



THE MAKING OF SUPACELL AT THAMESMEAD



With writer and director Rapman having exhibited his debut feature *Blue Story* at Film London's

[Distributor Slate Days](#) and lead star Calvin Demba (Rodney) being a [Film London Lodestar](#) in 2022 with his film *BabyDolls*, we were excited to see what TV drama *Supacell* had in store for us.

Set and shot in London, the series follows a group of seemingly ordinary people as they unexpectedly develop super powers.

Film London's Winona Navin-Holder went behind the scenes and spoke to Alexandra Healy, Senior Filming Officer at FilmFixer, and Spencer Normington, Supervising Location Manager about their experiences working on this latest Netflix hit. ***Spoiler Alert: this article discusses plot lines from throughout the series.***

Alex, how long did the production film with you at Thamesmead? Was the area used for any particularly notable moments that audiences might recognise?

AH: "*Supacell* spent a lot of time filming at Thamesmead, over a number of months in late 2022 and early 2023. In September 2022 they filmed some of the series most important opening scenes

with us. Including shots of Tazer's (Josh Tedeku) home life with his grandmother, and the pivotal moment where Michael's (Tosin Cole) superpowers are activated for the first time, allowing him to rewind time.

"The production returned the following month to capture a few particularly high-intensity scenes. Including the shots of Michael being threatened and chased through the estate by the Sixer's Gang, and later the moment where a gun is fired at Michael and he discovers he is able to freeze time, stop the bullet and vanish into thin air."

(Josh Tedeku and Mickira Oji at Thamesmead)

Spencer, as Alex mentions, Thamesmead is home to one of the main characters in the show (Tazer). Could you tell us a little about why this location was chosen?

SN: "The specific estate used was one of Rapman's favourite locations. With the invaluable assistance of FilmFixer, we were able to use several resident's flats as filming sites. Rapman truly went above and beyond, even spending an evening with the local residents to share his impressive journey and aspirations for the film industry. Additionally, Steve Dixon, formerly of the Met Police Film Unit, played a crucial role by coordinating with the local intelligence units."



"Ensuring a safe shoot with minimal disruption to residents."

Thamesmead has a long history of supporting film production – why do you think it's such a good location for filming?

AH: "Thamesmead has been architecturally renowned ever since it was built in the 1960s. Filmmakers have always been drawn to how it looks on camera, and the fact it really encapsulates South London."

"Peabody (Housing Association) have been incredibly helpful in supporting Film and TV production ever since they took over management of Thamesmead. Prior to their arrival, there was some mistrust towards the industry from residents, which dated all the way back to the filming of *A Clockwork Orange* in 1971. Peabody were pivotal to working alongside us (FilmFixer) to change the perception residents have towards Film and TV, showing the huge benefits production can have on a local community."

"Peabody have ensured that local residents benefit from filming, with fees

Thamesmead is an iconic location that unmistakably captures the essence of South London



going into their community fund, which helps to support and fund hugely beneficial projects for those living in the Thamesmead area. Over the years Peabody have worked closely with us to help support some brilliant films, TV shows, and music videos, including *Bulletproof* in 2018 and *Black Mirror* in 2024."

SN: "Thamesmead is such an iconic location that unmistakably captures the essence of South London. It was a key spot for Rapman from the beginning of shooting and provides the central hangout for the Tower Boys, the gang headed up by lead character Tazer.



(Calvin Demba as Rodney and Tosin Cole as Michael)

Rapman felt the steps next to the basketball court (pictured) were particularly essential in capturing the Tower Boys life on their estate. We explored numerous locations across London, but none matched the unique appeal of Thamesmead."

There's a really striking scene at the beginning of episode 2, where Tazer and the Tower Boys ride bikes along Rye Lane in Peckham. Can you tell me how that was achieved?

SN: "Achieving this required 12 weeks of dedicated consultations with local businesses, Highways, and FilmFixer."

"We had just once chance to make it happen, managing a very limited stop/go window on Rye Lane. Thanks to seamless coordination with Main Unit Location Services and FilmFixer, we successfully executed three perfectly timed three-minute holds."

AH: "As Spencer says, achieving this was very much a team effort, with considerable planning and consultation throughout the 12 week period. We worked closely with *Supacell's* location team, and various stakeholders within Southwark Council, including the brilliant highways department, for the duration.

"The production put in a lot of work, employing dedicated consultants for local businesses, and was very responsive to any queries from the highways department about shooting on a very busy road in Rye Lane.

"We were extremely happy with how they managed the shoot, and it's been amazing to see the sequence play out on TV."

The series is predominantly shot in South London. Did *Supacell* film any other scenes with you?

AH: "The production did a lot of work in Southwark, and our partners within the council were very supportive of our work there. *Supacell* shot extensively in Peckham and Camberwell, specifically Rye Lane and Walworth Road. As well as numerous travelling scooter shots of Tazer and the Tower Boys going through Peckham Square (next to Peckham Library), which required quite a few night shoots. We also supported filming at Daphanie's Taste of the Caribbean on Peckham High Street for a number of scenes.

(The Tower Boys on Rye Lane)



The production did a wonderful job with getting residents on board during their filming in Southwark, and we really commend the hard work done by the locations team."

Spencer, could you tell us a little bit more about the location research and receiving process for *Supacell*?

SN: "It was always destined to be in South London, as Rapman insisted on it. We did explore other boroughs due to some curfews, and were able to recreate the authentic South London vibe in Ealing, with the wonderful support of the

"West London Film Office. However overall, this is unmistakably a South London production!"

How important do you feel it is in creating a sense of place and atmosphere to use real locations as opposed to green screen or set builds?

SN: "I believe filming on location, when possible, brings a real sense of realism and authenticity."

AH: "I think what sets this series apart from other shows is the research and specificity of the different locations the production chose to represent South London. It really captures the vibe and brings everything to life so vividly – in a way I do not think is possible with a set build or green screen."

SN: "However it's worth noting, that for the large-scale stunts we needed to execute, using a back lot with Lifting Cranes was essential. This allowed us to carry out the stunts in a controlled and safe manner, thanks to an exceptional stunt team."

Alex, how was your overall experience working with the production? Were there any particular challenges within the shoot that you had to overcome, or any particular highlights?



(The back lot used for stunt work)

AH: "The locations team were brilliant to work with across all of our locations in South London – special mentions should go to Spencer, Chris who was a Location Manager and Tobi, assistant Location Manager, for all of their hard work on the series."

"The production had quite a lot of night shoots, which are notoriously difficult to achieve in highly residential areas such as Thamesmead. However the locations team did an amazing job of engaging the locals and getting everyone on side. They were able to achieve the scenes with minimal disruption, which was a

challenge given the action-packed nature of the content!

"Most importantly, training was made available to local residents via Peabody & FilmFixer's [Set Ready Programme](#), which gave residents the opportunity to work on the production. The Set Ready Programme helps to support the next generation of film and TV talent as they take their first steps into production and on to set, and it was great to see it utilised so successfully here."

"*Supacell* were incredibly hands on with offering opportunities to residents. Set Ready and Peabody also worked with the production to help organise a talk Rapman did in Thamesmead, discussing his experiences in Film and TV, and offering insights into routes into the industry.

Spencer, how did you find working with Rapman as a director?

SN: "Rapman was one of the best directors I've ever had the pleasure of working with. His clear vision and determination to achieve his goals were truly inspiring. Whenever we encountered any challenges, he always found a way to make things work, ensuring the highest production value possible. Working with him was an absolute joy."

What was your overall filming experience like at Thamesmead? Were there any particular challenges, or highlights for your team?

SN: "Thamesmead is a vast estate and Rapman is such a renowned figure that it was occasionally challenging to keep the fans at bay. However, Rapman's willingness to engage with the local residents, combined with the fantastic location team, made it a joy to work there. The locals were incredibly

accommodating, and it was fantastic to have aspiring filmmakers from the community assisting us as location marshalls, thanks to the Set Ready training scheme."

Thank you to both Alex and Spencer for chatting with us. You can catch *Supacell* on Netflix now.

Interview by Winona Navin-Holder

Watch the trailer [here](#).

(Writer/Director Rapman)

