John constable and friends of crossbones have been negotiating a memorial garden rather than development of luxury apartments
public works collaborated with John Constable to bring to the public, all the work John and friends of crossbones graveyard have been doing in the past decade. They have made it hard for the site to be commercially developed and have created public awareness through their vigils every month.
public works printed the 11 acts of resistance on 11 long, scroll like ribbons. Ribbons are key components in Crossbones ritual of remembrance. The ribbons were tied by participants to the gates, at the vigil held on 23rd June 2012.
ACT 1:

1996:
On the night of 23rd November
John Constable has a vision:
The Goose, the spirit of a medieval prostitute, reveals her secret history to John Crow in the first poem of The Southwark Mysteries:
‘For tonight in Hell / they are tolling the bell / for the Whore that lay at the Tabard
And well we know / how the carrion crow/ doth feast in our Crossbones Graveyard.’
That night, The Goose conducts him on a journey through the back-streets of The Borough.
At the gates of a desolate works yard in Redcross Way, Constable receives many poems, songs and mystical teachings.
He later discovers that he’s been led to the unconsecrated burial ground dug up during work on the Jubilee Line Extension.
The Halloween of Crossbones is a ritual drama ‘to honour The Goose and her outcast dead’ - conducted by John Crow, first presented on 31st October, then every Halloween for the next 13 years, evolving its own ceremonial forms. The performance of The Southwark Mysteries by John Constable, inspired by the spirit of Crossbones, climaxes in a candlelit procession to the gates of the unconsecrated burial ground.

Participants are given a ribbon bearing the name of someone buried here. The ribbons are tied to the gates and the names of the dead are read aloud, remembering, releasing them, reclaiming and sanctifying their place of rest.
The Southwark Mysteries performed in Shakespeare’s Globe and Southwark Cathedral on 23rd April, St George’s Day and Easter Sunday. The first full performance of the new cycle of Mystery Plays by John Constable, which grew out of the poems inspired by The Goose at Crossbones. It features a professional cast working with a hundred-strong community cast.

In 2010 a new production is staged in Southwark Cathedral. At the climax, John Crow calls on the Cathedral to ‘let in’ all those who had traditionally been shut out of society, including those buried at Crossbones.

In 2012, at the extraordinary ‘funeral for the unknown parishioner’, the Dean publicly reaffirms the Cathedral’s concern for those buried at Crossbones.
ACT 4:
2002:

After a long campaign by local residents, Southwark Council refuses a planning application to erect 3 tower blocks, effectively desecrating Crossbones Graveyard.

Councillor Danny McCarthy warns that any attempt to develop the site will be blighted by the unquiet spirits of Winchester Geese!

The decision was overturned on appeal to the Department of the Environment, though the planning permissions granted have since lapsed.

From this year on, Friends of Crossbones formed as an informal network to work towards the creation of garden on the burial ground.
2004:

The first Crossbones vigil held on the 23rd June.

‘Here lay your hearts, your flowers, your Book of Hours,
Your fingers, your thumbs, your Miss You Mums.
Here hang your hopes, your dreams, your Might Have Beens,
Your locks, your keys, your Mysteries.’
This poem, from The Southwark Mysteries by John Constable, was collectively performed that night and at every vigil since.

The vigil is ‘to renew the shrine and to honour the outcast, dead and alive’ - is held at 7pm on the 23rd of every month.
Cross Bones Graveyard

In medieval times this was an unconsecrated graveyard for prostitutes or 'Winchester Cease'. By the 18th century it had become a paupers' burial ground, which closed in 1853. Here, local people have created a memorial shrine.

The Outcast Dead
R.I.P
Katy Nicholls successfully applies to Southwark’s Cleaner Greener Safer fund for planters with ivy and a bronze plaque for the Crossbones gates.

At the first Halloween of Crossbones, in 1998, a plaque, reputedly made by a local working-girl, was fixed to the wall. It was the first of several unofficial plaques, all of which were removed. This, the first official plaque, can still be seen on the gates.

It bears the image of a rampant goose, a brief description of the Winchester Geese and the paupers who are buried here, and the legend:

‘R.I.P. The Outcast Dead’
ACT 7:
2007:

Friends of Crossbones gain temporary access to the burial ground and create a guerilla Goose Garden. Early that year, John Constable is approached by site security and given a key to the site. On 23rd April, St George’s Day, he leads a procession onto the old burial ground, to conduct a simple blessing and rededication. On 23rd July, Friends clear rubbish and begin planting a wild garden in ground exposed by previous archaeological digs. The following year, public access is denied. However, we successfully campaign to have the graveyard area fenced off from the remainder of the site. The garden continues to be shaped and tended by a mysterious ‘invisible gardener’.
Following our representations, London Assembly Member Valerie Shawcross asks Mayor Boris Johnson ‘to ensure that officers of TfL contact the Friends of Cross Bones Graveyard and start a discussion with them to protect this piece of London’s more interesting past’. We begin discussions with TfL, presenting our proposals for a garden of remembrance.

The Mayor later replies to John Constable, in a letter dated 22nd July 2011, stating that: ‘TfL officers have assured me that they will continue to work with you... in developing their approach for the site and they will be looking for proposals that give recognition to the special cultural and historical importance of the Cross Bones burial ground...’
Southwark Council Community Project Bank pledges £100,000 towards the creation of a Crossbones Garden of Remembrance.

We applied for this funding as part of our ongoing campaign to ensure that any redevelopment of the larger site must protect the burial ground as a memorial garden.

The Council would raise these funds from a future developer’s section 106 contribution.

Meanwhile, a wild garden already flowers in the graveyard. We are now asking the site owners, Transport for London, to allow public access and to work with us towards the creation of the Garden of Remembrance.
Transport for London (TfL) announces that they are seeking a partner to develop the ‘Landmark Court’ site, which includes Crossbones.

Responding to our constructive suggestions, the TfL planning guidelines indicate that:
‘The unconsecrated Crossbones burial ground is located in the southern part of the site. Any development at Landmark Court will need to be sympathetic to its heritage.’

Whilst this does not guarantee the protection of our garden, it is an important step towards TfL recognition that any disturbance of the burial ground would be a public relations disaster.
2012:

Friends of Crossbones in partnership with Bankside Open Spaces Trust present a proposal for a ‘meanwhile garden’ on the site of the burial ground.

There’s already a wild garden on the Crossbones Graveyard area. We’re campaigning for it to be protected from a future development on the remainder of the site, and eventually opened as a public garden of remembrance.

A decision on such a development has already been delayed for several years.

Meanwhile, we propose that the site owners grant access for a community gardening group to tend and improve the existing garden.
Ribbons being printed at Union Press and ....
and displayed.
Acts printed for public access at Crossbones