Centre. So it does take up quite a big part of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. And then of course V&A East have got their storehouse over in Here East.

**Sakina Sule Ali:** You can sit down, have a chill in the park, have your lunch, but then you're just going to be learning so much more. And without even realizing, you're just being immersed into this new community that's being built. It's very interesting and very cool to be a part of it.

**Anything But Footy:** The Mayor of London has officially opened East Bank on Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Years in the making, the first buildings of this unique cultural, educational and innovation district have opened their doors with students from across East London and beyond, flooding into the new London College of Fashion at UCL East over the past few weeks.

This is the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park podcast and this is just the start for East Bank as you're about to hear in this episode, starting with London Mayor, Sadiq Khan.

**Sadiq Khan:** Five years ago when we first set out, our vision was always for this to be an education and cultural powerhouse. The vision was for the East Bank to be open, accessible, and to democratize the best of culture, the best of arts. But also the vision was for local people to enjoy the fruits of the best our country has to offer, whether it's University of College London, whether it's University of Arts London, the London College Fashion, whether it's Sadler's Wells, opens next year. V&A BBC opens the year after, and the great thing is these five fantastic institutions are already plugged into the local community. So the local community are benefiting as students, as teachers, as employees, as artists in these wonderful institution in the East Bank.

**Anything But Footy:** We all remember 2012, but this park is now more than sport.

**Sadiq Khan:** Well, one of the things about 2012 that I reflect upon, as somebody who enjoyed the Olympics, loved the Olympics and is incredibly proud of the London Olympics, is did as many Londoners as could have done, enjoy the fruits of those Olympics? It felt like a spaceship came here, landed for a month, and then another month with a Paralympics, and then left. And what we've done since I became Mayor, 2016, is to make sure we enjoy, in a meaningful sense of the word, the legacy of the Olympics, and not just that wonderful month and the wonderful month afterwards, the Paralympics, but actually every day. And the joy of the East Bank is we're making sure, plugged into the DNA of this part of London are these wonderful institutions, at the same time as making sure we have genuinely affordable homes here, making sure that we have local people employed in the jobs being created with the skills needed to do the jobs, and it's really exciting.

**Anything But Footy:** You're standing in East Bank, you've seen the exhibition that they've got here as well. And as you mentioned, there's more to come.

**Sadiq Khan:** Listen, so for those who come and enjoy Queen Elizabeth Park, the East Bank, they will see an open UCL, an open UAL, but a soon to be open Sadler's Wells. I've been speaking to the team from Sadler's Wells, they've got some exciting programs for next year. They're already working in the community now. I know the team very well from V&A. They're already plugged into the community. They've announced, for the first time ever, joint programming for 2025, celebrating the contribution made by black people towards music in this country and around the world. I spoke to the team at the BBC who've got some really exciting plans with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, with the chorus and the singers coming to here as well, as well as rock and pop as well. So it's so exciting.

**Toyen:** Hi, my name's Toyen. I am a PhD researcher at London College of Fashion.

**Salima:** My name is Salima. I'm a guest lecturer and visiting practitioner at London College of Fashion.

**Sakina Sule Ali:** Hi, I'm Sakina Sule Ali. I'm a fashion journalism and content creation student here at London College of Fashion, and I also do content for London College of Fashion on social media.

**Anything But Footy:** So we're standing in the building. It's finally open.

**Toyen:** I know, it's absolutely amazing. Really exciting, especially after the Olympics. This is the Olympic legacy. So this is just a wonderful experience and a wonderful time for this building to actually be here.

**Salima:** This building is the collaboration and the coming together of all the different communities from different creative practices, coming together in one building. Because before, we used to be five different campuses all around Central London, but now we are all based in the heart of East London, which I believe is where creativity thrives the most.

**Sakina Sule Ali:** It's kind of a celebration, bringing everyone together. It's really nice to see that there's people higher up that value the creative industry because they're taking time out of their day to come and see us, come and speak to people like me. I'm just a student here. I should be in lectures, but I'm here talking to the mayor of London. It's nice to see that we don't just need to prioritize STEM subjects, even though they are important, creative industries are as important.

**Anything But Footy:** And what does it mean to be part of the Olympic legacy, that 2012 legacy? It's so long ago. It feels a long way ago now.

**Sakina Sule Ali:** It does feel long ago. I think I was in year three when that happened. I remember doing all the talks about it when I was in primary school, and now I'm in uni, and my uni is part of this big area. What I love most about UAL being here is just the exposure that it gives us. We have our logo out there. When people are shopping, they now think, "What is UAL? There is somewhere out there where I can make my dream a reality."

**Salima:** Buildings like London College of Fashion, the V&A, the BBC, moving to this area really shows the potential that we can use the community to be able to enrich the environment, and enrich the world even more. So, yeah, it's amazing.

**Toyen:** It inspired so many other people. I remember just thinking that the Olympics is actually on our doorstep. So it was almost really real to actually be that this is something that is reachable for us.

**Anything But Footy:** And it's great just seeing so many students and the park so busy.

**Salima:** Yes, I definitely knew that when this building opens, it will bring a plethora of students from all backgrounds, because our building not only has students from this community, but also international students, students from so many different other boroughs, and they're all coming to study in East London. So I think that's such amazing that our institution can bring them all together.

**Sakina Sule Ali:** On the surface, yeah, you can sit down, have a chill in the park, have your lunch, but then you're just going to be learning so much more. And without even realizing, you're just being immersed into this new community that's being built. It's very interesting and very cool to be a part of it.

**Tamsin Ace:** I'm Tamsin Ace and I'm director of East Bank Partnerships. It's a new role that's been put in place to work with all the East Bank partners, which are Sadler's Wells East, V&A East, BBC, London College of Fashion and University College London East. And my job is to think about how we collaborate, and co-produce, and co-program, and come together to be greater than the sum of our parts. So I've got a festival curatorial background. I've also worked within museums, and within art centers, and within academia. So I think I'm the perfect person to understand how to bring the strengths from all these different partners together to create a program that engages with as many people as possible.

**Anything But Footy:** And you used to be at the London College of Fashion, we're in the building as it's being opened. You've seen this project grow from the very start.

**Tamsin Ace:** I have. I joined London College of Fashion in a previous role as head of cultural programming, and my job was to start thinking about what a public offer would look like in the new building in Stratford. And I joined just towards the end of COVID, so I was sat in their old campus in John Prince's Street in Oxford Circus, and it felt like East Bank was a bit of a dream. And then to now actually be here on East Bank with their new building open, and all their campuses across London are now here in one roof, in this 13-floor, extraordinary building. And when the 5,000 students arrived last month to start their new term here in Stratford, the energy they've brought to the site, the way they've transformed how the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park feels. Just coming on the overground and walking through Westfield, you can see the students, you can see the energy that they bring to the site. They've decided how they want to engage with this beautiful space and it already feels like they own it, which is so exciting to see.

**Anything But Footy:** But your job is to then bring them, along with the V&A East, the Sadler's Wells, the BBC studios, and that will develop over the next few years?

**Tamsin Ace:** Yeah, so at the moment we have University College London open and London College of Fashion open. Over the next two years, we'll have Sadler's Wells East open in September, 2024, and then V&A East will open in the summer of 2025, followed by the BBC. And in 2025 when V&A East open with their launch exhibition, which is looking at a hundred years of British black music, all the East Bank partners are responding to that theme. And I think that is going to tell the story of what makes East Bank unique in that we are working together. We're responding to each other's strengths, to each other's programs, and thinking about that theme and how people can come to East Bank and explore an idea in multiple ways, across all of the different buildings and venues that East Bank occupies. And that is what makes East Bank unique, is that right from the beginning, we're collaborating. We're saying to each other, "We're doing this, do you want to get involved and do that?" And everyone is saying, "Yes," which makes my job a complete joy.

**Jasmine Sarkodie-Adu:** Hiya, I'm Jasmine Sarkodie-Adu. I'm the administrator for V&A East. Formerly, I was part of V&A East Youth Collective, consulting on the design of the museum and the galleries. And we were a group of, say, 15 young people, 14 to 25 year olds, who've grown up in the four Olympic boroughs. So having that opportunity to talk about our shared lived experiences and have that input into the design of the museums has been really invaluable experience.

**Anything But Footy:** And they always said that legacy was much more than just the sport here in the Olympic Park and this proves it.

**Jasmine Sarkodie-Adu:** Yeah. Yeah, definitely. Having grown up in Newham my whole life and seeing how the area has changed so much, and also to really make it a space for people who have lived here their whole life, and make it feel like a safe space for them, it's really amazing to see.

**Anything But Footy:** And the excitement is still to come because the V&A East, and the BBC, and Sadler's Wells, all yet to open.

**Jasmine Sarkodie-Adu:** Yeah, so V&A East is set to open in 2025, along with the V&A East Storehouse, which will house more than 250,000 objects from V&A's collection. So yeah, we are really buzzing for the opening, but also to see all the other institutions open as well, and welcome so many people in spaces.

**Anything But Footy:** For more details on the V&A East Museum's The Music Is Black: A British Story exhibition and the East Bank exhibition itself in London College of Fashion, check out Queen Elizabeth Olympic park.co.uk. Keep listening for more stories on the legacy of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games. [inaudible 00:11:15] just like East Bank, this is just the start.

**Sadiq Khan:** The wonderful thing is, the East Bank is now open and as I say, we should all be really proud of.

**Tamsin Ace:** If we're all working together, if we're not five isolated buildings, that we are all connected, sharing program ideas, sharing opportunities through our apprenticeship program, having students engaging with programs across the entire site, because how extraordinary for fashion students at London College of Fashion to be going over the parks to engage with the V&A Storehouse, and the architecture students based at UCL East engaging with the archive over at V&A East as well. Fashion student designing costume for Sadler's Wells and Sadler's Wells engaging with the skate park over at UCL East. We want to be occupying each other's spaces. We want to be infiltrating and then having roots out into the community as well, so that everyone knows they are welcome in every East Bank building.