

Curl la Tourelle Head Architecture

Social Value Booklet



Empathise and engage

If there's one thing we've learned makes better buildings, it's empathy. Architecture never happens in isolation—and simply by being interested and engaged, we've found it's possible to open up the conversations that connect a scheme to its clients and community.

We ♥ constraints

We believe that the more constraints there are, the better the architecture. If there aren't any constraints, we create them. Challenging sites, existing buildings and complex briefs almost always present incredible opportunities for great design.

Social detail

If a site's constraints guide the bigger design decisions, then it's empathy that informs the smaller, social details. These details frame the human narratives that aren't included in the brief, anticipating specific moments in the users' lives.

Passive future

To limit our environmental impact, we start with what is already there. By manipulating the form and fabric of a building whether new or existing, we can work with the existing conditions of topography, light and orientation, and harness the natural energy sources offered by air, ground and water.

Mud on our boots

Good architecture is as much about what happens on the building site as it is about what's on the drawing board. By working alongside contractors as well as clients we can ring-fence the ideas and details that matter, championing the quality of the building throughout its construction.

Curl la Tourelle Head

Walpole Bay, Margate

On recent, enagement with various coastal towns, Margate is one of England's first seaside resorts; visitors have visited the seaside town from the early 18th century to bathe in the sea for health reasons and more recently for pleasure.

It is home to two tidal pools, both built in 1937 during a period in which the British Seaside was at its height of popularity. Walpole Bay Tidal Pool is a Grade II listed, four-acre tidal pool with freshwater springs. The pool was constructed using interlocking concrete blocks and old tram rails and remains in good condition.

We are currently developing designs to enliven the seafront with new promenade buildings, changing facilities, food outlets and a versatile mixed use community space to improve local health and wellbeing as well as improve the safety and accessibility to the site.





Upgrading historic promenade buildings and public realm

Grade II listed tidal pool

Protecting the local ecology

Improving health and wellbeing along the coast of Margate

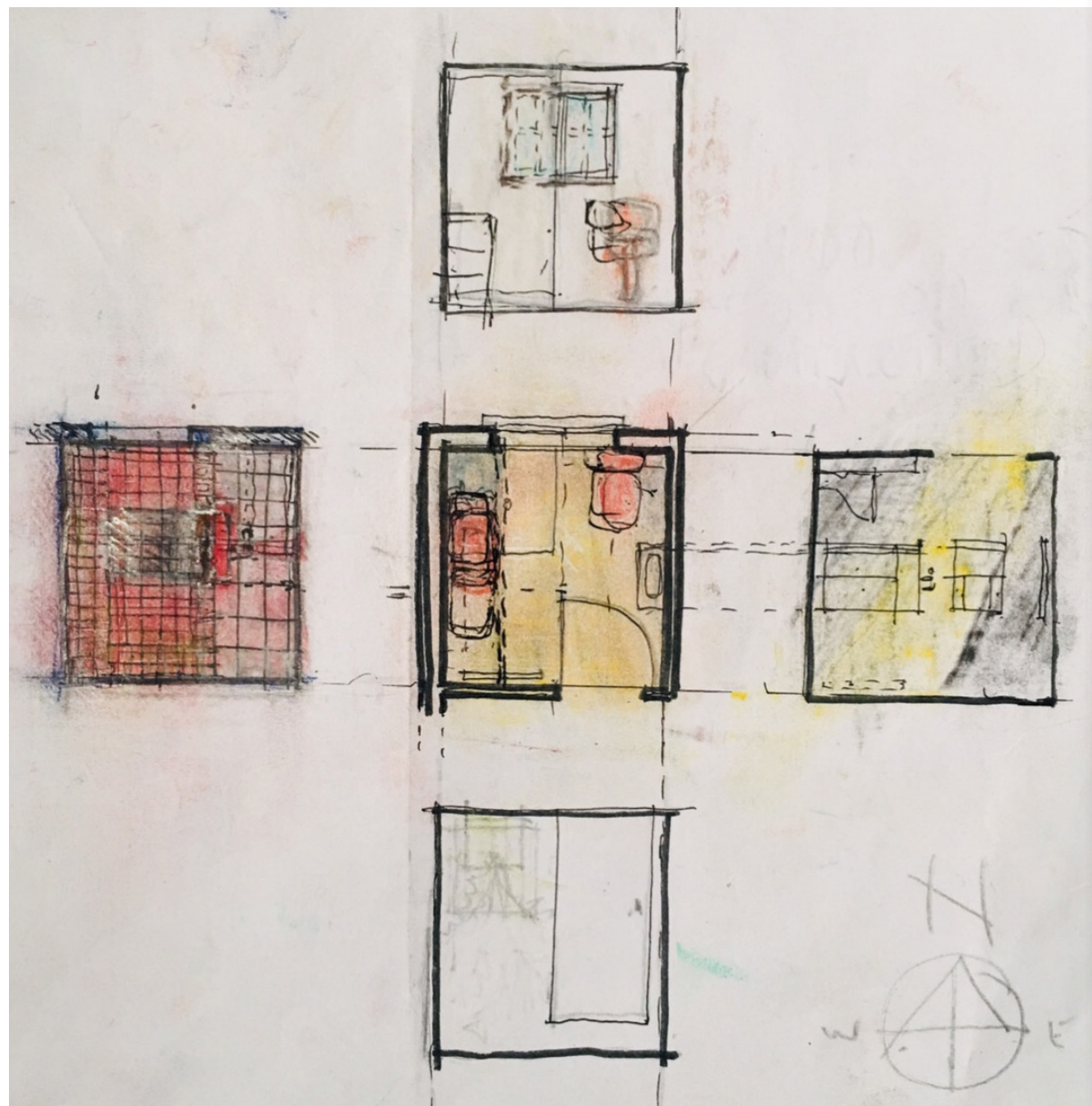
Historic Promenade

Newham Virtual Schools

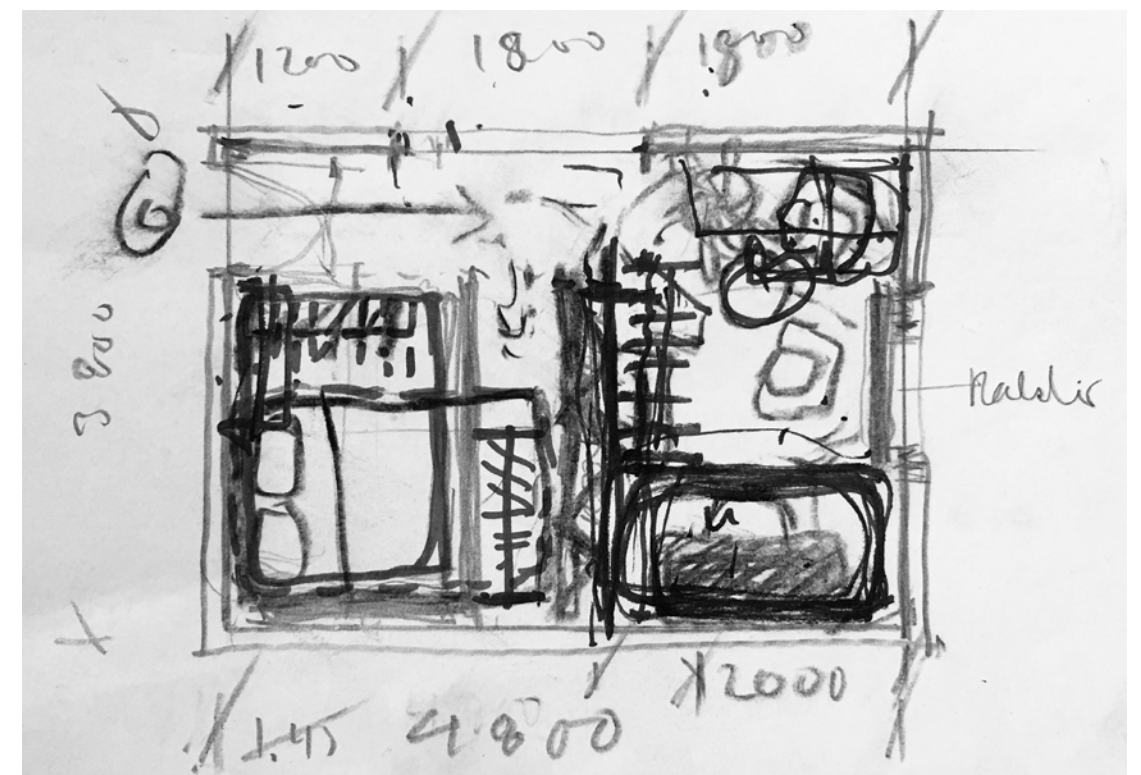
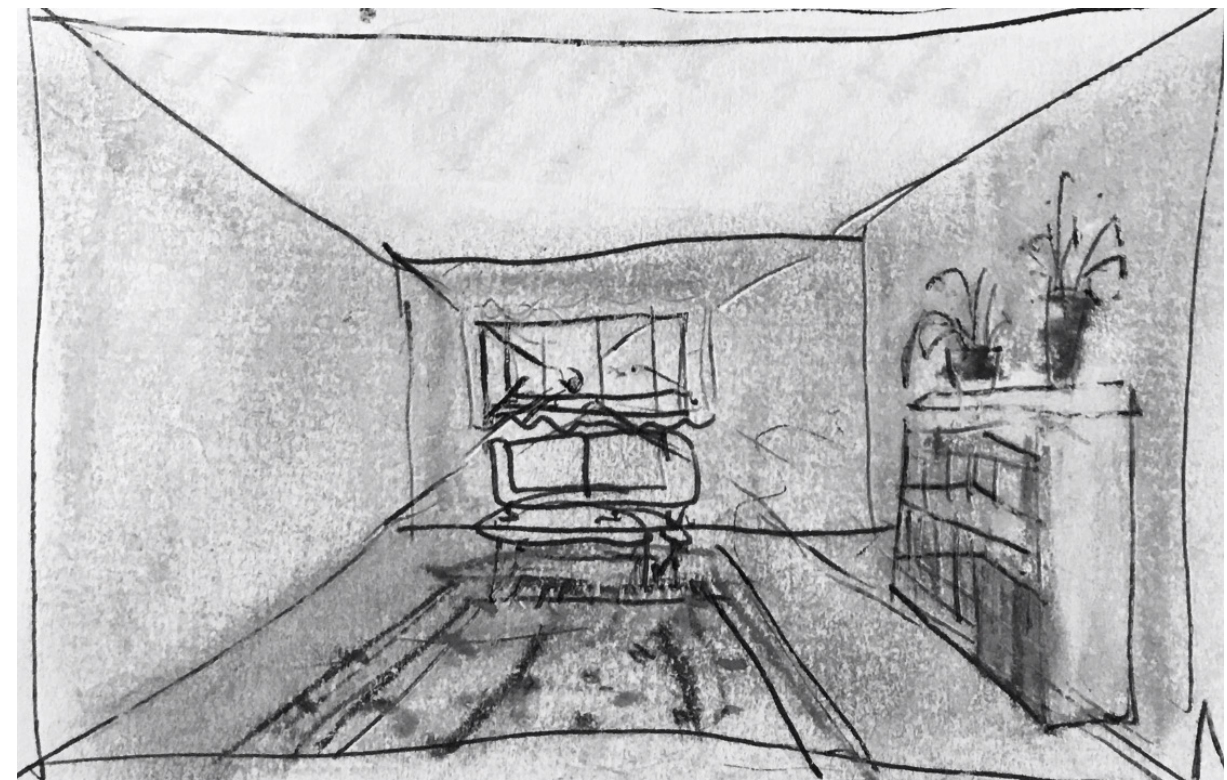
We recently completed an eight weeks programme with the care leavers at Newham Virtual School in London Borough of Newham. Where we explored how participants could best inhabit their flats, most of them having moved in recently.

Starting out with a package of materials and drawing equipment - including high-quality tape measure and the iconic triangular scale ruler. Participants were taught how to measure a particular room in their flat and subsequently draw up scaled plans and elevations. They also studied the existing qualities of their rooms, including materials, colours, textures, and light in particular. This was then made into propositional drawings with focus on the individual participant's ideas and needs.

The weekly sessions provided an opportunity to re-iterate and refine design ideas while providing the participants not only with a design portfolio documenting their work, but also with a range of transferrable skills and life skills to assist their independence.



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 Room studies, light studies
 and measurements taking
 done by participants during
 virtual training.



Gordon Brown Centre

Developing lifelong skills

We collaborated with London Borough of Brent Children and Young People Services to develop design ideas for an Independent Life Skills Centre located in the countryside of Hampshire.

The Gordon Brown Centre (GBC) is an outdoor activity hub covering 25 acres of land run by the London Borough of Brent. The centre serves as a week-long getaway area where temporary accommodation, learning opportunities and a range of activities for children and young people are provided.

The design proposes the development of a short-stay accommodation and workshop area that will offer independent life skills trainings, centred around the ASDAN learning modules and DIY for care leavers. It will also provide respite for vulnerable adolescents in the Borough while increasing the county's offer for young people and families. The design brief also includes development and restoration of various facilities around GBC as well as enhancing the accessibility of GBC as a whole to better suit its growing services.



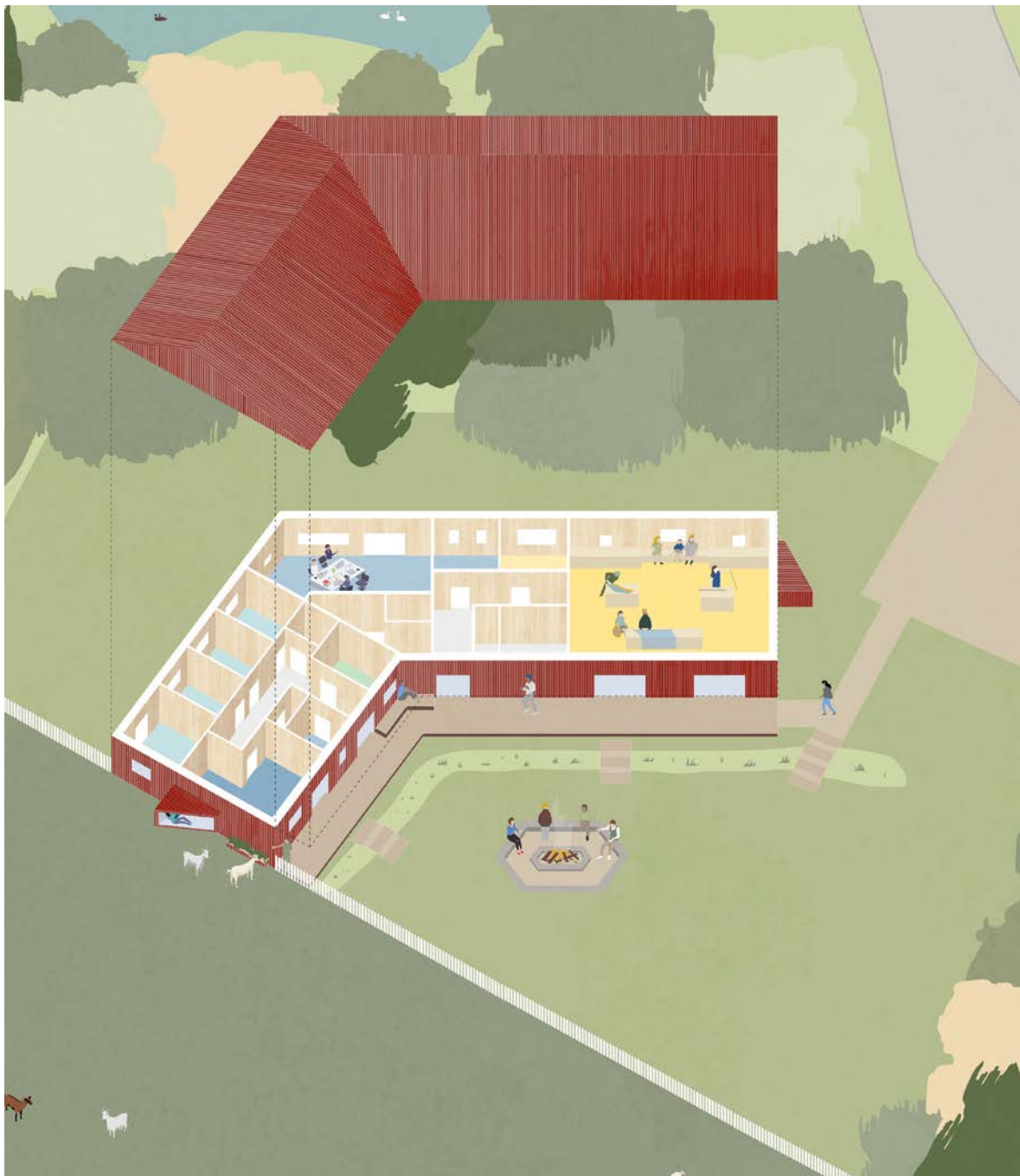
Aerial map showing site location and area for potential development.

- Planning Considerations**
- Site is within the Rotherwick Conservation Area
 - Site is within an Article 4 direction allocation
 - Site is within area of Significant Archaeological Features
 - Site is classed to be within the Grade II* Tylnay Hall Historic Park
 - There are 2 x HSE Consultation zones within the site, indicating major hazards. HSE will need to be consulted as part of any planning applications.

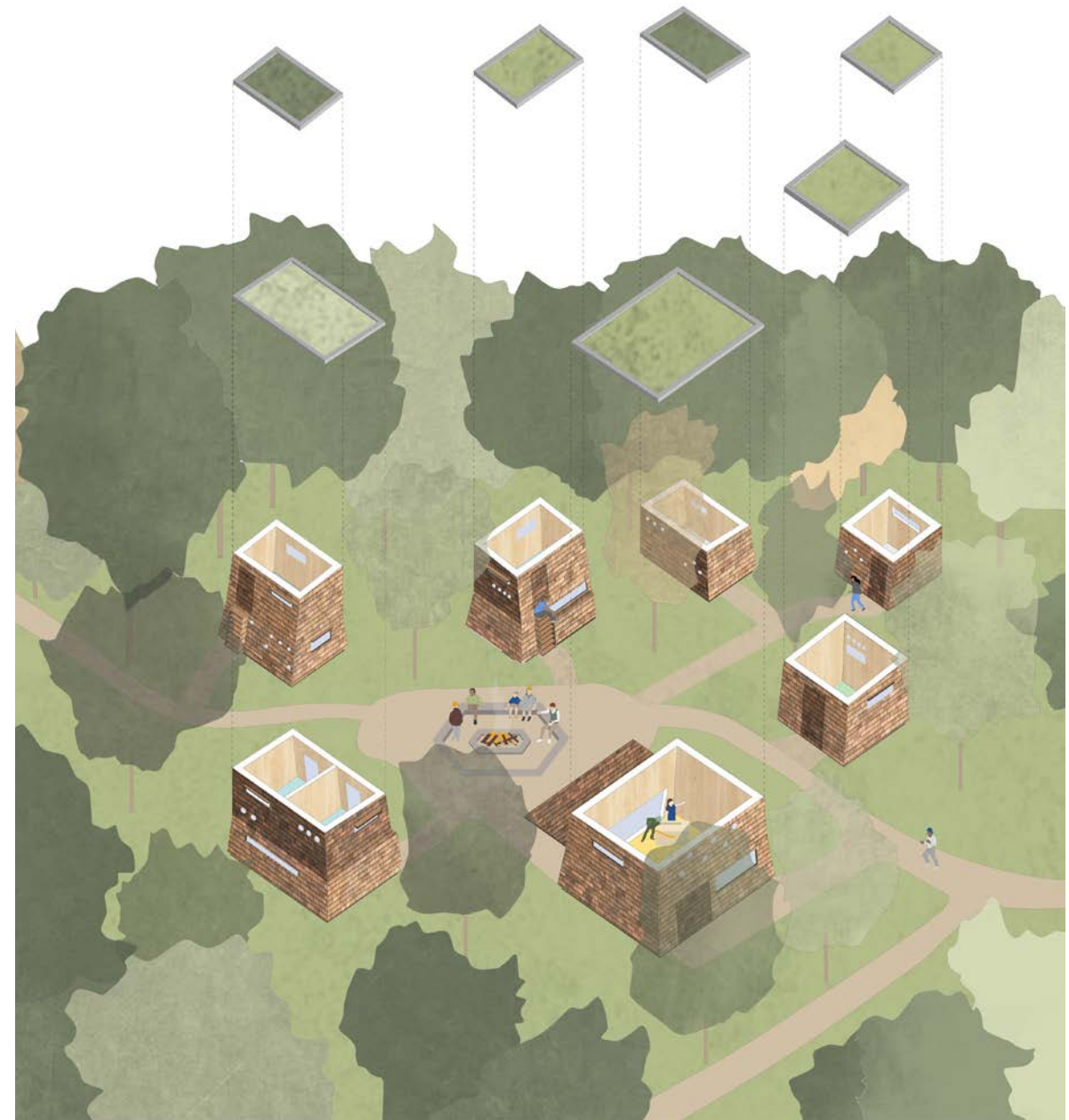


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Aerial map showing
site location and area
for potential
development

- Creating flexible teaching environments
- Interweaving outdoor and indoor spaces
- Connecting with nature
- Outdoor learning



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Design
development study
showing proposal
at the edge of the
farm area.



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Various buildings
housing different
activities and
function, spread out
in the woodland area



←
Artistic illustration
showing chosen
proposal in its
surrounding context.



↑
 Sectional idea
 showing flexibility of
 the building with
 various learning
 activity spaces and
 accomodation area.

Housing for the Homeless

Designing Quality Homes

This scheme consists of the redevelopment of a triangular parcel of land in central Dover which is currently in use as a car park. Dover District Council (DDC) are the freeholder of the site and have instructed Curl la Tourelle Head Architecture (CLTH) to develop proposals for high quality new affordable housing to meet the urgent need for new homes.

The site is located in a prominent and elevated position, overlooking Dover Town centre and a short walk to Dover Priory Train Station. The site is accessed off Military Road and on the southern embankment to Folkestone road. The site is within the Dover settlement boundary and the Town Castle ward.

The client's Brief is to maximise the number of homes on site and to ensure that the proposals combat fuel poverty by adhering to the highest environmental standards through the adoption of The Future Homes Standard. This will ensure performance above the minimum required through Building Regulations alone.

Given the site's proximity to adjacent Conservation Areas and the Grade II listed Alma Hostel, DDC Housing Officers have also specified a building that will 'enhance the local vernacular' and offer a design that will 'provide inspiration to future occupiers', encouraging a sense of ownership and belonging in future occupiers.

The proposal is a linear apartment building placed close to the edge of the adjacent slope down to Folkestone Road, offering views across the town to the North. The length of the scheme is defined between retained trees to East and West of the proposed footprint. External walls are angled to allow for an increased depth in the plan form and to better protect the adjacent root protection areas.

Car parking is arranged to the SW corner of the site and accessed via a short ramp. The ramp also allows for the servicing of an existing substation in the NW corner of the site



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Site axonometric highlighting the area
for the housing development.
↑
Historic etching of the site in 1837.





▲
 Angled facades add interest to the elevation and allows for extended three storey facades to this less sensitive side of the building.



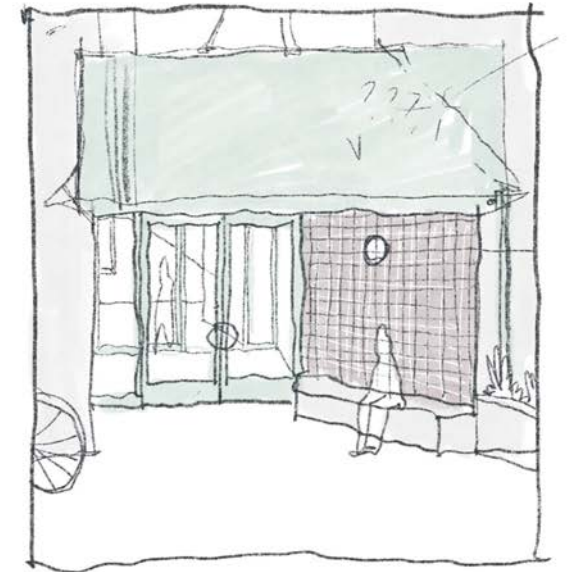
↑
East Elevation facing Worthington Street. The faceted profile turns with balconies extending past the tree line allowing views to and from this corner of the building.



↑
West Elevation, the West facing balconies capture the evening sun and limit enclosure over the path and communal entrance.



↑
Through the balcony and up to Dover
Castle.



↑
Interior view of interiors showing
landscape beyond through window
views.

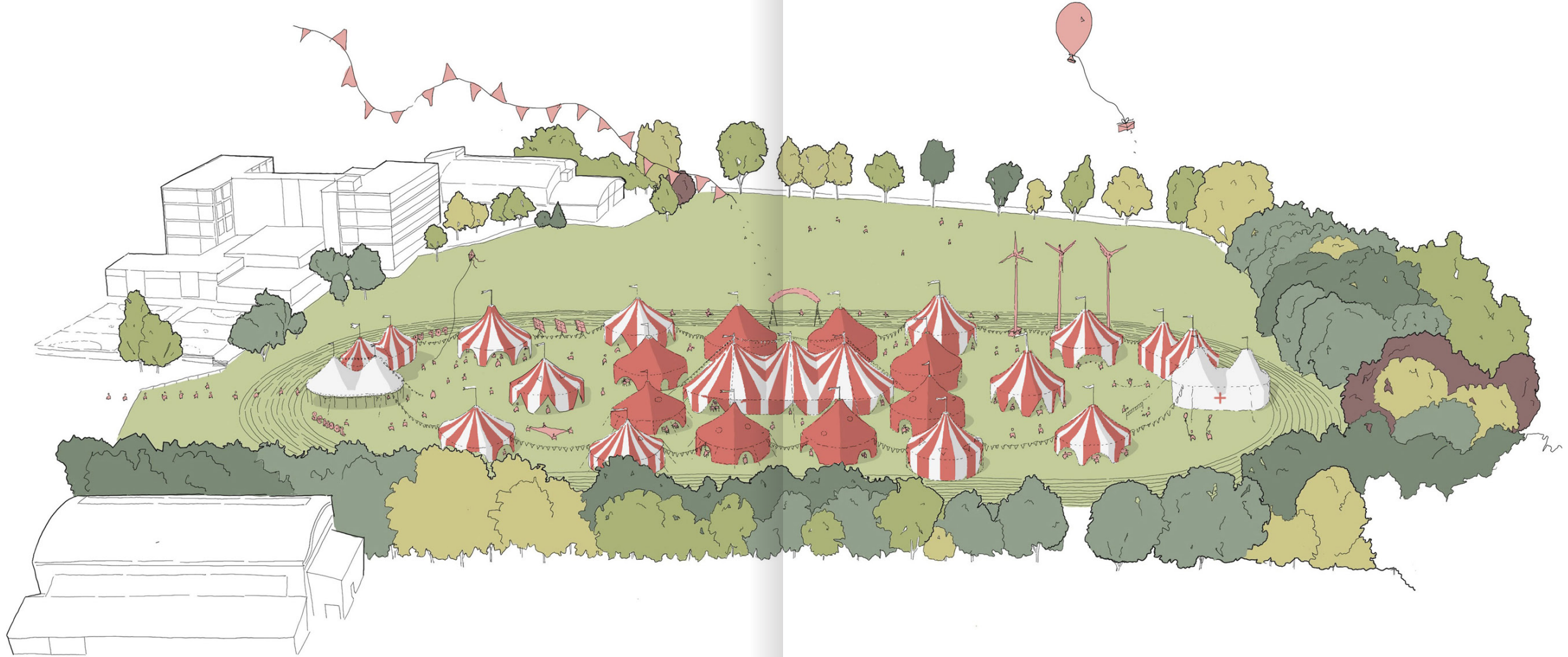
Pop Up Schools Demountable spaces

While the pandemic was causing disruptions to daily life, school activities and everywhere was shut down. We at CLTH sat down at the drawing table to discuss ideas and ways in which we could help mitigate restricted circulation within schools and civic buildings.

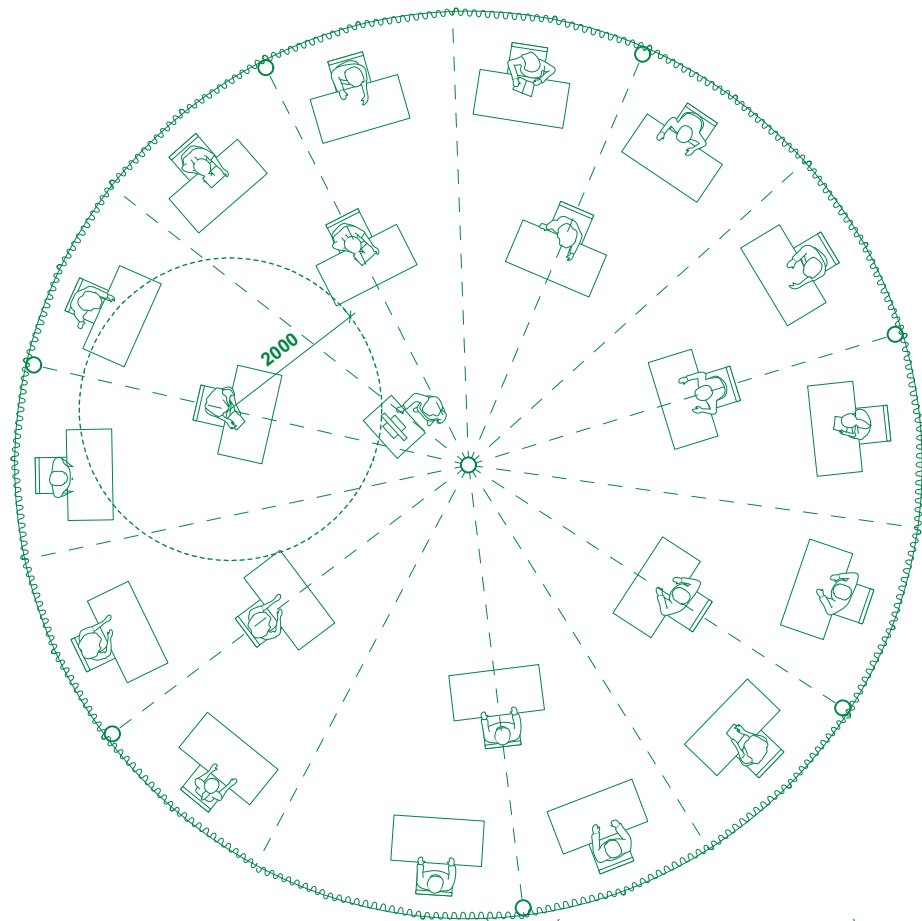
Pop Up Schools is an idea that aimed to address the challenges many schools in the UK and beyond faced when they re-opened. The design proposed a series of tent-like structures each of which was arranged to follow the two metre social distancing rules with the ability to host different classroom setups and activities. The idea tackles difficulties with social distancing among pupils while encouraging clockwise movement within and outside the schools in order to address the circulation issues.

The proposal made use of materials like marquees and portable bathrooms which were dormant during the period of pandemic. Where appropriate, provisions for renewable energy sources were provided on site in form of pv arrays which were used for heating hot water.

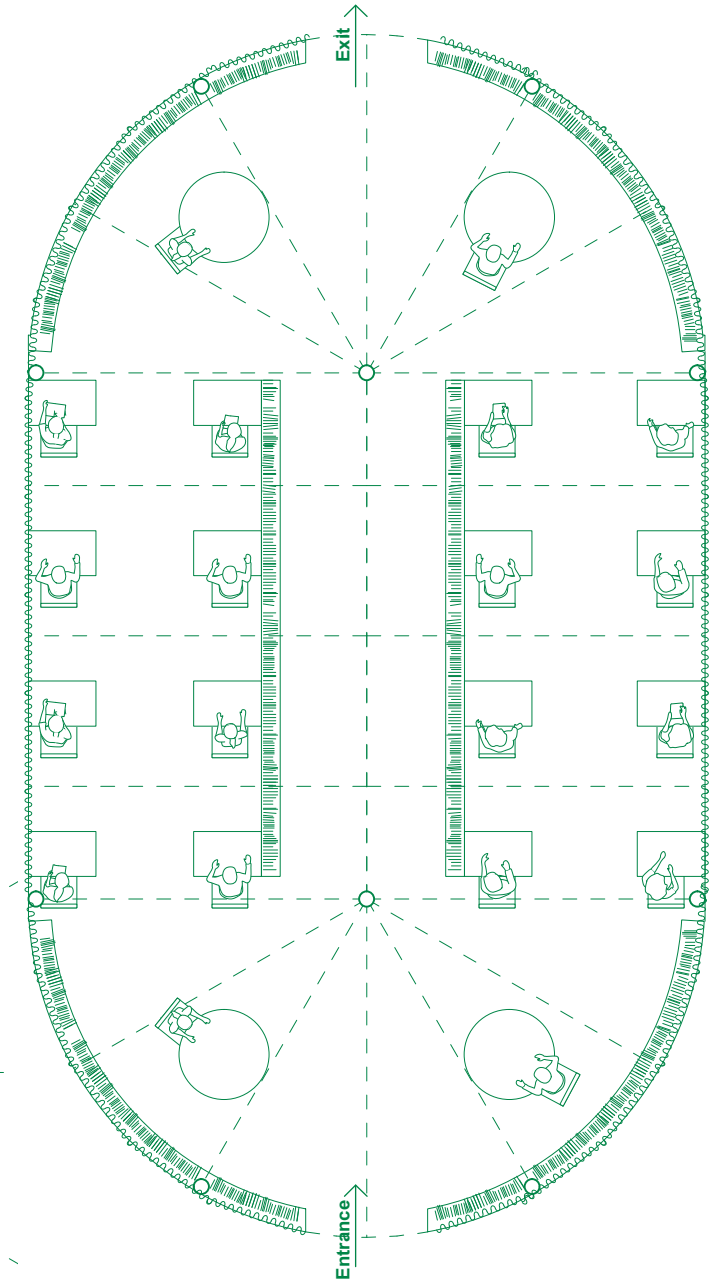
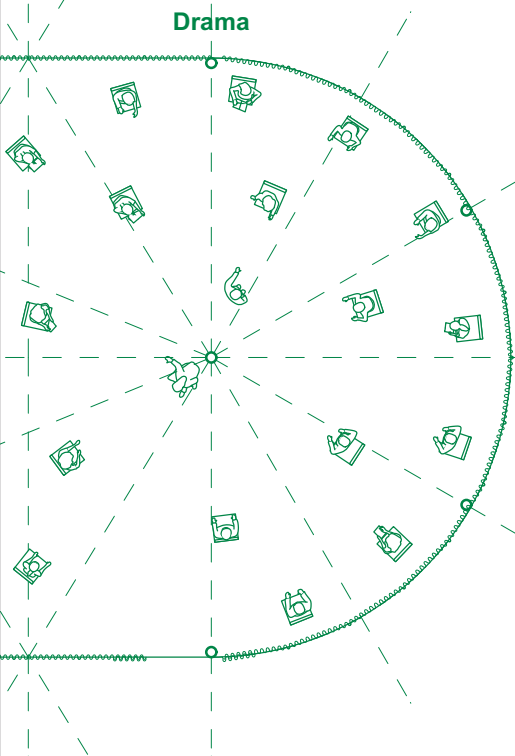
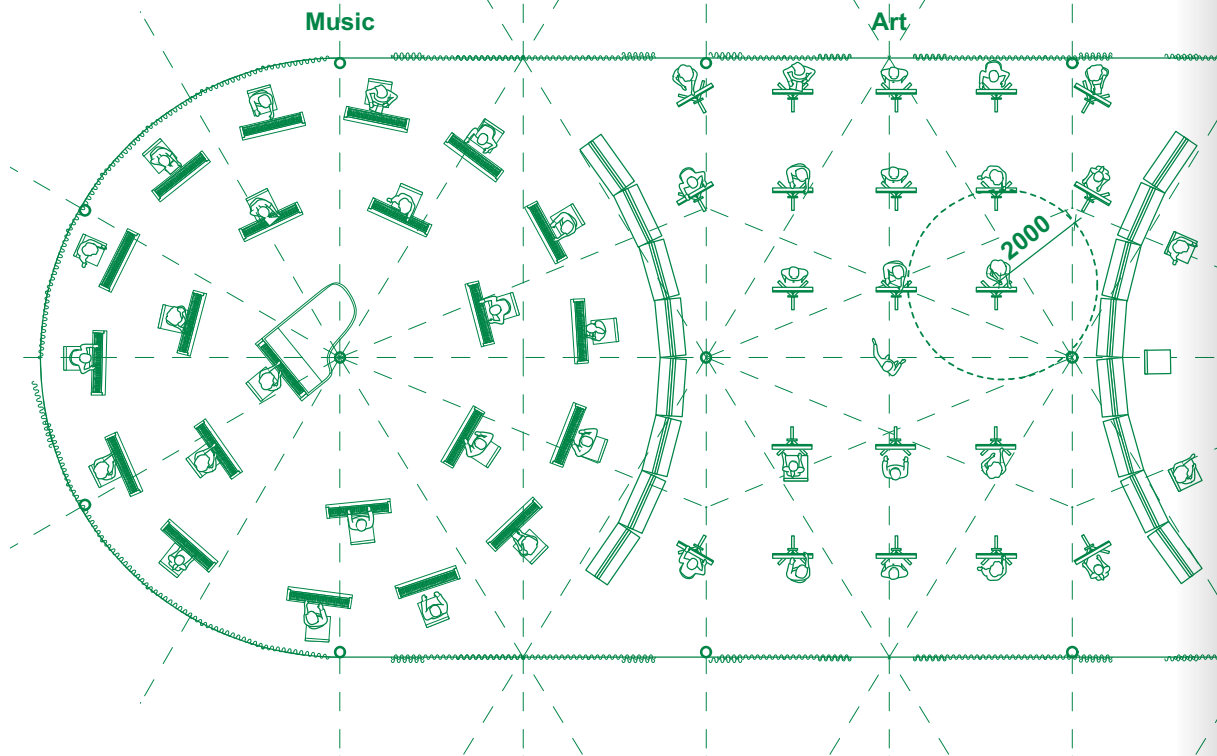
The idea is simple and adaptable and can be used for various outdoor settings from football pitches to pedestrianised areas and neighbourhood parks.



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Tent like
structures setup
in field of
schools.



Plans showing suggestions on how seating could be arranged within tents while compliant with lockdown regulations.







↑
Proposed tents being
used in the fields schools

City Lions -Young People Equipping the future

In line with our core values and interest in making social impact, we initiated a collaborative work with the young people of City Lions a charity based in Westminster working with young people to transform their life through arts and therapy. We directly engaged with a particular group of people, within the age of 13-16 year old.

In an online evening talk we presented the practice's recent work which quickly led the young participants to ask questions about construction techniques, functionality, environment and architectural education. The evening was embellished with a quiz about our Revitalise Peckham Rye project and also some quick drawing exercises to gradually introduce the next step of the project.

This led to planned walks around Westminster, visits to the BBC and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) with students drawing, observing and identifying buildings on the walk





Sutton Social Housing Back to Front

This project was born out of a relationship with the London Borough of Sutton that has lasted several decades, and includes our design for the Sutton Life Centre (a multi-purpose community building), primary schools and refurbishments. Looking to use their land more effectively to meet an increased need for housing, and responding to Policy H2 in the London Plan recommending the use of small brownfield sites to reduce the impact on greenfield ones, Sutton had identified a number of opportunities for infill development. Often occupied by rundown garages, many of the sites were hidden in inhospitable places, but had a variety of interesting contextual conditions. Our brief—following a short competition—was to carry out a study to explore the potential of these ‘blind spots’ for development.

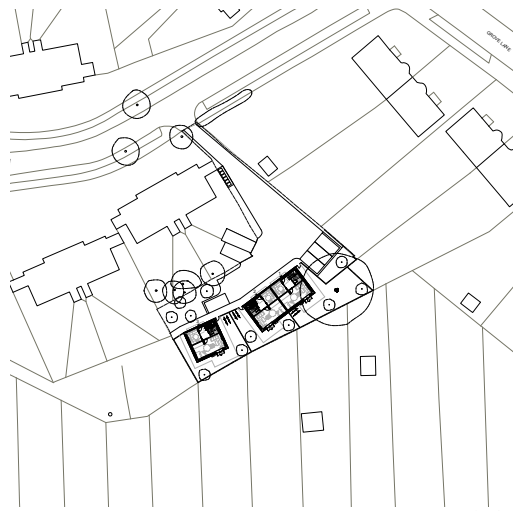
We visited nine very different sites during our research. Some were tucked behind high street shops or occupied an unbuilt gap in a residential row; others were interstitial areas on the edges of estates or unused plots backing onto neighbouring gardens. Rather than working remotely, we spent time at all of them, making sketches, talking to dog walkers and other passers-by, and looking in particular at the green amenities available.

Our study set out ideas for 44 new homes across the nine locations. We treated the projects as a family, developing a standardised palette of layouts and materials, and offered the potential for them to be constructed as a modular or panellised kit of parts offsite. The design principles were informed by the ‘Good Quality Homes for All Londoners’ supplementary planning guidance which sits alongside the London Plan. Most have the character of a traditional two-up, two-down and are built in high quality handmade brick, with pitched roofs and recognisable chimneys. Throughout, we tried to hold on to the general amenity, the smallest moves that make the biggest difference to everyday lives. Stair cores have natural light, the large windows in the main living rooms are oriented for the best aspect at certain times of day, balconies are generous and hallways wide enough to bring the buggy in.



Sutton Social Housing

Back to Front



Early sections exploring the contextual conditions of specific sites. Some were small and only offered the opportunity to construct a couple of new homes; others had space for larger-scale housing with multiple units.



Ground floor plans and views of sites within showing a range of contextual conditions.



This environmental section shows our early intent to build with a cross-laminated timber (CLT) frame, giving a natural, almost Scandinavian, quality to the inside spaces. The distinctive chimneys respond to the suburban location and also assist with the passive ventilation of the homes.

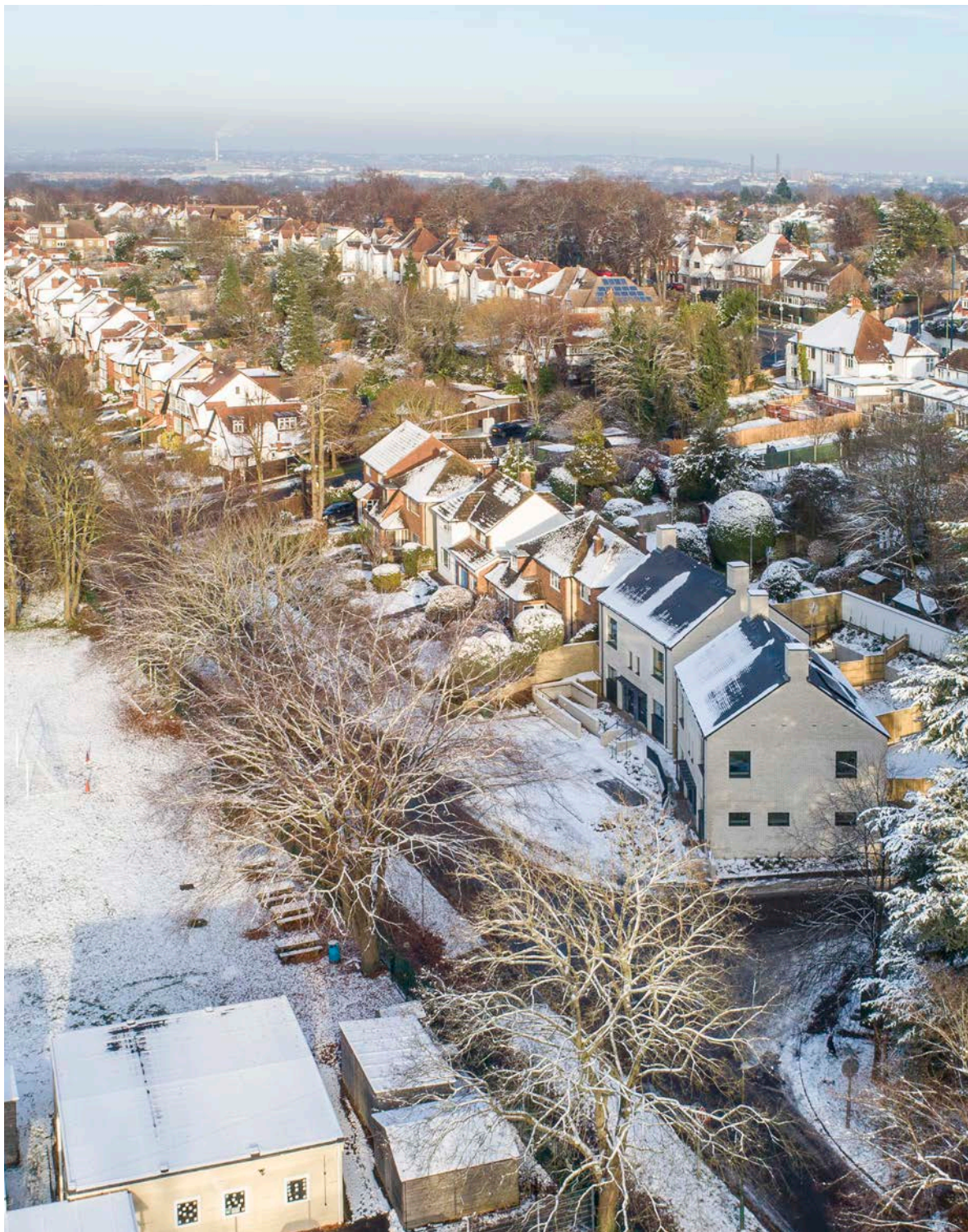




Some aspects of the design and detailing are common across all the sites. These elevations show how a familiar pitched-roof form is applied on both single-family and multiple-unit housing.



Axometric image showing proposal in context. The decision to use familiar forms and pitched roof similar to those of the surrounding context pays.



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The homes on this site are cranked away from one another to look out onto an existing tree, taking full advantage of the local landscape.

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This site had a tough urban setting behind some garages, so we gave the homes walled gardens to offer sanctuary and safety.



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 Guided by the idea of home
 as a refuge, we took
 particular care in detailing
 the arrival sequence
 whatever the scale, giving
 residents shelter as they
 approach their front door.





Brent Urban Farm and Liveable Space

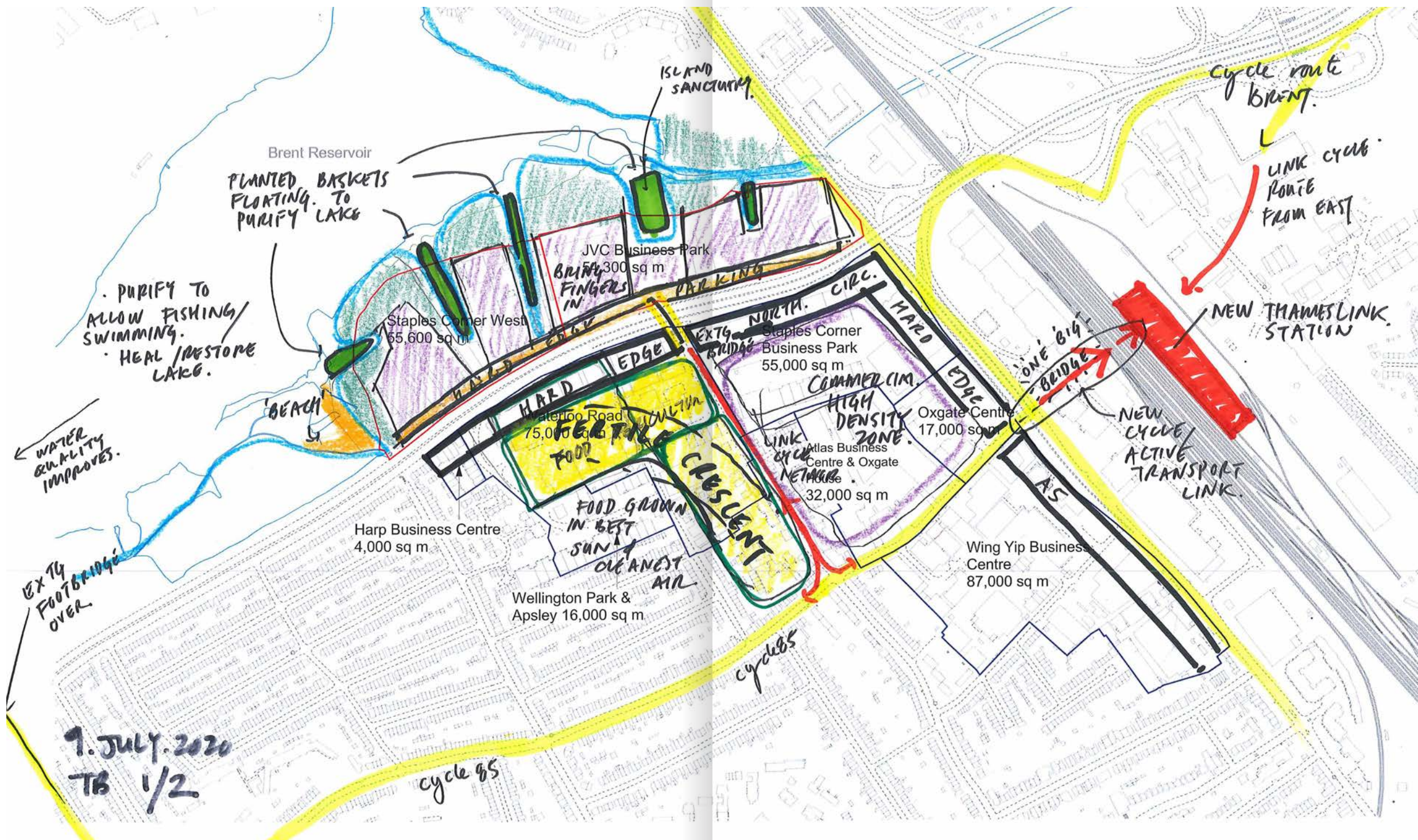
Home grown

The area around Staples Corner in north-west London, where the North Circular meets the M1 motorway, is a particularly Bollardian landscape of flyovers and industrial sheds. Straddling the main road, the cluster of sheds—many of them now redundant—blocks access to the Welsh Harp (or Brent) Reservoir from a large grid of interwar suburbs to the south. We were approached by the London Borough of Brent to produce a study into how the area could be redeveloped. As Strategic Industrial Land (SIL), the industrial base had to be retained, but their aim was to reinvigorate it in a more sustainable way, as well as introducing new housing and improved connections across the neighbourhood.

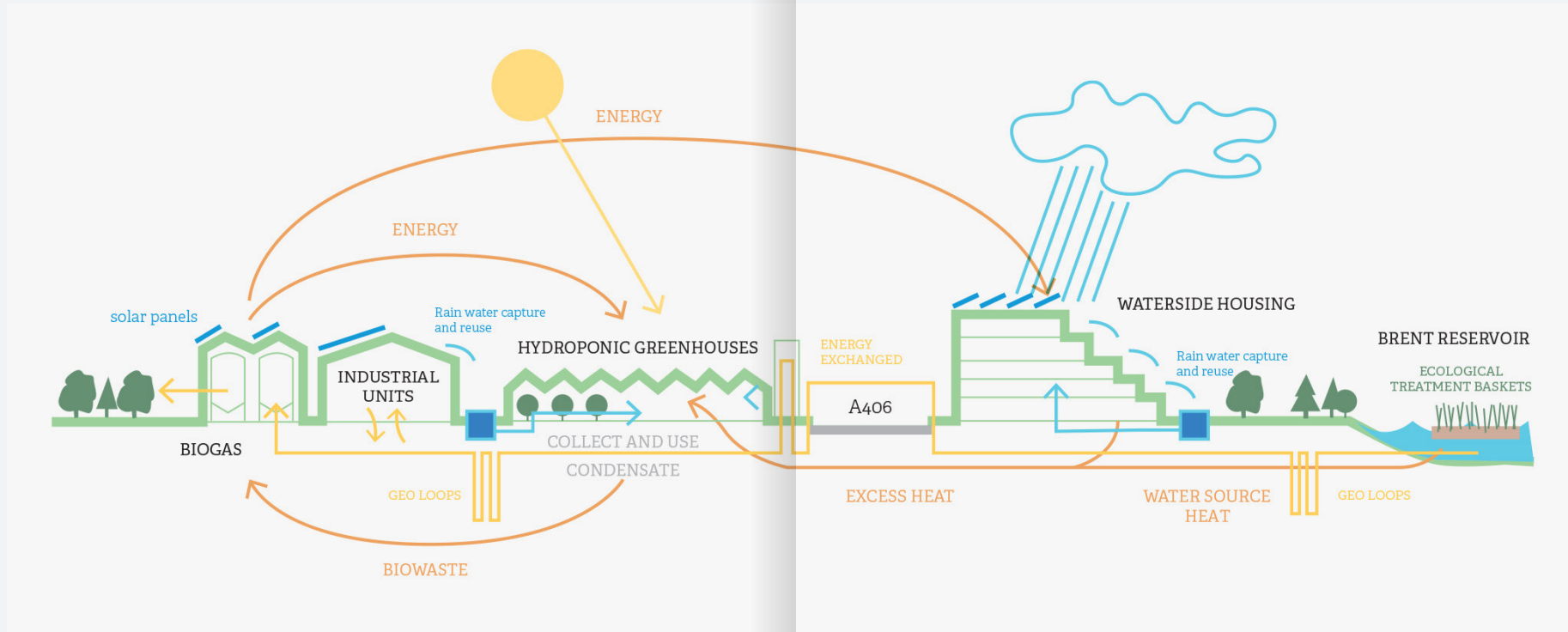
We began by looking at the economic activity that had historically taken place in the area. Much of this was food production, increasingly targeted towards the aviation industry at nearby Heathrow. In an attempt to decarbonise the site and reallocate it to green industry, we worked with The Ecoponics Group, experts in aquaponics, to look at how more environmentally friendly food growing businesses could be located here. As a result, our masterplan proposes an urban farm that could become the UK's first major centre for hydroponic and aquaponic farming, our projections showing that potentially all of Brent's residents could be fed each day with fresh vegetables grown within the borough. Hydroponics would colonise the site on a large scale, the buildings taking an industrial greenhouse aesthetic, accompanied by a centre for agricultural training.

The residential elements of the scheme take full advantage of the benefits offered by waterside living on the fringe of the reservoir, new bridge connections removing the focus from the busy roads that currently fragment the neighbourhood. Our design code suggests the residential blocks would be clad with brick to give a more domestic feel, and—in line with the scheme's environmental ambition—have a cross-laminated timber structure. They would have passive environmental systems, sharing an energy recovery system with the greenhouses and aquaponics facilities.

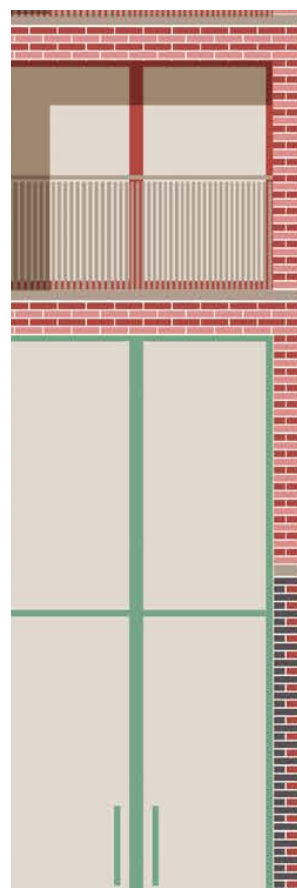
The scheme shows how civic values—of wellness, sustainability, education and work—can be applied to urban development, all criteria in the project's successful shortlisting for the NLA Awards in 2020. It marks a shift away from automotive priority to a better pedestrian experience, with the restoration and improvement of public realm central to the masterplan.



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First sketch to exploring
the contextual
opportunities and
constraints offered by the
site.



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Environmental section developed in collaboration with Professor Trevor Butler, a specialist in sustainability, water systems and hydro-ponics. Industrial units, hydroponic greenhouses, waterside housing and natural resources are harnessed into an energy and food system with minimal waste and optimum efficiency.



↑
Entrances to the various residential and agricultural spaces alternate with small shops and food outlets at street level. Also see elevation overleaf.



↑
Elevation overlooking lock, showing greenhouses placed on the rooftops of the lower-rise residential blocks to mix in different uses and materials.

PLANNING
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