



After the regeneration of the Borough of Wandsworth, Transport for London added two stations to the London Underground's Northern Line. Many areas along the south bank of the River Thames are undergoing renovation, and thus, local communities have experienced the impact of gentrification.

## Review

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For the first time since 1999, the London Underground has extended one of its lines. Connecting Battersea Power Station and Nine Elms to the Northern Line, the new stations opened Sept. 20. According to Metro Newspaper, the Northern Line had not undergone a station addition since 1941, prior to this year.

To commemorate this moment in transportation history, Battersea Power Station held a street festival Sept. 25-26.

Showcasing the newly redeveloped area, a plethora of activities were accessible to visitors: pop-up shops, street performances and street art, as well as a wide array of foods from different countries. Bungee trampolines and designated play spaces also rendered the

event kid-friendly.

Up-and-coming culture in Battersea seems more accessible and prominent than ever before, all on account of the accessibility of the Tube and the joyful street festival atmosphere.

Upon arrival, I was most impressed by the live graffiti artwork produced by various street artists. An assortment of color and design set the tone for Battersea and its artsy feel, solidifying the area as a hub of creativity in London.

One of the artists present was Chloe Gaish, a professional singer and songwriter whom I stumbled upon while she was performing "The Last Thing on My Mind" by Tom Paxton. Gaish said she typically plays folk-country music because she can communicate a story

through the lyrics – the emotions run high. Areas akin to Battersea facilitate the elevation of art forms for many artists like Gaish.

Moreover, one major reason for the Northern Line's extension was the regeneration of the borough along with many new businesses – including restaurants – which set up storefronts to attract civilians. One could find myriad cuisines represented by food trucks parked along the river.

The high quality remained consistent in every facet of the festival, perhaps most notably through the food offered to visitors. Not only did the restaurants contain a diverse range of unparalleled flavor profiles, but they also met dietary restrictions and provided options for vegetarian, vegan, lactose intolerant and gluten intolerant customers.

For lunch, I sampled warm, flavorful gyoza dumplings from a Japanese booth which had the perfect wrapper texture. Later, I tasted a creamy and delectable plant-based soft serve ice cream.

Unfortunately, certain aspects of Battersea's regeneration have hindered its community instead of helped. Recent gentrification of neighborhoods surrounding the River Thames has left the Borough of Wandsworth highly polarized in terms of socioeconomic status.

While regenerating areas can lead to benefits, such as attracting economic investment



An artist adds graffiti to a wall Sept. 26. Many styles of artwork were present at the street festival. *Photo by Eden Leavey*

and new employment, gentrifying them leaves a disproportionately negative impact on poorer communities. By inflating the price of housing, citizens are forced out of their homes and into more dangerous neighborhoods.

Coffeeshouses, boutiques and apartment complexes may line the edge of the river, but a few blocks inland and you will find yourself in a significantly less "boho chic" area, often in which knife crime and mugging rates are high.

In fact, there were 1,242 reportings of crime in Battersea solely throughout the month of July, per UKCrimeStats. Of those, 261 incidents report an

act of violence.

Instead of raising the price of a single – undeniably tasty – donut to £4.50 at the Battersea Power Station's opening street festival, the council of Wandsworth should instead shift their focus to reducing poverty throughout the borough and providing a safe living environment for

all who reside there, regardless of socioeconomic status.

Aside from the detriment of gentrification on certain neighborhoods, Battersea Power Station is located in a unique area with a lively culture well worth exploring. And with the Northern Line's new extension, making a trip is highly convenient.

“Battersea seems more accessible and prominent than ever.”

“The most vibrant times to visit are weekends.”

The most vibrant times to visit are weekends during the afternoon, when many businesses and performers populate the riverside. This is a must-visit spot for Londoners hoping to immerse themselves in the promising culture of Battersea.

To view a video of the street festival experience, scan here:



Food trucks set up by the River Thames serve food to the public Sept. 26. An assortment of culinary options were available. *Photo by Eden Leavey*