



# CROYDON NORTH END QUARTER

## MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

December 2024

# Contents

<b>WHAT IS THE NORTH END QUARTER MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK?</b> .....	4
How to read this document .....	5
<b>SETTING THE SCENE – WHAT IS THE MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK?</b> .....	7
What makes Croydon? .....	8
Croydon’s rich mix of people .....	10
Energy of youth .....	12
Spirit of enterprise .....	14
Creative magnetism .....	16
A strategic hub .....	18
Reconnecting Croydon and unlocking value .....	20
Public engagement .....	22
A new centre for Croydon .....	24
The momentum for change .....	25
Ambitions .....	26
Planning policy guidance .....	28
Land ownership .....	29
Historic roots .....	30
A constant retail innovator .....	32
<b>FRAMEWORK ELEMENTS – WHY THE FRAMEWORK IS LIKE IT IS</b> .....	35
Connecting East Croydon through to North End and Old Town .....	36
Breathing new life into North End .....	38
Respecting its historic past .....	40
Wellesley Road softened, humanized, outward looking .....	42
Stitching into existing streets and routes .....	44
A careful approach to demolition and retention .....	46
A revitalized metropolitan town centre .....	48
A range of new public spaces .....	50
Respecting and enhancing natural assets .....	52
A new residential community .....	54
<b>AIMS AND PRINCIPLES – HOW THE FRAMEWORK WILL BE DELIVERED</b> .....	57
1.0 Deliver place-led change .....	60
2.0 Create a more permeable public realm network of streets and spaces .....	78
3.0 Celebrate local identity and its setting .....	94
4.0 Curate and deliver an appropriate mix of uses .....	102
5.0 Address scale in a contextual way .....	110
6.0 Placemaking which responds to the NEQ’s unique and varied character .....	118
7.0 A mix of high quality homes .....	130
8.0 Strengthen biodiversity and green infrastructure .....	132
9.0 Vehicular movement, servicing and parking .....	134
10.0 A resilient and sustainable Croydon .....	140

The content of the Masterplan Framework has been produced by Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield (URW) and a specialist consultant team including:

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# What is the North End Quarter Masterplan Framework?

This Masterplan Framework (“MF”) has been prepared by Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield (URW) in collaboration with Croydon Council to help promote and steer the long-term regeneration and transformation of the North End Quarter (NEQ) in Croydon.

Situated at the heart of both Croydon town centre and the wider Croydon Opportunity Area, the NEQ has been earmarked for radical transformation for some time. In recent years, approvals for major redevelopment proposals have been secured but not implemented. Compounded by changing retail habits, this has contributed to an uncertain future for the town centre’s two primary shopping centres and North End. The result has been the gradual decline of the town centre with steadily decreasing levels of investment.

This uncertainty reflects the increasingly turbulent nature of retail and town centre economics. With the growth of on-line retailing and the demise of major high street names, town centres and high streets across the country have been under increasingly intense strain.

The COVID pandemic was a powerful catalyst, further accelerating the pace of change. Post-COVID and recessionary challenges, combined with multi-faceted local public health and social inequality issues compound these uncertainties.



Photos: LCA

*The message is clear: Croydon is ready for positive change, and the North End Quarter Masterplan Framework provides a roadmap for delivery*

## How to read this document

This Masterplan Framework will help to guide and direct change and investment within the NEQ over the next 10-15 years. It provides an area-wide framework within which phased and managed change can be delivered. The framework is strategic in nature and is therefore inherently flexible. However, each key element of this framework is fundamental to the successful transformation of the NEQ.

This Masterplan Framework has three key parts, as follows:

- **Setting the scene - WHAT** is the Masterplan Framework? This provides an overview of Croydon’s social, economic and environmental context within which the Framework is set. Transformation of the NEQ must respond to Croydon’s unique characteristics – it must take the best of Croydon and make it better.
- **Framework elements - WHY** the Framework is like it is: The Masterplan Framework emerges through a series of key moves, each of which respond to an understanding of, and response to, the wide range of issues and opportunities presented by the NEQ.
- **Aims and principles - HOW** the Framework will be delivered: Within the context of a physical framework, aims and principles relating to connectivity, environmental quality, land uses and activities, heritage, biodiversity, sustainability and resilience are outlined.

The MF responds directly to the emerging Local Plan policy context which sets the aspirations for transformational changes across the NEQ.

The case for radical and transformative change is therefore a compelling one. Croydon town centre is the largest Metropolitan Centre in London, but with vacancy levels continuing to increase, the structure and format of the town centre is in need of urgent review.

First opening in stages between 1968 and 1970, the Whitgift Shopping Centre has become a symbol and physical manifestation of an outdated town centre format. However, with the Whitgift Centre alone covering an area of approximately 7 Ha, the site and wider 20 Ha NEQ area present huge opportunities for the town to evolve, reform, reposition and go further than before.

This MF responds directly to the policy framework and priorities outlined in the emerging Croydon Local Plan and most particularly the NEQ Transformation Area. The MF is intended to be a flexible yet ambitious document which sets out the key parameters

and principles to facilitate the long-term transformation of a critical part of Croydon Town Centre.

Once endorsed, the MF will act as a material consideration and inform the preparation of future planning applications, with the supporting imagery/plans being indicative. The approval process for any future planning applications is as follows:

- **Stage 1:** Masterplan Framework endorsed by the Council
- **Stage 2:** Design Proposals and further masterplanning work progressed and aligned with MF written principles
- **Stage 3:** Phased planning application considered against Development Plan and MF written principles
- **Stage 4:** Phased planning permission granted
- **Stage 5:** Development delivered

WHAT

WHY

HOW

### **Setting the scene - WHAT is the Masterplan Framework?**

This introductory section explains WHAT the Masterplan Framework is and provides an outline of the context within which the Framework has been prepared. A series of overarching ambitions is established, each of which is specific to the North End Quarter (NEQ) and the role it plays in Croydon town centre. In reviewing the Framework's socio-economic context - its socio-economic composition, its young population, its cultural creativity, its strategic location, its heritage and its role as a pioneer in retail innovation and the experience economy - an overview of the particular characteristics of Croydon which will underpin the NEQ's long-term transformation is outlined. The section also contains a summary of the feedback received during public and stakeholder engagement undertaken during the preparation of the Framework.



# What makes Croydon?

**Croydon is London's largest and most diverse borough<sup>1</sup>. Its people create a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. Croydon's people are hardworking and pioneers of innovation.**

Croydon is home to anchor and market-leading institutions including the renowned BRIT School, Crystal Palace FC, government organisations, Superdrug headquarters, and major service centres for multi-disciplinary engineering practices Mott MacDonald and AECOM. These operate alongside a growing hospitality sector, cultural heritage sectors and pioneering digital and creative industries. Croydon is a place with a unique back-story and a proud social and cultural history. It is a place of energy, creativity, diverse cultures, and big ideas.

Croydon town centre is poised for major transformation - another exciting chapter in its evolution. This will build on Croydon's Metropolitan Centre status and the regeneration ambition underpinning the Croydon Opportunity Area Planning Framework.

The town centre now comprises a mix of historic, post-war and modern development accommodating a range of residential, retail and commercial uses. This includes the recent delivery of Ten Degrees (delivered by Greystar), the adjacent Enclave development, Saffron Square (delivered by Berkeley Group) and Queens Quarter (a collaboration between HUB and Bridges Fund Management).



<sup>1</sup> ICS Annual Report, Croydon Borough Council (2024)



# Croydon's rich mix of people

**Croydon has a vibrant town centre which supports Croydon's local and wider population.**

The town centre has an ethnically and economically diverse population and wider catchment. The area is more diverse than both the rest of the borough and London as a whole, with over 50.7% of the residents born outside of the UK and 25.8% of households in the NEQ's Fairfield ward partially or fully made up of people who do not count English as their main language<sup>1</sup>. This diversity is fundamental to Croydon's identity.

The town centre sits between lower income neighbourhoods to the north and more affluent areas to the south and east. Most of the wider area falls within the 30% of most deprived neighbourhoods in England and Wales, with significant pockets of deprivation to the north of the NEQ area<sup>2</sup>.

Croydon's diversity means that its transformation must address a complex and multifaceted series of needs, issues and opportunities.

# 390,700

## RESIDENTS MAKES CROYDON LONDON'S MOST POPULOUS BOROUGH<sup>3</sup>

### Championing Croydon's diversity at NEQ:

The NEQ will be strongly informed by local community needs alongside commercial and economic drivers. It will serve and amplify the diverse cultures in Croydon. It will also be inviting to new residents, workers and visitors. It will focus on those who live here now, those who will come to live here in the future and will consider the future needs of its local and wider adjacent communities.



Photos: LCA, URW and LBC

<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics (2021)  
<sup>2</sup> London Borough of Croydon (2024)  
<sup>3</sup> Office for National Statistics (2021)



# Energy of youth

**Croydon is known for its progressive youth culture which contributes significantly to the borough's identity.**

Croydon is a young borough with almost a quarter (25%) of its population under the age of 19 years. It has the largest number of under 18 year olds compared to other boroughs<sup>1</sup>. This is reflected in the local area with nearly 60% of the population of the Fairfield Ward under the age of 34 years. Croydon town centre saw most growth in the 25-34 year and 35-49 year age categories between 2011 and 2021.

Alongside a youthful resident population, there is also a high concentration of students. Many of these students are from London South Bank University in Croydon, which trains approximately 500 nurses a year, and from Croydon College, which is attended by over 15,000 students, making it one of the country's largest further and higher education providers<sup>2</sup>.

## Championing young people in the NEQ:

Ignite partnerships and foster inclusion for young people. Invite them into the design and planning process. Listen to their ideas and make sure the masterplan delivers what Croydon's young people want to see. Encourage opportunity and growth for young people in work, play, wellbeing and housing.

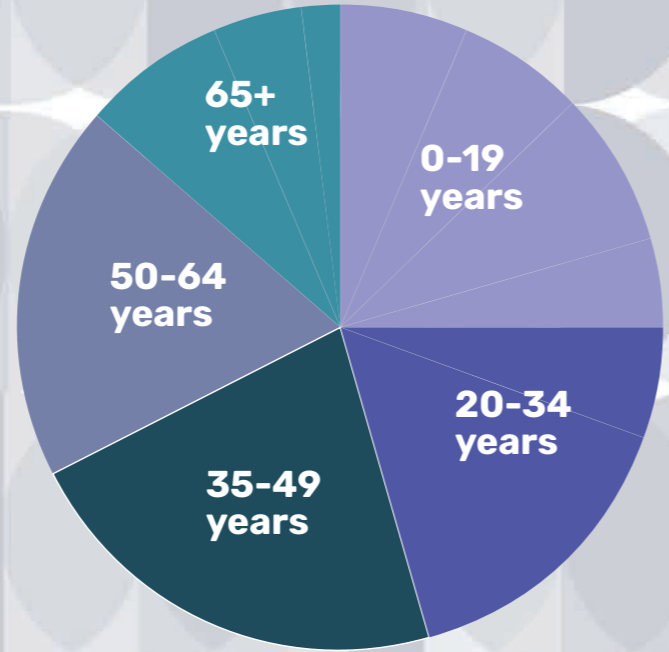


Fig 2 Age demographic breakdown (source: ONS, 2021)

**“This isn’t just about creating something for now, but for generations to come.”**  
From stakeholder interviews



Photos: LCA, URW and LBC

<sup>1</sup> Croydon Youth Safety Plan, London Borough of Croydon, 2023  
<sup>2</sup> OCN London



# Spirit of enterprise

**Strategically located within South London, Croydon is a transportation hub and economic powerhouse. It boasts a diverse economy with key strengths in retail, finance, and the arts. Croydon is a town ready to embrace the future.**

Croydon has a staggering number of small businesses. Over 40% of the registered businesses have a single employee highlighting the entrepreneurial spirit of its local communities.

Innovation and co-working hubs and shared workspaces are crucial for these small businesses. Services such as Start Up Croydon, Impact Croydon, Croydon Council's Business Bootcamps and LSBU React Innovation Centre all provide supportive networks to help drive and encourage innovative and scalable solutions to a number of tech, retail, healthcare and start-up businesses and entrepreneurs.

## Championing productivity at NEQ:

Work with existing employers to understand both their current and their potential future workspace needs and requirements. It will be important to have conversations with workers, employees and business owners to discuss and understand their ideas for future work environments.



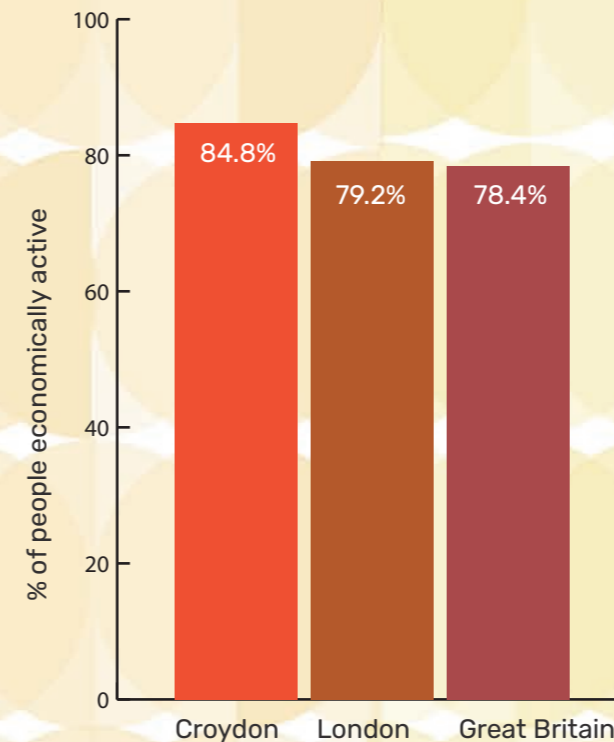
Glowpretty is a Croydon-based vegan skincare and cosmetics brand. In 2023, Glowpretty was named as one of the UK's top 100 small businesses.



The REACT Innovation Centre at London South Bank University Croydon focuses on delivering innovative and scalable solution to real challenges being faced within niche healthcare/tech, energy, sustainability and smart manufacturing markets.



Monty Bojangles was born in Croydon and is now a hugely successful confectionery business worth £10million. The business is a huge supporter of Croydon charities including Home-Start Croydon.



**1080**  
of registered businesses in Croydon are small or medium

Croydon has exceptionally high % of people who are economically active - proportionally higher than both London and Great Britain as a whole.



# Creative magnetism

## Croydon is a place with a rich and exciting creative community.

With a proud musical history, Croydon was at the heart of the punk rock scene in the 1970s, and the birthplace of Dubstep in the early 2000s. BRIT School is the UK's leading free performing and creative arts school, drawing exceptional young creative talents from throughout the country to live, learn and perform in Croydon.

There are a number of community initiatives which currently occupy retail units in the town centre. These include Turf Projects, a community arts project aiming to activate under-used public spaces in central Croydon by putting on exhibitions, workshops and providing local artists with space, resources and a creative community.

In 2023 the Borough was designated as the London Borough of Culture. Its 'This is Croydon' programme celebrated local culture, talents and communities.

Croydon is home to a number of diverse arts and

culture venues, including Fairfield Halls which is South London's largest arts centre, hosting theatre, concerts, comedy, gigs, dance and more; Stanley Arts which is a inclusive space seeking to bring to the foreground under-represented voices, providing artists of colour and LGBTQ+ creatives with a platform; and Croydon Clocktower.

Croydon has a rich history of creative residents, including Stormzy, Amy Winehouse, Adele, Noel Fielding, Tom Holland, Tracey Emin and JB Gill and many more.

### Championing creativity at NEQ:

Develop and nurture creativity in the NEQ. Make it an inspiring place for creativity to form, happen and evolve. Create space for creative people and events.

**"Establish pop-up shops, artist studios, and co-working spaces in vacant buildings. Consider rotating art pop-ups to attract visitors and make Croydon an art destination."**

Stakeholder feedback



Street art across the town showcases local talent  
c. LCA



Turf Projects - community arts space aiming to make the planning process more accessible to local residents and young people.  
c. URW



Performers who took part in 'This is Croydon' London Borough of Culture 2023 programme  
c. LBC



Big Apple Records - London Dupstep Label and Record Shop 1996-2004  
c. Big Apple Records



The BRIT School has taught many great musical and acting legends, including Amy Winehouse, Tom Holland, Adele, Kate Tempest & Jessie J  
Source: The Brit School



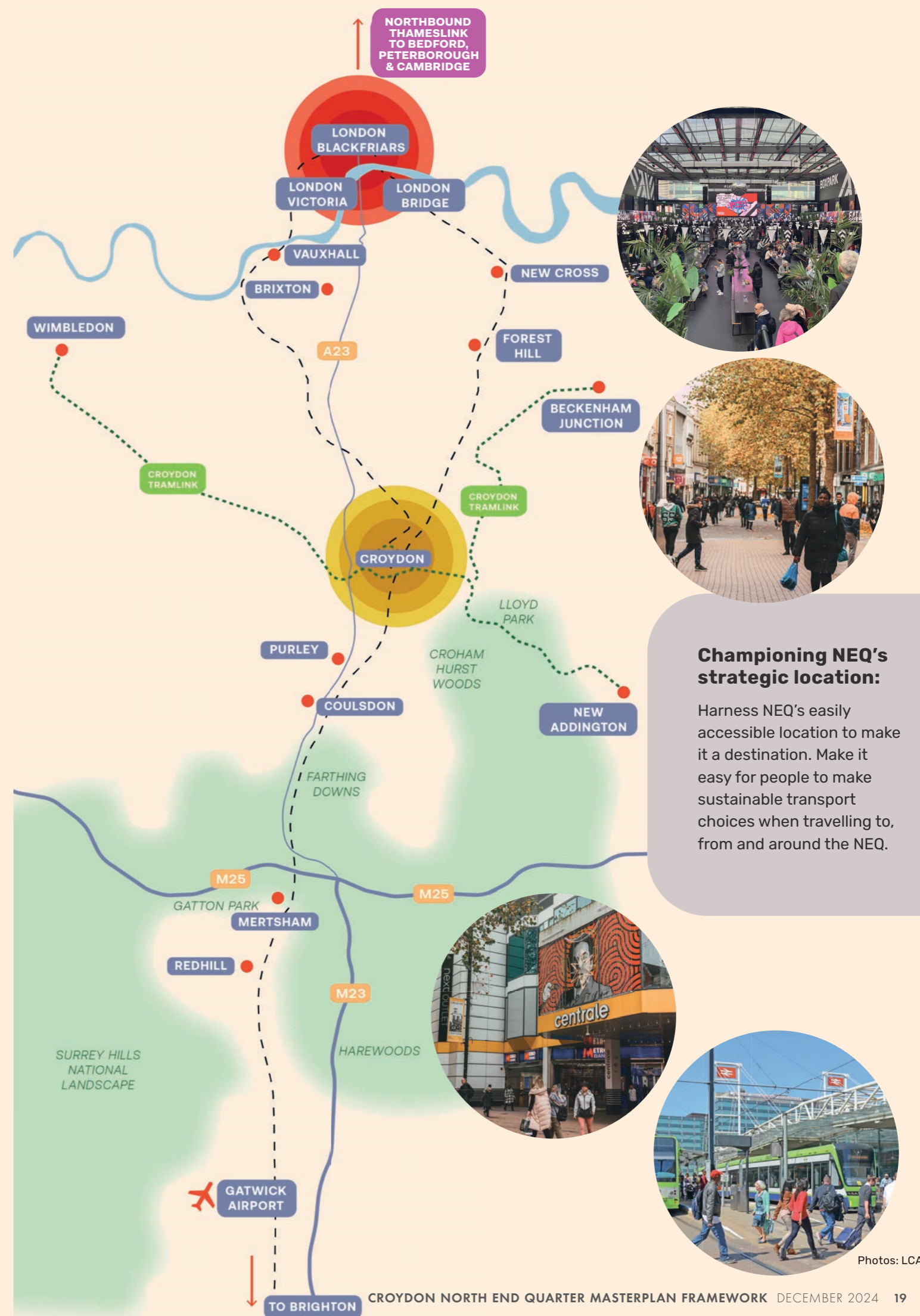
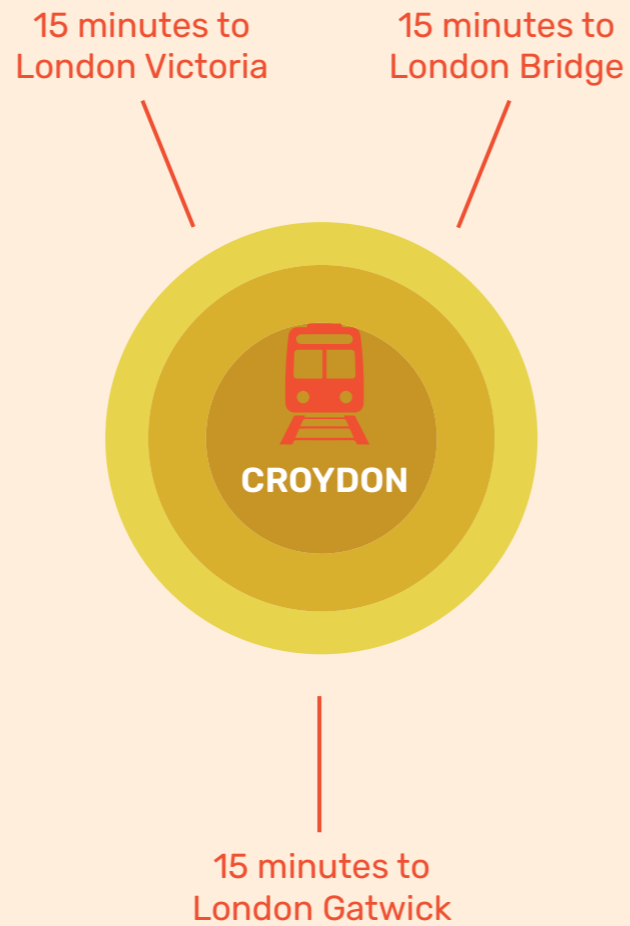
# A strategic hub

**Strategically located within South London, Croydon is a transportation hub and economic powerhouse.**

Fast train services to London Bridge, Victoria, and Gatwick Airport connect with East Croydon within 15 minutes. With local tram and bus networks, these services combine to ensure Croydon is exceptionally well connected by public transport. The train network extends to Brighton and East Grinstead in the south and Thameslink services extend north of London providing direct connections with Bedford, Luton and Luton Airport.

Gatwick airport can also be reached quickly via the A23 / M23 axis, helping to make Croydon attractive for international travellers and workers, particularly those involved in international logistics and shipping. Quick and easy access to the M25 also helps to ensure Croydon benefits from excellent access to the strategic road network.

As well as Croydon's proximity to the city and international destinations, the town is also close to beautiful green landscapes and countryside. Farthing Downs is a gateway to the countryside, and the Surrey Hills to the west provide a network of walking and cycling opportunities for getting out into fresh air.



## Championing NEQ's strategic location:

Harness NEQ's easily accessible location to make it a destination. Make it easy for people to make sustainable transport choices when travelling to, from and around the NEQ.



# Reconnecting Croydon and unlocking value

**Croydon has a unique character. Transformation of the NEQ is an immense opportunity for Croydon's local communities to get involved in managing the process of change. Croydon's story is shaped by its role as a connector and creative catalyst.**

The population spans different generations, connecting youthful energy with the wisdom and experience of older residents. Diverse ethnic communities come together to create a rich and varied mixed society characterised by a local spirit of enterprise, entrepreneurship, and cultural innovation. Croydon is a place rich in history, but hungry for new ideas.

The community feedback on the draft Framework made it clear that local people want the process of transformation to commence. Local people want change - and they want it quickly. Their frustration comes from the harsh reality that neglect and an inability to adapt has meant that the heart of Croydon has ceased being the great connector it should be.

The NEQ's long-term transformation creates an opportunity to create a neighbourhood that once again connects the people of Croydon.

Harnessing and channelling diverse and different forces. Transforming tension, inequality and division, into richness, vibrancy and unity. Cross-fertilising business, retail, housing and social spaces to breathe new life into the area. Serving its local communities as well as attracting visitors from far and wide.

The opportunity should now be taken to open up Croydon once again, stimulating the movement and collaboration that led to progress and new opportunity. Creating a neighbourhood where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts - a community that enables the people of Croydon to move forward together.

## Championing diverse cultures at NEQ:

Celebrate Croydon's diversity and mix of cultures. Be inclusive to all, and foster harmony, collaboration and partnerships to create a cohesive community spirit and a place that all Croydoners feel proud of and want to use.



**"Market stalls supporting local south London businesses. Music events, fitness events to encourage wider sense of community."**

*Quote from stakeholder interviews*



**"I would like the town centre to become a unique place where local people can benefit, but also a place that attracts people from across London as a whole. A creative hub that supports a new generation, that generates interest for the entire community. A place that reflects Croydon's multicultural character and can help to bring people together"**

*Quote from consultation*



**"We need to be layering in local heroes, with local charity heroes and then drive the sales with the biggest retailers so you have a cool eclectic mix."**

*Quote from stakeholder interviews*



Photos: URW





# Public engagement

In November 2024, URW conducted 4 public sessions held at the Urban Room in Croydon town centre. 198 people attended the events in person and 192 people completed the survey. These are some thoughts from participants and survey respondents.



**"I believe that adding more green spaces throughout the town centre, both on the streets and around building façades, would make a significant positive impact. Introducing plants, trees, and green walls could help enhance the aesthetic appeal of Croydon while also improving air quality and providing much-needed natural spaces for relaxation and recreation."**

**"Market stalls supporting local south London businesses. Music events, fitness events to encourage wider sense of community."**

**"Places for brunch, wine bars, craft breweries, mid-scale restaurants (Franco Manca, tapas bars, Gail's bakery etc)"**

**"Surrey Street Market, Croydon Street Art should be preserved, George Street all the way down to Reeves Corner, West Croydon London Road."**

**"I would like to see NEQ also have more nighttime activities as currently there is very little reason to visit that area at night (and as a result it feels deserted and quite unsafe to walk at night). This could be things like restaurants, pubs/bars, leisure activities (entertainment venues, gyms etc.)"**

**"Independent high-quality stores and eateries, I would like to see more sustainable clothing brands, healthy food options as restaurants."**

**"Keen there is still a strong emphasis on security and avoiding antisocial behaviour."**

**"A temporary music venue would be nice to see, as there aren't really any decent music venues (that are primarily standing only) in Croydon."**

**"One place that truly inspires me is King's Cross in London. The redevelopment there transformed it from an industrial area into a vibrant, multi-use hub that balances work, leisure, and green spaces."**

**"Access to late night hubs, cafes that close late. A creative hub that allows for open mic nights, events, co-working space."**

**"We know the answer isn't 'build a shopping centre and they will come'. Nor is it mixed-use by numbers. We need a new blueprint, designed for Croydon."**





# A new centre for Croydon

The North End Quarter (NEQ) is Croydon's primary comparison retail location. Historically, the area has been a thriving destination representing all that is uniquely Croydon - a place of creativity and innovation, with a strong community focus and civic nature which is reflected in its historic buildings and streets. Today, however, much of the NEQ feels tired and doesn't offer occupiers or shoppers the type of experience or accommodation that they expect. The transformation of the NEQ offers an opportunity to improve this experience, and to build on the town's unique character and spirit through the creation of a vibrant and distinctive mixed-use destination which celebrates 'Croydoness' and supports youth and creativity, local culture and grassroots activity.

The NEQ also has a wider role to play in revitalising the town centre and benefiting local existing communities by providing enhanced retail, leisure, amenity, workspace, and a mix of high-quality new homes of all tenures. These uses will be supported by a network of high-quality streets and spaces, offering enhanced greening, connectivity and

accessibility. New development will protect and respect Croydon's important heritage assets.

As the NEQ evolves, activity will be maintained through temporary activities and meanwhile uses, including the use of vacant shops until more permanent retailing can be established.

The emerging Local Plan promotes the regeneration and reinvigoration of the NEQ in line with the London Plan's status of Croydon as an Opportunity Area and Metropolitan Centre. This policy framework recognises that fundamental transformation of the NEQ is required, and that this needs to be done in a coordinated manner. It is envisioned that significant change would require a mixture of demolition and redevelopment, renewal and refurbishment.

Revitalisation of the NEQ will attract more people to shop and live in Croydon. This will support enhanced economic performance for existing businesses across the town centre and beyond. Additional people will result in greater footfall that will be able to support new spin-off uses.

# The momentum for change

## Why is it happening now?

The local community want to see positive progress in the town centre following the previous planning consent which was not delivered. With Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield (URW) having taken sole freehold and leasehold ownership of the site and recent consultation by the council on the future of the town centre, there is momentum for change.

In previous council-led consultations, the community expressed a strong desire for an improved town centre.

LBC's Strategic Vision for Croydon Town Centre:

1. Reflecting and Enhancing Croydon's Rich Heritage and Vibrant Culture
2. Being Adaptable, Innovative, and Dynamic
3. Feeling Welcoming, Accessible, and Safe
4. Supporting Residents and Visitors In Living Healthy, Happy Lives

## Consolidated control, ready to deliver

URW is the freeholder of the Centrale centre and various North End properties and parts of Allders. It is the long leaseholder of the Whitgift centre, Green Park House and remaining parts of Allders, under the freehold of John Whitgift Foundation. URW and John Whitgift Foundation are therefore jointly the predominant landowners within the North End Quarter. This provides a unique opportunity to drive the transformation forward.

URW's commitment to Croydon, together with its expertise in developing and managing successful mixed-use destinations, provides a strong foundation for the delivery of NEQ's transformation.



Thousands of new high quality homes

New streets for walking and cycling

Historic context

Shopping streets

New public spaces and squares

# Ambitions

The vision for North End Quarter’s transformation encompasses six ambitions. These respond to the unique context of Croydon, its people and its communities and the special place that Croydon is. These ambitions are both strategic and site specific and respond directly to the emerging Croydon Local Plan NEQ policy framework.

## a place for CROYDONERS

Croydon is characterised by its people, its places and its enterprise.

Croydon’s young population, social and physical history and creative energy will drive NEQ’s short, medium and long-term transformation.

A transformed NEQ will provide wide-ranging opportunities for local people, enhance the quality of central Croydon’s environments and deliver much needed investment to the commercial and community heart of the town.

The NEQ’s transformation creates an important platform for Croydon’s next generation to actively engage in the town’s ongoing evolution.

## a REVITALISED town centre

A transformed NEQ will be more active, diverse and vibrant.

Retail, community and commercial uses will all make important contributions to Croydon’s sustained economic success – underpinning a revitalised Metropolitan Centre.

An enhanced North End will secure its status as Croydon’s primary retail high street.

A more diverse mix of town centre uses will activate and enliven other important public routes.

A consolidated retail core will breathe new life into the centre, delivered through the careful refurbishment and redevelopment.

## a place for LIVING

A new sustainable and low carbon town centre neighbourhood of thousands of new homes will invigorate the town centre, supported by Croydon’s exceptional public transport infrastructure.

Play spaces, parks, gardens and squares will be open and accessible, with new and existing residents benefiting from improved health, education, transport and other community facilities and services.

New mixed-tenure and high-density homes will deliver a wide range of housing choices with a diverse range of high-quality dwelling types and sizes.

## a strong IDENTITY

Whilst North End will remain the area’s primary north-south public route and historic high street, transformation and new investment presents exciting opportunities to create a variety of new complementary places and spaces.

A network of vibrant, safe, connected and ecologically rich spaces will establish new connections through the heart of Croydon, integrating with neighbouring areas.

Routes and spaces will be designed and managed to support community life, promote ecology and biodiversity, and sustain a wide range of activities.

Redevelopment and refurbishment will respect heritage assets and be responsive to the prevailing scale and grain of the town centre.

The tallest buildings within the NEQ will be located on the east side of the area, towards Wellesley Road, with sensitively scaled height towards Croydon Old Town.

## RECONNECTING Old Town & East Croydon

Redevelopment of the Whitgift Centre will, for the first time, deliver a permanently open, safe and direct primary east-west route which directly connects East Croydon with Old Town.

Whilst complex, delivering this connection will play a fundamental role in improving the accessibility, permeability and safety of the town centre for the benefit of all users.

The environment along Wellesley Road will be transformed, both through new street-level crossings and environmental improvements along its length.

New and improved secondary connections, including with Poplar Walk and potentially George Street, will deliver direct links with surrounding streets and routes to ensure the NEQ’s transformation fully integrates with the wider town and its neighbourhoods.

## a place that is ALIVE

A managed phasing strategy will deliver short-term environmental and placemaking improvements whilst seeking to avoid long-term disruption in the heart of the town.

Early elements in the public realm will deliver an improved town centre environment whilst longer term phases are being progressed.

A programme of events and meanwhile activities, collaboratively managed and regularly reviewed, will enliven the town centre throughout the entire day.

New visitors will be attracted by a dynamic, creative and varied public offer throughout the transformation period and beyond.



# Planning policy guidance

## National, regional and local policy and guidance context

As well as those shown here, there is a host of other relevant policy and guidance documents relevant to the transformation of the NEQ, including but not limited to Expanding London's Public Realm; TfL Healthy Streets; Good Growth by Design series; Creative Enterprise Zone Study and Historic England guidance

### NATIONAL & REGIONAL

- **National Planning Policy Framework (2024)**  
The NPPF sets out the Government's economic, environmental and social planning policies for England. The NPPF includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development which means that development which is sustainable should be approved without delay. The document is clear that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.
- **National Design Guide (2021)** The guide sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice, identifying ten characteristics of beautiful, enduring and successful places.
- **National Model Design Code (2021)** The National Model Design Code provides detailed guidance on the production of design codes, guides and policies to promote successful design.
- **The London Plan (2021)** The London Plan 2021 is the Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. It sets out a framework for how London will develop over the next 20-25 years and the Mayor's vision for Good Growth. The London Plan identifies Croydon as a key Opportunity Area, a Metropolitan town centre and a Strategic Area for Regeneration.
- **Croydon Opportunity Area Planning Framework (2013)** The Croydon OAPF acts as supplementary planning guidance to the London Plan, providing greater detail on the nature and scale of development and regeneration across the entire Opportunity Area.
- **Public London Charter (2021)** The Charter consists of eight principles that set out the rights and responsibilities for the users, owners and managers of new public spaces.

### LOCAL

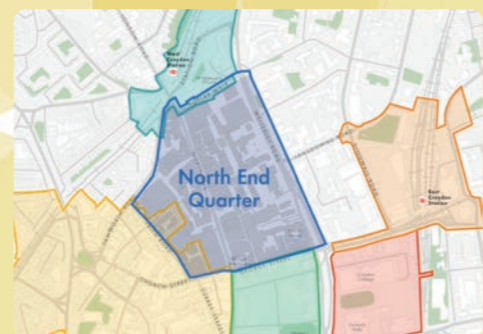


Fig 3 The NEQ masterplan area shown within the context of the existing Croydon town centre masterplans



# Land ownership

Through freeholds and long leasehold interests, URW's land ownership extends across the Whitgift and Centrale shopping centres and is shown on the adjacent plan. The MF is being advanced by URW to provide the basis for future planning applications and inform infrastructure and other development activity in the vicinity.

However, the principles set out in this MF have been set for the NEQ transformation area as a whole, consistent with the emerging Local Plan. The boundary of the NEQ area is shown below in Fig 4.

The Whitgift Foundation (freeholder of the Whitgift Centre, Green Park House and part

of Allders), and other landowners in the town centre are critical stakeholders and contributors to the future of the NEQ transformation area.

Furthermore, it is recognised that in setting masterplan principles for the NEQ area and the URW landownership, it is necessary to understand the relationship with the wider area e.g. land uses, movement and connectivity, public realm, heritage, etc. Therefore, whilst the focus of this MF is on the NEQ area, regard has been given to the characteristics of the wider area to ensure a holistic and well rounded approach is adopted.





# Historic roots

## Early history

Croydon began as a small Saxon settlement and subsequently developed into one of Surrey's principal market towns during the medieval and early modern periods. The main driver behind the town's early development was the patronage of the Archbishops of Canterbury, who had a summer residence at Croydon Palace until 1780.

The town was conveniently located between the City of London and the south coast. By the end of the 18th century, the town had a wide range of markets, fairs, and inns to accommodate the influx of traders and travellers.

The Surrey Iron Railway arrived in 1803 and the Croydon Canal opened in 1809, both of which enabled the transport of agricultural and industrial goods to central London. However, both had closed by the 1840s and, on 5th June 1839 'Croydon' station (now named West Croydon) opened on the London and Croydon Railway, quickly followed by the 'New Croydon' station (now East Croydon) which opened on 12th July 1841 on the newly constructed London and Brighton Railways.

By the mid-19th century Central Croydon had emerged as an important commercial hub and commuter town. Two large high-end department stores, Kennards (later Debenhams) and Allders were constructed on North End during the 1850s and 60s. Residential development in the form of terraces and detached and semi-detached villas were laid out on new streets extending from the High Street.

By the end of the 19th century, the High Street/North End and George Street had been established as the town's principal shopping streets, boasting three large high

end department stores and various other commercial premises.

The metropolitan character of central Croydon was further confirmed when electric tram lines were laid in 1901 along North End and George Street. During this period Croydon had a vibrant night-life with many places of entertainment.

## Croydon in wartime

Croydon had been an important strategic location in the First World War (1914-1918) because of Croydon Aerodrome, one of a small number of airfields which were created to protect London against Zeppelin airship raids.

Records suggest that more than 1,300 bombs were dropped on the borough of Croydon in just eight months. While the centre of Croydon largely escaped any major destruction, sporadic bomb damage did occur. After the war, the townscape and character of central Croydon was totally reconfigured through an ambitious redevelopment programme.

## Post-war Croydon

The Corporation embarked on a campaign to develop Croydon town centre and take on the overflow from central London. Large areas were cleared away to make way for new modernist blocks, high rise offices, and a large new shopping centre, the Whitgift Centre; all built during the 1960s and 1970s. There were also significant changes to transport infrastructure including the creation of major road gyratory and carriageways such as Park Lane and the widening of Wellesley Road. Croydon was amalgamated into Greater London in 1965. These relatively modern interventions result in a town centre island of buildings with large footprints in amongst earlier suburban development.



The North End Quarter 1940s



1910: View north east across the private Almshouses courtyard



Electricity Showrooms and Offices (c. Allies and Morrison)



Today: View north east across the private Almshouses courtyard (Source: This is Croydon)



John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury (1583-1604) (Source: John Whitgift Foundation)



Croydon Minster (c. Allies and Morrison)



Parish Church of St Michael and All Angel (c. Allies and Morrison)



The site of the Whitgift Centre in the 1947 OS map



Redevelopment underway in Croydon, c.1960s (Source: BFI)



Photographs of North End in 1860



Aerial photograph of Croydon town centre, 1938 (Source: Britain from Above)



Whitgift Grammar School in the early C20. (Source: John Whitgift Foundation)

### Championing the past at NEQ:

Create a place that celebrates and highlights Croydon's history, historic assets and people. Where it is appropriate to do so, repair lost streets and look to past urban structures to inform new designs.



# A constant retail innovator

Kennards, Croydon's first department store, first opened in 1853 and pioneered the concept of experience retail.

Allders on North End soon followed, opening in 1862. A third department store, Grants of Croydon, opened on the High Street in 1895 and was considered the Harrods of its generation during the First World War. The store was said to provide all the uniforms for the Royal Air Force and was regularly visited by the Royal Family. It was also the first store in the UK to have its own generator-supplied electricity.

Kennards was eventually purchased by a Debenhams subsidiary in 1928 and re-branded to Debenhams in 1973. The store combined with the neighbouring Drummond Shopping Centre and a nearby former C&A Store to form the new Centrale Shopping Centre which opened in 2004. Following in C&A's wake, Debenhams didn't reopen following the COVID pandemic and the space is now a Next Beauty Hall store.

Allders grew rapidly in the latter part of the C19th, expanding along North End. The shop was sold in 1908 to J. W. Holdron and F. C. Bearman who oversaw further growth until it was sold again in 1921 to the Lawrence family. The North End facade was erected in 1926 and in 1932 an arcade from North End to George Street was completed. Growth and expansion continued and in the 1960s/70s it had become the third-largest department store in the UK, after Harrods and Selfridges. The store continued to evolve through further ownership changes in the decades that followed until its eventual closure in 2012.

By the 1980s, retail competition forced Grants out of business and the store closed its doors in 1985 and remained empty until 2000.

## The Whitgift Centre

In 1965 (under the terms of the London Government Act 1963) the County Borough of Croydon was abolished and the area was transferred to Greater London and combined with the Coulsdon and Purley Urban District to form the London Borough of Croydon. The Whitgift Shopping Centre in 1968-70 (now rebuilt) was one of the first shopping centres to be constructed in the newly absorbed market towns.

The section of George Street to the east of Wellesley Road was one of the first sites to be developed in the late 1950s as part of the Corporation's vision of "a mini-Manhattan". The town centre masterplan included the new ring road which, while only ever partially built, transformed the leafy Wellesley Road into the busy dual carriageway and underpass that survives today.

Marshall was directly involved with the development of the Whitgift Centre on the site of the old Middle School/Trinity School of John Whitgift. The school moved between 1965 and 1968 from its North End site to new premises in Shirley Park. The school buildings, including the Blomfield centrepiece, were demolished and the extensive grounds given over to the development of what was the largest shopping mall in Greater London until 2008.

The original shopping centre was designed by Fitzroy Robinson, a prolific commercial architect, and completed in stages between 1966 and 1970. The centre was then extensively rebuilt in the 1990s to a scheme designed by architects Dawe and Geddes and covered by a new glass roof. With two storeys of retail and a full basement for vehicle access, the complex includes four office slab blocks on Wellesley Road and the 20-storey point block (Centre Tower) located towards the middle of the site.

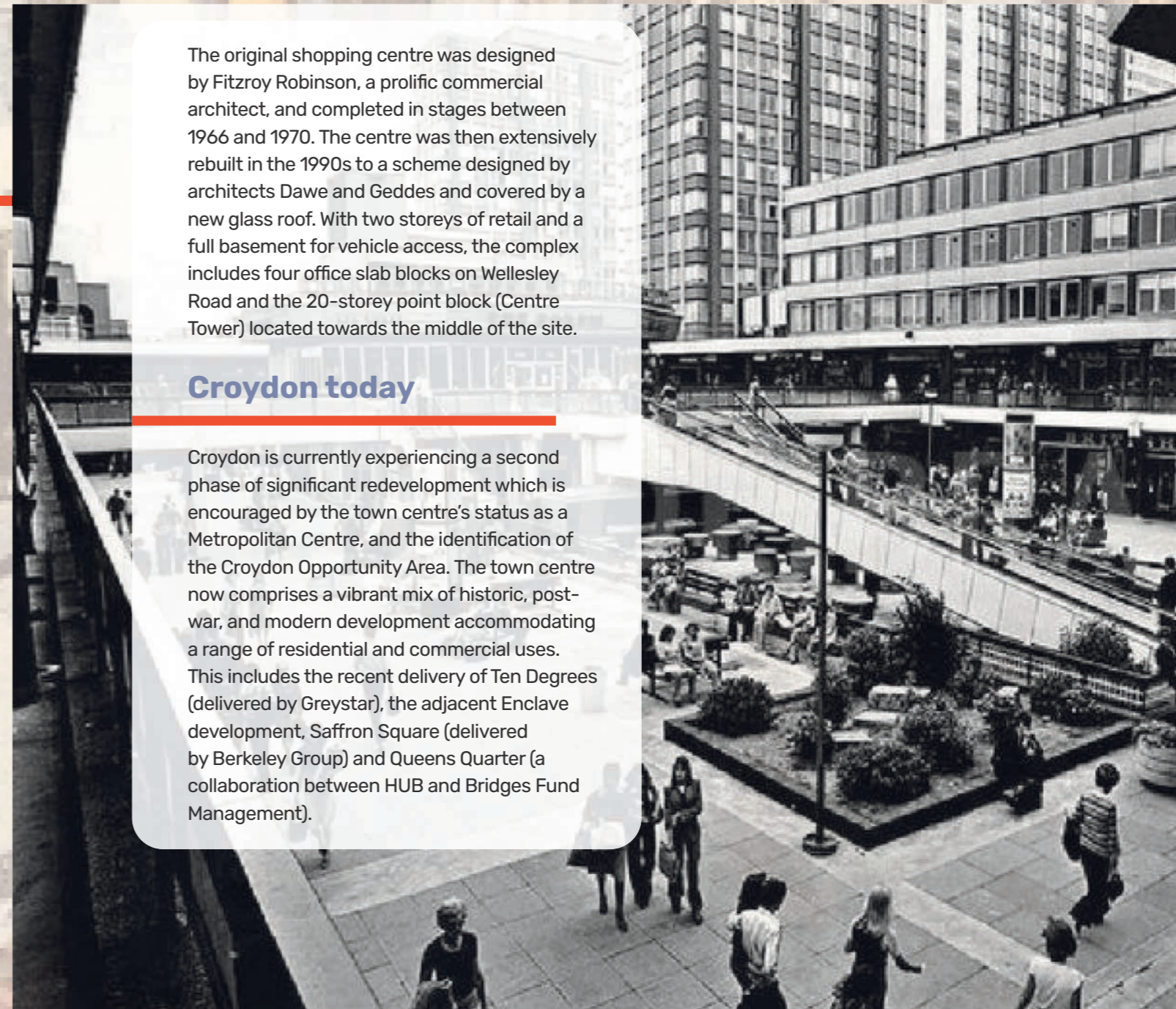
## Croydon today

Croydon is currently experiencing a second phase of significant redevelopment which is encouraged by the town centre's status as a Metropolitan Centre, and the identification of the Croydon Opportunity Area. The town centre now comprises a vibrant mix of historic, post-war, and modern development accommodating a range of residential and commercial uses. This includes the recent delivery of Ten Degrees (delivered by Greystar), the adjacent Enclave development, Saffron Square (delivered by Berkeley Group) and Queens Quarter (a collaboration between HUB and Bridges Fund Management).

### Championing innovation at NEQ:

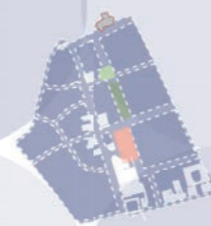
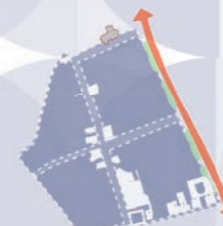
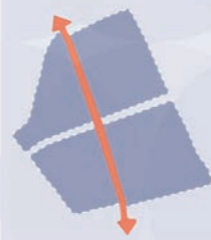
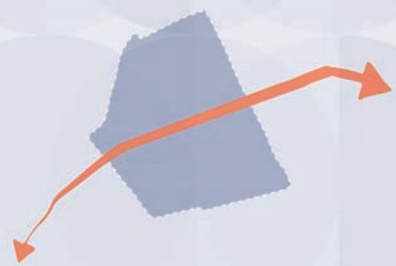
Create a space for remarkable and ambitious ideas that can capture the imagination and spark conversations.

Throughout the design process, listen to Croydon's communities to understand and deliver on their hopes and wants for the future of their town. Have iterative conversations, learn constantly and be flexible to new approaches.



The Forum c. 1970s.  
Photo: Vaughan Pomeroy submitted via Croydon Urban Room





WHAT

WHY

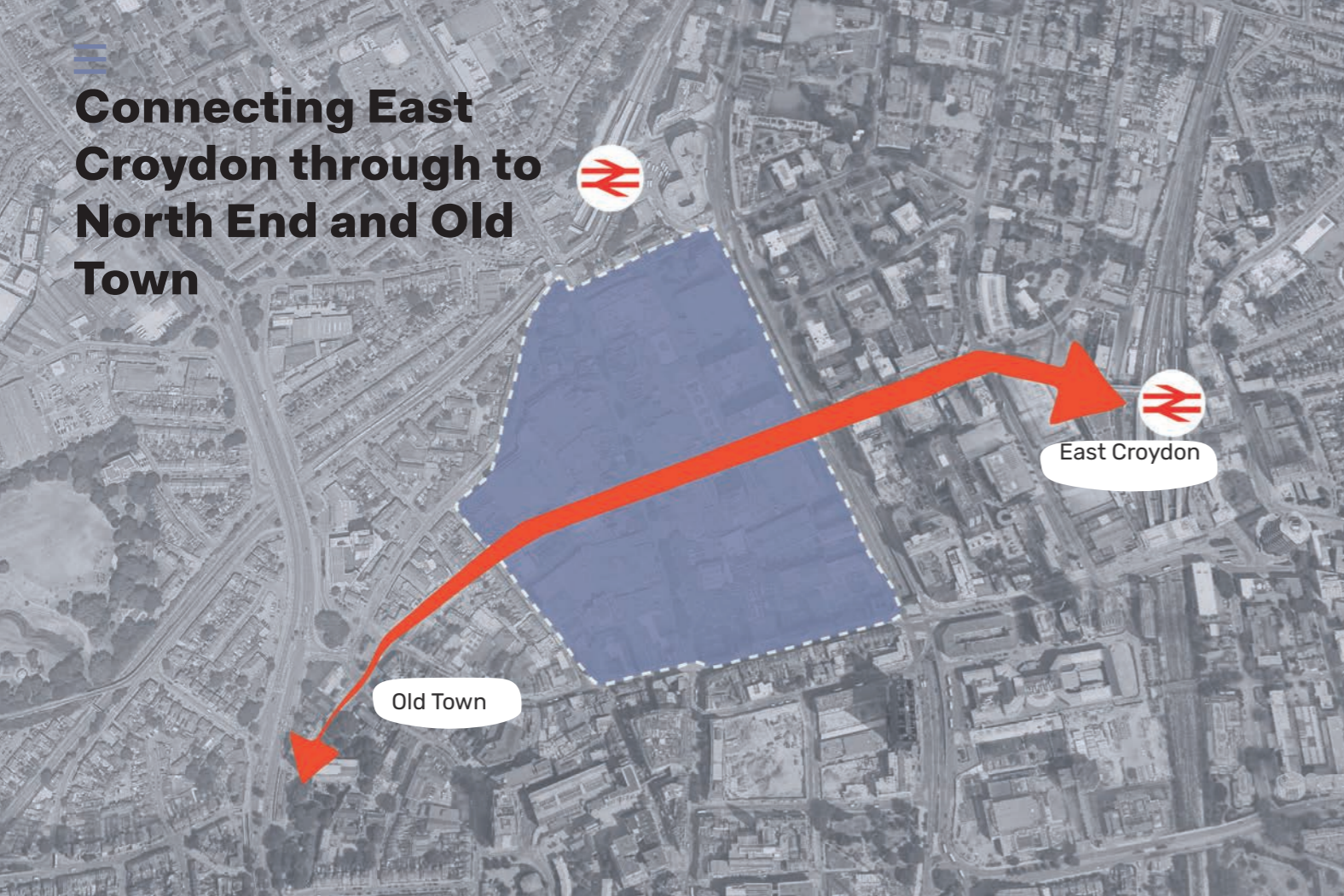
HOW

**Framework elements – WHY the Framework is like it is**

The Masterplan Framework comprises a series of key moves, each of which has emerged from an understanding of the issues and opportunities presented by the site and its context. This section provides an explanation of WHY the framework has emerged in the way it has. Some of these framework elements emerge from both town-wide and site-specific issues.



# Connecting East Croydon through to North End and Old Town



## Overcoming the Wellesley Road barrier

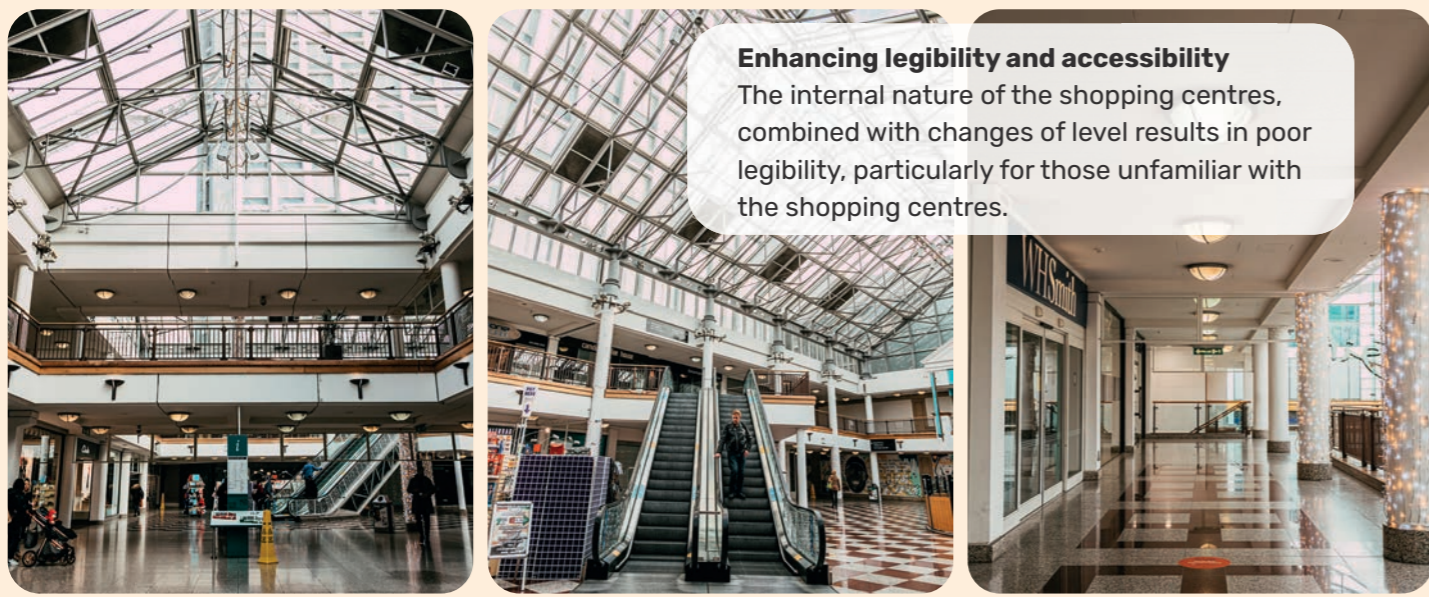
Wellesley Road is a significant barrier to east-west movement within Croydon town centre. The major north-south multi-lane dual carriageway, which has a Croydon Tramlink along its central reservation, creates a difficult and hostile environment for pedestrians. There are limited pedestrian crossings, and a pedestrian underpass which can at times feel unsafe - deterring people from taking what could otherwise be a direct route from East Croydon station to the NEQ and beyond.



## Creating a direct all-hours route

While there are many pedestrian routes forming a network within the town's shopping centres and emerging at entrances on the NEQ's key streets, these are only accessible during the centre's opening hours. This means that, while they create some permeability, they also prevent east-west movement when the centres are closed.

The route from East Croydon station to North End and Old Town should be direct and easily walkable at all times of the day. A number of significant barriers currently exist which impact east-west movement, discouraging walking and result in lengthier journey times through the town.



**Enhancing legibility and accessibility**  
The internal nature of the shopping centres, combined with changes of level results in poor legibility, particularly for those unfamiliar with the shopping centres.

Photos of the Whitgift Shopping Centres entrance on North End. c. LCA

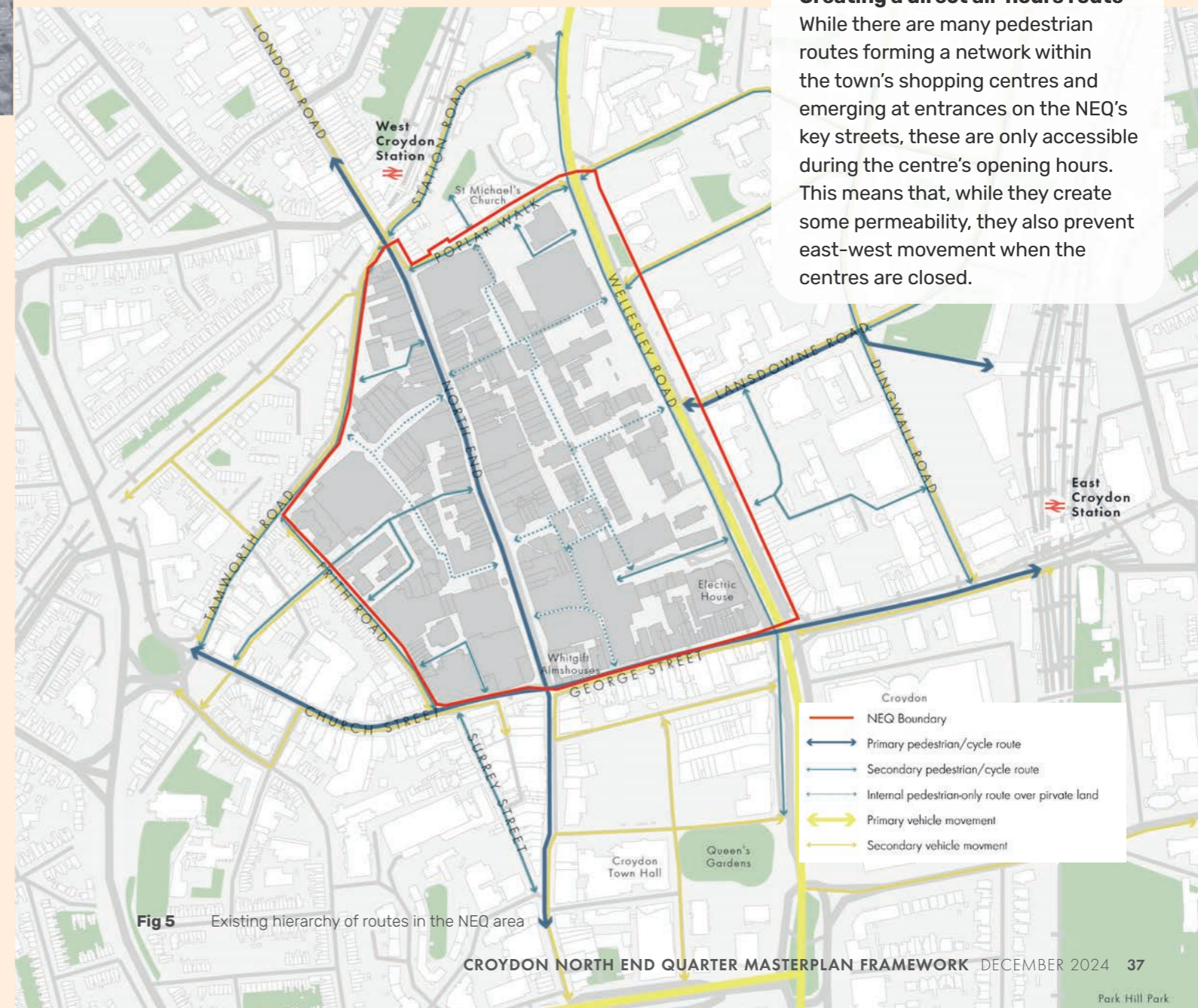
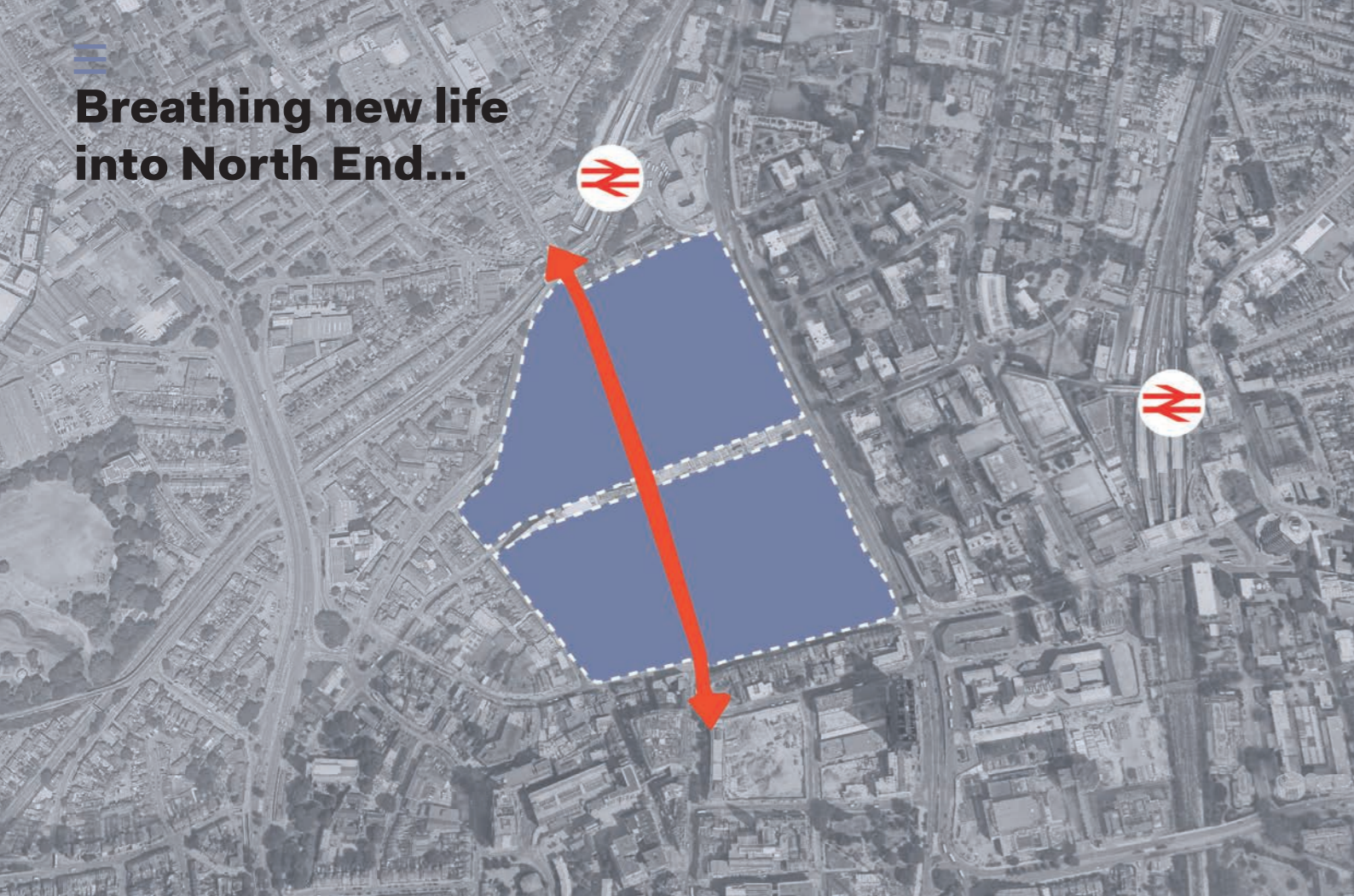


Fig 5 Existing hierarchy of routes in the NEQ area



# Breathing new life into North End...



North End has long been one of Croydon's key town centre retail streets and civic spaces, where people congregate and spend time. Today, however, much of North End feels tired and doesn't offer occupiers or shoppers the type of experience that they expect.

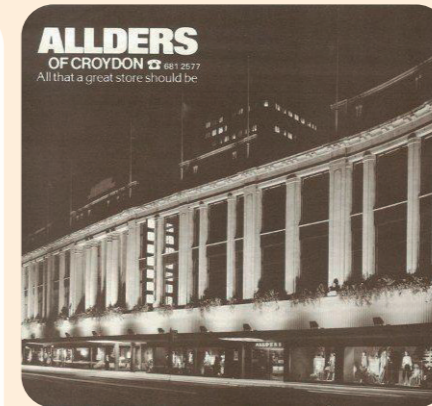
A survey respondent said: **"When you look up above the shops there are many nice buildings but the units below do not complement them."**



**Empty shops and a tired public realm...** North End was pedestrianised in the 1990s and it remains busy during the day, but its importance as one of Croydon's key town centre retail streets is let down by the quality and condition of its public realm. The street also has many attractive historic façades, but the setting of these heritage assets is somewhat harmed by some shopfronts, vacant units and the condition of some of the more recent buildings. Feedback has indicated that there is a reduced perception of safety and concerns around antisocial behaviour, fuelled by a lack of active frontages and activity after dark.

### ...but once the go-to place for experience retail

Kennards, Croydon's first department store, first opened in 1853 and pioneered the concept of experience retail. Allders on North End soon followed, opening in 1862. A third department store, Grants of Croydon, opened on the High Street in 1895 and was considered the Harrods of its generation during the First World War. The store was said to provide all the uniforms for the Royal Air Force and was regularly visited by the Royal Family. It was also the first store in the UK to have its own generator-supplied electricity.



A survey respondent said: **"I would also like to see NEQ also have more nighttime activities as currently there is very little reason to visit that area at night (and as a result it feels deserted and quite unsafe to walk at night)."**



Source: Your Local Guardian

### A historically significant street

North End has historically held important significance in the town of Croydon - from its medieval origins, and as a possible Roman road, providing the main connection between Croydon town and central London. Once a residential street, it later evolved into a retail destination visited by people across the UK and overseas. By the end of the 19th century North End had been established as one of the town's principal shopping streets, boasting three large high end department stores and various other commercial premises. According to the 1897 Ordnance Survey map, much of the back-land areas behind the main commercial streets had evolved into a series of ad hoc yards and workshops.



Fig 6 The earliest detailed map of Croydon by Jean-Baptiste Say (1785)



Fig 7 1870s Ordnance Survey map



Fig 8 1900s Ordnance Survey map

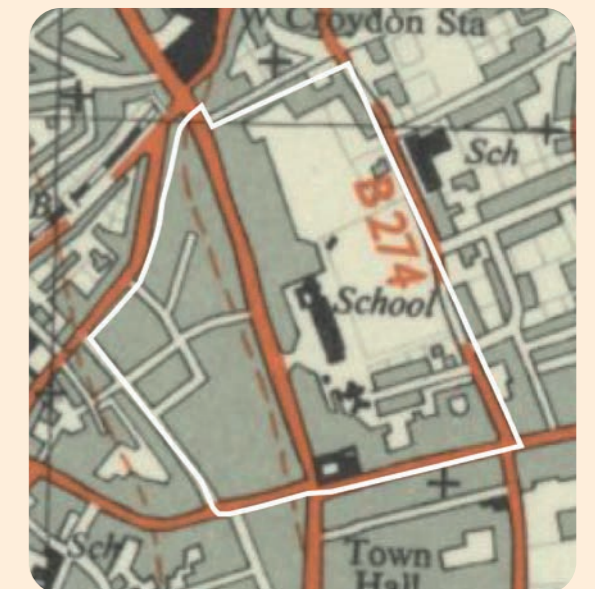
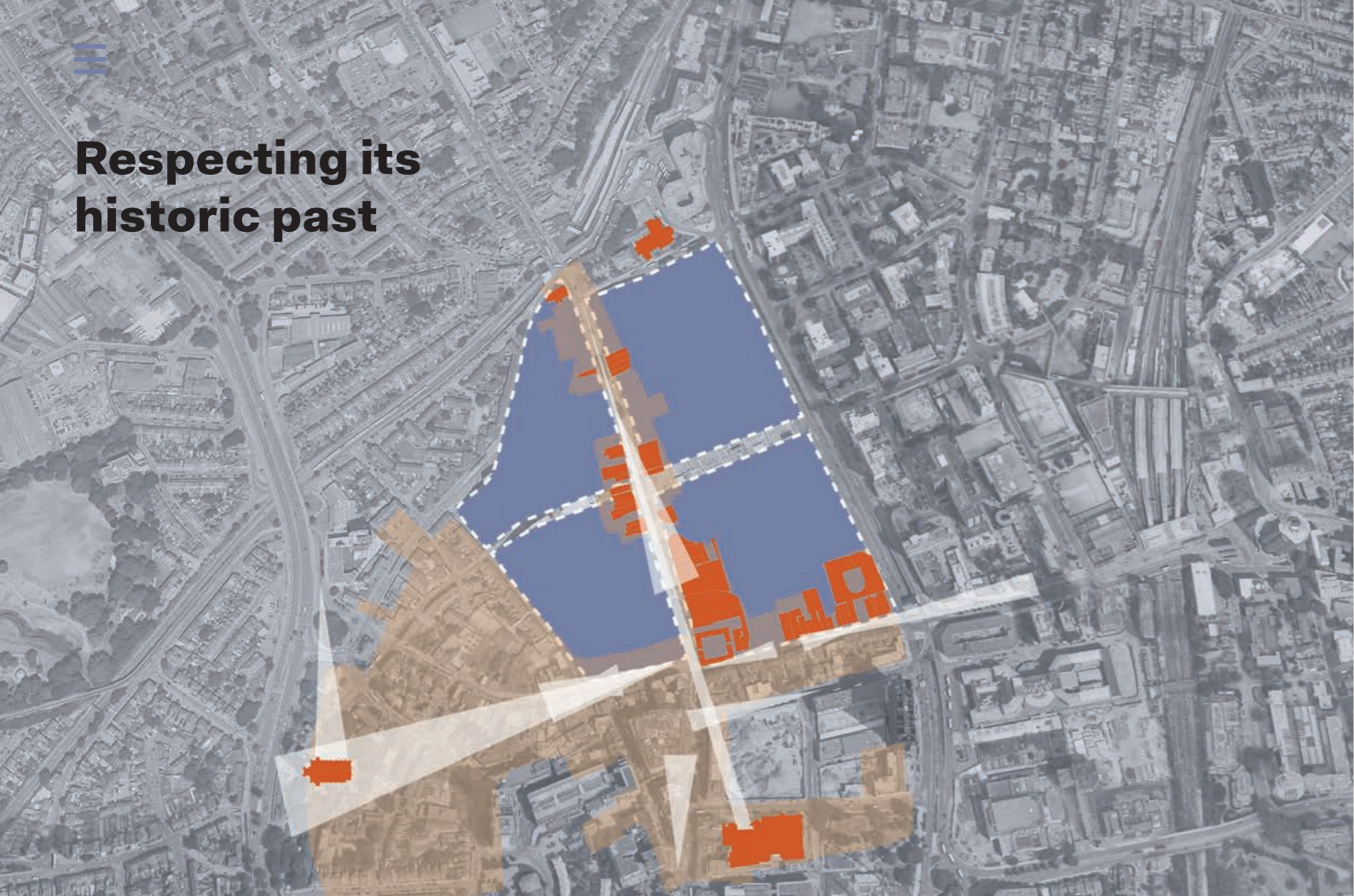


Fig 9 1940s Ordnance Survey map



## Respecting its historic past



The North End Quarter and the surrounding streets are home to a number of nationally and locally significant historic buildings. As well as being architecturally important, they also help to tell Croydon's stories and are an integral part of its character. It is important that their setting is preserved or enhanced as new development and transformation takes place.



### Restoring and celebrating what is valued

Although not a statutorily listed building, the Allders department store is a symbol of Croydon's retail prowess, and the building is much admired by Croydoners. In 2024, URW began construction work to bring Allders shopping centre back in to use whilst preserving the historic building on North End. In 2025, new shops and food outlets will start using the Allders shop fronts, the first step in reopening and celebrating this 150 year old Croydon landmark.

A survey respondent said:

**"Allders is the building we admire; it looks good and great memories too..."**

A survey respondent said: **"The vision needs to be there, preserving culture and heritage and most importantly the community. What do we want the Croydon community to be like and stand for?"**

### Historic buildings which tell Croydon's story...

The Hospital of the Holy Trinity was founded and built in 1596-9 by Archbishop John Whitgift. It is a rare example of purpose-built Elizabethan Almshouses as well as a rare survivor of Croydon's early history - offering a fascinating glimpse of a 16th century Croydon. John Whitgift Foundation carries on Whitgift's legacy, educating the young, caring for the most vulnerable and assisting the elderly, in line with the Archbishop John Whitgift's wishes. The Foundation uses the land and assets set aside by Whitgift to generate income which is then reinvested into the local community.



Whitgift Almshouses courtyard (Grade I Listed) (Source: This is Croydon)

The Electricity Showrooms and Office building is a beautiful example of high-quality civic architecture. Designed by Robert Atkinson for the County Borough of Croydon in 1942, the building is clad in Portland stone and contrasting marbles, with a prominent corner entrance and large ground floor windows addressing the street. Many Electricity Showrooms were designed to make electricity accessible to all, and the civic and welcoming quality of the building has allowed it to stand the test of time. The building is now home to London South Bank University and includes an enterprise and business solution centre as well as purpose-built clinical skills labs.



Electricity Showrooms and Offices (Grade II Listed)



**John Whitgift was enthroned as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1583. As Archbishop, he would regularly travel between Lambeth and Canterbury, stopping off in Croydon. This was how he developed his fondness for Croydon and noticed the hardships endured by the people there. He decided to leave a legacy to the town, building an almshouse to look after the poor and needy and a school to educate the young.**



Parish Church of St Michael and All Angel (Grade I Listed)



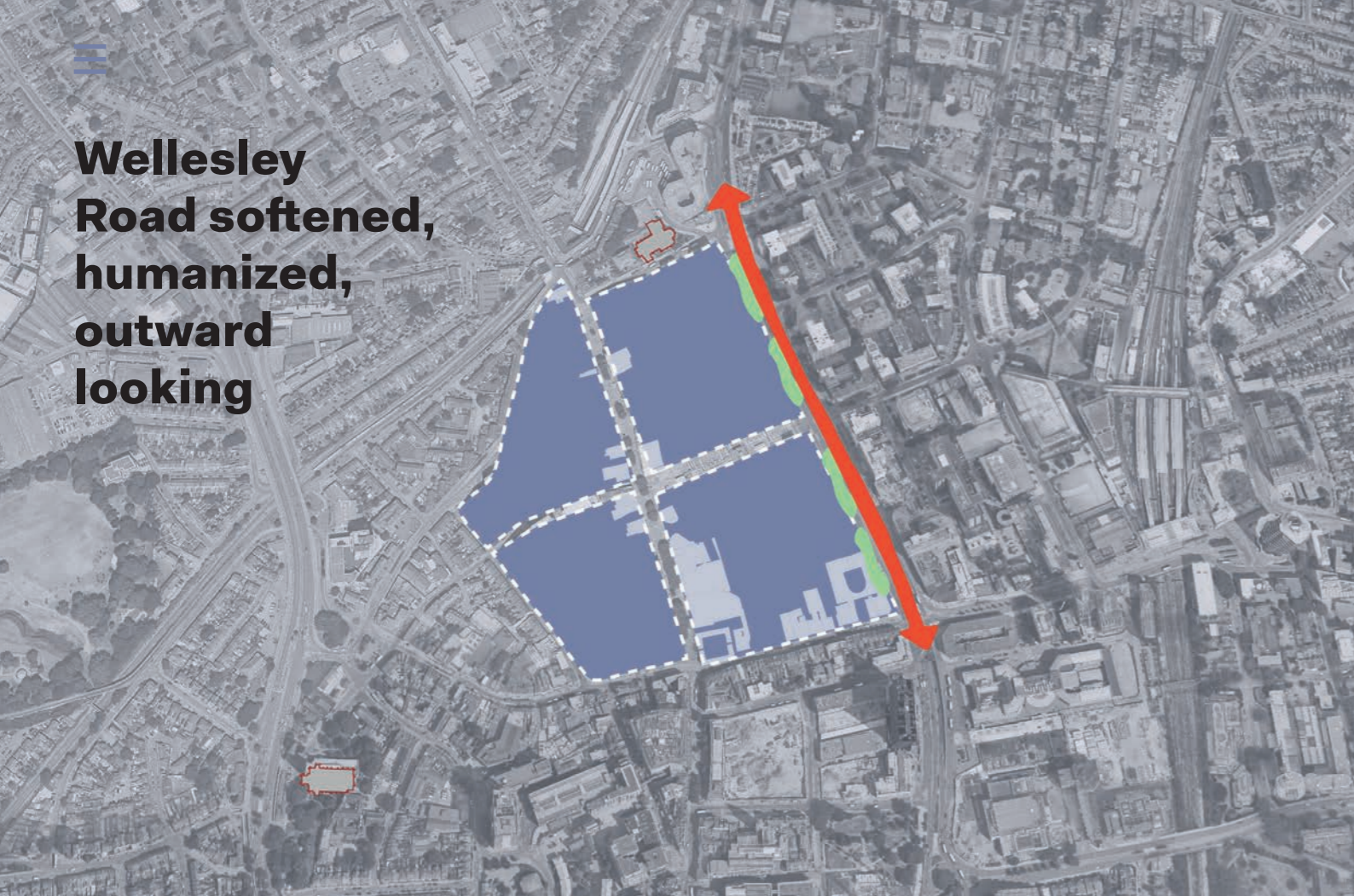
Croydon Minster (Grade I Listed)

### Important context and views

Whilst not within the NEQ themselves, these Grade I Listed churches are architecturally significant and contribute positively to the Croydon townscape. Consideration will need to be given to how new development responds positively to the setting of these historic assets. Important views towards and from these landmarks are identified in the Croydon Central Conservation Area Appraisal and it will be important to test the townscape impact of proposed new development on these and other important non-designated views/panoramas.



# Wellesley Road softened, humanized, outward looking



Once a leafy residential street, Wellesley Road has been incrementally transformed and widened into a major thoroughfare for traffic and trams, with large buildings that line the street but do little to interact with it - creating an inhospitable environment for people.



A survey respondent said: **“More trees please to beat the pollution of the Wellesley Road.”**

Photos: URW

### A sea of concrete and tarmac

The Wellesley Road corridor is wide and spacious, but the majority of the space is given to the movement and circulation of vehicles, resulting in a heavily tarmacked stretch of road. The tall buildings which front onto this space are also primarily constructed of concrete, steel and glass. These hard surfaces and a lack of greening to soften the space results in it feeling cavernous, imposing and uninviting to pedestrians.

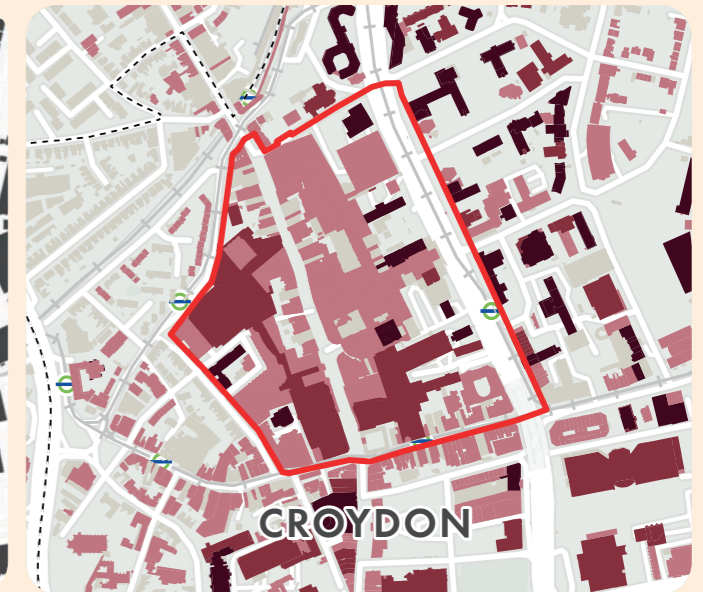


Photos: URW

A survey respondent said: **“The town centre needs to feel safe. Currently there is a hostile atmosphere, not helped by the empty shops.”**

### Not a place for people

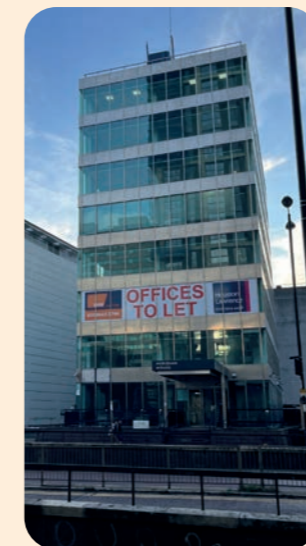
In addition to vehicles, the environment along the western side of Wellesley Road is dominated by unsightly access ramps, parking and servicing zones. Poplar Walk is also undermined by prominent blank flank walls and service ramps. These large spaces, designed to be accessed by vehicles and inaccessible to pedestrians, enhance the feeling that this is not a place for people.



### Disjointed urban grain

This figure ground plan and building heights plan show how the composition and character of the Wellesley Road corridor is a marked departure from the more compact and fine-grained character of Old Town and North End. The human scale of these more historic areas is lost with the coarse grain of development along Wellesley Road.

A survey respondent said: **“Fix or demolish the derelict buildings on Wellesley Road... Wellesley Road could not look worse than it does.”**



Photos: Allies and Morrison

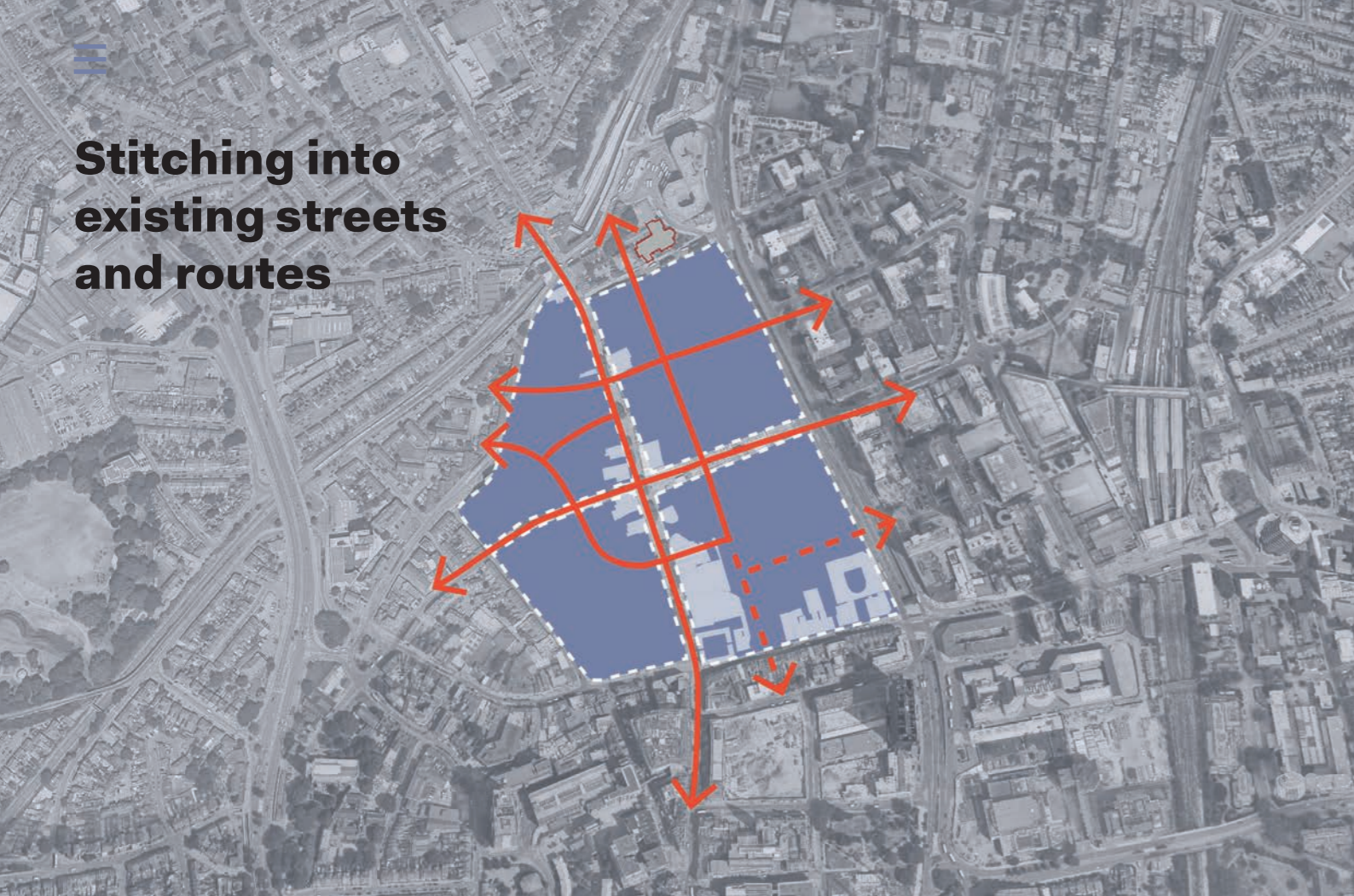


### A lack of human activity

Croydon's town centre economy has faced, and continues to face, huge challenges. Changing retail habits and office space demand has resulted in prominent vacancies and a chronic lack of investment. The impact is felt along Wellesley Road where buildings portray an outdated and unloved appearance, with many looking empty and unoccupied. The lack of human activity can make the space feel unsafe and uncomfortable to spend time in.



## Stitching into existing streets and routes



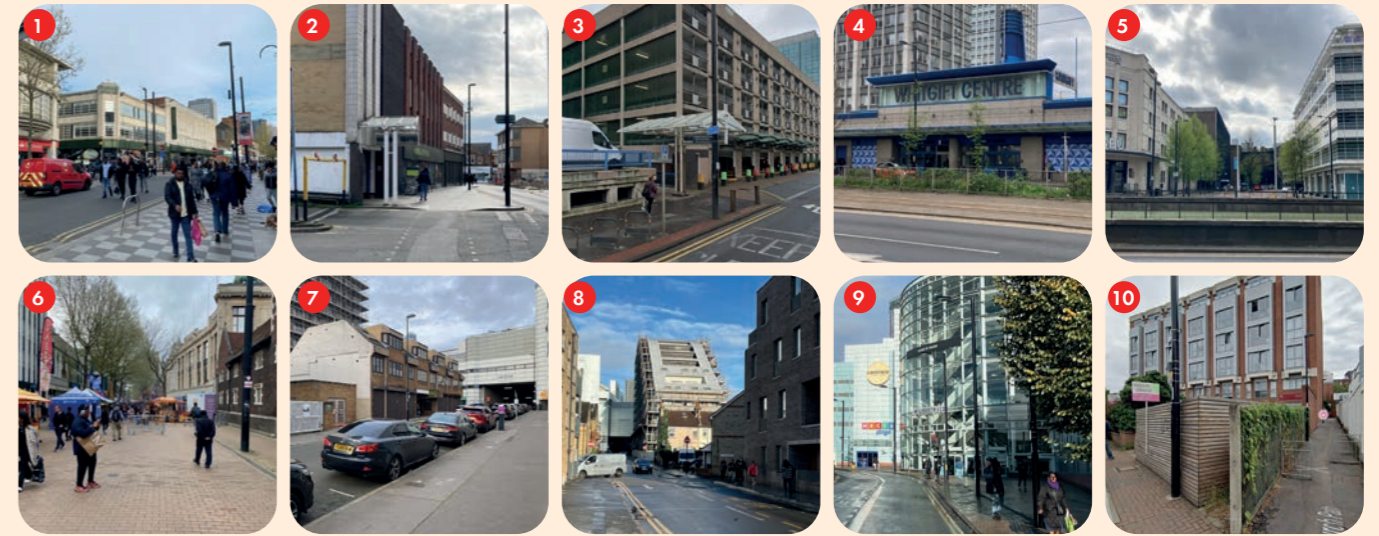
The NEQ can feel isolated and inaccessible given the busy roads which surround it, as well as the large urban blocks which can be difficult to navigate. It is therefore important to consider ways in which the NEQ can be better integrated into the existing street network to help improve accessibility and integrate better with surrounding neighbourhoods.



Fig 10 Historic map (1885-1900)

### Integrating into the existing streets and enhancing permeability

In the late 19th century, the west side of the NEQ was comprised of a more organic and finer-grain network of urban blocks and streets allowing for ease of walking between North End and Old Town. Successive development has over time consolidated routes and urban blocks, making North End feel far less accessible from Old Town. However, the east side which was primarily comprised of the Whitgift School buildings and playing fields would have been less publicly accessible. Unlocking east-west permeability through this eastern side of the NEQ and making better connections with surrounding streets will create a more permeable urban block structure, unlocking movement in the town centre.



Photos: Allies and Morrison



A survey respondent said: **“Heading from west to east is a nightmare currently. Would like improved access from Old Town and Church Street, across to Wellesley Road and beyond. The old cut through from George Street to North End was so useful; would be nice if that could be reincorporated into design, and even into some temporary access at points during works.”**

### An impenetrable block

The NEQ constitutes a significant piece of Croydon town centre, where a number of town centre activities take place. As such, it should be an area which is easily accessed by all, particularly those in surrounding neighbourhoods. At present, however, the NEQ can feel like an island, with many of the roads bordering the NEQ acting as barriers - both physically where there are busy roads but also in their character as back streets or alleys or access/servicing streets, which can make them feel unsafe and unwelcoming. The photos shown here present a picture of the approaches into the NEQ at present. The gateways at either end of North End are perhaps the most accessible and welcoming, but still face challenges overcoming vehicle and tram movements. Improving these routes and spaces to create a more accessible, safe and welcoming approach to North End Quarter would help to encourage more people to walk into it from surrounding neighbourhoods, reducing reliance on cars and public transport.



# A careful approach to demolition and retention



The North End Quarter has a legacy of buildings and structures which span generations of Croydon's evolution. Careful analysis and understanding of these existing structures is needed to ascertain what should or could be retained or re-used as part the NEQ's transformation and what should not.

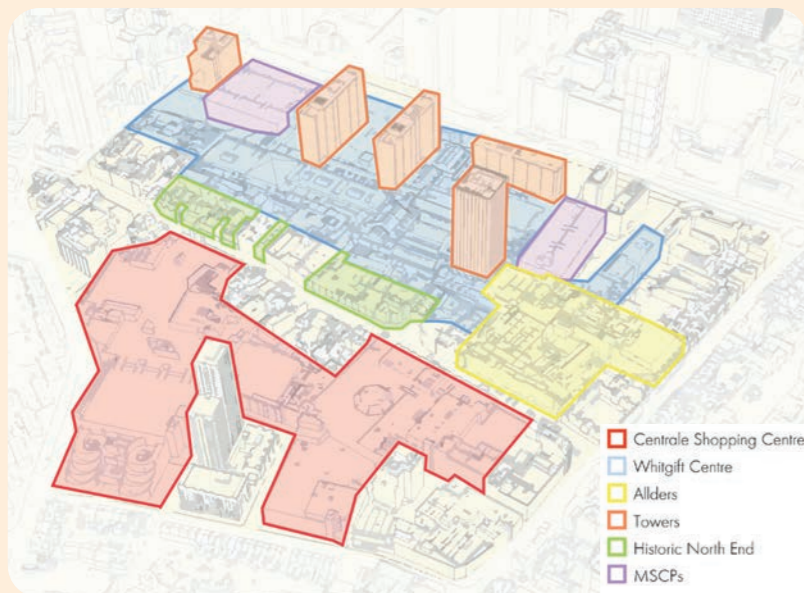


Fig 11 Typologies of existing built assets across NEQ in URW ownership

## Understanding the existing structures

The NEQ is comprised of a number of built components, each with their own characteristics. This diagram identifies and groups the key components, including the Whitgift and Centrale shopping centres, the historic buildings of North End, the Allders department store building, the multi-storey car parks, and the tower blocks. A number of factors will need to be taken into consideration when determining what could make a positive contribution to the future of the NEQ, including heritage and townscape value, embodied carbon and environmental adaptability, impact on accessibility and permeability, and flexibility and adaptability of use.

## A complex basement structure...

The existing Whitgift Centre basement is structurally highly complex, a result of multiple phases of development over many years. This presents both constraints and opportunities for the transformation of the NEQ. The extensive basement complex beneath the Whitgift Centre and Allders is c.8m below Wellesley Road, with large retaining walls forming the perimeter, and a series of inner retaining walls managing the level changes within the basement. A large servicing route, currently for HGVs servicing the Centre, runs north-south with access/egress ramps on Poplar Walk (north) and Wellesley Road (south). The embedded carbon of the existing basement, as well as the huge existing investment in a structure which is very expensive to create, will be an important consideration in the retention and reuse strategy. The alignment of the existing below-ground buildings and structures may necessarily inform the location of buildings and spaces above ground, particularly the alignment of essential services, and where the basements support buildings above.

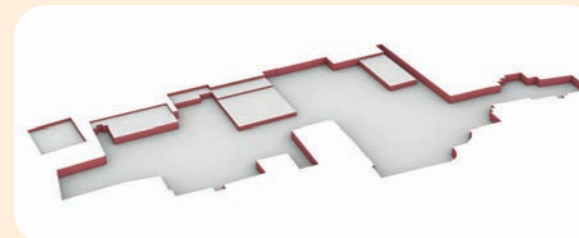


Fig 12 The multi-level existing basement below the Whitgift Centre and Allders

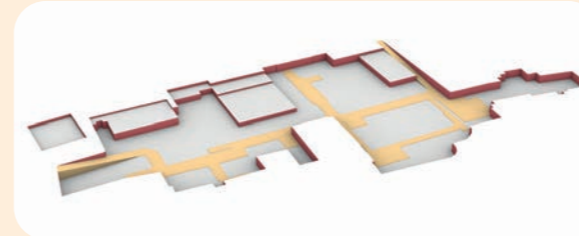


Fig 13 Established service routes through the existing basement

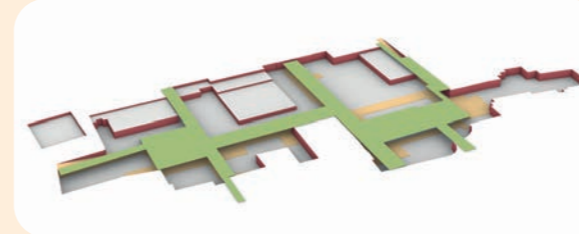


Fig 14 Atrium and public routes through the existing Whitgift Centre



Photos: URW

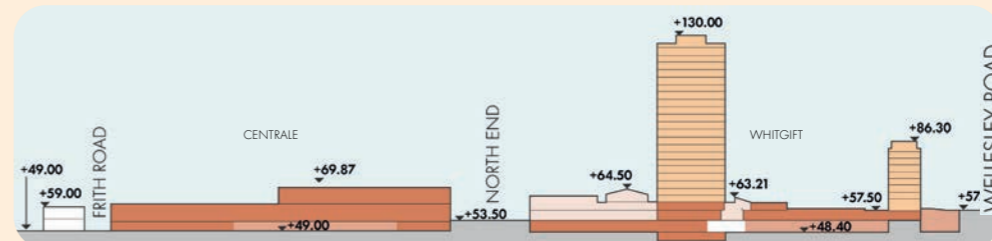


Fig 15 Section 1 from Frith Road to Wellesley Road, cutting across the southern ends of both Whitgift and Centrale Shopping Centres

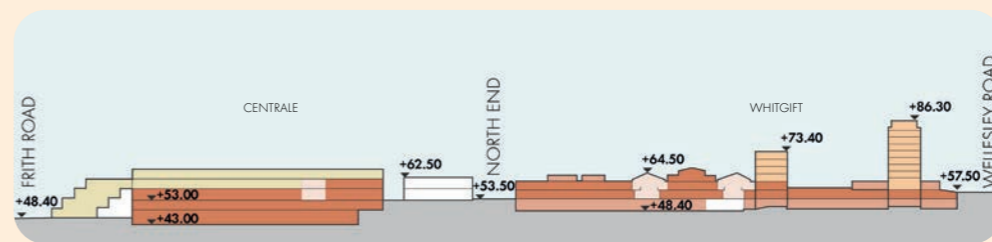
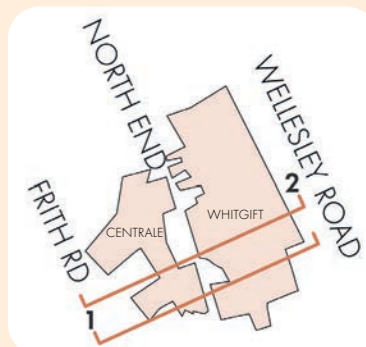


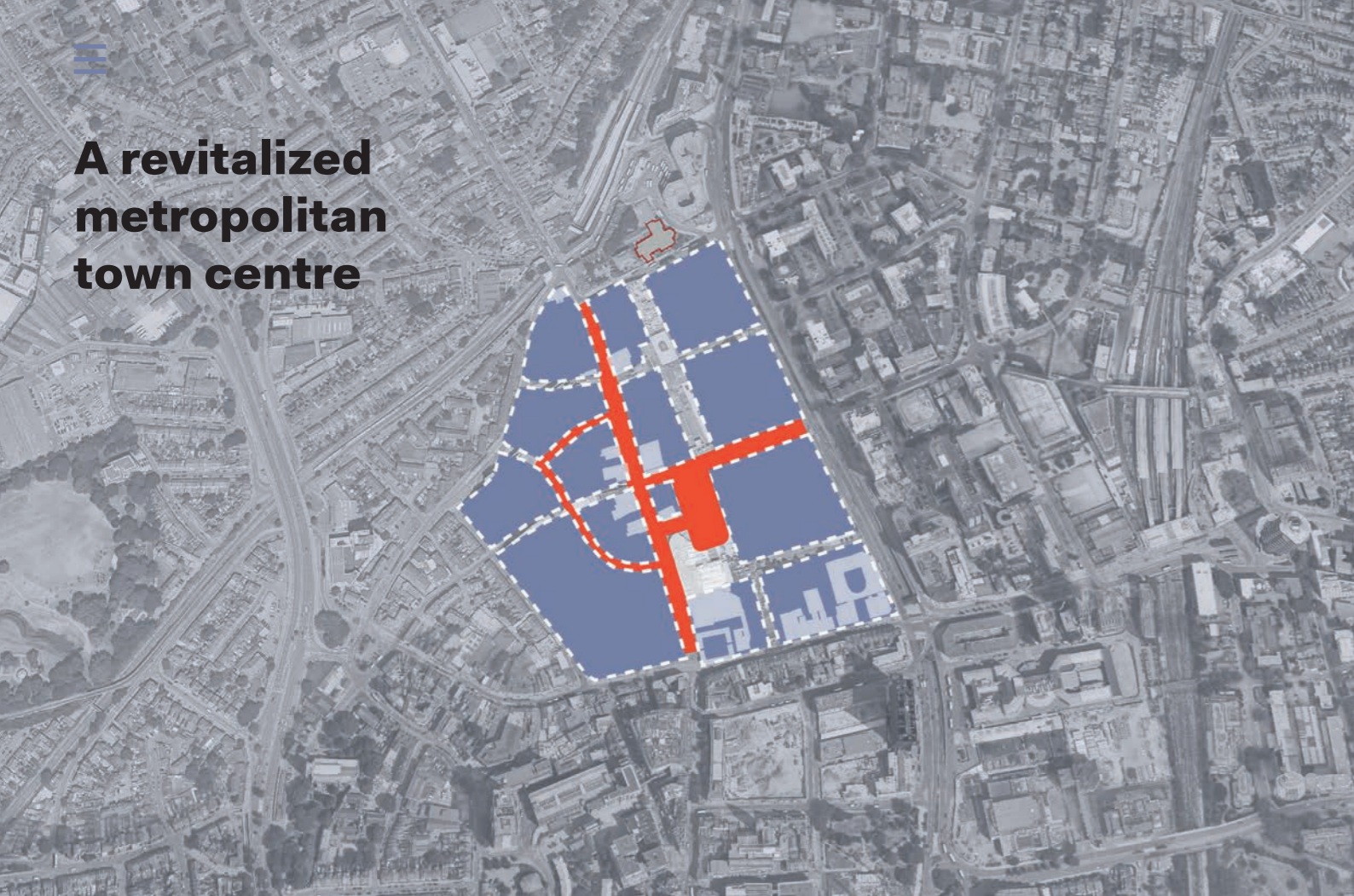
Fig 16 Section 2 from Frith Road to Wellesley Road, cutting across the more central part of both Whitgift and Centrale Shopping Centres



- Office
- Retail
- Circulation
- Car park
- Service / BOH



# A revitalized metropolitan town centre



Croydon town centre has the highest quantum of retail floorspace of any London Metropolitan Centre. However, it also has the highest proportion of vacant retail floorspace of any Metropolitan Centre. Maintaining its status as one of London’s primary retail destinations whilst also addressing vacancy presents transformative opportunities for the centre.



**Fig 17** Land uses in the North End Quarter and surrounding areas

### Continuity and transformation

At the last count (the GLA’s London Town Centre Health Check, 2017), Croydon had over 30,000 sqm more comparison retail floorspace than any other Metropolitan centre in London. The North End high street is the centre’s primary retail street, and this will be protected by the transformation of the NEQ. Retail will be consolidated in redevelopment of the Whitgift Centre along the new primary east-west route. Retained throughout the transformation process, retail continuity will be maintained through a strengthening of Centrale Shopping Centre’s retail function.



### Retail circuits

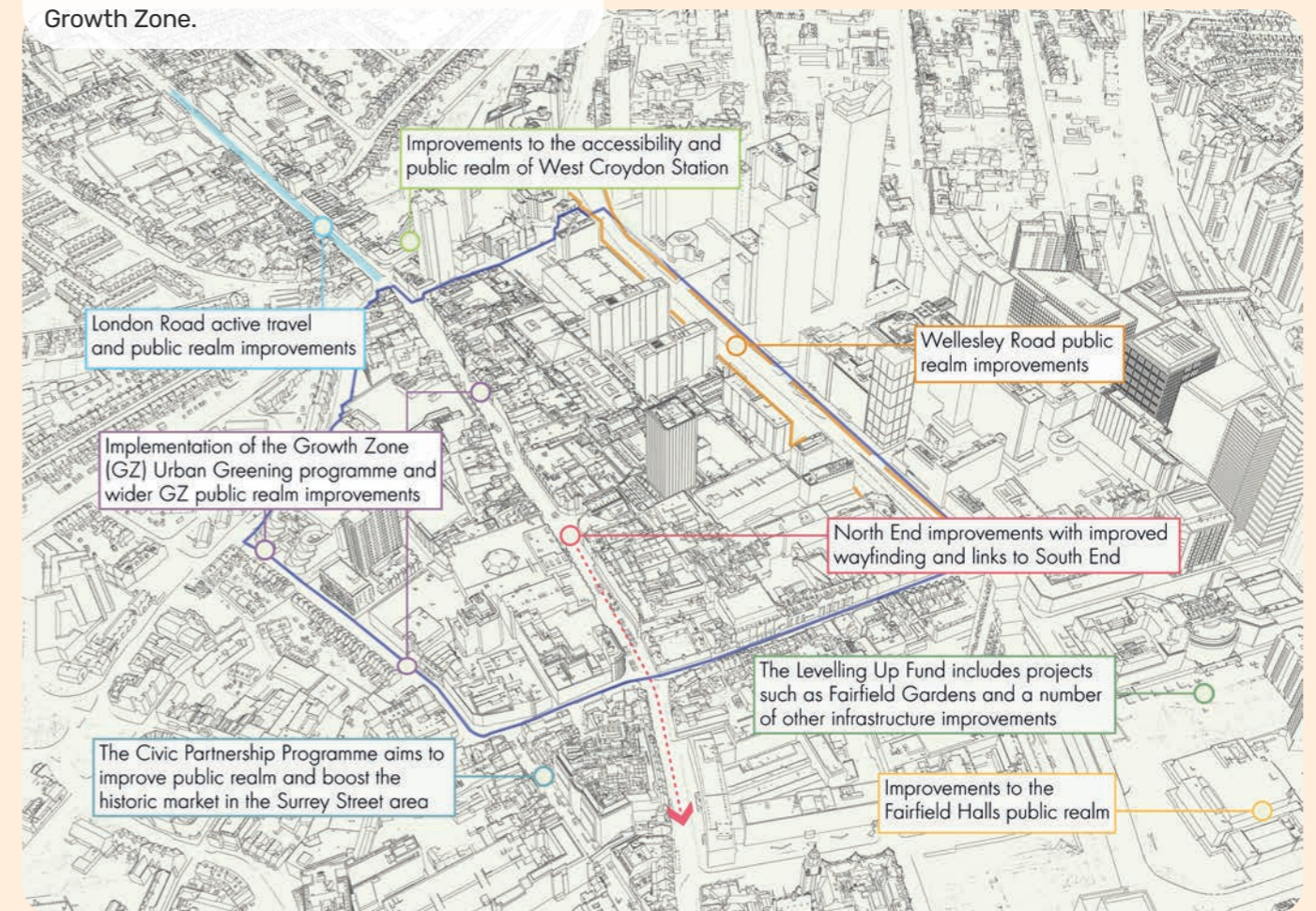
The most successful retail destinations are typically arranged in retail circuits. The new east-west link which connects North End with East Croydon Station creates the opportunity form part of a new retail circuit in the town centre. The retention of Centrale Shopping Centre, with its direct looped connections with the North End axis highlights the critical role Centrale will play in maintaining strategic continuity of retail operations during the transformation process.

Photos: LCA

### Wider improvements

Improvements within the North End Quarter will be delivered in the context of wider improvement initiatives. Examples include improvements to Fairfield Gardens through the Levelling Up Fund and an Urban Greening programme through the implementation of the Growth Zone.

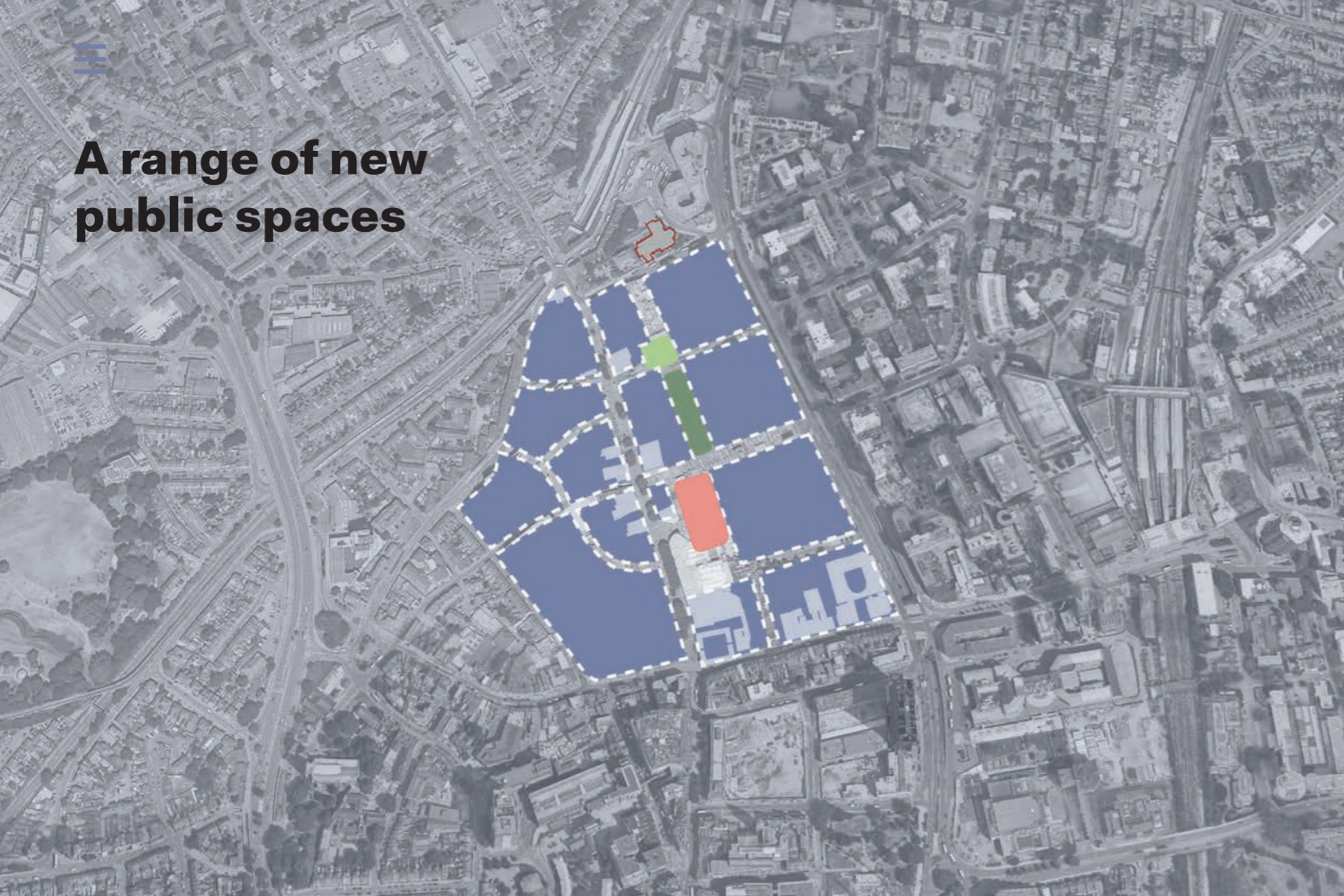
**Croydon’s Local Plan policy says, under emerging Policy NEQ DM 1, that North End is the town centre’s retail focal point.**



**Fig 18** Emerging initiatives in the vicinity of the NEQ



## A range of new public spaces



Despite the Whitgift Centre site once being the cricket ground for Whitgift Grammar School, open space is now in very short supply across Croydon's North End Quarter. The area's transformation provides a valuable opportunity to address this shortfall. The Masterplan Framework should deliver a range of contrasting and complementary high quality spaces and places.

### North End axis

The handsome and elegant North End street frontage can be seen in this photo from 1938. Already a major retail centre, North End was a prestigious retail address. Now pedestrianised, the central section of North End is itself a valuable public and community space in the very heart of Croydon. Transformation of the North End should bring improvements to this key pedestrian axis.



Aerial photo of Croydon town centre, 1938 (© Historic England)

A survey respondent said:  
**"Croydon could be the jewel of south London with a restored, active, safe and green town centre."**

**A lack of public spaces**  
 Aside from the pedestrianised section of North End, the town centre lacks a diverse range of open spaces that would encourage people to gather and spend time in the area. The space opposite St Michael's Church on Poplar Walk is the only dedicated public space aside from North End, but this space is currently somewhat neglected and lacks ground floor activity and animation. A range of new, high quality and safe public spaces, supported by a programme of events, will help to enliven the NEQ and encourage people to dwell.

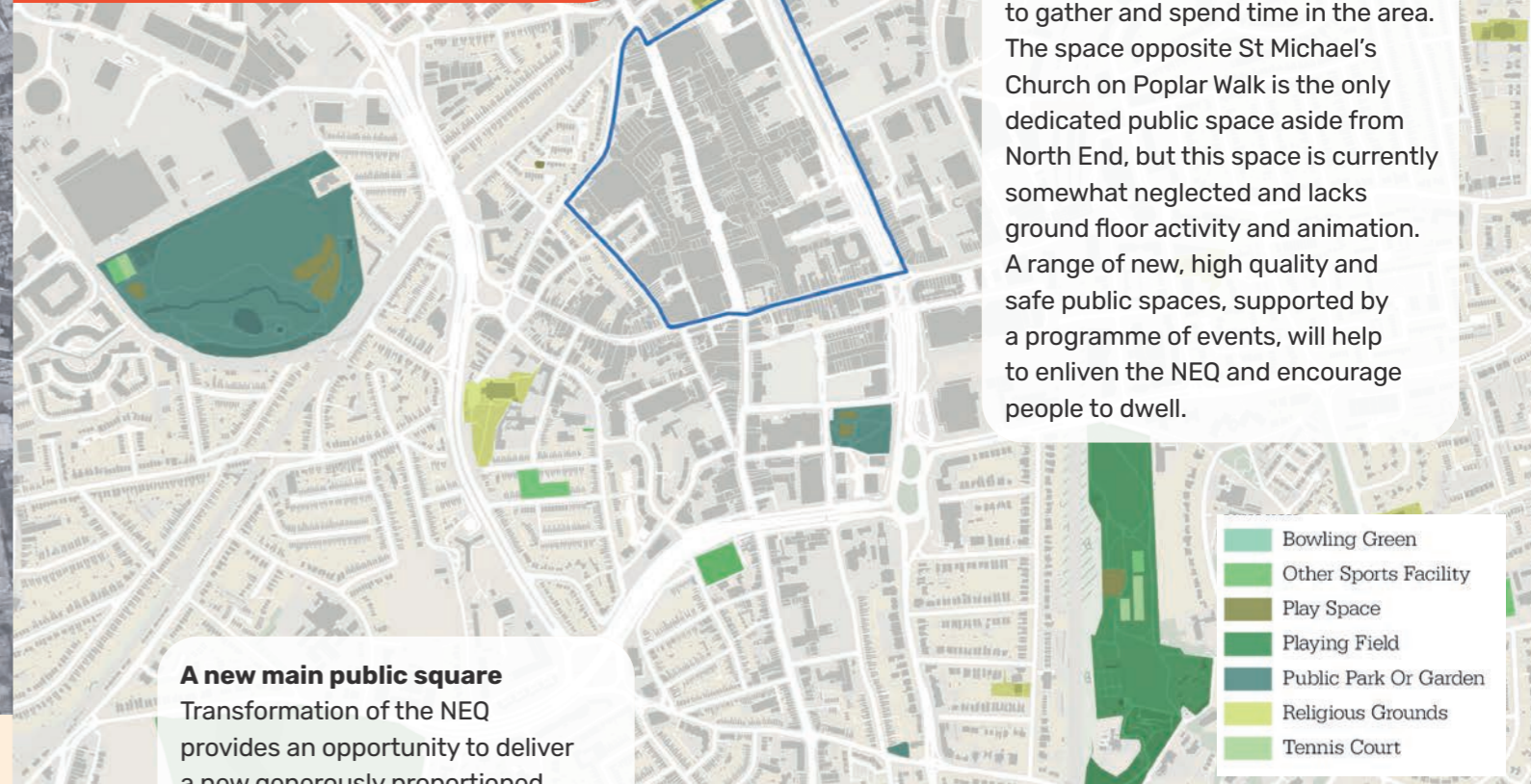


Fig 19 Public green spaces in Croydon town centre

### A new main public square

Transformation of the NEQ provides an opportunity to deliver a new generously proportioned, permanently open anchor public space right in the heart of the town. In a location broadly determined by the existing Whitgift structure - its basement and its atrium routes between existing buildings - this new space will complement and support life along North End and across the NEQ as a whole.

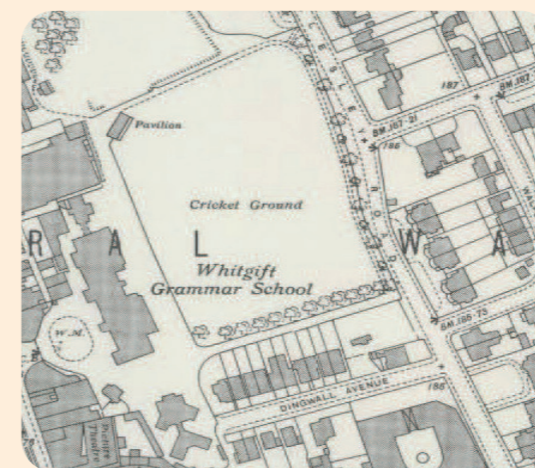


Fig 20 The site of the Whitgift Centre in the 1947 OS map, once the open spaces of playing fields and cricket grounds for Whitgift Grammar School.



Fig 21 Whitgift Grammar School in the early 20th century (Source: John Whitgift Foundation)

**Croydon's Local Plan, under draft Policy NEQ SP 1, calls for new spaces at a range of scales to benefit both new occupants (commercial and residential) and visitors to the area.**



## Respecting and enhancing natural assets

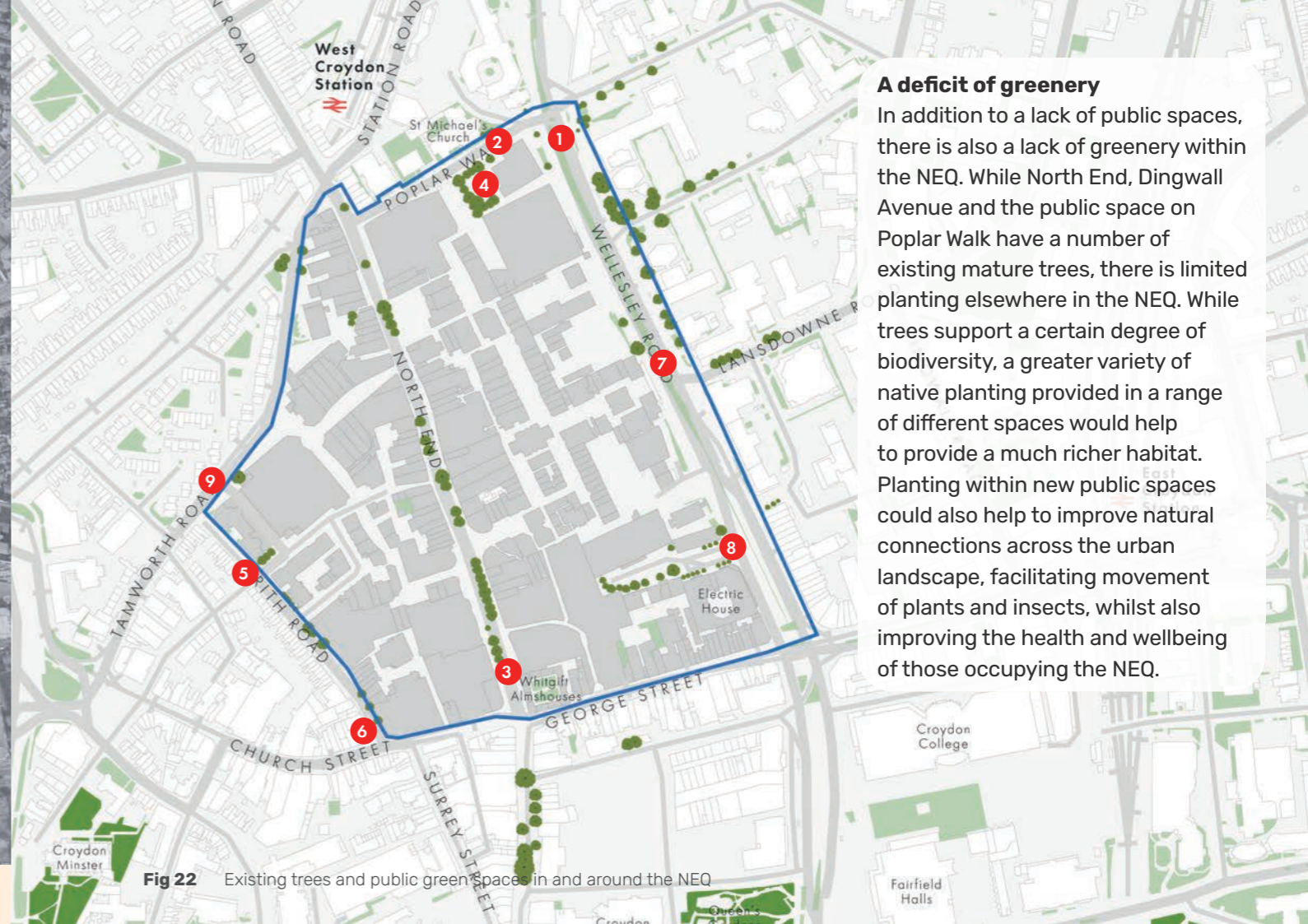
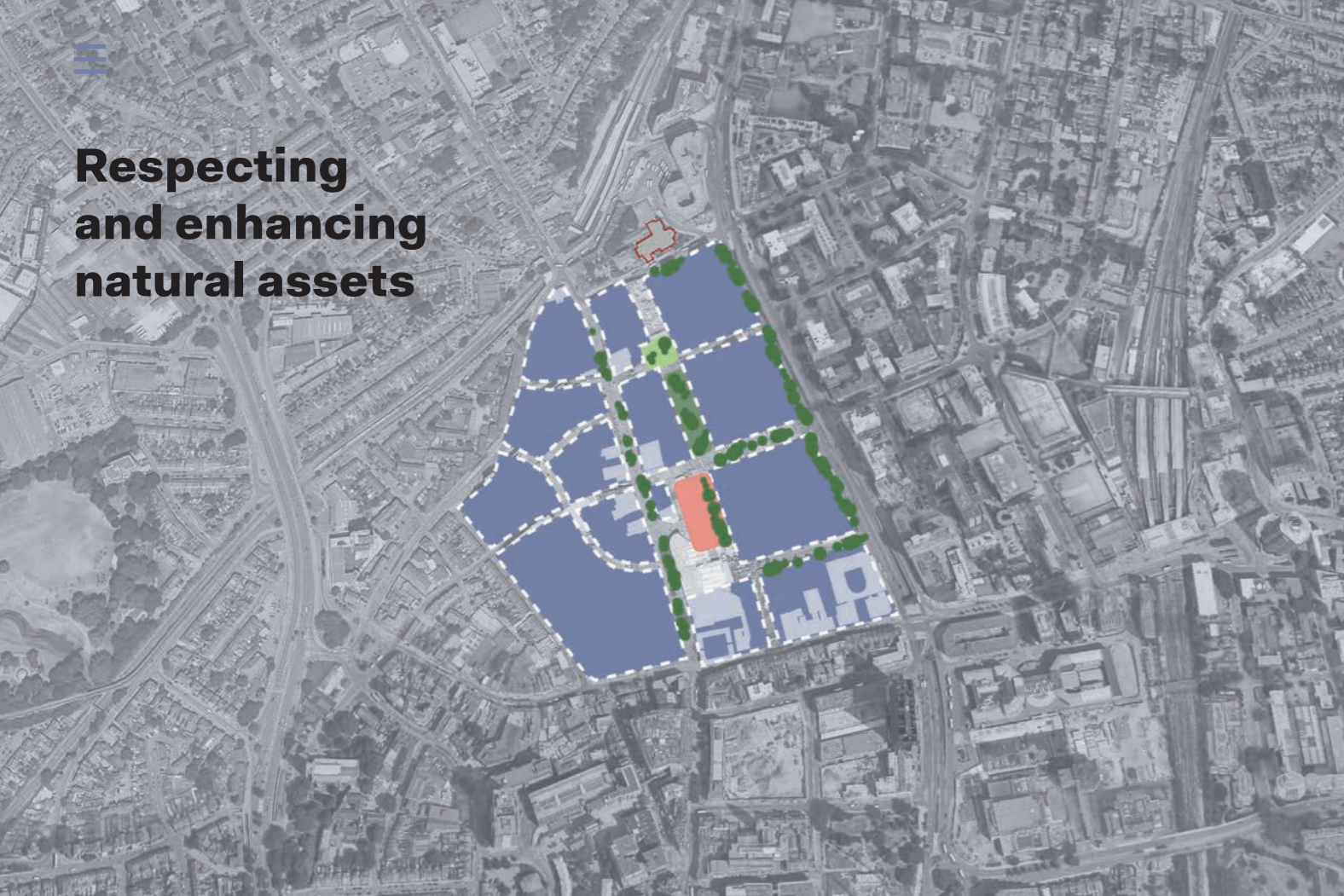


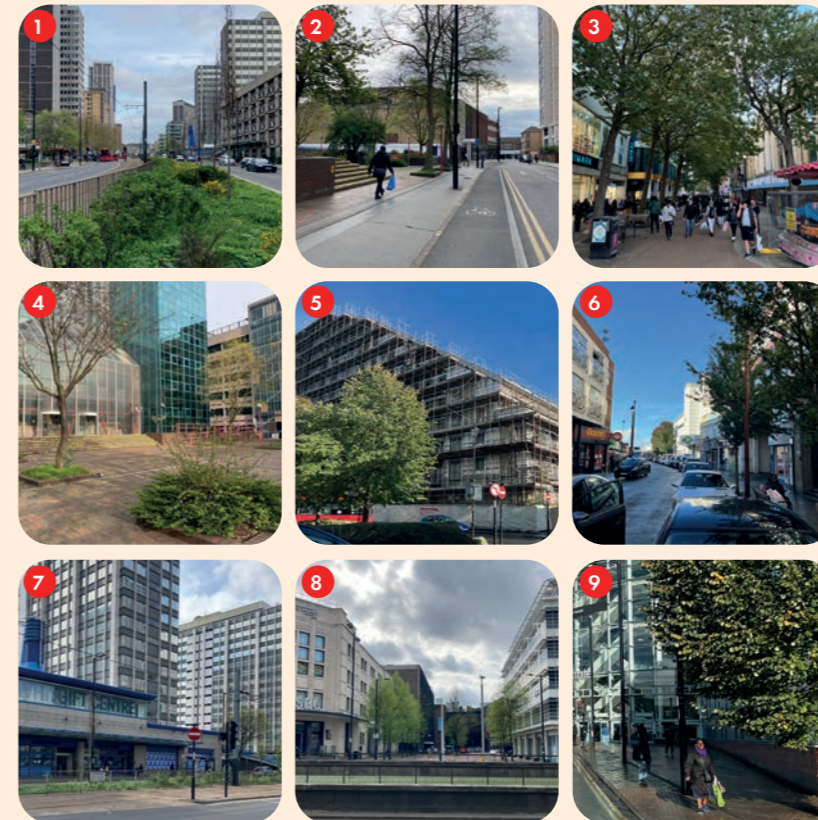
Fig 22 Existing trees and public green spaces in and around the NEQ

**A deficit of greenery**  
In addition to a lack of public spaces, there is also a lack of greenery within the NEQ. While North End, Dingwall Avenue and the public space on Poplar Walk have a number of existing mature trees, there is limited planting elsewhere in the NEQ. While trees support a certain degree of biodiversity, a greater variety of native planting provided in a range of different spaces would help to provide a much richer habitat. Planting within new public spaces could also help to improve natural connections across the urban landscape, facilitating movement of plants and insects, whilst also improving the health and wellbeing of those occupying the NEQ.

North End Quarter's public realm is dominated by hard surfacing. While some streets benefit from mature trees providing colour and shade, the NEQ will require enhanced greening, biodiversity, sustainable urban drainage and shading to become more climate resilient. Existing natural assets should be respected and bolstered through a range of interventions which respond to and enhance the character of open spaces.

### Existing green infrastructure

Whilst urban in character, the NEQ does have some important green infrastructure assets. The pedestrianised part of North End benefits from an axis of mature London Plane trees. Whilst in need of ongoing maintenance, these trees are an important natural asset for the NEQ, particularly given their positions in service-free trenches rather than planters. Other notable assets include planting in the public spaces on Poplar Walk and some landscaping elements along Wellesley Road.



**Existing trees and planting**  
These photos demonstrate the existing planting within the NEQ. While trees and bushes help to soften certain streets and public spaces, the sporadic use of planting along the NEQ's perimeter demonstrates that little consideration has been given to the potential contribution planting can have to the wider network of biodiversity within Croydon. More joined-up and naturalistic planting could help to create a more welcoming and attractive environment for people and wildlife alike.

**Croydon's Local Plan's Strategic Objective 5 calls for new development to both integrate, respect and enhance the borough's natural environment.**



# A new residential community



**Croydon town centre is the Borough’s most sustainable location. With excellent levels of public transport accessibility with easy and convenient access to the widest range of retail and community facilities. Through its long-term transformation, the North End Quarter is perfectly suited to hosting new neighbourhoods and in doing so meeting local housing need.**

### Once a lively neighbourhood

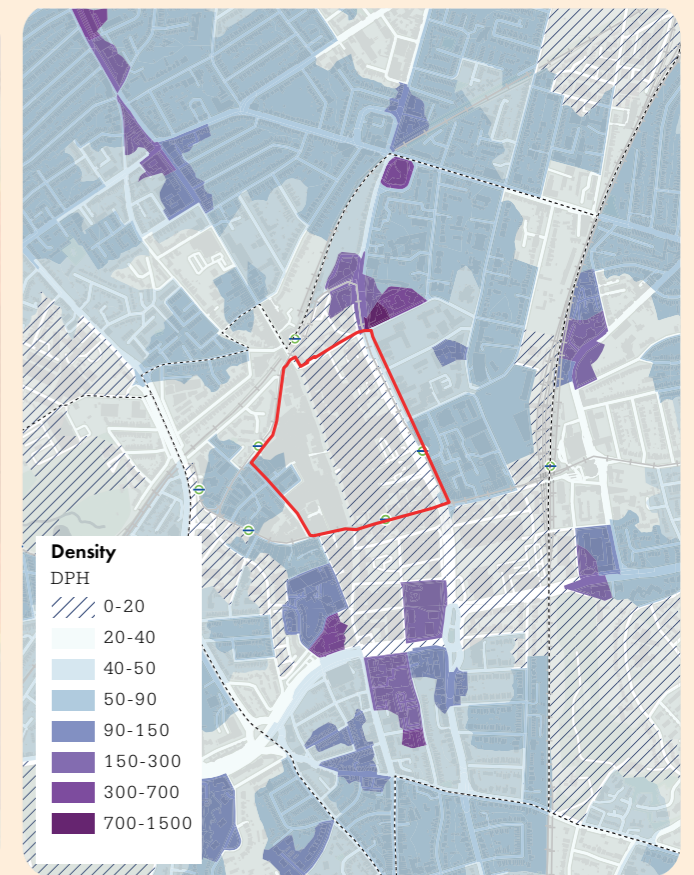
North End itself would once have been a high street neighbourhood with family housing above high street shops and workshops. This mix of uses would have meant the town centre benefited from more activity at all times of day - supporting local shops and other town centre facilities. Transformation of the NEQ can bring some of this former life and energy back into the heart of the town centre.



**Fig 23** Two early views looking north up North End with the former John Whitgift Hospital (now Almshouses) on the right (source: John Whitgift Foundation)



**Fig 24** PTAL levels across the whole of the NEQ



**Fig 25** Housing density, by dwellings per hectare, across the NEQ area

### Excellent public transport connectivity

The entire NEQ area benefits from excellent levels of public transport accessibility. With two mainline railway stations within a few minutes’ walk, the Croydon Tramlink service circling the site and a comprehensive network of local bus services, the centre itself is easily accessible to local neighbourhoods, but residents also benefit from excellent services via the Thameslink, Brighton Mainline and London Gatwick services.

### ...but a low housing density

The opportunity to intensify the delivery of new homes in this sustainable location is highlighted by its very low existing housing density, with the Whitgift Centre part of the site having a typical housing density of between 0 and 20 dph. Transformation should be at housing densities similar to other recent town centre housing developments to ensure effective use of land is made to meet local and wider needs while protecting the environment and ensuring healthy living conditions.



Church Street looking west from the southern end of North End

### Infrastructure investment

The NEQ and Croydon town centre as a whole has suffered from a lack of investment in physical and social infrastructure. The required improvements to infrastructure provision to address existing deficiencies and meet the needs of new occupants are beyond the sole responsibility of development within the NEQ. Coordinated investment and public funding needs to be explored to enable the realisation of development on this complex site.

**Croydon’s Local Plan policy for the North End Quarter Transformation Area sets out an aspiration for new homes and neighbourhoods behind the North End Street frontages**



WHAT

WHY

HOW

### **Aims and principles – HOW the Framework will be delivered**

With the key elements of the framework defined, this section of the Masterplan Framework describes HOW the transformation of the NEQ will be delivered. Aims and principles relating to movement and connections, spaces and places, and uses and activities are outlined. The section continues with principles relating to heritage assets and the scale of development envisaged. Principles around green infrastructure and biodiversity, retention and phasing as well as overarching principles relating to sustainability are outlined. These principles provide the framework for change and will be used to help assess more detailed proposals as they come forward.



# The North End Quarter will aim to...

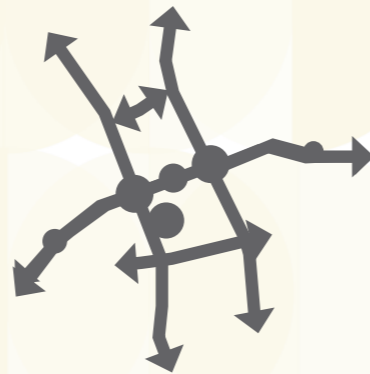
1

**Deliver place-led change**



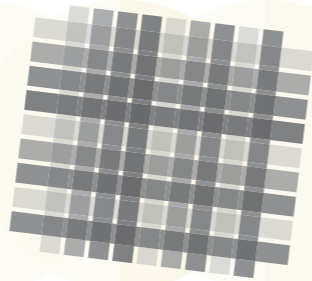
2

**Create a more permeable public realm network of streets and spaces**



3

**Curate and deliver an appropriate mix of uses**



4

**Celebrate local identity, heritage and its setting**



5

**Address scale in a contextual way**



6

**Explore placemaking opportunities which respond to NEQ's unique and varied character**



7

**Provide a mix of high-quality homes**



8

**Strengthen biodiversity and greening**



9

**Resolve access, parking, servicing and infrastructure**



10

**Create a resilient and sustainable Croydon**





# Deliver place-led change

A busy, diverse, stimulating and high-quality town centre is a prerequisite for success. A robust, sustainable, diverse and place-based approach is required, informed by local community and cultural needs alongside commercial and economic drivers which is designed to capitalise on Croydon's diverse strengths, and address its weaknesses. Eight specific principles are identified as part of this aim:

- 1 New East-West link - with a new chain of public spaces
- 2 Wellesley Road to North End Link
- 3 Re-establishing Wellesley Road as a Boulevard
- 4 Strengthen North End as the retail spine
- 5 Improve George Street and Poplar Walk connections
- 6 Create new routes to improve permeability
- 7 Exploring potential routes through Allders Store
- 8 Incremental phasing and supporting meanwhile uses

These are each explored in further detail on the following pages. Whilst transformative, the NEQ's regeneration will not be fully comprehensive. Some buildings and structures will be retained and refurbished - see 10.1 below for more explanation.

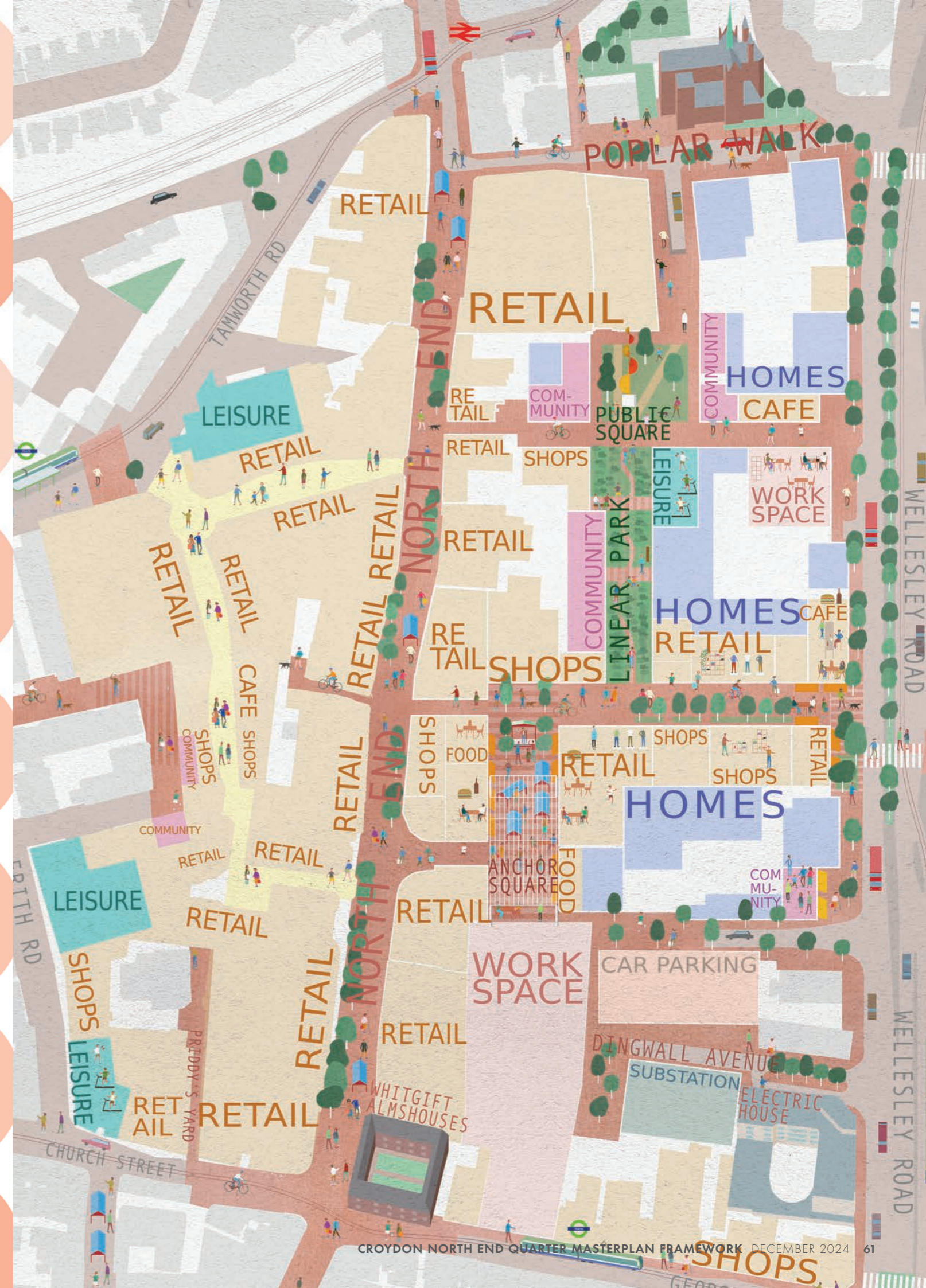
This approach will impact and influence the design and alignment of streets and spaces as well as the distribution of new development across the NEQ.

Working with existing retained assets, including Allders, Centrale Shopping Centre, the Whitgift Centre Basement structure and other buildings, is therefore an integral part of delivering place-led change. It plays a role in protecting heritage, aligning connections, minimising disruption and saving carbon.

## THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE STREET NETWORK IN THE NEQ WILL...

- Celebrate the area's unique commercial, social and physical history - its heritage and identity.
- Be an attractive and high-quality destination in which to live, work and visit.
- Maintain Croydon town centre's strategic role as a Metropolitan Centre with a vibrant mix of retail, leisure and commercial uses and activities.
- Deliver much needed new homes in the heart of the Borough's most sustainable location.
- Be supported by a vibrant community, educational/learning, creative and cultural offer.

Fig 26 Illustrative concept diagram for NEQ's transformation - showing how the NEQ may come forward as part of this Masterplan Framework. Note: This artist's impression represents one option of how the site could come forward. A variety of options will be explored and tested as more detailed design stages are progressed.





# 1.1

## NEW EAST-WEST LINK - A NEW CHAIN OF PUBLIC SPACES

**A strong primary east-west route connecting a radically improved East Croydon Station with North End and beyond to Croydon Old Town will improve permeability, support greater active travel and provide the town centre with a chain of green spaces.**

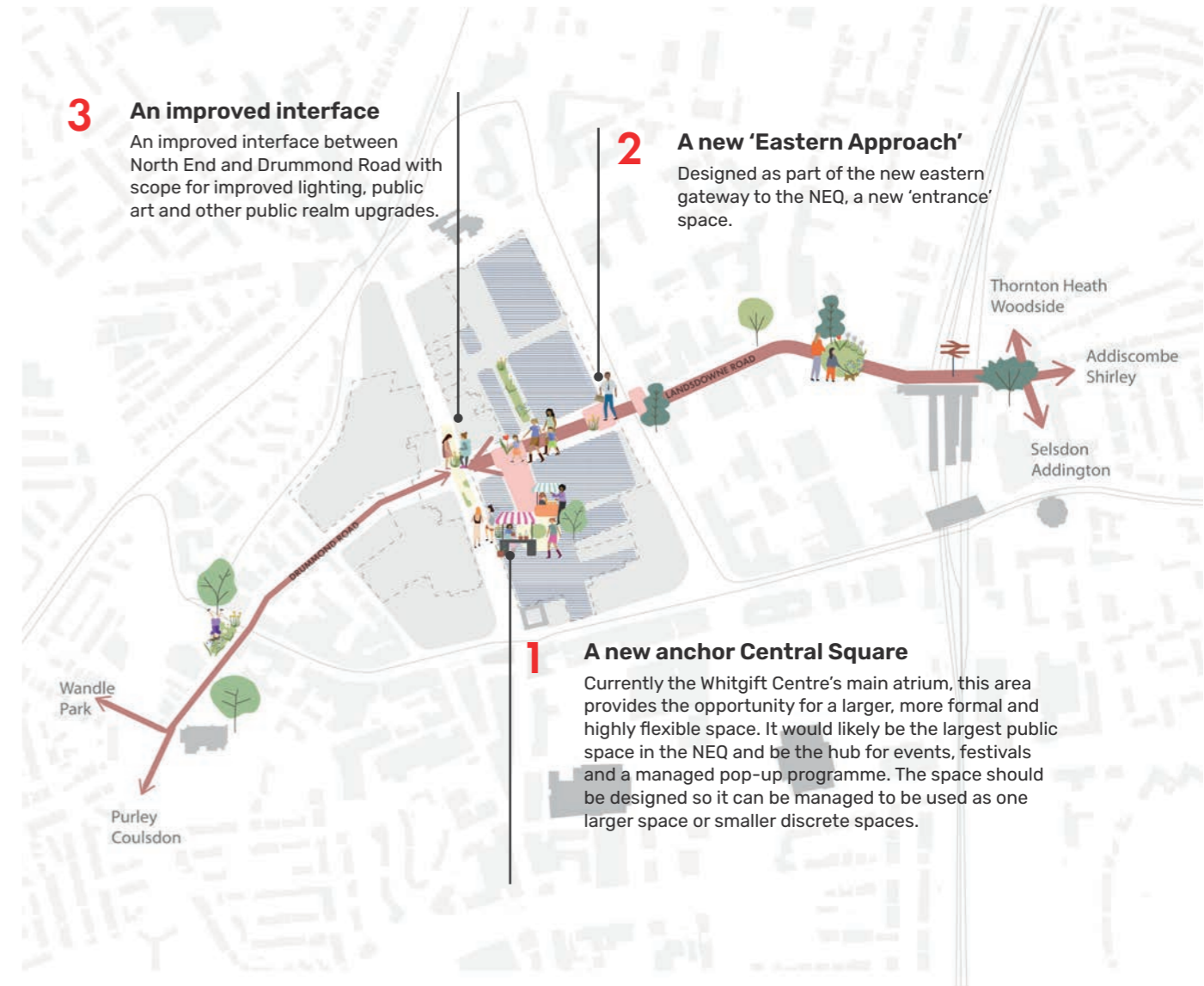
This primary pedestrian route will make a very significant contribution to Croydon's public realm network. It could host a hierarchy of managed spaces as follows, all of which will be open to the public:

- 1 A new large anchor public space in a transformed Whitgift Centre, complementing and supporting a wide range of town centre uses.
- 2 A new 'Eastern Approach' at-grade crossing as part of an improved Wellesley Road.
- 3 An improved interface with the existing alignment of, and, where possible, environmental and public realm improvements along, Drummond Road.

These spaces will be designed to deliver a flexible and varied hierarchy of new public spaces for the NEQ and Croydon as a whole.

They will be managed so they host a varied programme of pop-up events and activities which will complement other events, programmes and festivals in the town centre.

New and improved public spaces will be designed and sized carefully and appropriately for associated pedestrian flows to support community, cultural and commercial events and activities conducive to their respective locations and surrounding characters.



Elephant Park Key route with active frontages and greening © Gillespies

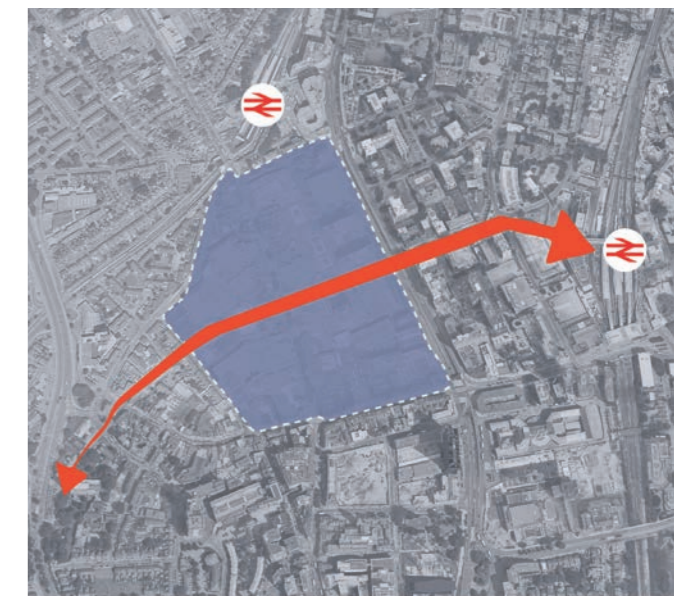


Fig 27 A new primary east-west link through the North End Quarter



# 1.2

## WELLESLEY ROAD TO NORTH END LINK

Securing an open public east-west pedestrian route across the North End Quarter is one of the prime objectives of its transformation.

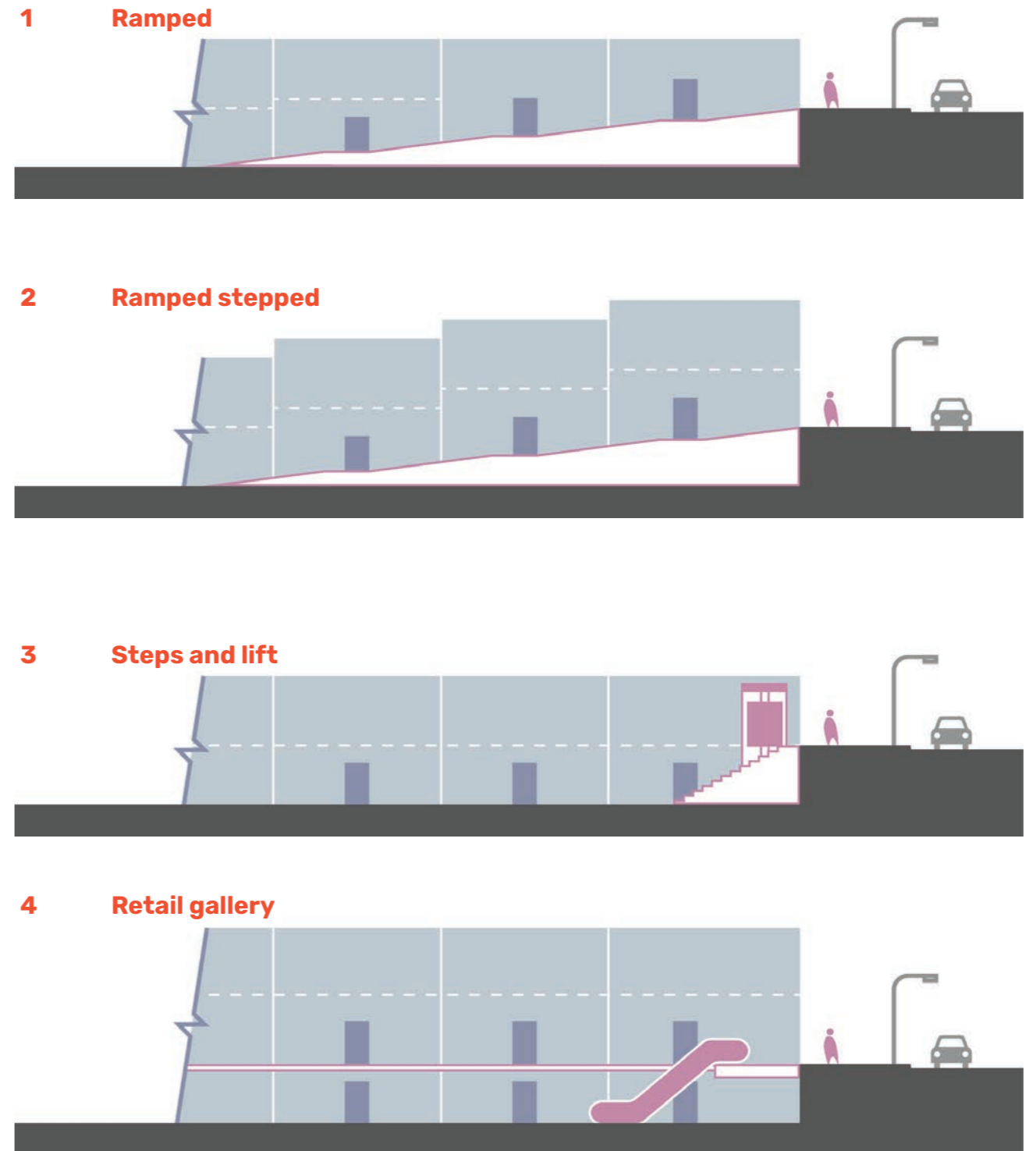
There is a level change of approximately 3 metres between Wellesley Road and North End. The form and nature of the east-west route will need to address the level change between its east and west extents.

In navigating level changes, designs will need to balance the tension between step free and sloped access and the potentially adverse impact on the provision of level, accessible and flexible thresholds to retail units.

Options will need to be considered as more detailed masterplanning studies are progressed. A combination of, and/or variation on, these options may emerge as the optimum final solution.

A refined solution will emerge following more detailed masterplanning and feasibility studies. In principle options for how this level change might be navigated include the following:

- 1 **Ramped**  
Using ramps to navigate the level change, with retail units planned at the same datum level but with internal fit outs designed around each stepped level.
- 2 **Ramped stepped**  
Using ramps to navigate the level change with standard retail units planned at, and accessed from, each stepped level.
- 3 **Steps and lift**  
The level change is navigated once on the route with the use of steps and lifts.
- 4 **Retail gallery**  
Escalators are used to transition between levels at either end of the route, enabling a retail gallery at the high level to extend along its length.



**Fig 28** Concept options for navigating level changes across the proposed primary east-west route



# 1.3

## WELLESLEY ROAD BOULEVARD

Once a tree-line urban street providing access to some of Croydon's historical institutions, various road widening initiatives have left Wellesley Road an urban motorway.

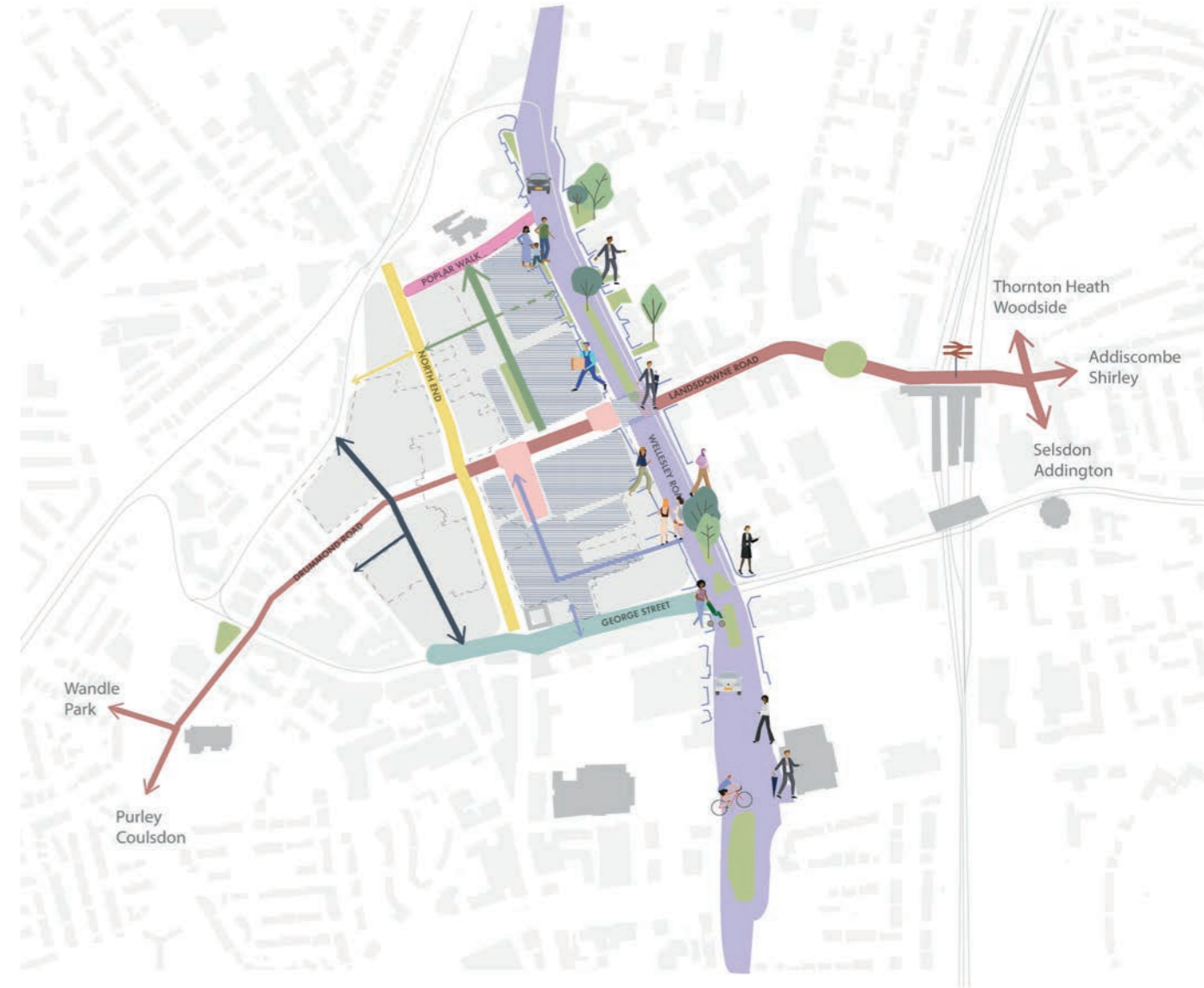
Delivering physical environmental improvements to the Wellesley Road corridor is one of six key public realm principles for Croydon town centre as outlined in the OAPF.

Working with key stakeholders including TfL, the Council are now promoting the delivery of an ambitious public realm and landscaping scheme to transform Wellesley Road into an urban boulevard creating a more people friendly environment in line with OAPF principles. This will be an integral part of wider the transformation of the NEQ and will complement and provide improved connections across the heart of the town centre.

By reconfiguring both the road and its edges, the Wellesley Road corridor will be transformed from an urban motorway barrier into a busy and vibrant urban boulevard, with trees and landscaping, new pedestrian crossings and generous public realm.

Transformation of the NEQ will...

- 1 Deliver a package of improvements designed to address existing constraints which include the impact of the tram route, retaining wall constraints on the eastern flank of the existing Whitgift Centre, the existing car dominated dual carriageway condition of Wellesley Road and existing traffic management arrangements which prioritise vehicular movement over active travel. This may involve a varying of the existing building line / frontages along Wellesley Road.
- 2 Consider how the form and distribution of massing can assist with humanising the Wellesley Road pedestrian environment and mitigating the impact of tall buildings, such as through plinth and tower configurations.
- 3 Explore opportunities for urban greening and tree planting along the length of Wellesley Road in order to address deficiencies in green infrastructure.
- 4 Deliver a major new at-grade pedestrian crossing aligned with Lansdowne Road which will provide good quality connections to East Croydon Station - part of the new primary E-W link.
- 5 Explore the potential for a new crossing on the axis of Sydenham Road. The potential for this to align with an entrance to a new residential neighbourhood as part of the redeveloped Whitgift Centre will be explored.
- 6 Explore scope for improvements to the existing Bedford Park / Poplar Walk crossing, if viable.



New Kent Road Transformation: Example of how a key arterial road can be transformed into a tree-line boulevard and improved environment for pedestrians and cyclists  
Photo: Allies and Morrison



Fig 29 Wellesley Road boulevard







# 1.5

## GEORGE STREET AND POPLAR WALK CONNECTIONS

George Street and Poplar Walk define the NEQ's southern and northern boundary respectively. In doing so, they form an important frame for the NEQ's transformation.

Both routes play a particularly important role in connecting the NEQ with the town's primary public transport hubs, with George Street providing a strategic E-W connection between East Croydon, Reeves Corner and the Croydon Minster beyond.

Both George Street and Poplar are also sensitive in terms of their heritage assets.

Transformation of the NEQ will...

- 1 Support and enable improvements in the pedestrian environment along George Street through the provision of a primary E-W route to the north which provides an alternative high-quality connection with an improved East Croydon Station. These improvements will need to address the dominance and constraints of trams on the pedestrian environment.
- 2 Enhance the Alders Store connectivity to George Street to provide streetscape enhancements and explore, through the adaptation of the former Alders Store building, the potential of delivering links to the redeveloped Whitgift site, Dingwall Avenue and North End.
- 3 Support a potential new link connecting a new residential neighbourhood (delivered through redevelopment of the Whitgift Centre) and Poplar Walk will contribute to an improved network of routes in the town centre.
- 4 Deliver environmental improvements along Poplar Walk through hard and soft landscaping and street trees to help create a high quality and climate resilient public realm.
- 5 Support the principle of using public spaces along Poplar Walk for meanwhile events as part of a meanwhile strategy.
- 6 Explore opportunities to deliver a cycling route along Poplar Walk to improve connections with West Croydon.
- 7 Seek to balance the needs of all future users of Poplar Walk, i.e. pedestrians, cyclists, private and service vehicles.



Key retail street accommodating tram, vehicle and cycling

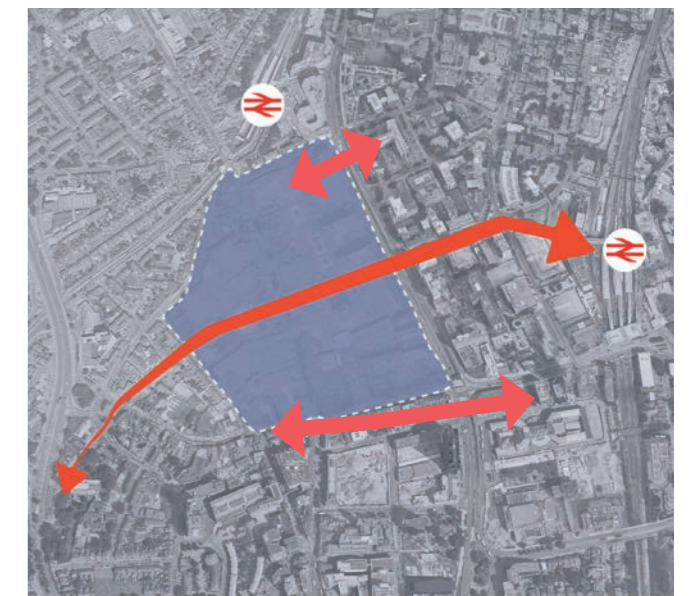


Fig 31 George Street and Poplar Walk connections  
note: blocks shown on all plans are indicative only.



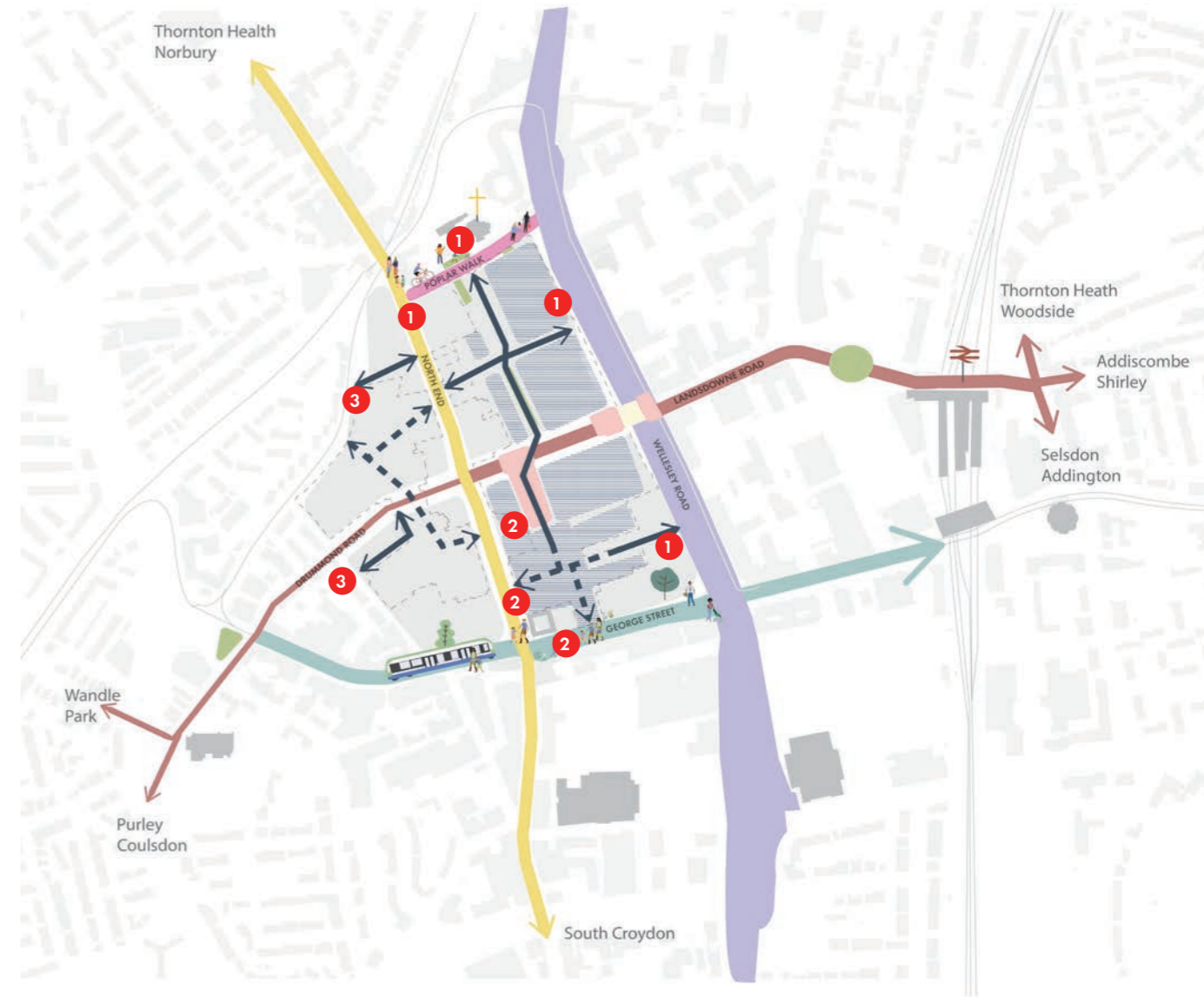
# 1.6

## MINOR CONNECTIONS

To complement the primary new east-west route, the potential for minor routes and connections across the NEQ will be explored, including access through existing buildings to help further improve permeability across the area.

Where it is viable and deliverable, transformation of the NEQ will...

- 1 To the east of North End, explore options to provide new and improved connections between the redeveloped Whitgift Centre and George Street, Wellesley Grove (to Dingwall Avenue) and Walpole Road.
- 2 Particular considerations revolve around resolving the future use of the former Allders Store and servicing arrangements for major new development. This route will be subject to proposals and future occupier requirement.
- 3 Improve and enhance the network of informal, organic routes which characterised the more historic area west of North End at the threshold with Croydon Old Town.
- 4 Support improved connections to and linkages with West Croydon Station and the London Road corridor north of the NEQ.



Elephant Park: Example of a pedestrianised street with active ground floor uses and greening  
© Allies and Morrison



Fig 32 Nurturing minor connections  
note: blocks shown on all plans are indicative only.



# 1.7

## FORMER ALLDERS STORE

The former Alders Store enjoys a prominent position on the corner of George Street and North End.

Building façades on frontages to both these key retail streets contribute positively to the character of the conservation area.

The future adaptation and use of this significant site should explore how routes and connection might be established between the redeveloped Whitgift Centre, George Street, North End and Dingwall Avenue.

Consideration should also be given to how future adaptation can respond to the setting of the adjacent Grade I Listed Whitgift Almshouses, and provide entrances to the varied uses that could come forward throughout the building.

A number of options should be explored, including:

### 1 Historical link

The former Alders Store did historically include a retail arcade route between George Street and North End at ground floor. Could this be reinstated?

### 2 One unit link

Consolidation of the former department store to form one large retail unit at ground floor with other uses above, potentially with a new

physical north-south link at the site's east end, including potentially with Dingwall Avenue.

### 3 Two unit link

Creating a potential pedestrian connection between two separate retail units, one fronting George Street and one North End respectively, at ground floor with other uses above. This link could also potentially open up to Dingwall Avenue.

### 4 Three unit link

This scenario would create three separate retail units of varying size and each with different principal addresses at ground floor with other uses above. A route between them could be formed.

There will be other options which will need to be explored. All options will need to carefully consider the potential heritage impacts of new development and the positive contribution made by parts of the existing elevations of the former Alders Store.

Any link is subject to future occupier needs, if one cannot be provided there is sufficient movement along North End in any event.

Ensuring any public routes are safe and legible is a priority.



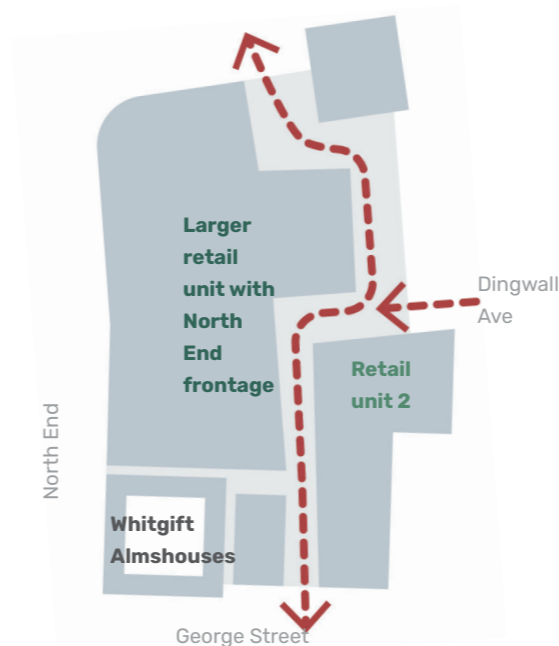
### 1 Historical link

Reinstate the arcade route linking George Street with North End. This approach would recognise the historical arcade, but would be constrained by existing geometries which might undermine the quality of the route.



### 2 One unit link

Create new N-S route between George Street, Dingwall Ave and redevelopment to the north to the west of one large retail use. This option would offer the greatest opportunity to deliver large floor-plates for the refurbished Alders store and would provide a direct and legible connection to Dingwall Avenue.



### 3 Two unit link

Create discrete retail units fronting North End and George Street, with a route between. This approach would capitalise separately on the two primary street frontages. Depending on the layout of the units, the route between might not be direct.



### 4 Three unit link

This approach would create three separate units, potentially with frontages to North End, George Street as well as the redevelopment shopping centre to the north. A route between the units has the potential to be direct, safe and legible but could result in small and unattractive retail units.

Fig 33 Former Alders Store - scoping of potential linkage option



# 1.8

## INCREMENTAL AND PROGRESSIVE PHASING

It will be important to programme the delivery of these phases incrementally to ensure the continued vitality of town centre. Given the scale and complexity of the NEQ's regeneration, later phases may change as the needs of the town centre evolve over time.

The realisation of the regeneration of the NEQ will come forward in a phased manner over many years. Each phase will be required to be part of a comprehensive approach to avoid piecemeal developments which would be prejudicial to the overall vision. The following phasing principles will be important as progress is made:

- 1 Phases will be co-ordinated to ensure the continued vitality of the town centre and minimise disruption to existing tenants and traders. Measures will be put in place to support business continuity during construction.
- 2 Phases should be co-ordinated in a coherent manner so that earlier phases do not prejudice the delivery of later phases - both in terms of physical development and timing.
- 3 An appropriate quantum and mix of land-uses is to be delivered in each phase having recognition of the wider masterplan aspirations.

- 4 Necessary and proportionate social and physical infrastructure is provided to support each phase - with a co-ordinated approach to funding and delivery on a masterplan wide and phase basis.
- 5 Meanwhile uses should be utilised to provide for continued town centre activation during delivery.
- 6 Public and private realm is to be provided - which may include temporary spaces during delivery.
- 7 Car parking management and delivery to be considered - for both the redevelopment and the wider town centre.
- 8 A servicing strategy is required for each phase with key partners working together to, where possible, avoid large stretches of hoarding.
- 9 Pedestrian and cycle access and wayfinding matters need to be addressed.
- 10 Detailed Phasing Strategies are to be provided at the appropriate times.

Given the scale and complexity of the site, it is likely that redevelopment of the Whitgift Centre could take approximately 10 - 15 years. Given these time-scales, the wider masterplan for the NEQ will need to be kept under review in order to meet the evolving needs of the town centre.

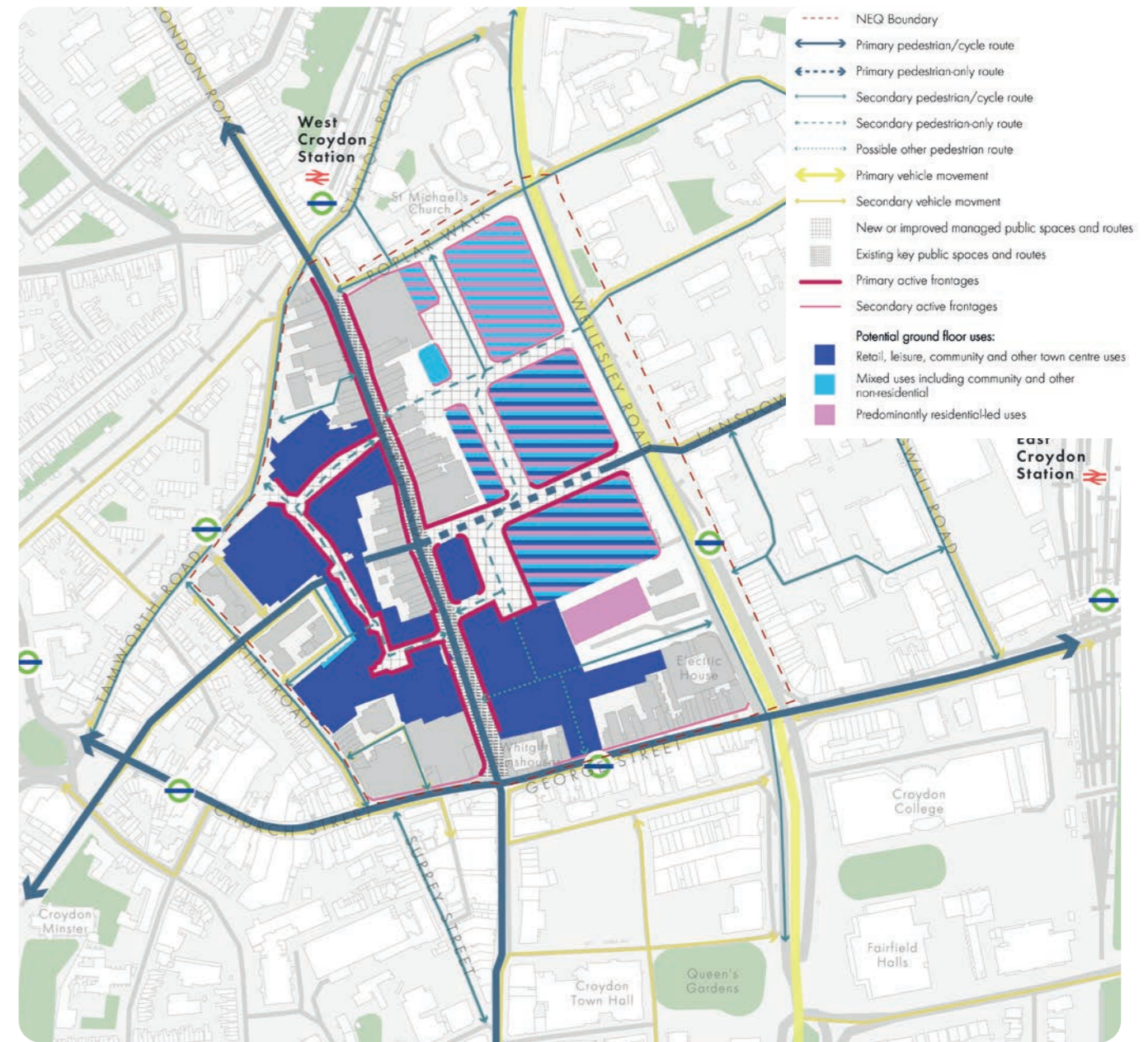
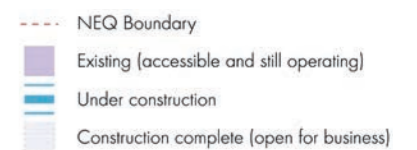


Fig 34 NEQ Masterplan Framework - master diagram  
note: blocks shown on all plans are indicative only.



Fig 35 Principal outline development phases (l-r): Today - Centrale retail consolidation and improvements; Phase 1 Whitgift South under construction; Phase 2 Whitgift North under construction; longer term potential future change, including potential changes at Centrale.





# Create a more permeable public realm network of streets and spaces

A hierarchy of routes and connections will be delivered to help ensure new development in the NEQ is fully integrated with Croydon town centre's wider context.

Primary, secondary and other routes will deliver better quality links and connections with surrounding communities and will improve access to nearby bus and tram stops, rail stations and the wider active travel network. New routes will fulfil criteria relating to accessibility, safety, connectivity and visual legibility.

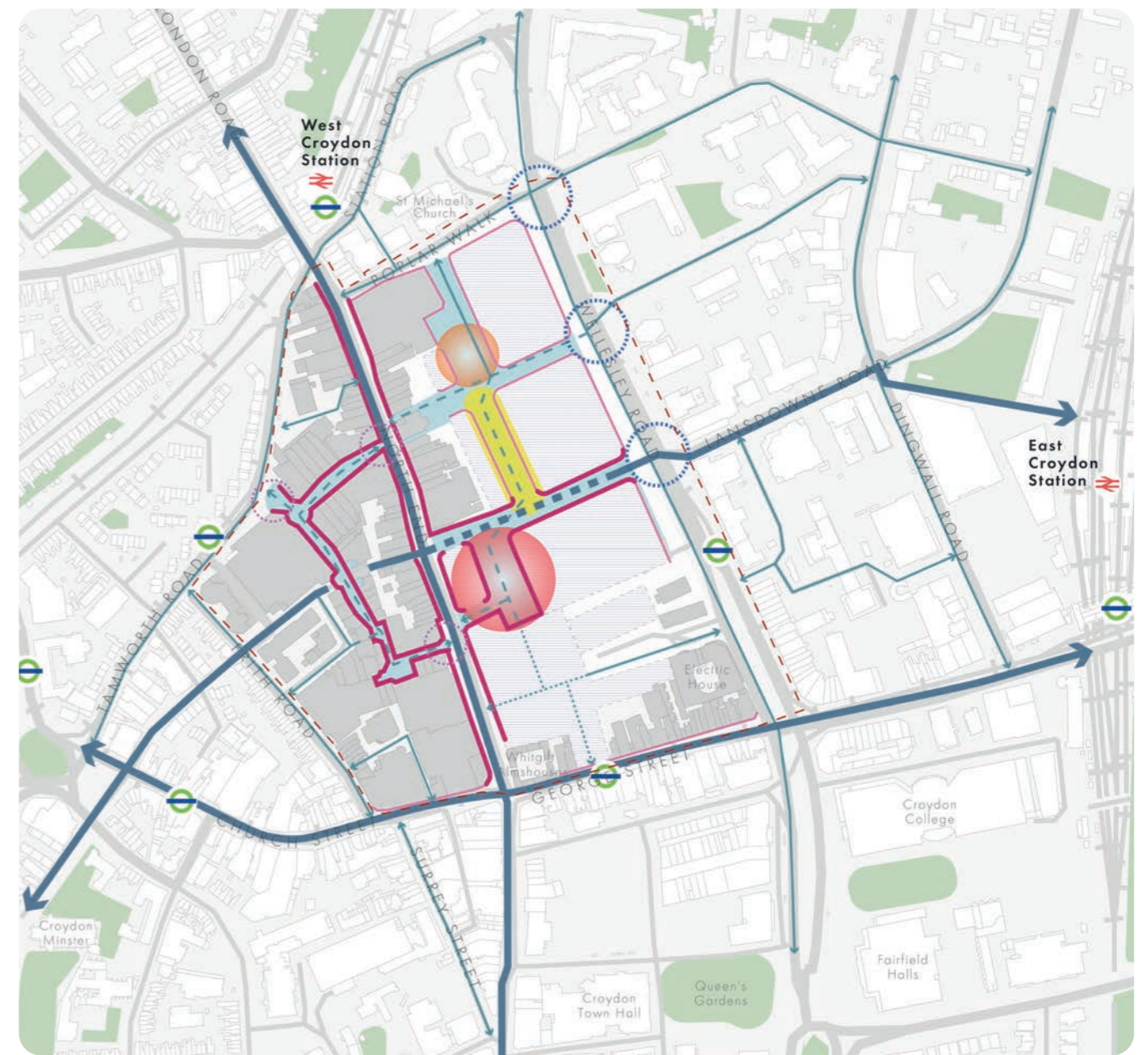
The emerging Local Plan NEQ policy seeks the establishment of new routes through the town centre, including a north-south route east of the North End façade and east-west routes providing links to existing streets and facilities either side of the shopping centres.

Seven specific principles are identified as part of this aim. These are each explored on the following pages:

- 1 Hierarchy of pedestrian routes
- 2 Cycle routes
- 3 Hierarchy of public and private spaces
- 4 A new anchor space
- 5 Other types of spaces
- 6 Principles for hard and soft landscaping within spaces and streets
- 7 Principles for the provision of play space and private amenity

## THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE STREET NETWORK IN THE NEQ WILL...

- Deliver a new, public route which directly connects Lansdowne Road (and East Croydon beyond) with Drummond Road (and Croydon Old Town beyond) via North End.
- Deliver public realm improvements to Drummond Road such as lighting, signage and potentially public art installations.
- Improve secondary connections between Poplar Walk and the new primary E-W link, which will support a new town centre neighbourhood. If possible, this connection will closely align with Sydenham Road and provide a link to upper North End.
- Consider the viability of establishing public routes through the site of the former Allders store.
- Provide 'step free' public streets that aid direct journeys. Where possible they will be lined with uses and activities which bring street activity and passive surveillance throughout the day and night.



**Fig 36** Existing and potential evolution of a new route hierarchy for the NEQ  
*note: blacks shown on all plans are indicative only.*

- NEQ Boundary
- Anchor public space
- Public space
- Linear park
- New or improved public realm
- Improved entranceways
- Potential new or improved crossing
- Primary active frontage
- Secondary active frontage
- ➡ Primary pedestrian/cycle route
- ➡ Primary pedestrian-only route
- ➡ Secondary pedestrian/cycle route
- ➡ Secondary pedestrian-only route
- ➡ Possible other pedestrian route



# 2.1

## HIERARCHY OF PEDESTRIAN ROUTES

The NEQ's transformation will see the delivery of an open, accessible, legible and safe pedestrian network of routes which properly integrates the NEQ into the wider town centre network.

Transformation of the NEQ will...

- 1 Deliver an open, accessible and direct E-W pedestrian route. This will be a generous route, open 24 hours, which successfully navigates the level difference across the site.
- 2 The E-W route will continue west of North End on the alignment of Drummond Road and enhancements to the pedestrian environment will be explored.
- 3 East of North End and north of the E-W link, a smaller network of local pedestrian routes will be created within each of the new residential neighbourhoods providing local access and connections and, ideally, a new link north to Poplar Walk.
- 4 Explore ways to refurbish the former Allders Store and in doing so seek to establish new routes through the site connecting with the new E-W link, Dingwall Avenue and North End itself if possible.



**Fig 37** Potential pedestrian route hierarchy for the NEQ  
note: blocks shown on all plans are indicative only.

- NEQ Boundary
- Primary pedestrian/cycle route
- Primary pedestrian-only route
- Secondary pedestrian/cycle route
- Secondary pedestrian-only route
- ..... Possible other pedestrian route



# 2.2

## CYCLE ROUTES

The NEQ's transformation will see the delivery of cycle infrastructure and route upgrades to help support modal shift and support more sustainable patterns of behaviour.

Transformation of the NEQ will...

- 1 Retain and improve the cycle route along the length of North End.
- 2 Investigate with relevant landowners and TfL the opportunity to deliver a new cycle route as part of the upgrades being progressed along Wellesley Road.
- 3 Dedicated cycle parking and docking stations will be provided throughout the NEQ.
- 4 Secure and integrated cycle parking facilities will be provided for all residential dwellings in accordance with parking standards.



**Fig 38** Existing and potential evolution of a new route hierarchy for the NEQ  
*note: blocks shown on all plans are indicative only.*

--- NEQ Boundary  
 → Cycle movement



# 2.3

## HIERARCHY OF PUBLIC SPACES

A hierarchy of routes and spaces will be delivered to help improve the environmental quality of the town centre and support and complement the diverse uses and activities around them.

As future detailed design proposals are progressed, making provision for the needs of all users will be a key consideration in the design of routes and spaces. This will include creating good quality and convenient, accessible solutions to how level changes across the site are addressed.

Where possible, the aspiration will be that new spaces are designed and managed to reflect the principles outlined in the GLA's Public London Charter.

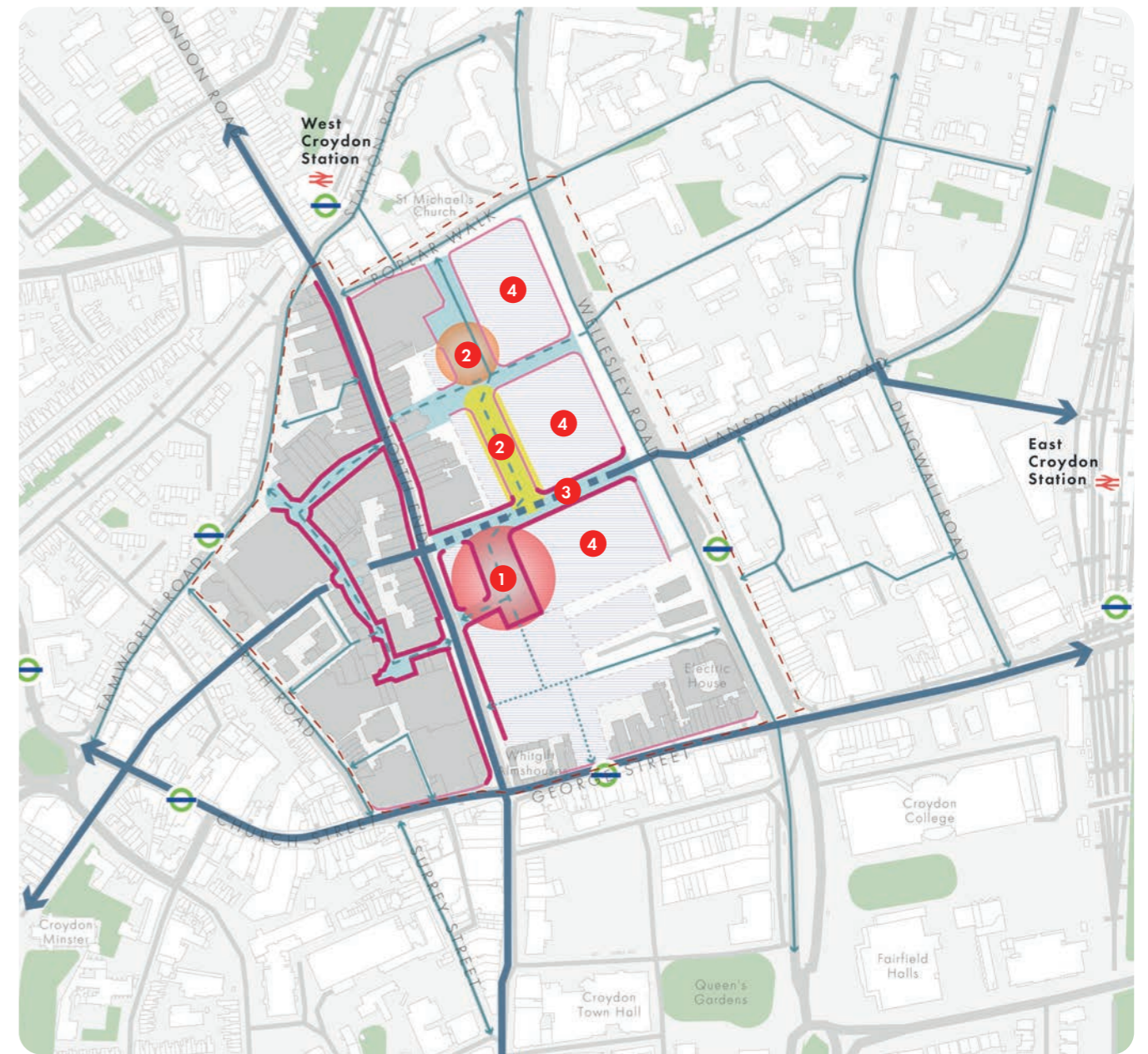
An integrated network of accessible public open spaces, semi-public and private landscaped areas – each with distinctive scale, character and purpose – will collectively form the focal point of outdoor activities. The character, scale and type of each space will be defined by their location and edges, and their proposed functions:

- 1 **Anchor public space**
- 2 **A Linear Park and new public spaces**
- 3 **A new Eastern approach**
- 4 **Private and shared amenity**

The redevelopment and renovation of the NEQ provides an opportunity to broaden the range of cultural and social events and activities within the town centre. The busyness of North End and scale of the Whitgift site can support a major new public space that has the flexibility to contain commercial uses, an event space or other installations that can be programmed with the major festivals that already form part of Croydon's cultural life. Alongside this primary new square, other small plazas and spaces permeate the rest of the commercial development to provide space for cafes and restaurants to spill out, or provide benches for lunch, socialising and relaxation outside the new workplaces.

New public spaces will be managed so as to support a programme of special events and activities to help draw in visitors and expand the public offer. The programme and events to be hosted in these spaces should be developed collaboratively with stakeholders and captured within an agreed Community Plan.

Spaces should be managed through the use of well-considered and responsive long-term management and maintenance strategies.



**Fig 39** North End Quarter public realm framework  
note: blocks shown on all plans and areas of public realm are indicative only.

- NEQ Boundary
- Anchor public space
- Public space
- Linear park
- New or improved public realm
- Primary active frontage
- Secondary active frontage
- Primary pedestrian/cycle route
- Primary pedestrian-only route
- Secondary pedestrian/cycle route
- Secondary pedestrian-only route



# 2.4

## A NEW PUBLIC ANCHOR SPACE

A generously scaled new anchor space, in the approximate location of the Whitgift Centre's existing main atrium, would likely be the largest public space in the NEQ and be a major hub for events, festivals and a curated pop-up programme.

It would be an accessible and inclusive open space that serves residents of and visitors to the NEQ and wider Croydon Opportunity Area.

Located immediately adjacent to busy North End and intersected by the new E-W route, this space could become a focus for the new mixed-use district framed by retail with ancillary food and drink uses to support an active daytime and evening economy.

The scale and form of this new anchor space will be defined as more detailed masterplanning is progressed. However, the existing Whitgift structure and basement arrangement provide some constraints. Some concept options include:

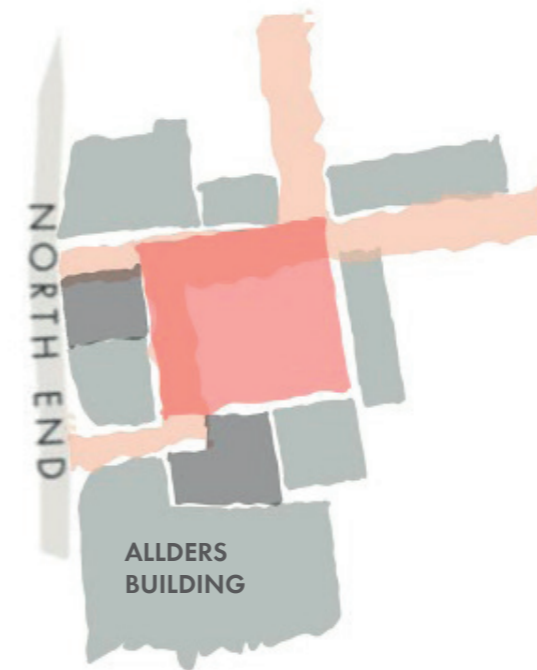
**1 Square:** This could sit alongside the main E-W route and the short route parallel to North End. It could be flanked by existing and new active frontages. Whilst it would be a generous space, its square proportions might result in the space feeling large and over-scaled, potentially undermining the user experience. It would provide good

connections to adjacent spaces and routes immediately but retail frontage on the eastern edge would be some distance from the North End's primary retail frontage and consequently might not integrate with North End as well as it could.

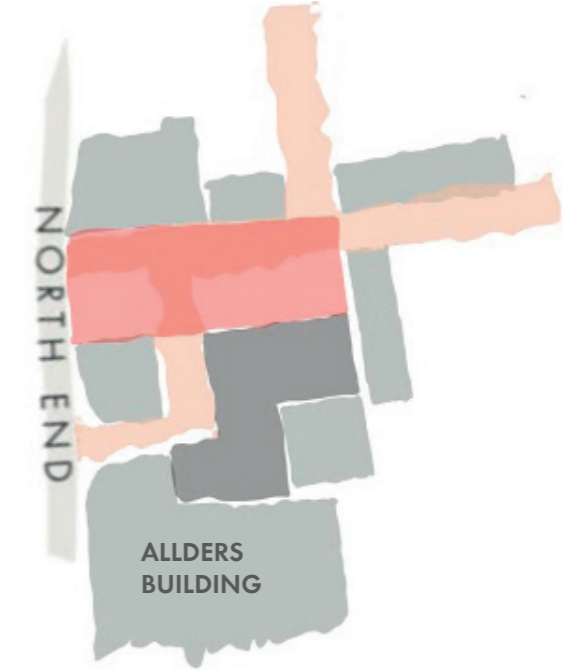
**2 East-west:** This space could be aligned east-west along the axis of the new E-W route. It could be an extension of a major new connection with North End and be flanked by new active frontage on the southern side. Whilst it would align well with the natural flow of pedestrians, its flexibility may be compromised with the space being as much a route as it would be a public space.

**3 North-south:** This alignment could sit parallel to North End but could share its northern short side with the new E-W route. In programming events and activities, the roles of the space as a route and a space would be more complementary, with less conflict between these two primary roles. The space could be flanked by existing and new active frontage. The space could also lead to a new connection with the refurbished former Allders site.

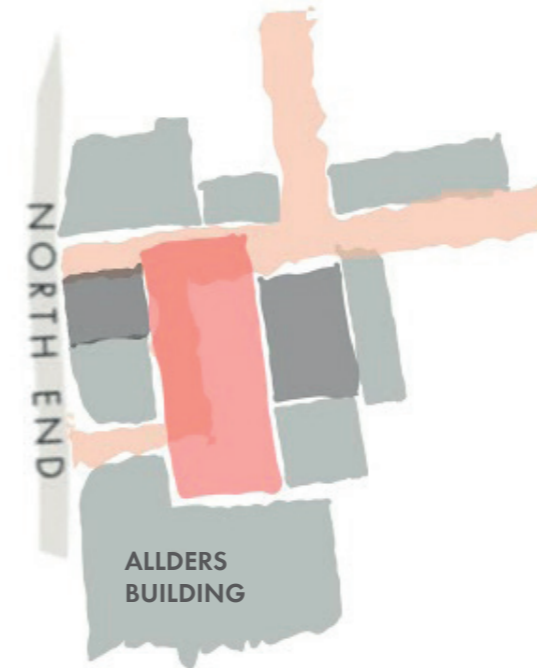
**4 Diagonal:** The triangular geometry could seek to forge strong connection between spaces, thus supporting linkages and integration of the new public realm network. However, the resultant new floorspace would likely be provided in less efficient form which could undermine its commercial success.



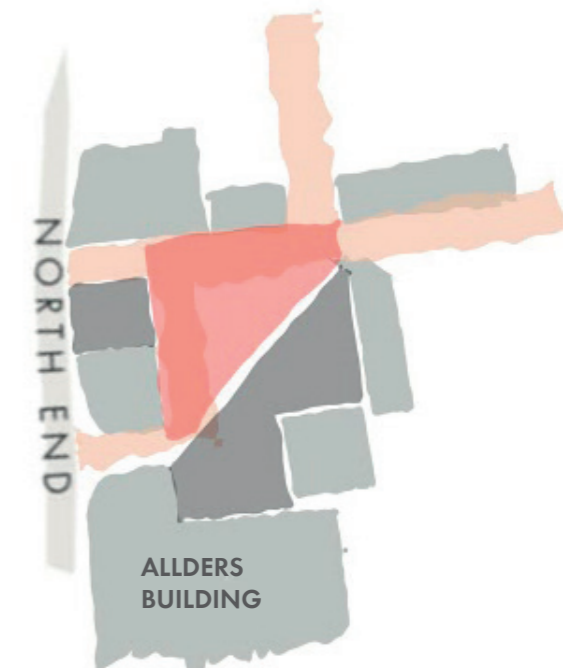
**1 Square**  
Large and flexible, but could feel large and potentially disconnected so would need careful programming



**2 East-west**  
Integrated with the proposed E-W route, but perhaps resulting in route vs space conflicts



**3 North-south**  
Connected with but adjacent to the proposed E-W route, a large a flexible space running parallel with North End. Connections to new routes the north may not be as legible and direct as other options



**4 Diagonal**  
Emphasis placed on the securing good quality connections between new spaces, but perhaps at the expense of space efficiency

**Fig 40** Concept studies exploring the shape, orientation and alignment of the proposed new anchor public space (note that these options are linked to options regarding the potential retention of the Allders building which may impose certain constraints to the anchor space arrangement)



# 2.5

## OTHER KEY TYPES OF SPACES

### 1 A linear park and new community spaces

Structured around a sequence of green spaces, the central north-south spine and eastern parts of the Whitgift centre could form a new residential neighbourhood. A linear, north-south route could connect the new east-west route to the south with a new landscaped pocket community space at the northern end of Whitgift, where new community facilities could be positioned as appropriate to benefit existing and future residents. More modestly scaled than the main central square, this could be a more discreet space serving new and existing residents.

These spaces could provide scope for soft landscaping and designed to support rich biodiversity. They could be informal spaces, with facilities to encourage small meetings and conversations, made safe by being overlooked by windows and doors.

### 2 A new eastern approach

Designed as part of the new eastern gateway to the NEQ, a new Wellesley Road 'entrance' space could meet the major new at-grade pedestrian crossing aligned with Lansdowne Road to the east, making the route towards East Croydon Station. With a wayfinding role, this space could welcome pedestrians entering the site from the east. Commercial and retail uses would likely face onto this space.

This space could primarily be designed, used and managed as a route, flanked along its length by active frontage and town centre uses. It will be a busy space, with high columns of pedestrian movement.

This route will need to navigate a significant level change which is explored in Fig 28 on page 65.

### 3 Private and shared amenity

Each new home within the transformed NEQ will have access to private and shared amenity space. This could be provided through a variety of space typologies ranging from private balconies, shared roof terraces and shared courtyard spaces.

These spaces will be quiet, private, intimate spaces and managed spaces with no access to the general public. There will be opportunities to incorporate features which support sustainable urban drainage and biodiversity.

"Ensuring well-maintained public spaces, with adequate lighting and regular cleaning, is crucial to making the area feel safe and welcoming for everyone."  
 - Feedback from a member of the public at an engagement event



Covent Garden (Source: Visit London)



Bishop's Square, Spitalfields (Source: Foster + Partners)



Canon's Marsh, (Source: Bristol City Council)



Kensal Road (© Tim Crocker)

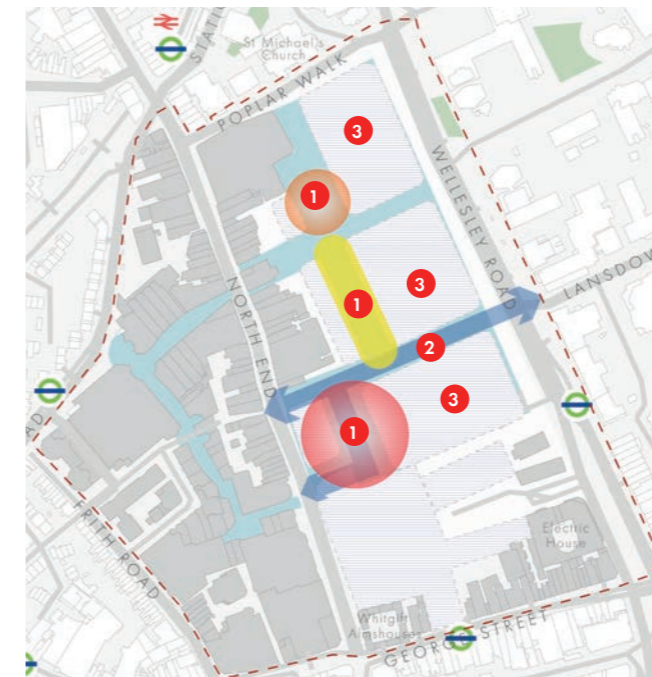


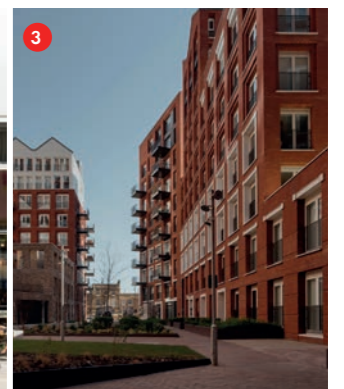
Fig 41 North End Quarter public realm framework



St Andrews, Bow (© Allies and Morrison)



Bankside (© Allies and Morrison)



Keybridge House (© Allies and Morrison)



# 2.6

## PRINCIPLES FOR THE INCLUSION OF HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING WITHIN SPACES AND STREETS

**Varied approaches to hard and soft landscaping, appropriate to each of the principal streets and secondary spaces, will inform the spatial hierarchy of streets and spaces, and will create cohesion, orientation and legibility across the NEQ. The Croydon Public Realm Design Guide will be a key reference document.**

- 1 Public realm designs will be characterful and will strive to reinforce distinctive difference between places; but also be functional and inclusive to all users by providing curated street furniture, placed in considered positions that retain clear movement for people and create an accessible environment for all users.
- 2 Designs will be context-led, responding to the function and character of the different places, seeking to demonstrate understanding of local character, create public realm that contributes positively to the existing context, and celebrating where appropriate, existing heritage and local assets.
- 3 Street upgrades will seek opportunities to create green and climate resilient streetscapes. In combination with trees, planting could be used to define contrast between different places and neighbourhoods.
- 4 The public realm will seek to increase nature and biodiversity within the masterplan. This might include the incorporation of planting in ways that ensures healthy long term growth - e.g. positioning plants according to their micro-climate needs and providing sufficient root soil volume for trees to grow; incorporation of urban greening where appropriate in the public realm to support everyday activities and create visually attractive environments; the use of planting to improve the micro-climate - for example, providing shade, reducing wind exposure and mitigating urban heat island effect.
- 5 Areas of public realm built over existing basement or new podium should seek to provide planting as appropriate and feasible considering soil depth and loading capacity of their specific location. Consideration should be given to the most appropriate way to achieve greening in these locations - such as locating trees in areas where the structure below is able to accommodate them.
- 6 Planting should always be balanced with the functional needs of the public realm - ensuring planting zones are not obstructive and plants species are fit for purpose - e.g. robust plants used in high-footfall areas and plant species that can capture air pollutants located adjacent to busy vehicular areas.
- 7 Hard and soft landscape spaces will be subject to a bespoke management regime.



Pavilion Road, London (Source: Stiff + Trevillion)



Eltham High Street (@East.uk)



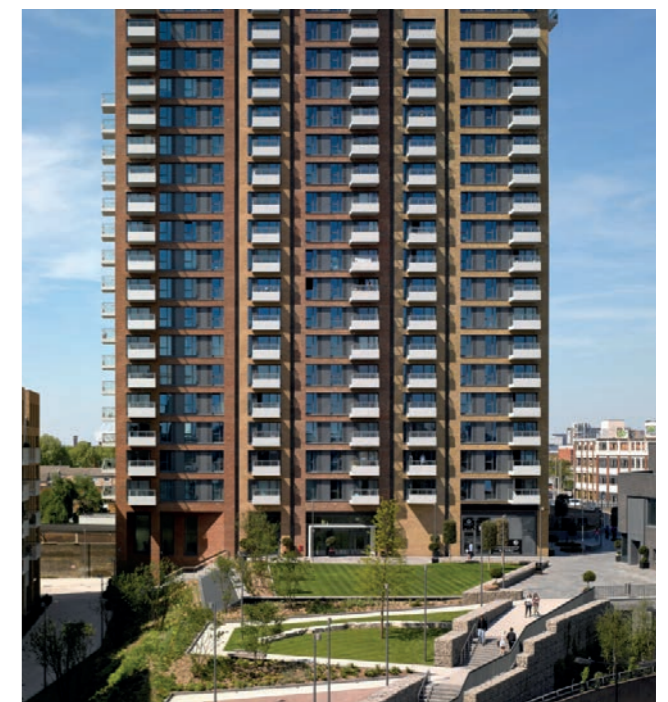
Grey to green, Sheffield (@Nigel Dunnett)



Nine Elms internal courtyard podium garden (@ Jake Hobhouse)



Woonerf Street, Netherlands (@Allies and Morrison)



St Andrew's podium level public garden (@ Edmund Sumner)



# 2.7

## PRINCIPLES FOR THE PROVISION OF PLAY SPACE AND PRIVATE AMENITY

**Appropriate play space, associated with the new residential development, should seek to provide opportunities for play and informal recreation.**

- 1 Designs should seek to provide a stimulating environment that can be accessed safely, is overlooked to provide passive surveillance. Play space should incorporate both formal play as well as incidental play - which might include trees or other forms of greenery.
- 2 Play areas should be designed to include areas which appeal to various age groups of children and teens.
- 3 Play areas should be fully accessible between dawn and dusk.
- 4 Play areas should include a significant component of soft landscape and 'nature play'.
- 5 Play areas should be designed to have different landscape characters and different activities on offer.
- 6 Play areas should be designed to have different landscape characters and different activities on offer.
- 7 'Play along the way' facilities could be provided, within the wider public realm and public spaces as well as discreet play spaces for more private courtyards.
- 8 Blue and green infrastructure should be an integral part of public realm proposals to help support biodiversity networks and connects with the wider green grid.
- 9 Bespoke maintenance arrangements should be put in place to ensure play spaces remain safe, and attractive.



Fitness trail play



Wakenwerksplaats, Amsterdam



Beuningenplein Playground, Amsterdam (Source: Carve Landscape Architecture)



West Hendon, podium level garden with play equipments (© Allies and Morrison)



Playground, Amsterdam



Play along the way' space, Dujardin Mews, Enfield (© Allies and Morrison)



# Celebrate local identity and its setting

Croydon is currently experiencing a second phase of modern redevelopment which is encouraged by the town centre's status as a Metropolitan Centre, and the identification of the Croydon Opportunity Area. The town centre now comprises a vibrant mix of historic, post-war, and modern development accommodating a range of residential and commercial uses. This includes the recent delivery of Ten Degrees (delivered by Greystar), the adjacent Enclave development, Saffron Square (delivered by Berkeley Group) and Queens Quarter (a collaboration between HUB and Bridges Fund Management).

The NEQ area is framed to the south by the Central Croydon Conservation Area, which also runs up North End, taking in many of the historic buildings which line this street. A number of these historic buildings are locally listed, and consideration should be given to the setting of these and the wider Conservation Area. A significant number of locally listed buildings also exist along George Street and Church Street which bound the NEQ to the south. Draft Local Plan Policy NEQ DM1 seeks to retain and enhance the existing façade of the former Allders Department Store.

3 specific principles are identified as part of this aim:

- 1 Improving local character
- 2 Responding to local context
- 3 Considering appropriate scales for buildings

## THE NEQ WILL CELEBRATE AND IMPROVE LOCAL CHARACTER BY...

- Ensuring new development proposals protect the setting of heritage assets and their special local character.
- Balancing the need for transformational and comprehensive change
- Looking for cues in the historic urban landscape to inform a restitching of streets and routes
- Being informed by townscape and views in consideration of massing and height



The Surrey Street Pumping Station



Rear view of St Michael and All Angels



Station Road mixed use re-development



The George Street entrance to the former Allders Store



1910: View north east across the private Almshouses courtyard (Source: John Whitgift Foundation)



Today: View north east across the private Almshouses courtyard (Source: John Whitgift Foundation)



Parish Church of St Michael and All Angel

Photos: Allies and Morrison



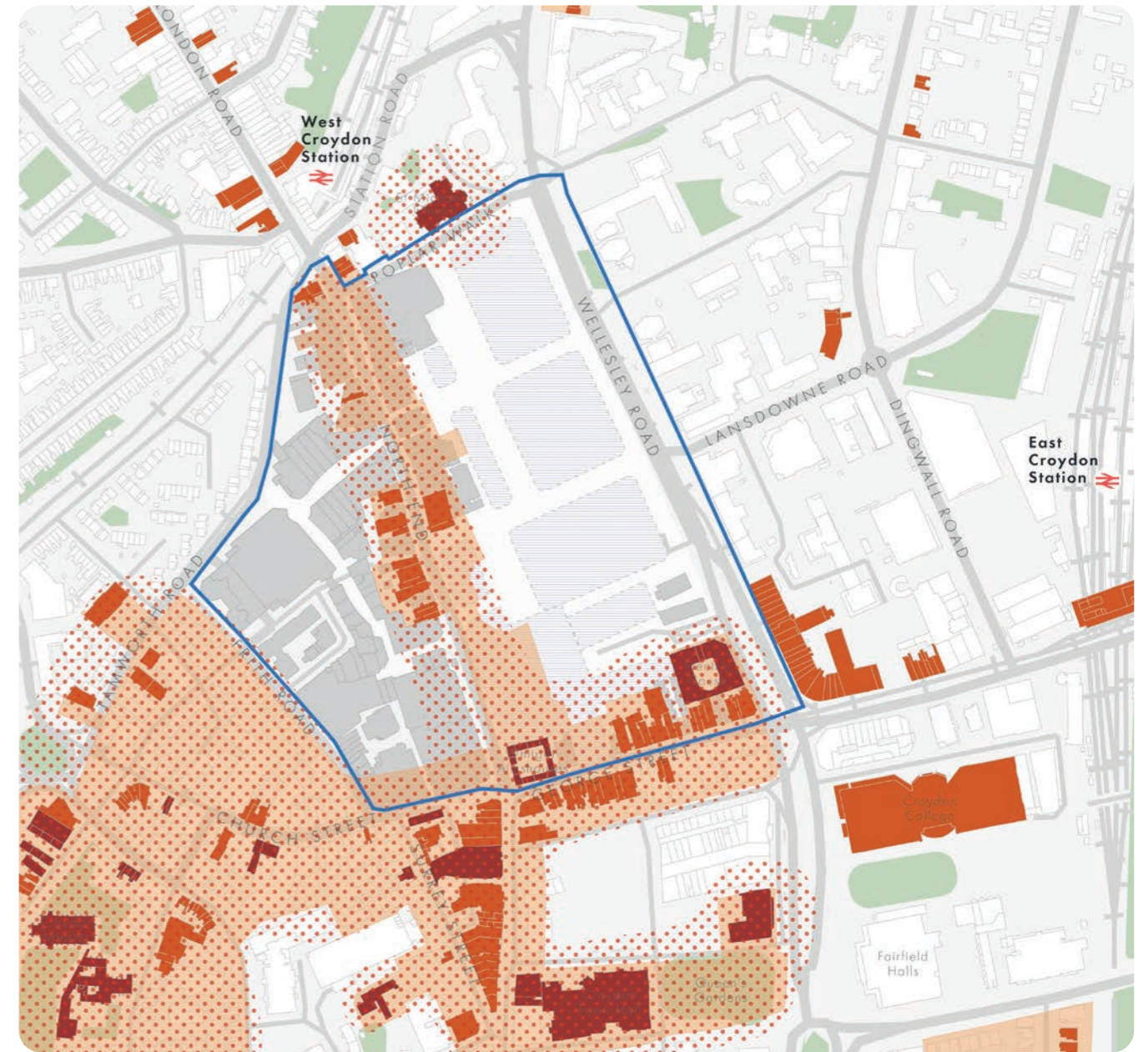
# 3.1

## IMPROVING LOCAL CHARACTER

The NEQ has a number of important heritage assets, both within it and surrounding it. These heritage assets make a positive contribution to the area's townscape setting and help to reinforce its special character and identity. New development should respond positively to these heritage assets, and be mindful of any potential impact to their setting.

Transformation of the NEQ will...

- 1 Ensure new development proposals protect the setting of heritage assets and their special local character.
- 2 Balance the need for transformational and comprehensive change with the need to preserve or enhance the special character of Central Croydon Conservation Area and heritage assets.
- 3 Take care to explore the impact of new development on formally identified views and other views shown to be important. These studies will help inform massing studies and the form of development so that the impact on these important views is either positive or neutral.
- 4 Consider how the design and delivery of new or improved public realm could preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Central Croydon Conservation Area and the wider town centre. Particular opportunities in this regard may come forward in the planning and delivery of the proposed E-W link as it meets North End from the east. The setting of St. Michael's Church and the quality of the public realm around it will also be a key consideration.
- 5 The public realm has a huge impact on the quality of local townscape. Investment and improvement in public realm - in streets and spaces - throughout the NEQ has huge potential to make a positive contribution to the town.



**Fig 42** Designated heritage assets and associated areas of townscape sensitivity  
note: blocks shown on all plans are indicative only.

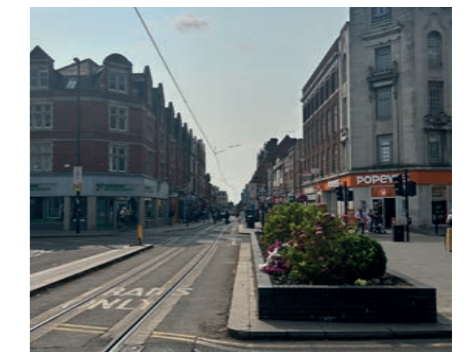
- NEQ Boundary
- Conservation area
- Statutory listed buildings
- Locally listed buildings
- Area of identified townscape sensitivity



Towards Almshouses from Church Street



NLA tower from George Street



Croydon Minster along George Street from Wellesley Road

Photos showing the impact of the public realm on the character of conservation areas



# 3.2

## RESPONDING TO LOCAL CONTEXT

As well as responding to and respecting, local heritage and character, development should take opportunities to celebrate these assets, as well as Croydon's unique identity and social and cultural heritage.

An example of some of Croydon's key heritage assets and how their respective settings could be preserved or enhanced is set out below.

**St Michael and All Angels Church**

The priority issue here will be the opportunity to protect the setting of this Grade 1 Listed Building which falls outside the Central Croydon Conservation Area. Massing will be a key consideration in this location, with opportunities to improve the quality of streetscape along Poplar Walk and open up long range views of the church.

**The Hospital of the Holy Trinity (Whitgift Hospital, the almshouse)**

Views from within the almshouse will be the key consideration here. There is already a contrast in scales between this two-storey 16th century structure and the adjacent shopping centre. A stepped layering of massing with careful consideration of overlooking issues will be required.

**Electricity Showrooms**

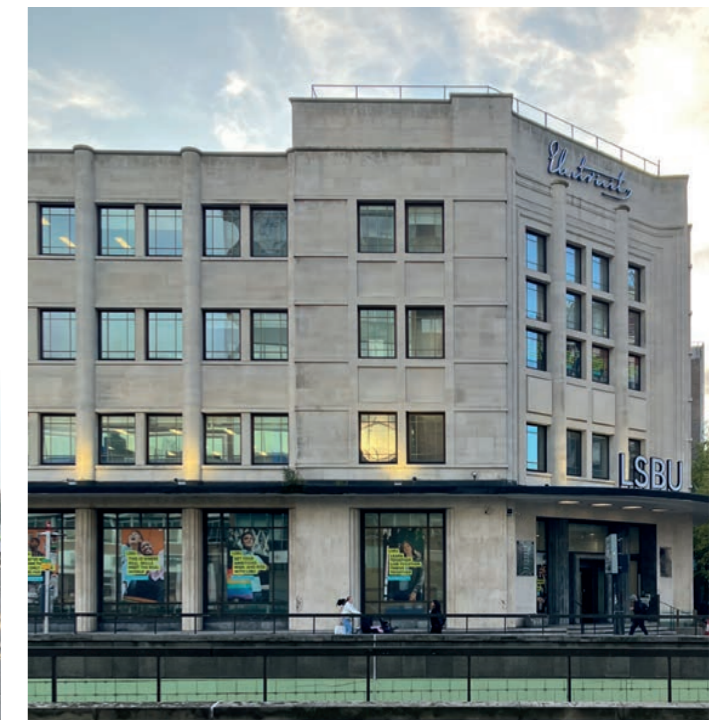
This building enjoys a prominent location on Wellesley Road, addressing the corner of Dingwall Avenue. The opportunity to preserve, re-frame and improve the setting of this listed building will be explored, respecting prominent views towards it from the north.



The Hospital of the Holy Trinity (Whitgift Hospital, the almshouse)



Parish Church of St Michael and All Angel



Electricity Showrooms and Offices



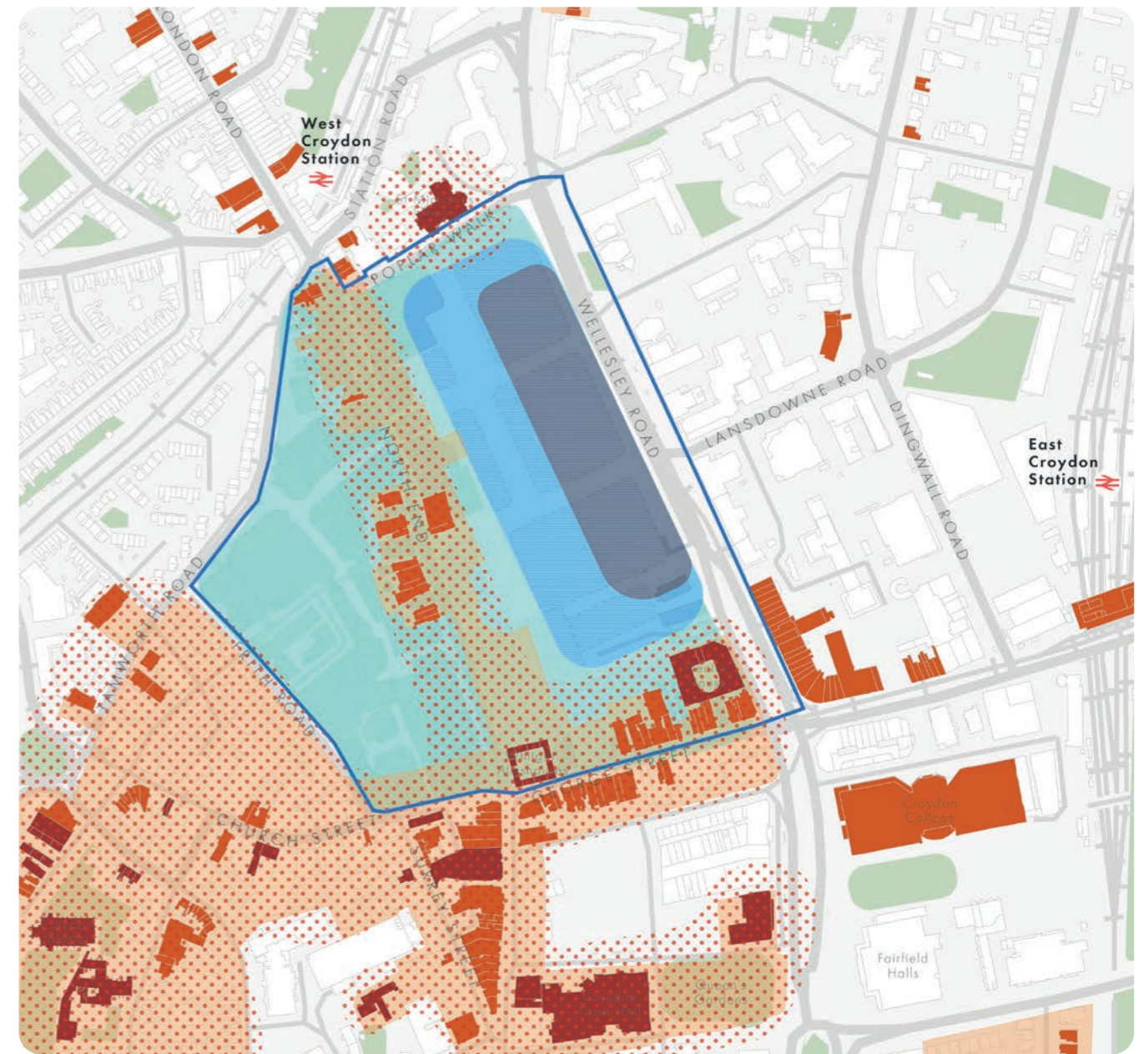
# 3.3

## CONSIDERING APPROPRIATE SCALES FOR BUILDINGS

**Croydon town centre is arguably the most appropriate location in South London for new tall buildings. However, the town centre and the NEQ itself has some important heritage assets, the setting of which should be preserved or enhanced**

- 1 The scale of development along North End should respect its historic finer grain datum.
- 2 Development should be informed by an understanding of the visual impact in views to and from the Almshouses, including its central courtyard.
- 3 Development should be informed by other important views of heritage assets in the wider area. These include Croydon Minster, St Michael and All Angels Church and Electricity Showrooms building, all of which are statutorily listed.
- 4 Taller buildings should have a distinctive appearance that is rooted in the character and appearance of Croydon.

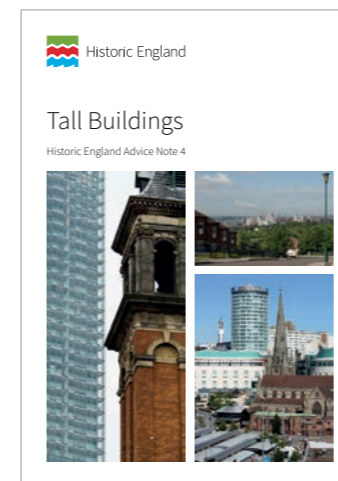
- 5 Massing and views analysis and impact assessments prepared in support of detailed proposals should consider issues including skyline composition, coalescence, overshadowing, micro-climate impacts including wind effects, and material palette.
- 6 The most appropriate location for taller forms of development is adjacent to the Wellesley Road frontage.
- 7 Proposed building heights should step down towards listed buildings at the north and southern ends of the Wellesley Road axis of the NEQ.
- 8 Proposed building heights should also step down to respect the traditional high street character of North End.
- 9 The finer grain character of the area west of North End is suitable for a more modest scale of development, but noting the scale of the recently consented scheme off Drummond Road/Keeley Road.
- 10 Relevant guidance is contained in Historic England's Tall Building Advice Note 4 in relation to the design of tall buildings.



**Fig 44** Building heights and scale in a sensitive heritage context  
*note: blocks shown on all plans are indicative only.*

- NEQ Boundary
- Area most suitable for tallest, or pinnacle, buildings\*
- Area suitable for tall buildings\*
- Area suitable for mid-heights\*
- Area of identified townscape sensitivity
- Conservation area
- Statutory listed building
- Locally listed building

\*Indicative of building heights which may be suitable in these areas based on the surrounding context and local policy. Building heights will vary in these zones in response to opportunities to enhance the overall townscape and placemaking potential of North End Quarter and the surrounding town centre.



**Fig 43** Tall buildings: Historic England Advice Note 4



# 4

## Curate and deliver an appropriate mix of uses

The regeneration of the NEQ presents an opportunity to radically transform the fortunes of Croydon town centre into a high density, sustainable development.

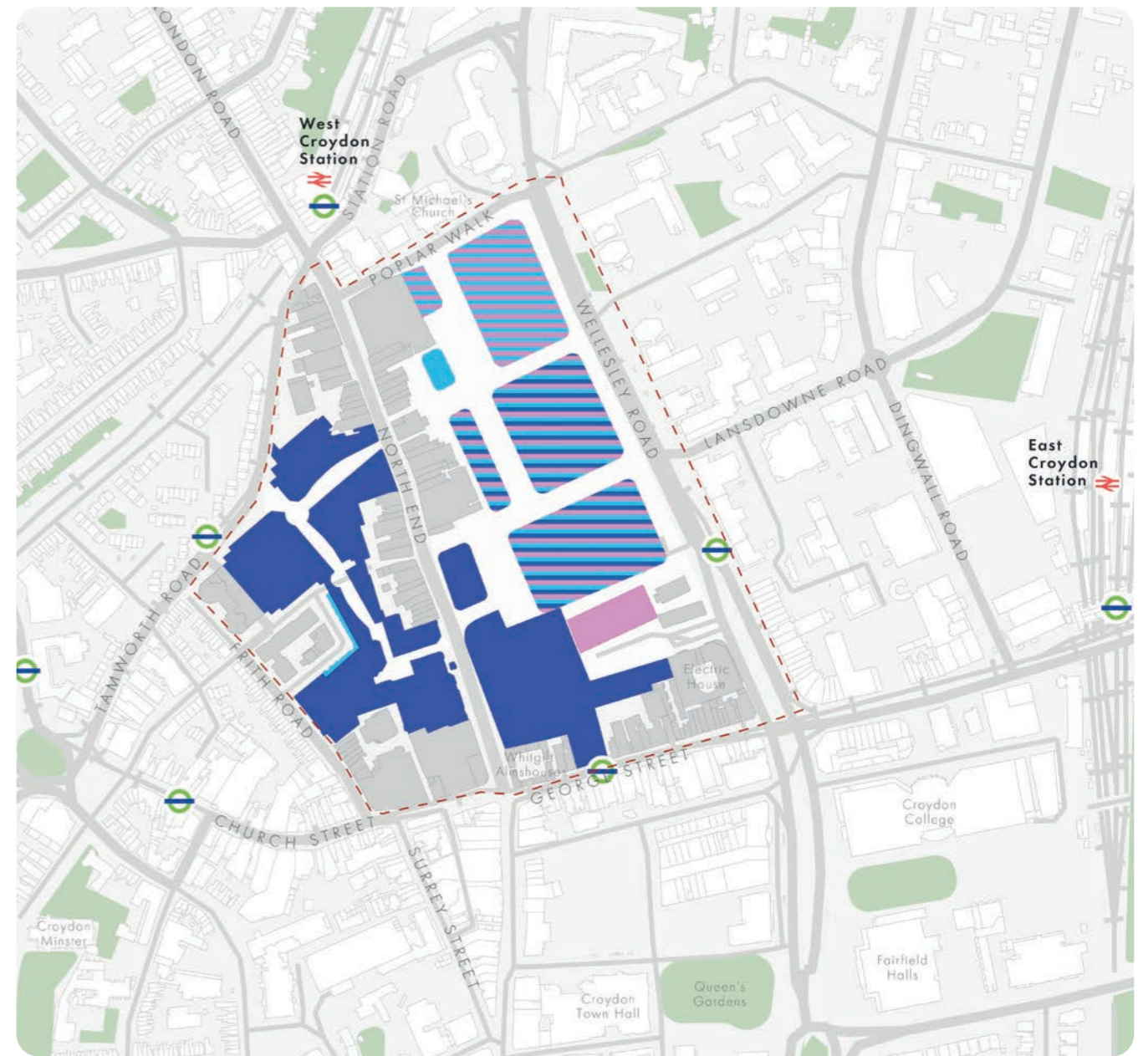
3 specific principles are identified as part of this aim:

- 1 Sustainable retail and entertainment
- 2 Temporary and pop-up uses
- 3 Social and community infrastructure

“One place that truly inspires me is King’s Cross in London. The redevelopment there transformed it from an industrial area into a vibrant, multi-use hub that balances work, leisure, and green spaces. Granary Square, for example, offers open public areas, interactive fountains, and frequent events, which create a welcoming atmosphere year-round.”

- Feedback from a member of the public at an engagement event

- THE TRANSFORMATION WILL...**
- Deliver the broad mix of uses required to create a vibrant and sustainable town centre, where people can live, work and enjoy spending time throughout the day and night.
  - Be delivered over the long term. The masterplan is a flexible framework. This will be important to enable the town centre to respond to changing market trends.
  - Consolidate retail floorspace in the town centre. New leisure, culture and flexible workspace uses will complement this consolidated retail offer, with floorspace provision informed by an understanding of both current and potential future needs and requirements.
  - Maintain Croydon’s Metropolitan Centre status during any redevelopment phase.
  - Deliver a full range of high-density mixed tenure housing as a series of new neighbourhoods.
  - New development will be supported by appropriate community infrastructure - education and health uses and facilities.
  - Designs having due regard to matters such as TV mitigation, Wi-Fi capacity, air quality, wind and carbon emissions
  - There is also an ambition to optimise the number of high-quality residential homes within the NEQ to maximise benefit from its sustainable location and support a wider mix of uses across the town centre.
  - The regeneration should accommodate suitable levels of community and workspace uses.



**Fig 45** Land use and street frontages  
note: blocks shown on all plans are indicative only.

**Key**

- - - - NEQ Boundary
- Potential ground floor uses:**
- Predominantly commercial, leisure, community and other town centre uses at ground level
- Predominantly mixed uses including community and other non-residential at ground level
- Predominantly residential-led uses



# 4.1

## SUSTAINABLE RETAIL AND ENTERTAINMENT

The continued growth of online retailing, post-COVID behavioural change and greater focus on experience over traditional retailing has resulted in an oversupply of town centre retail floorspace. Consolidation, more flexible formats and co-ordinated event curation will be critical for Croydon.

Consolidated ground floor retail frontage will be complemented by a diverse range of leisure, culture and food and drink uses which will play an important role in serving Croydon's local and wider South London catchment.

Transformation of the NEQ will...

- 1 Maintain the primary retail character of North End.
- 2 Distribute primarily commercial town centre uses within Centrale and along the new primary east-west axis between North End and Lansdowne Road.
- 3 Provide secondary frontages along Wellesley Road which could include non-residential uses at ground floor level including community, cultural and commercial uses.
- 4 Deliver frontages across the NEQ which will be active in order to help ensure streets and routes are safer and more legible throughout the day and evening.
- 5 Support commercial leisure uses which will complement more traditional retail formats to help attract footfall.

6 The Whitgift and Centrale shopping centres and Alders department store form a large part of the existing retail and leisure floorspace within the NEQ. There is currently c.1,900,000sqft of floorspace across these facilities of which a significant proportion is vacant. To help improve the long-term environment and quality of the town centre, and to assist retaining its Metropolitan Centre status, a market facing sustainable quantum of flexible form retail and related uses (c.700,000sqft – 1,000,000sqft) is planned as part of the regeneration of the NEQ.

- 7 Take care to ensure that potential residential neighbourhoods are welcoming, safe, attractive and fully integrated with the wider town centre.
- 8 These new residential neighbourhoods might benefit from some community (health / education) uses at ground and lower levels within them.
- 9 Where possible, these residential neighbourhoods will be designed to have ground floors that are active and address the public realm they face.

"Seasonal Events: Ice rinks in winter, summer festivals, and holiday markets similar to that of Battersea Ice Rink and other events that happen within London, as Croydon has the potential to be a super-town due to its location and population."  
- Feedback from a member of the public at an engagement event

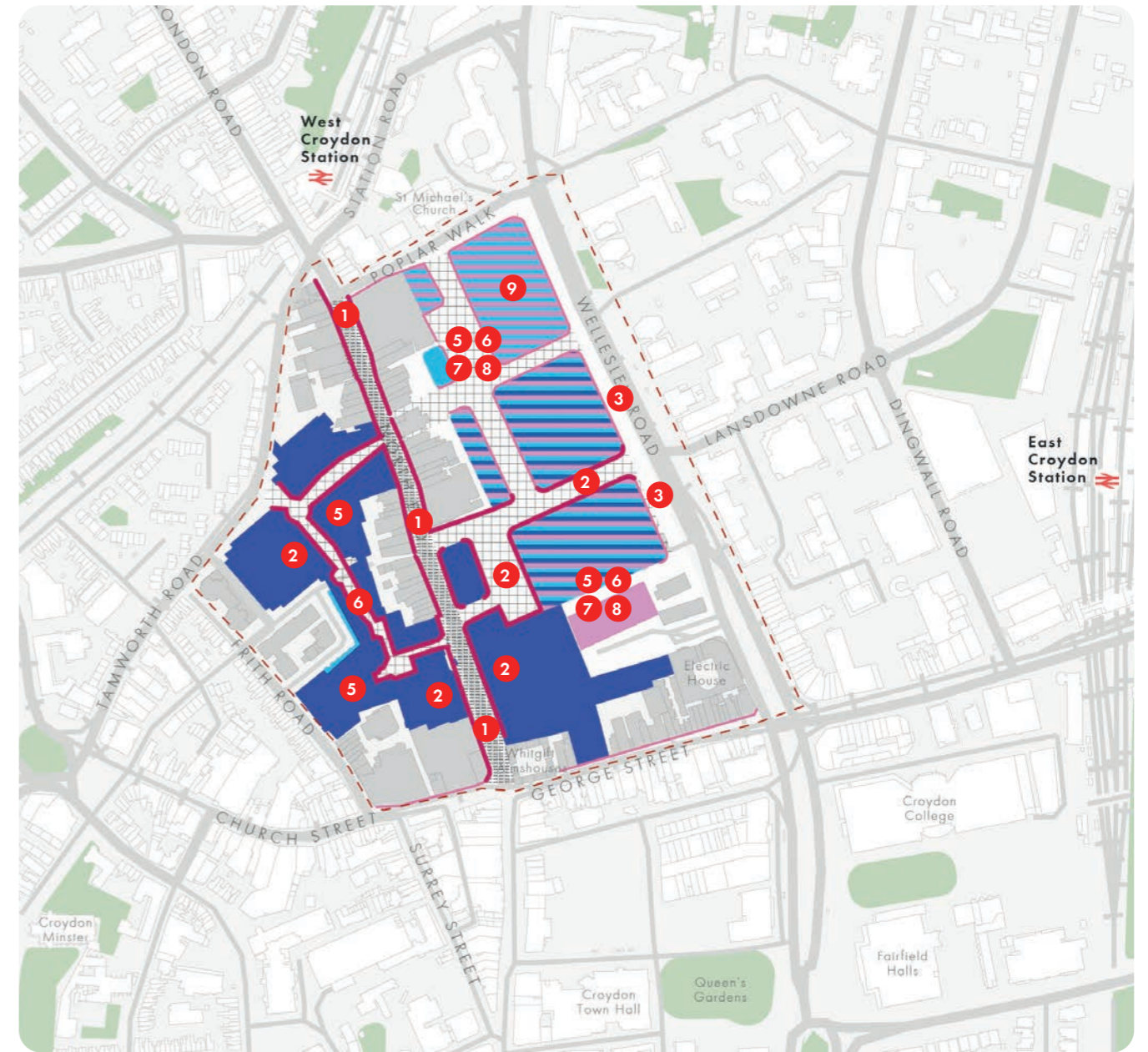


Fig 47 Potential street frontages - primary and secondary  
note: blocks shown on all plans are indicative only.



Fig 46 Indicative mix of uses

- Key**
- NEQ Boundary
  - Primary active frontages
  - Secondary active frontages
  - New or improved managed public spaces and routes
  - Existing key public spaces and routes
  - Potential ground floor uses:**
  - Retail, leisure, community and other town centre uses
  - Mixed uses including community and other non-residential
  - Predominantly residential-led uses



# 4.2

## TEMPORARY AND POP-UP USES

**The transformation of the NEQ is a highly complex and long-term initiative. It will be delivered in phases.**

**Temporary and pop-up retail and events will all be an integral part of the tapestry of town centre uses in Croydon, helping creativity to form, happen and evolve.**

**The NEQ cannot wait for long-term solutions to vacancy or dereliction. Temporary uses - and a hands-on approach to their management - are legitimate and important in their own right.**

**Meanwhile projects could be used to test future uses in specific locations.**

Transformation of the NEQ will...

- 1 Be delivered with meanwhile / temporary and pop-ups uses and activities, in line with the phasing strategy. These uses will play an important role in allowing the town centre to continue trading throughout the development phases.
- 2 Utilise spaces and buildings, existing and new, as part of this meanwhile and events programme.
- 3 Involve direct engagement with local and leading arts, culture and community organisations as part of a meanwhile strategy.
- 4 Deliver a vibrant and dynamic mix of activities and attractions which will complement the existing town centre retail offer and events programme including Croydon's famous Surrey Street Market.

"It would be nice to see some more pop-ups such as the roller-skating rink that appeared for a period of time in centrale."

- Feedback from a member of the public at an engagement event

"Establish pop-up shops, artist studios, and co-working spaces in vacant buildings. Consider rotating art pop-ups to attract visitors and make Croydon an art destination."

- Feedback from a member of the public at an engagement event



1. Coimbra, Portugal ©Allies and Morrison  
 2. Ebury Edge temporary (2020-2024) creative hub, Westminster, London © Allies and Morrison  
 3. Borough Market, London ©Allies and Morrison  
 4. Borough Yards, empty shop units lit up, London © Allies and Morrison  
 5. Angel Yard, LaunchIt, Enfield © Jack Hobhouse  
 6. Renault - Experiential pop-up, Whitgift Centre ©URW  
 7. Good Fest at Westfield's White City © URW



# 4.3

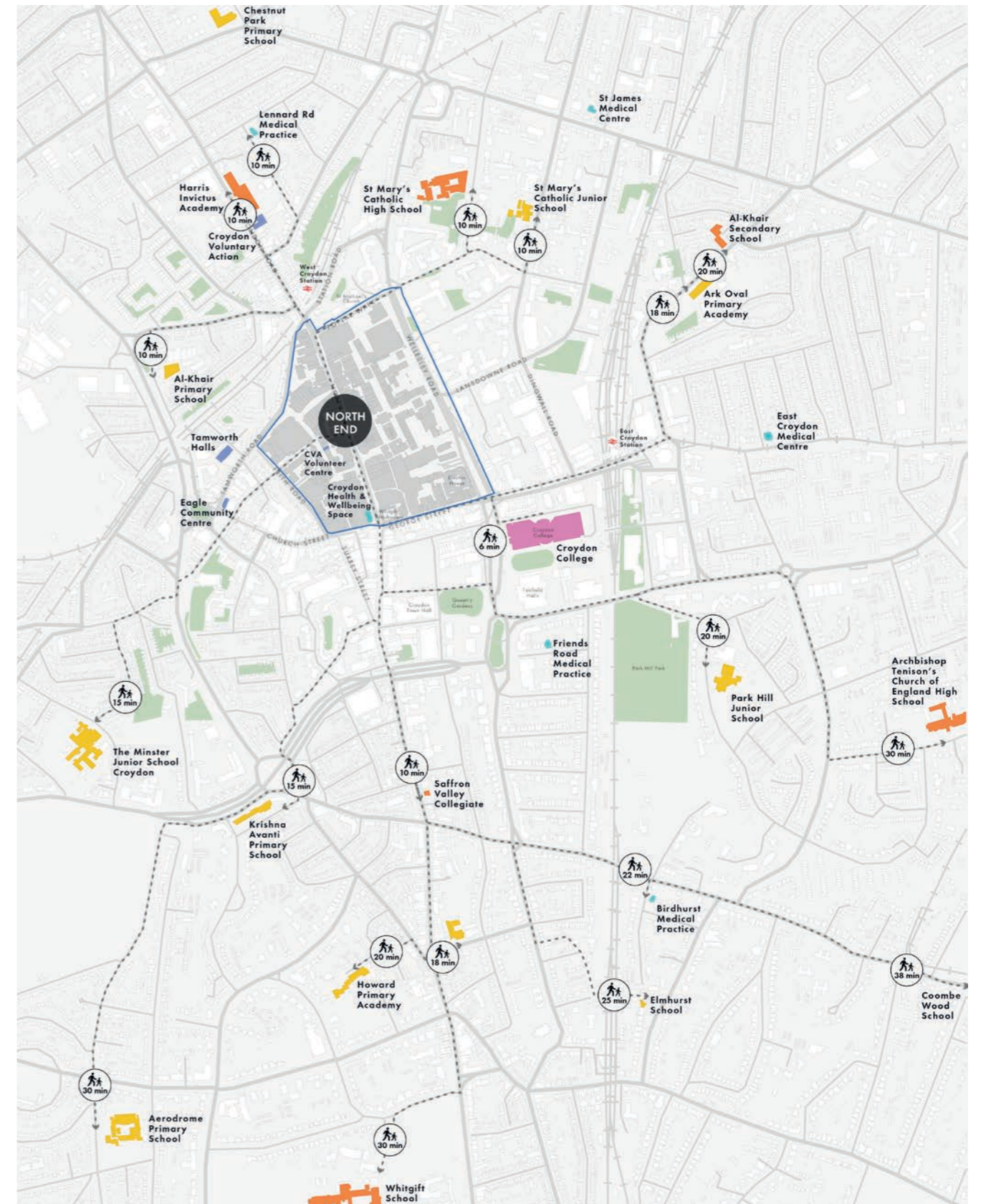
## SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

**New high-density residential neighbourhoods in the NEQ will need to be supported by social and community infrastructure - most particularly health and education, but also libraries, childcare, sports centres and community centres.**

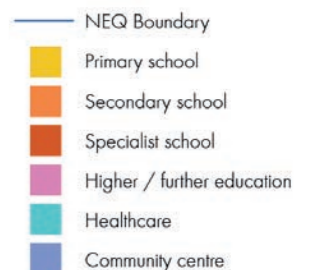
Transformation of the NEQ will...

- 1 Deliver investments in existing and provide new community facilities in line with relative levels of additional need resulting from new development.
- 2 Explore and deliver opportunities to active ground floor frontages with new community uses where possible.
- 3 Look for the NEQ masterplan to accommodate on-site health facilities to serve the needs of new residents, subject to engagement with relevant health providers and consideration of existing facility capacity.

- 4 Support the principle of delivering safe routes to local schools serving the new population.
- 5 Consider the need for education provision associated with increased local need resulting from new development. Detailed testing will be undertaken prior to the run up to submission of a planning application(s) to assess capacity within existing schools to determine the need for on-site provision and/or expansion to existing facilities.
- 6 Involve liaison and engagement with higher education providers to explore opportunities for on-site provision. The Council and URW will engage with the relevant organisations at the appropriate time.
- 7 Explore the potential to accommodate more informal and third sector community uses.
- 8 Require the preparation and agreement of a Community Plan to scope out, in liaison with existing community groups, how services and facilities can be improved to meet increased demand. This will help to ensure change within the NEQ is inclusive and helps create a cohesive community spirit and a place that all Croydoners feel proud of.



**Fig 48** Proximity to community facilities  
note: blocks shown on all plans are indicative only.







# Address scale in a contextual way

A balance must be struck between making the best and most efficient use of this highly sustainable location and the need for new development to respond appropriately to the prevailing urban grain.

3 specific principles are identified as part of this aim:

- 1 Thresholds
- 2 Siting of tall buildings
- 3 Quality of Tall Buildings and their outlook

## A RESPONSIVE URBAN GRAIN

- The scale and character of the NEQ shifts from higher density, taller buildings are on the Wellesley Road frontage, giving over to more sensitive layered scales along North End and towards Old Town.
- Croydon is a Metropolitan Town Centre and falls within an Opportunity Area, and therefore has a role to play in delivering growth for the Borough, and this can be achieved through a sensitive and contextual approach to delivering higher density which can aid legibility, placemaking and enhance local character.



Fig 49 The NEQ straddles both the existing historic and fine grain Croydon Old Town area and the commercial high-rise zone of East Croydon



Fig 50 The Croydon Tall Building Study (LBC, 2024), identifies areas within the NEQ as the most suitable locations for very tall buildings



# 5.1

## THRESHOLDS

The recently produced **Croydon Tall Buildings Study**, prepared to support the emerging **Croydon Local Plan Review**, provides a context for building heights across the town.

Scale and massing at the site's thresholds with adjacent neighbourhoods will be one of the principal issues relating to townscape and building heights within the NEQ.

### 1 Eastern threshold

Scale of development will respond to the taller, coarser and larger scale of buildings and development in this part of Croydon town centre. This is one of the most appropriate locations for very tall buildings in Croydon.

### 2 Western threshold

Centrale shopping centre is taller than much of the adjacent streets, and a new residential development of up to 25 storeys will be situated on Keeley Road. Any additional height can therefore be accommodated beyond the conservation area but heights should respect the finer grain and more organic street pattern.

### 3 Northern threshold

Scale and massing of new development will acknowledge the more sensitive, historic, and lower scale of the NEQ's northern threshold. Whilst still appropriate for a more modest scale of tall buildings, particularly within the context of the recently constructed circa 20 storey residential towers on Station Road, protecting the setting of the Central Croydon conservation area and that of St Michael and All Angels Church will be a key consideration.

### 4 Southern threshold

Redevelopment proposals will step down to respect the scale of George Street which forms part of the Central Croydon conservation area. The setting of and views from within the courtyard of the Hospital of the Holy Trinity (almshouse) will be a particular sensitivity.

1



Fig 51 Eastern threshold, Wellesley Road looking south



2



Fig 52 Western threshold, Frith Road looking north



3



Fig 53 Northern threshold, Poplar Walk looking east



4



Fig 54 Southern threshold, George Street looking east





# 5.2

## SITING OF TALL BUILDINGS

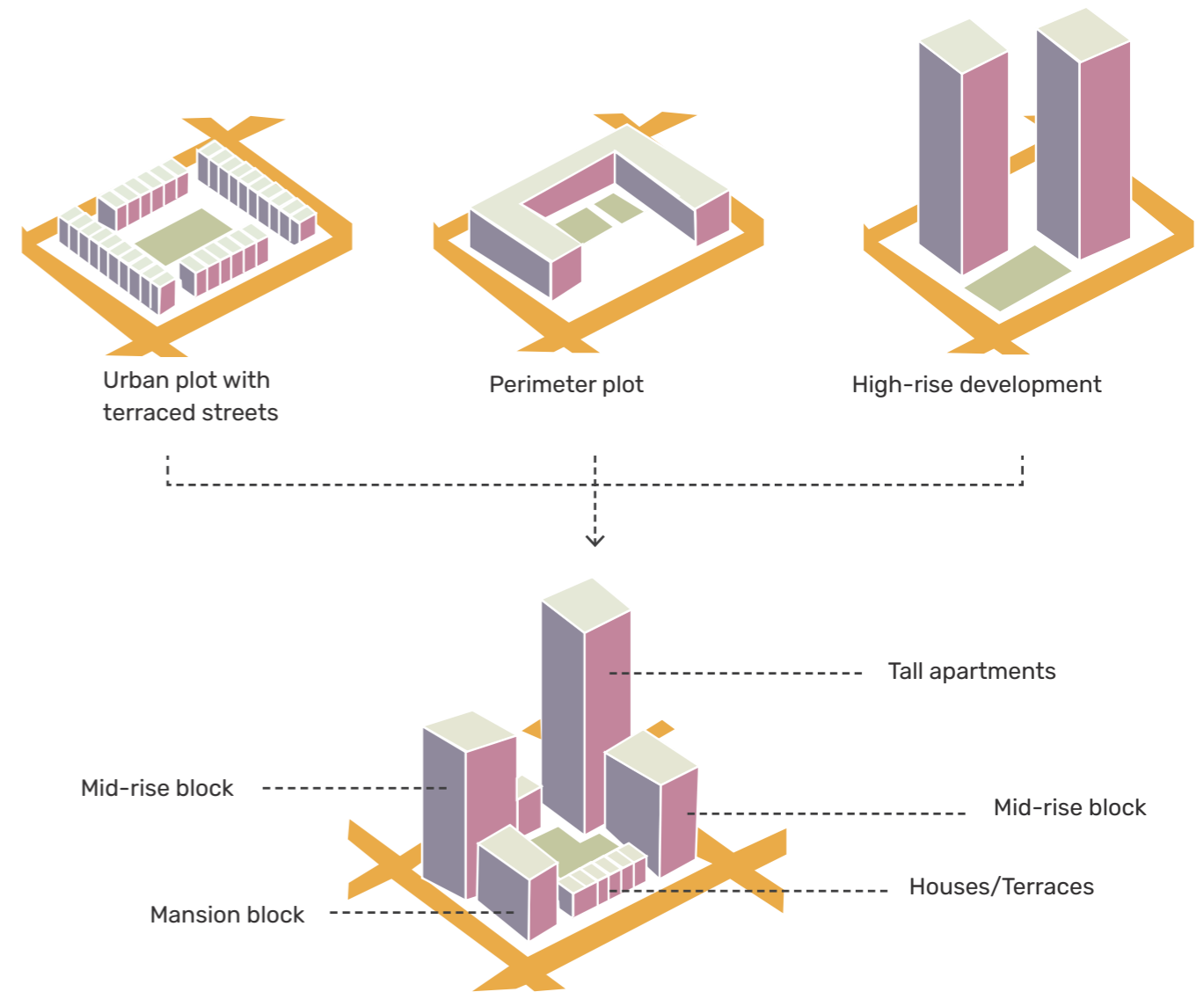
The transformation of the NEQ will support significant variation and diversity of heights to create attractive, sensitive compositions which are appropriate to local conditions and the setting of Croydon town centre.

Principle considerations in the siting of tall buildings will include:

- 1 Silhouette**  
How the siting of a tall building or buildings create and/or contribute to the silhouette and skyline. Consideration of individual buildings, clusters of new buildings as well as new and existing buildings will be considered with regard to composition or coalescence of the immediate and longer-view skyline.
- 2 Proximity**  
The siting of new tall buildings will consider proximity to other tall buildings, to public and private spaces, and to 'gateways'. Consideration will be given to their impact on environmental items such as overshadowing, daylighting and outlook.
- 3 Wayfinding and urban legibility** Tall buildings can play a role in both local and townscape urban legibility. The siting of tall buildings will consider townscape legibility, for example in longer views, as well as their immediate role in local wayfinding.

- 4 Visibility in key close and longer views**  
Views analysis and testing will be undertaken in order to inform the siting of tall buildings and their positive contribution to the reading of Croydon as a whole.
- 5 Heritage sensitivities**  
Views analysis and testing will be undertaken in order to inform the siting of tall buildings with regard to the setting of listed and locally listed assets.
- 6 Clusters and pinnacles**  
Consideration should be given to the location of clusters of taller buildings and pinnacles both within the site itself, and in the context of existing and emerging neighbouring schemes. Consideration should be given to how clusters and pinnacles contribute to the overall skyline, urban legibility and wayfinding, or how they might act as 'markers' within the site and the town.
- 7 Micro-climate**  
Tall buildings should not adversely impact local micro-climate such as wind turbulence, overshadowing, noise, reflected glare, aviation, navigation, quality of internal spaces and telecommunication interference.

### Singular block typologies combine...



**Fig 55** Mixed use urban blocks could be comprised of a range of building typologies to help add variety in form and use, creative vibrant and stimulating people-friendly places



# 5.3

## QUALITY OF TALL BUILDINGS AND THEIR OUTLOOK

The design of tall buildings will need to include, at detailed design stage, testing and consideration of the following key design principles, seeking to achieve high quality design.

Key considerations in the design of tall buildings will include:

**1 Visual quality outside and inside**

Building design should consider appropriate and contextual materiality, scale and proportion of building elements such as walls, windows, balconies, bases and tops, to achieve high quality, contextual design that serves residents, neighbours and pedestrians at ground level alike.

**2 Local and wider views testing, iteratively**

Views analysis and testing will be undertaken in order to inform the siting of tall buildings as well as the setting of listed and locally listed assets.

**3 Environmental impact including operational and embodied carbon**

Building design should consider the operation and embodied environmental impact seeking to reduce their carbon impact where possible.

**4 Quality of internal and external residential space**

Including daylight, sunlight and provision of private and shared amenity for residents.

**5 User environment**

Building design should consider the user environment seeking to achieve high quality internal and external spaces, including daylight and sunlight testing, overheating, provision of private and communal amenity space, as well as including testing of daylight and sunlight of adjacent spaces and buildings.

**6 The 'fifth elevation' roofscapes**

These should seek to find a balance between their technical function – containing plant enclosures, lift overruns and other mechanical equipment, with the opportunity to provide brown or green roofs, rooftop amenity and residents' terraces.

**7 Long-term** Planning applications that come forward will consider, either by submission or by condition, appropriate and responsive long-term management and maintenance strategies.

**8 Policy and guidance** All other relevant policy criteria should be reviewed including emerging Local Plan Policy and England's Tall Building Advice Note 4.



**Fig 56** Places for people to live: Playing an important role in the making of the town, tall buildings can also provide a large number of high quality new homes. Hale Wharf c. Allies and Morrison



# Placemaking which responds to the NEQ's unique and varied character

Croydon's evolution is preserved in the pattern of its streets - the narrow lanes of Old Town contrast with the modernist orthogonal order of East Croydon. This unique urban grain is Croydon's fingerprint - its identity.

NEQ straddles both, connecting the old town with the new town.

6 specific principles are identified as part of this aim:

- 1 Gateways
- 2 Landmark buildings
- 3 Character areas
- 4 Whitgift South
- 5 Whitgift North
- 6 Centrale and North End

## RESPONDING TO A UNIQUE CONTEXT

- New buildings and public realm within the NEQ should seek to achieve high quality design and durability and to make a meaningful relationship with this rich and varied context. The images to the right show examples of how this quality might be achieved in NEQ.
- Buildings and their façades in and adjacent to the Conservation Area or adjacent to existing heritage assets will be designed sympathetically to their specific individual and distinctive contexts.

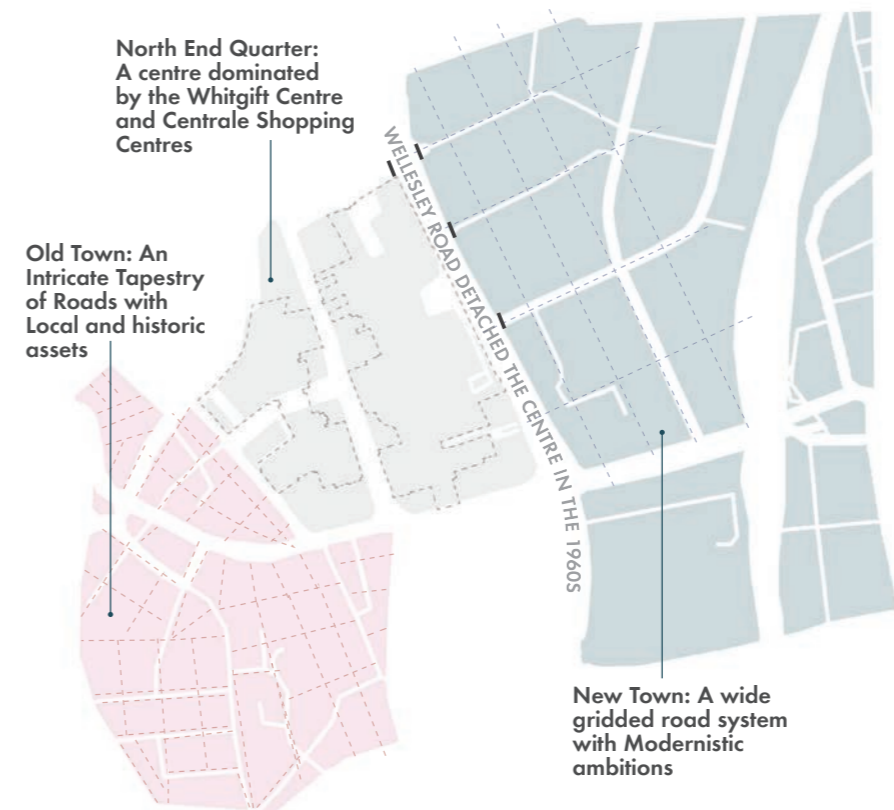
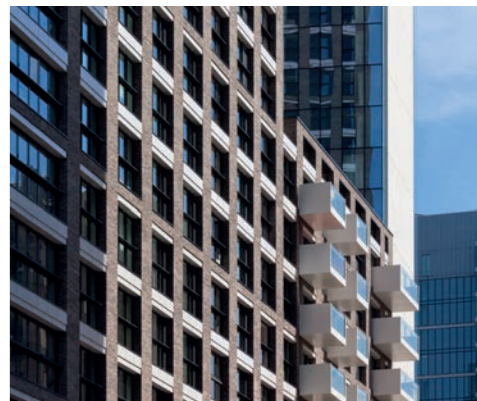
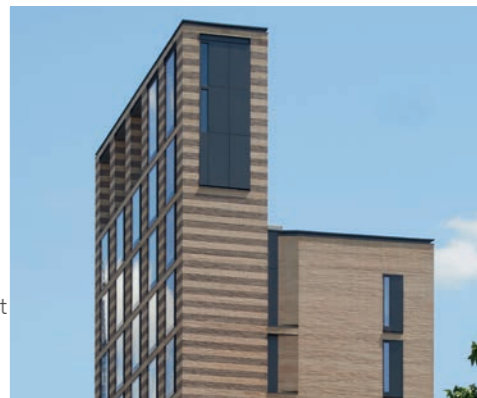


Fig 57 Contrast in prevailing urban grain and the role the NEQ must play mediating between Old and East Croydon, (above); the masterplan will promote high quality design for buildings and public spaces (below, right)



Solid and void



Special tops



Integration



Special moments



Projection and depth



Variety



Residents' amenity



Front doors

Photos: Allies and Morrison



# 6.1

## GATEWAYS

Gateways between the transformed NEQ and the wider town centre will require particular design consideration.

Similarly, there will be gateway locations on the North End axis itself between different zones of the NEQ's transformation.

Gateway locations are not necessarily suitable for tall buildings (though they might be). They are locations where footfall is likely to be high and the quality of the public realm is therefore likely to be particularly important.

Fig 58 shows two tiers of gateways. Primary gateways are prominent locations which mark an important threshold location where footfall activity is likely to be high. Secondary gateways are less prominent threshold locations.

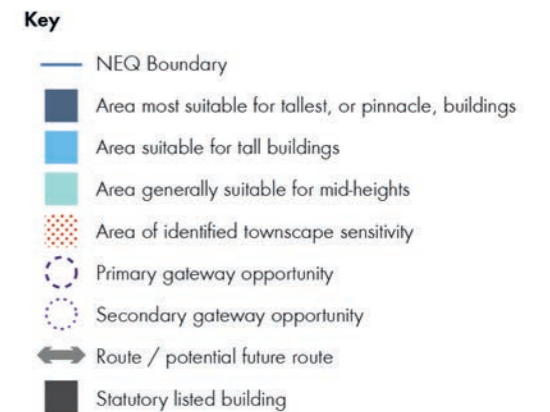
Primary gateway locations will include:

- 1 At the Lansdowne Road axis which will be the principal entry point to the transformed NEQ from the east and East Croydon station. Pedestrian volumes may be high and a new Wellesley Road crossing will be required. This is a complex location with many issues and constraints and a carefully considered design approach will be required to successfully integrate the NEQ into its wider context at this point.

- 2 A residential neighbourhood entrance to the NEQ might be provided in the vicinity of the Sydenham Road junction. Safety and overlooking will be key considerations.
- 3 Access to the NEQ will be re-provided along Poplar Walk. Balance will be needed to address competing demand for space between pedestrians, cycles and vehicles.
- 4 The North End node on the new E-W axis will mark the commercial epicentre of the transformed NEQ.
- 5 The entrance to North End from George Street to the south. The Almshouses already represent this gateway threshold.
- 6 Secondary gateway locations will include:
  - Dingwall Avenue - potentially a key vehicular gateway.
  - Poplar Walk which could provide a secondary entrance to the transformed Whitgift Centre.
  - The threshold with Centrale Tram stop, which will deliver significant numbers of visitors to the transformed NEQ.
  - The threshold with Old Town on the axis of Drummond Road.



Fig 58 Placemaking and gateway locations  
note: blocks shown on all plans are indicative only.





# 6.2

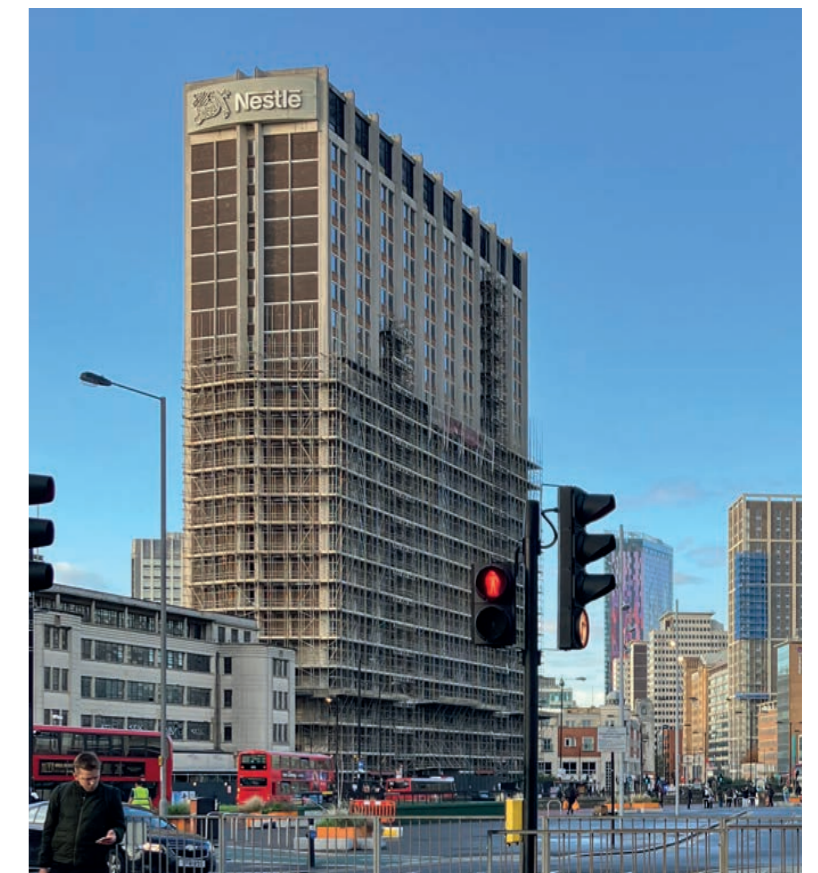
## LANDMARK BUILDINGS

Landmark buildings can play a number of important functions within the urban landscape. They are most often noticeable or recognisable structures that can help to orientate, navigate, or mark a significant moment in an urban environment, such as the 'gateways' discussed on the previous page.

Landmark buildings are not always necessarily tall; they could have a particular civic presence in their built form, features which make them recognisable, or gain 'landmark' status based solely on their siting in a public or open space.

- 1 Landmark buildings, whilst recognisable, should always respond positively and remain sensitive to the setting of conservation areas and historic buildings.
- 2 Landmark buildings, whilst distinctive, should remain contextual and feel 'of the place'.
- 3 Could play a wayfinding role to help orientate pedestrians within and towards the NEQ.
- 4 Could mark a gateway or entrance into a particular part or space, for example, the new anchor space, or the junction with Wellesley Road.

The images on the opposite page provide examples of landmark buildings and structures.



Landmark buildings are often noticeable or recognisable, and can say something about their immediate place or help urban legibility. This might be achieved through ornamentation (top), difference (bottom, left), or scale and siting (bottom, right).

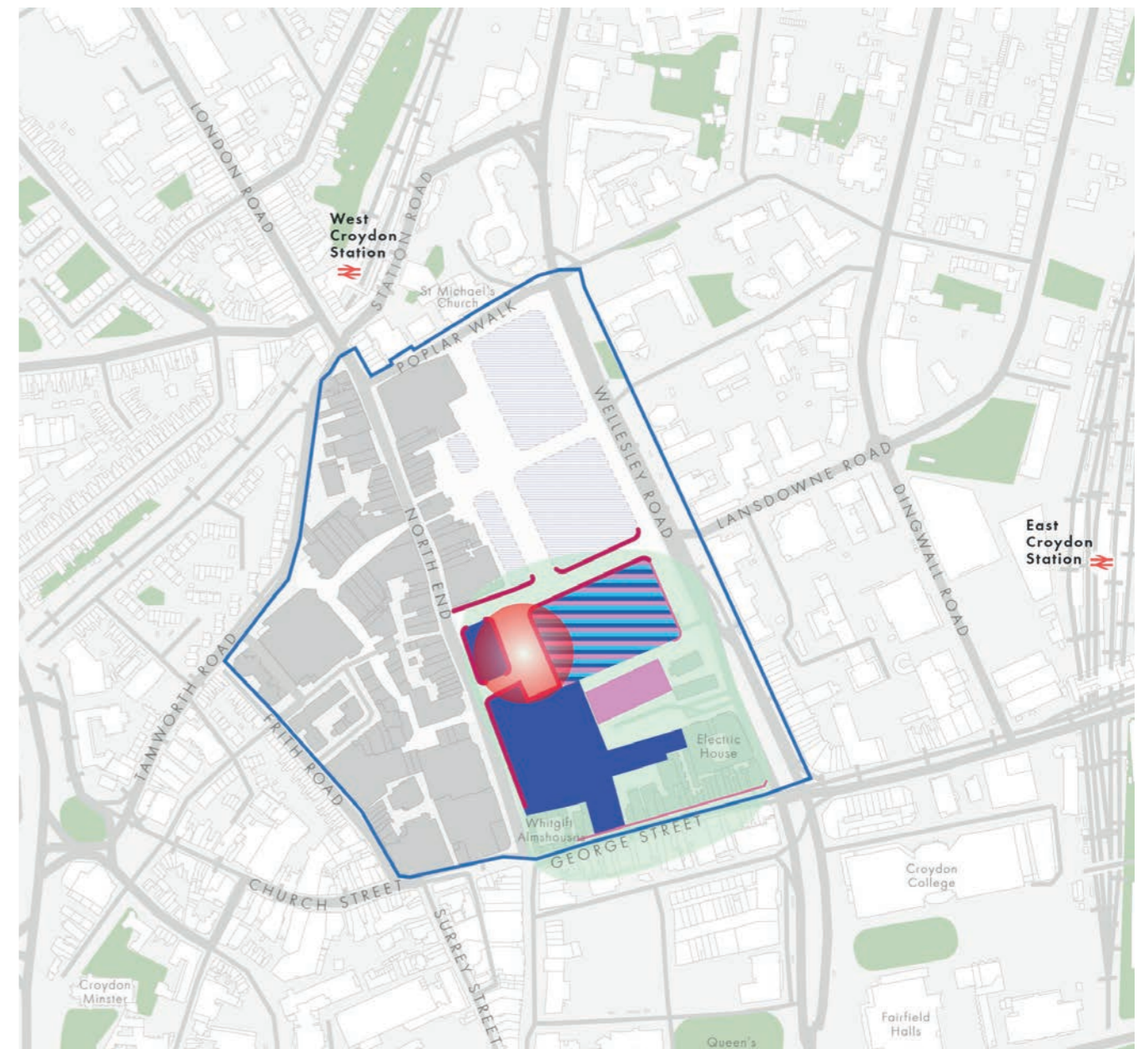


# 6.3

## WHITGIFT SOUTH

**Focused on retail, leisure and residential uses. This area will also feature the revitalisation and refurbishment of Alders.**

- 1 Formed around the new east-west connection and anchor public space, Whitgift South will prioritise retail and residential-led regeneration with high concentrations of retail and leisure uses. Retail frontages will address the primary routes of North End and the new east-west route and there will be a vibrant mix of retail and leisure activities, including the potential for larger major high street stores and smaller units.
- 2 Significant scope for new flexible workspace across a number of buildings, with the highest concentrations likely to be distributed towards the Wellesley Road frontage.
- 3 Retention and targeted repair of the historic North End street frontage with sensitive infill of an appropriate scale. Wellesley Road street frontage will see radical improvement with active ground floor uses along its length. Massing will increase towards Wellesley Road in response to the existing tall buildings to the east.
- 4 A revitalised Alders could provide retail frontages on North End, and a refurbishment and/or reconfiguration of upper floors could look to maintain flexibility of uses such as workspace or educational.
- 5 Considerations should be given to key views including from the Almshouses and the setting of Electricity Showrooms, both listed buildings.



**Fig 59** Whitgift South  
note: blocks shown on all plans are indicative only.

**Key**

- NEQ Boundary
- Anchor public space
- Public space
- Linear park
- Primary active frontage
- Secondary active frontage

**Potential ground floor uses:**

- Predominantly commercial, leisure, community and other town centre uses of ground level
- Predominantly mixed uses including community and other non-residential at ground level
- Predominantly residential-led uses

■ WHITGIFT NORTH  
 ■ WHITGIFT SOUTH  
 ■ CENTRALE & NORTH END

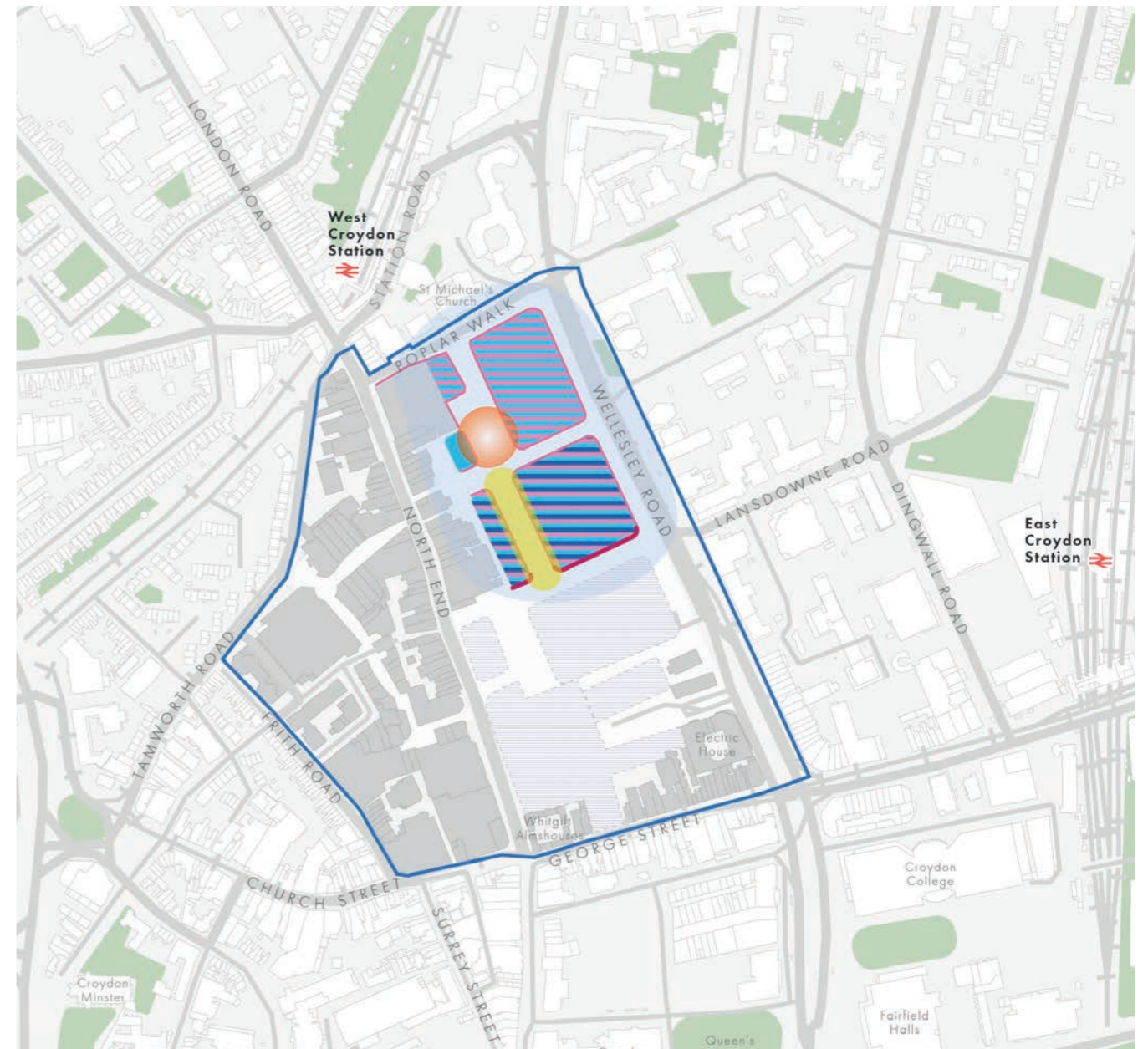


# 6.4

## WHITGIFT NORTH

Whitgift North will have a focus on delivering homes due to its proximity to the stations. Alongside homes, there will be significant new community uses to support the new neighbourhood and residents.

- 1 Whitgift North has potential to deliver a significant number of new homes of mixed types and tenures. Whitgift North might be particularly suited to new community uses, being the part of the site closest to Croydon bus station and directly between the town's two principal rail stations.
- 2 A 'linear park' could form a north-south connection, meeting the east-west route to the south and terminating at a community space at its the northern end. Whitgift North might see provision of retail and leisure facilities, anticipated to be typically within smaller units, with significant scope for new flexible workspace across a number of buildings, with the highest concentrations likely to be distributed towards the Wellesley Road frontage.
- 3 The historic North End high street character will be respected, and massing will again increase in response to the existing taller buildings to the east and the north. Development should also acknowledge the setting of the Grade I listed St Michael's Church on Poplar Walk.



**Fig 60** Whitgift North  
note: blocks shown on all plans are indicative only.

**Key**

- NEQ Boundary
- Anchor public space
- Public space
- Linear park
- Primary active frontage
- Secondary active frontage

**Potential ground floor uses:**

- Predominantly commercial, leisure, community and other town centre uses at ground level
- Predominantly mixed uses including community and other non-residential at ground level
- Predominantly residential uses

■ WHITGIFT NORTH  
■ WHITGIFT SOUTH  
■ CENTRALE & NORTH END



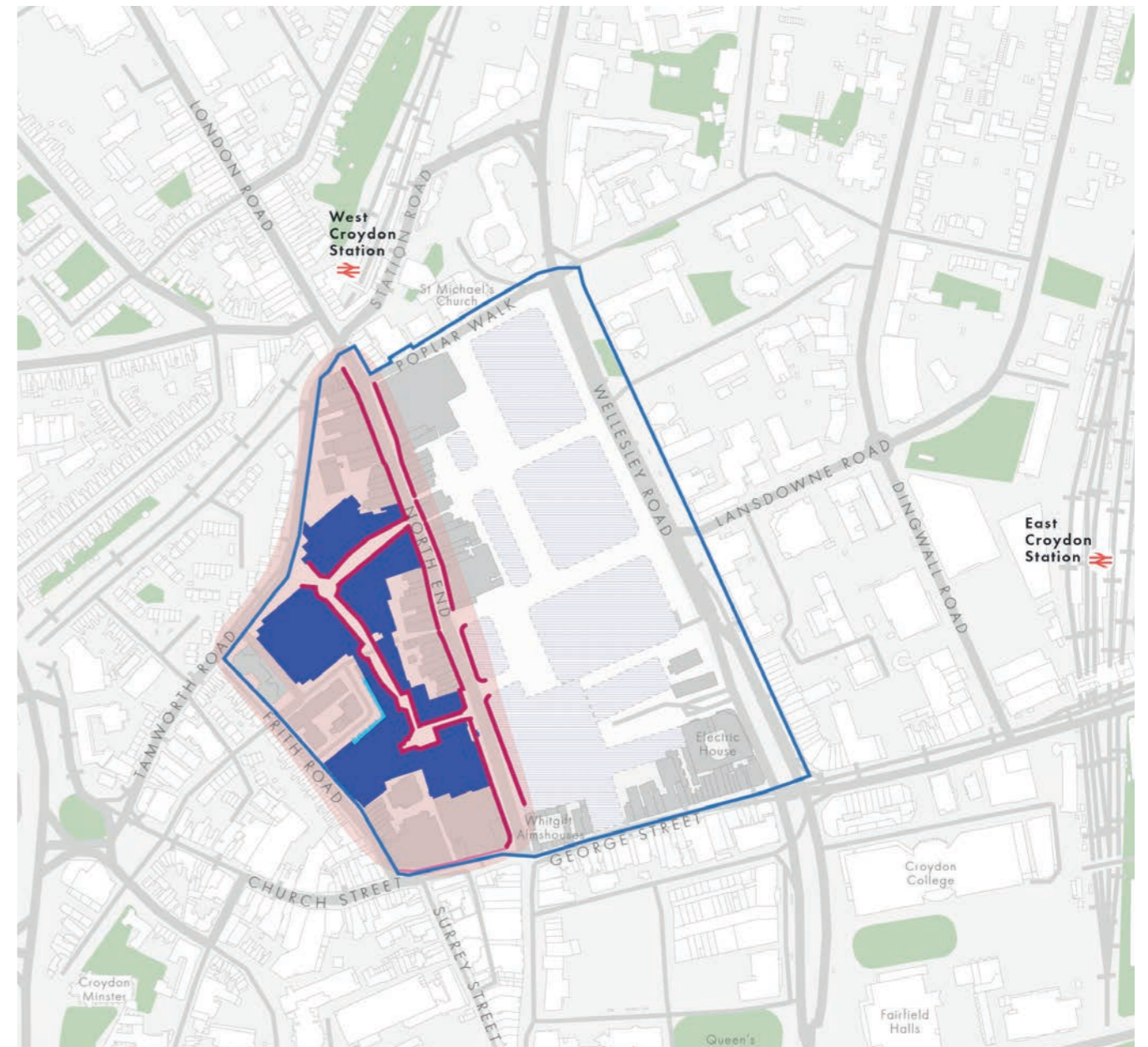
# 6.5

## CENTRALE AND NORTH END

North End emerged as Croydon's principal shopping street in the second half of the 19th century and retains this status. First opened in 2004, Centrale Shopping Centre provides the town centre with good quality retail floorspace and is an integral part of Croydon's prime retail zone. As the town's principal shopping centre, Centrale plays a critical role in supporting Croydon's Metropolitan Centre status.

- 1 Centrale Shopping Centre will play a fundamental role in supporting the transformation of the NEQ. With such fundamental levels of change being required within the NEQ, a careful balance needs to be struck between the phased delivery of new development and the continuity of the NEQ's role as south London's primary Metropolitan Centre.
- 2 Continuity of the core retail function of Centrale Shopping Centre and North End must therefore be carefully managed during the various phases of redevelopment. Ongoing management of and investment in the primary retail activities within Centrale and along North End will be important to ensure Croydon maintains its Metropolitan Centre status and function throughout the transformation period.

- 3 To complement redevelopment of the Whitgift Shopping Centre, a programme of public realm and environmental improvements and enhancement within and around the retained Centrale Shopping Centre might include:
  - Improvements to principal public entrances to Centrale, particularly from North End itself.
  - Improvements to the environment along Drummond Road, Keeley Road and Frith Street where the Centre addresses the street frontage - such as public art, improved lighting and shopfront improvements where possible.
  - Exploring scope for physical landscape improvements within the street environment - such as landscaping, tree planting and lighting where possible.
- 4 In the much longer term, as the town centre evolves and retail habits continue to change, Centrale may present opportunities for more extensive remodelling and mixed-use development, which could include residential uses - see Fig 62.
- 5 Any such longer term and comprehensive change however would need to be devised in a manner which ensures Croydon's Metropolitan Centre status is protected and maintained whilst also respecting the sensitive townscape of the adjacent Croydon Old Town.
- 6 Retention of the Centrale Shopping Centre car park will be important throughout the NEQ transformation programme to support the retail health of the centre.



**Fig 61** Centrale and North End  
note: blocks shown on all plans are indicative only.

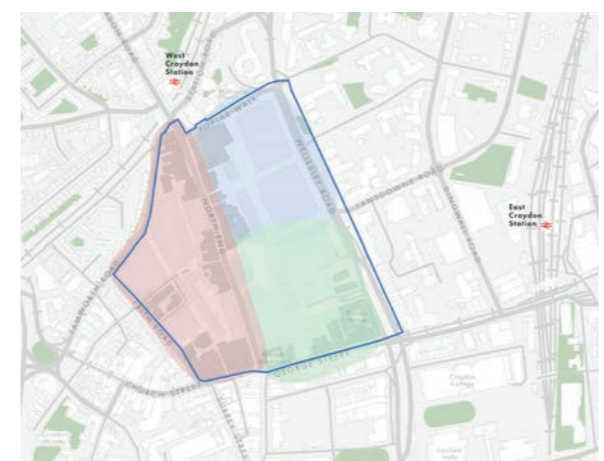
**Key**

- NEQ Boundary
- Anchor public space
- Public space
- Linear park
- Primary active frontage
- Secondary active frontage

**Potential ground floor uses:**

- Predominantly commercial, leisure, community and other town centre uses of ground level
- Predominantly mixed uses including community and other non-residential at ground level
- Predominantly residential uses

WHITGIFT NORTH  
WHITGIFT SOUTH  
CENTRALE & NORTH END



**Fig 62** Alternative long-term remodelling  
note: blocks shown on all plans are indicative only.



# A mix of high quality homes

The first criteria under Croydon Local Plan's emerging Strategic Policy NEQ SP1 confirms the potential for significant housing delivery in the NEQ.

Strategic Policy NEQ SP2 states that new neighbourhoods will be created behind North End frontages.

- 1 The site allocation in the emerging Local Plan is 1,250 homes. URW has aspirations to exceed the site allocations and aim to deliver up to 3,000 homes subject to high quality placemaking, evidencing a satisfactory level of social and physical infrastructure, and demonstrating appropriate environmental conditions i.e. wind, sunlight/daylight, public realm etc.
- 2 The emerging Local Plan seeks to ensure that new development will deliver a choice and mix of housing for people in Croydon and address the borough's need for homes of different sizes. There is a recognised national, regional and local need for new homes. Locally this is evidenced by the London Plan and the housing need identified in the Council's evidence base.
- 3 Choice of housing includes a range of housing types and products such as market, affordable, build to rent, student, co-living, and supported housing.
- 4 Homes are to be safe and well designed to meet existing and future needs and contribute to sustainable communities having regard to:

- Space and design standards,
  - A mix suitable to high density urban areas; and
  - Associated spaces contributing positively to health and well-being.
- 5 Designs across all tenures will need to be functional, accessible, adaptable and sustainable.
  - 6 New homes within the NEQ will seek to achieve high quality internal and external places to live. This will include reference to the London Plan Housing Standards LPG.
  - 7 Buildings will be positioned, oriented and designed with the following in mind:
    - Appropriate private and communal amenity space for residents.
    - Levels of internal daylight and sunlight, ventilation and dual aspect appropriate to high density town centre residential development.
    - Primary and secondary outlook from within homes appropriate to high density town centre residential development.
    - Sunlight to communal external amenity space which might be located at grade, on podiums or at roof level.
    - Location of and access to play provision – doorstep, as well as other communal provision that might be made elsewhere within the masterplan.
    - NDSS and London Plan minimum internal space standards for residential homes.
    - Impact on micro-climate.

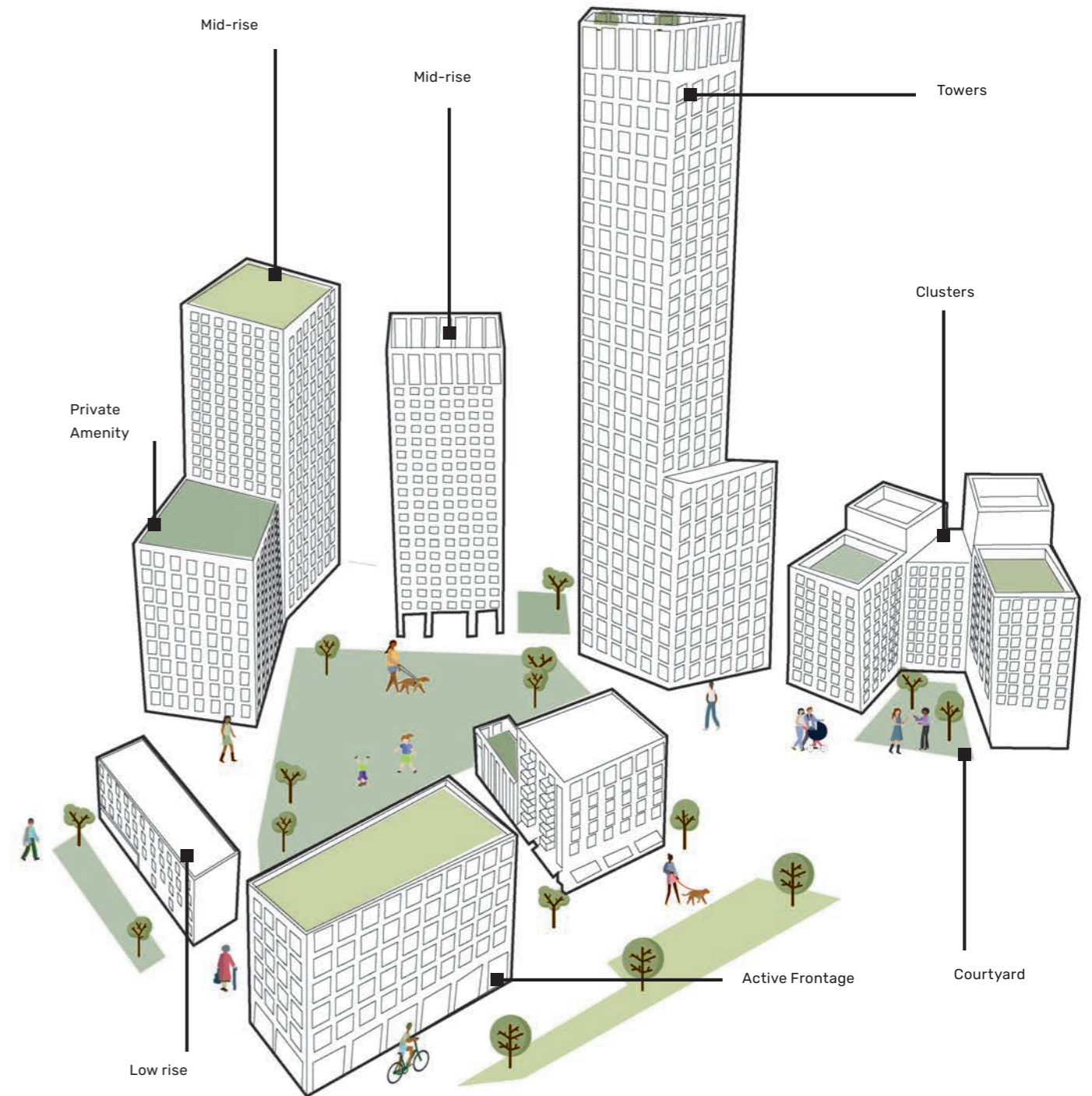


Fig 63 A range of housing typologies will be delivered, in response to market demand and local need



# Strengthen biodiversity and green infrastructure

The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) policy is a UK government law that was introduced in 2021 as part of the Environment Act. The policy aims to increase ecological assets by a minimum of 10% after the majority of development projects are completed.

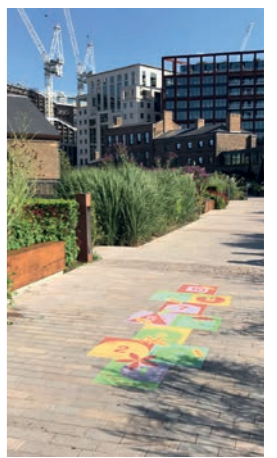
The London Plan policies G5 Urban Greening and G6 Biodiversity and Access to Nature together require developments to make urban greening a fundamental element of design and to deliver net gains for biodiversity. This needs to be an early consideration in masterplanning and scheme design.

The principles will reduce the impact of heat island effect through the reduction of hard surfacing where possible. This will create a green environment with trees and planting at ground level, as well as utilisation of roofs for greening ; thus creating breathing room and lowering temperatures.

“The town centre is a concrete jungle, and it would be great to encompass an open space or places for biodiversity to help make it more welcoming.”

- Feedback from a member of the public at an engagement event

- 1 New development within the NEQ will seek to achieve a minimum of 10% biodiversity increase based on current levels, with an aspiration for higher. A hierarchy of new green spaces aligning existing and promoted routes will be integrated into the wider network of publicly accessible green spaces in the town.
- 2 The public realm should incorporate SuDS and attenuation where feasible, to increase the town's climate adaptability and resilience against stormwater and flooding.
- 3 Opportunities to create a new community-oriented space towards Old Town along the western end of the new east-west route will be explored. More formal urban green spaces will be created east of North End. Their design will encourage a biodiverse environment through a varied and climate resilient planting scheme. They will also be designed to be flexible so as to serve as key events and gathering spaces.
- 4 Development proposals will give early consideration to opportunities for biodiversity, vegetation and rainwater attenuation on building roofs, whilst balancing the needs for resident amenity space, plant and building maintenance infrastructure, and building operation
- 5 Development proposals will give consideration to opportunities for creating visual amenity for high level living spaces through the use of green roofs.



Examples of integrating planting and sustainable, attractive drainage solutions into the public realm

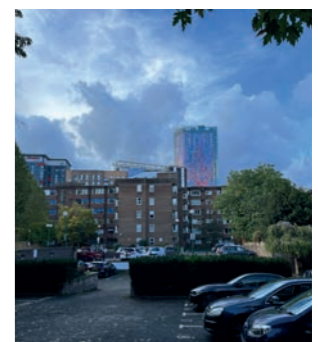
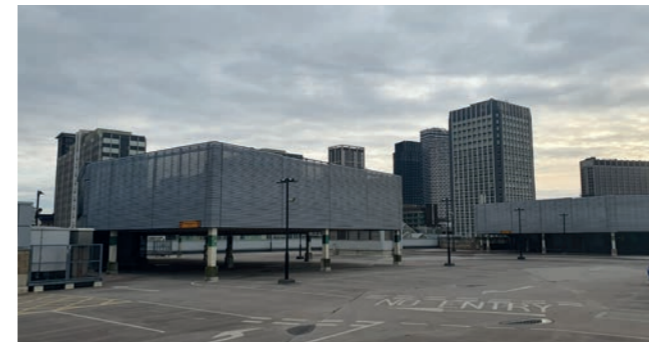
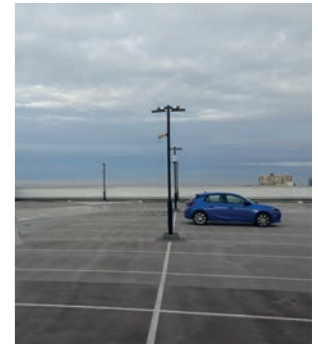


# Vehicular movement, servicing and parking

The new NEQ will seek to consolidate the parking provision, fostering a neighbourhood where residents and visitors can easily choose more sustainable transport methods which are convenient and pleasant to use. By developing NEQ with a holistic masterplan, site-wide servicing, access and parking strategy will allow for a more strategic approach, which balances the needs of businesses, residents and visitors.

There are two key areas to consider as part of the masterplan:

- 1 Servicing and access
- 2 Parking





# 9.1

## SERVICING AND ACCESS

Incorporating access for servicing from the primary road network will be a key consideration, enabling the town centre to function efficiently and minimising the impact of vehicles within the public realm.

A detailed access and servicing strategy will be required as the designs for the NEQ develop and will identify access points into and through the site for all modes of transport.

- 1 A site-wide access, parking and servicing strategy will be required to support the comprehensive regeneration of the NEQ. This strategy will seek to balance the needs of businesses in the area alongside the need to provide for regular day-to-day traffic movements by all modes, whilst also taking care to minimise disruption to existing and future residents.
- 2 In addition, an access, parking and servicing strategy will be required for each sequential development phase.
- 3 These strategies will however be conceived within the context of an overriding principal of protecting the quality of the primary active travel network of routes across the NEQ. The delivery of a high-quality environment for pedestrians using the new east-west route will be a primary consideration in this regard, with service routes being improved, rationalised or, where possible, operating around rather than along this key new route.
- 4 Where deliveries are required on primary active travel routes, time-limited deliveries should be sought. Where possible, off-site and last mile logistics and deliveries should be encouraged - reducing congestion and emissions within the town centre.
- 5 Existing site constraints should also be taken into consideration when developing a servicing strategy, avoiding primary pedestrian routes like North End during the day and at peak times; and George Street, where deliveries may interfere with public transport routes.
- 6 Future detailed design stages will need to carefully consider fire tender access across the site and 'secure by design'/terrorism related mitigation.



A fully electric truck, helping to reduce emissions within urban centres



Ecofleet - a free last mile delivery service working as part of the Cross River Partnership Clean Air Villages project



# 9.2

## PARKING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

As the Borough's principal town centre, the NEQ currently accommodates around 3,000 publicly accessible car parking spaces.

The Croydon Local Plan aspiration is for transformation of the NEQ to promote alternative travel modes over the use of the private car. Parking restraint in new development is part of this strategy.

The Masterplan Framework promotes car-free residential development, and encourages the use of public transport, cycling and walking as far as possible, acknowledging the need to reduce traffic generation.

- 1 The NEQ will remain the Borough's principal shopping, civic, cultural and entertainment destination. During and following NEQ's transformation, public parking will continue to play an important role in supporting the town centre economy.
- 2 There will be an overall net decrease in the total provision of public parking.
- 3 This approach will be an integral part of a movement and transport strategy which promotes active and sustainable travel behaviour.
- 4 However, the use of alternative transport modes is not a practicable option for all people nor in all circumstances, and there is a need to ensure the town centre remains competitive and supports the significant level of investment needed to revitalise the NEQ.

- 5 New residential will be car free, save for accessible provision.
- 6 Public car parking within the NEQ should:
  - Reduce the overall number of parking spaces across the NEQ;
  - Deliver new or improved public car parking, including EV charging points, in high quality facilities which support the operation and competitiveness of the NEQ and the town as whole;
  - Where possible, parking provision should make a positive contribution to placemaking. This could be achieved by the avoidance of blank and inactive walls. Other measures might include good quality entrances with clear and direct relationship to street frontages, and lighting, signage and where possible landscaping elements and features to improve the public realm both within and around parking structures, such as trees and planting.
- 7 The delivery of development within the NEQ is complex and infrastructure delivery/upgrades will be required. Anticipated infrastructure includes utilities, highways, EV facilities, active travel/public transport, taxi provision, coach facilities if required, public realm, social infrastructure, TV and Wi-Fi and car parking. The infrastructure provided might support wider growth across the town centre. The precise details of the infrastructure to delivered will be determined by detailed testing as part of planning applications.

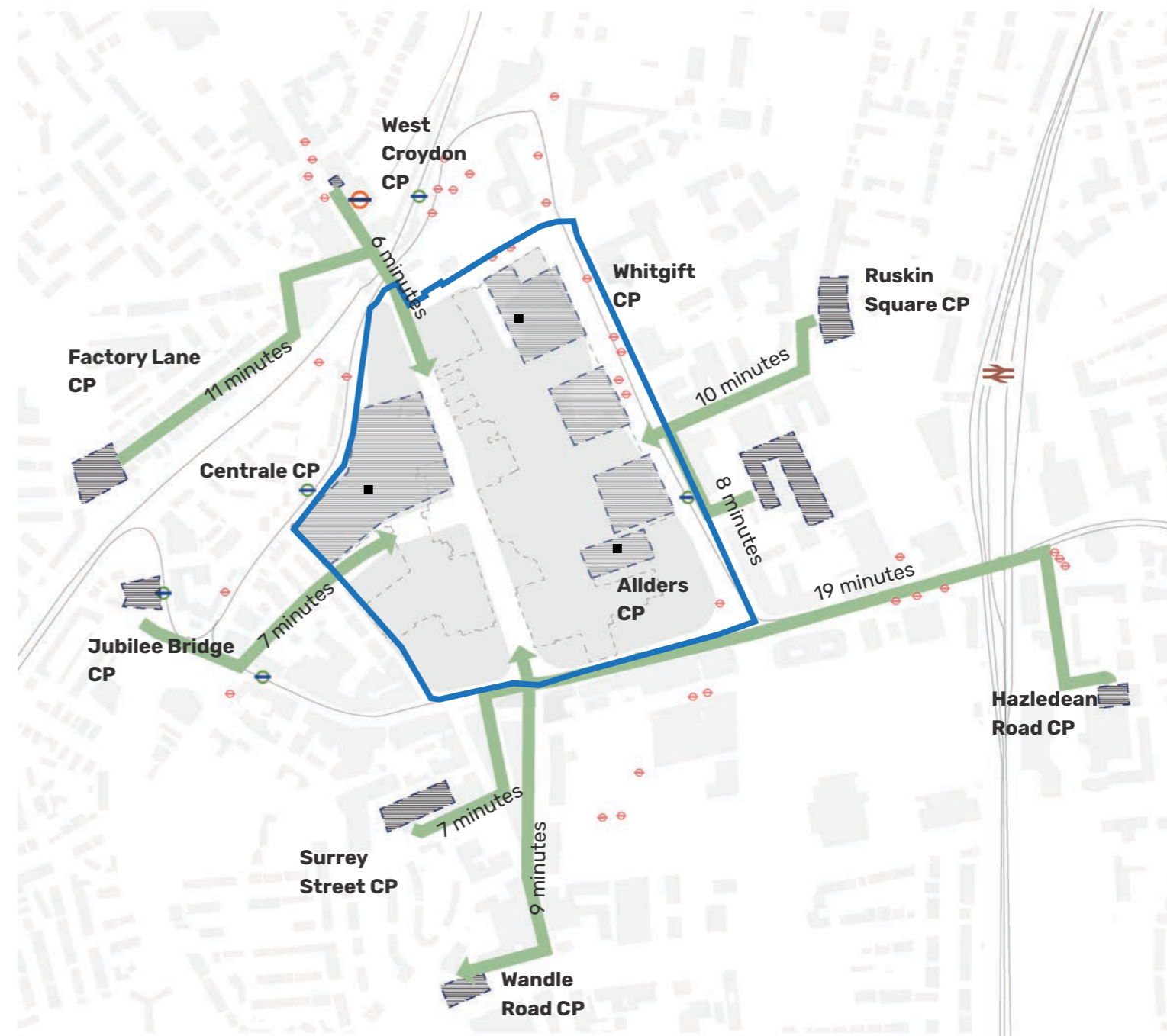


Fig 64 Existing car parking in and around the NEQ and walking times to North End.



# 10 A resilient and sustainable Croydon

**Environmental sustainability and carbon efficiency should be a key consideration of the NEQ masterplan. A whole life approach to carbon should be taken, which will include the approach to retention, retrofit, adaptation and reuse, as well as to the long-term view for buildings going forward to maintain resilience in response to the changing climate. This means creating spaces and buildings that are adaptable and flexible to a variety of uses, tenants and future climate models.**

**Two specific principles are identified as part of this aim:**

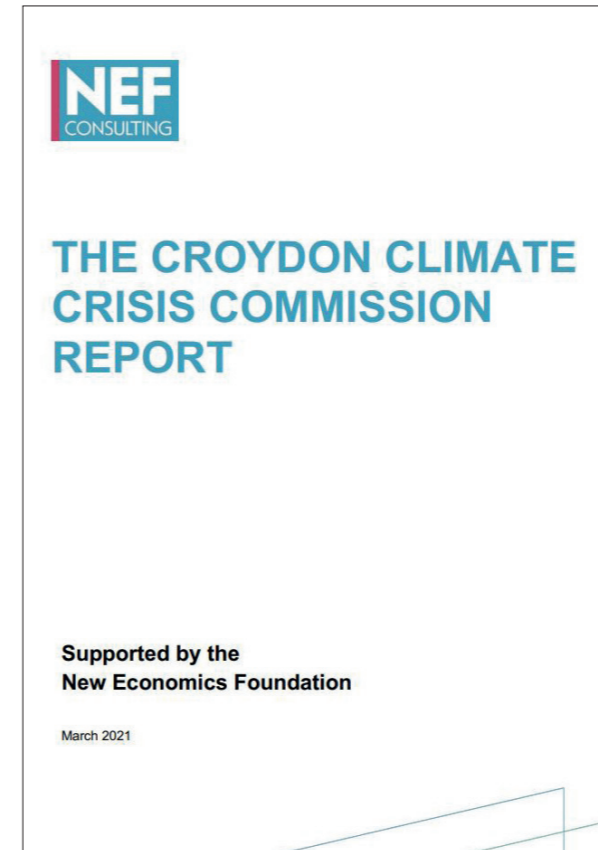
- 1 Retention and reuse
- 2 Whole life carbon and future adaptability

The Masterplan Framework has been designed to enable good levels of flexibility in relation to retention and reuse. The Framework seeks to generally work around existing structures. Decisions can therefore be made later into the NEQ transformation process on the merits of retaining or redevelopment individual buildings without the Framework being undermined.

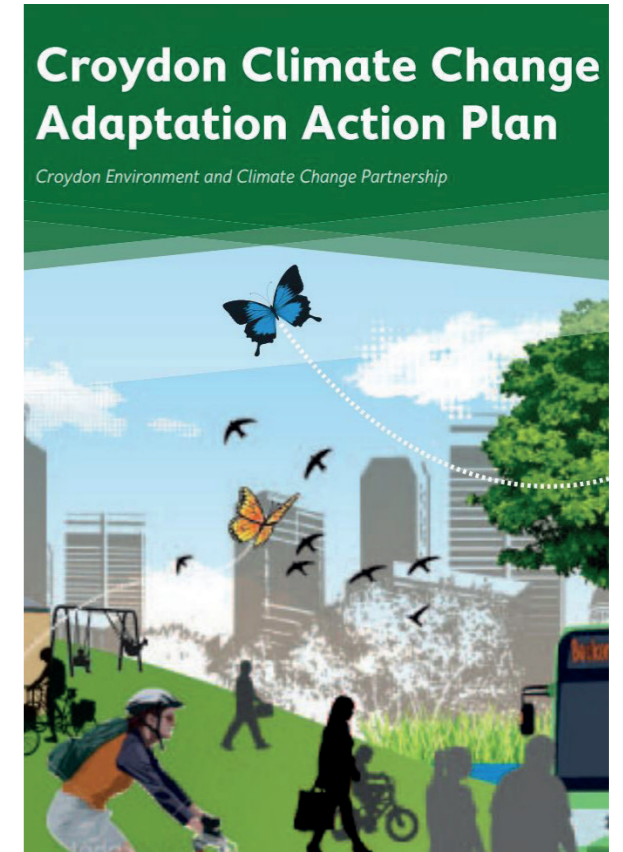
More generally, sustainability underpins all strands of the Masterplan Framework. Generally, the existing built assets within the NEQ are currently unsustainable and a radical transformation is required for the area to meet desirable environmental merit.

With radical and comprehensive change comes huge opportunities to think much more holistically and ambitiously around sustainable design and construction.

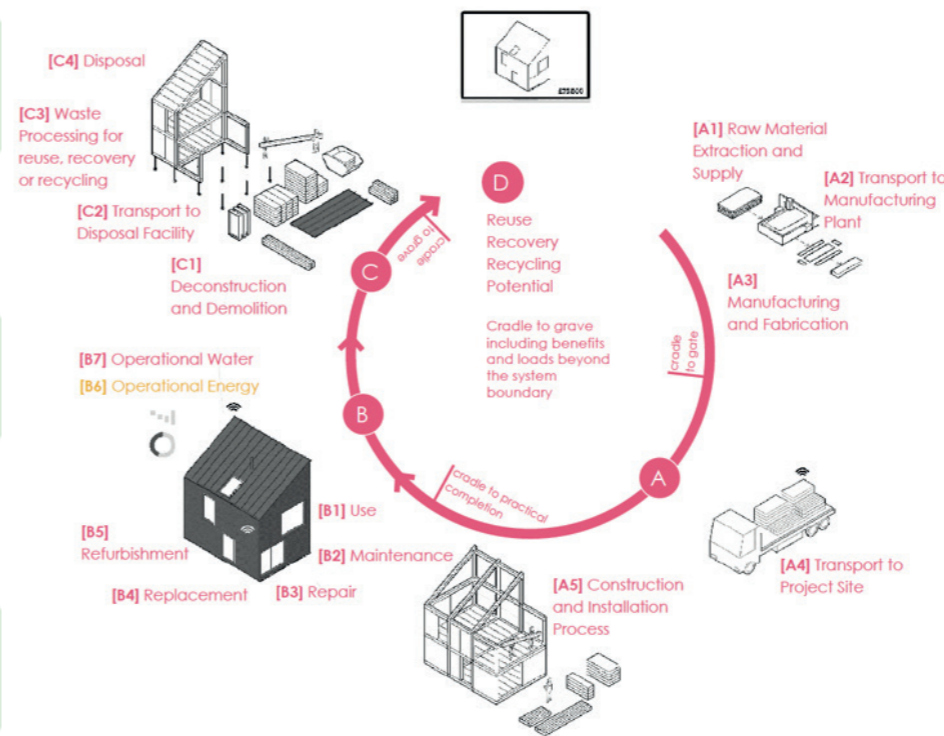
These might include site and area-wide energy issues, site and area-wide waste and water management opportunities and the modern methods of construction.



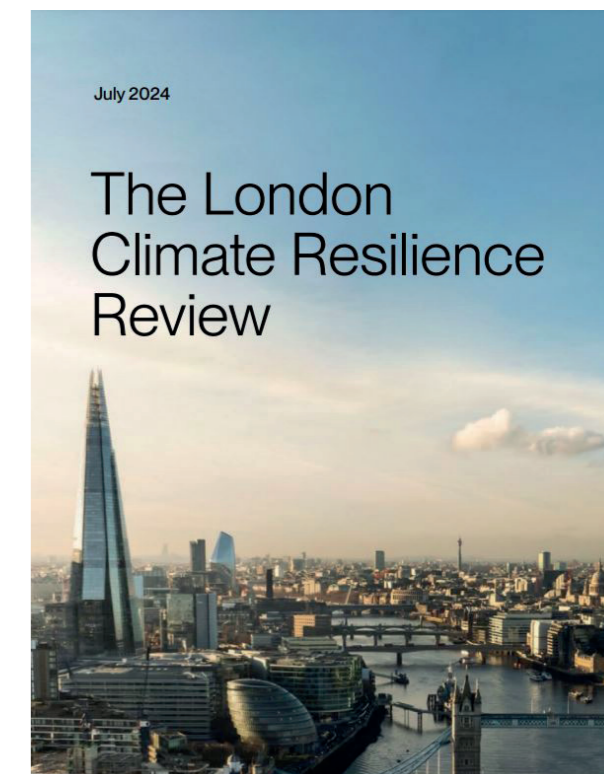
**Fig 65** The Croydon Climate Crisis Commission Report provides practical recommendations for delivering a step change in Croydon's transition to net zero by 2030.



**Fig 66** The Adaptation Action Plan aims to build adaptive capacity within the borough, putting in place support systems, legislative and policy frameworks to increase the resilience of public services, development, and local businesses.



**Fig 67** Building lifecycle from inception to deconstruction, considering all elements of carbon generation. The cycle promotes reuse, recovery and recycling potential for use in new buildings (Source: Hawkins\Brown)



**Fig 68** The London Climate Resilience Review sets out clear recommendations for improving the living standards of Londoners and delivering robust infrastructure.



# 10.1

## RETENTION AND REUSE

**Redevelopment of the NEQ will need to consider the potential benefits of re-use versus demolition of existing buildings, having particular regard to the carbon impacts of demolishing buildings balanced against the other impacts and benefits of demolition – such as the transformational change and townscape/heritage benefits for the wider area.**

There are a number of substantial existing buildings on the site – such as the Whitgift and Centrale Shopping Centres (including deep and complex site-wide basements), Green Park House (a vacant commercial office building of c. 12 storeys) and Centre Tower (formally Rothschild House, a vacant commercial office building of c.21 storeys) – some of which may have potential for reuse.

However, it is considered very likely that large areas of the existing buildings above ground will require significant alteration and/or demolition, in order for the masterplan to achieve its stated aims of a more permeable, public network of streets and spaces. The redevelopment of the NEQ will need to consider this balance whilst exploring the potential for retention, and it is anticipated that the re-use of below ground basements and structures will necessarily inform the design of any future development.

Where not in conflict with the overarching aims of the masterplan, and where buildings are structurally or spatially suitable for re-use or re-purposing, the masterplan will seek to retain above ground structures wherever possible.

The Masterplan Framework has emerged in direct response to the opportunities and constraints presented by the existing Whitgift Shopping Centre structure – the buildings over it and around it, but perhaps most particularly the basement beneath it.

It is not yet possible to outline a detailed retention strategy as part of this Framework. However, with the Framework elements as they are, working with existing Whitgift structures rather than against them, many reuse and refurbishment options remain open.

Existing built elements of the NEQ more likely to be retained include:

- **Centrale Shopping Centre** – this is the principal shopping centre in Croydon town centre and its retention forms a key part of the continuity of retail strategy for the NEQ. It is essential that Croydon maintains its Metropolitan Centre status throughout the NEQ transformation process, and retaining and continuing to invest in this existing prime retail asset will support this objective.
- **Former Alders store** – this is an important building with a prominent North End retail frontage. The building makes a positive contribution to the character of the Central Croydon Conservation Area. There is potential to reuse the building for new retail and other commercial uses and retention of the building forms a key component in an emerging retention and reuse strategy for the NEQ.

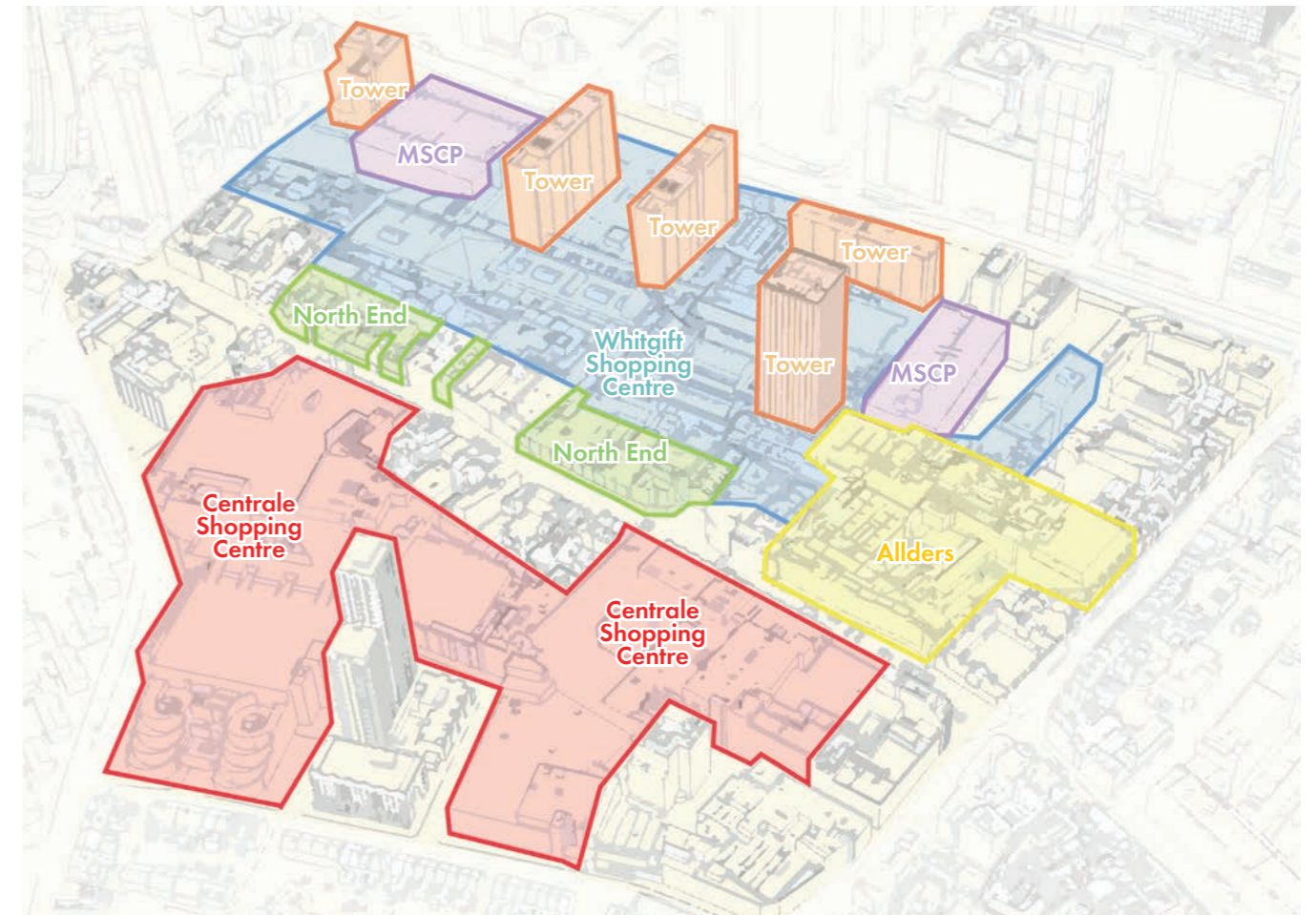


Fig 69 Typologies of existing built assets across NEQ in URW ownership

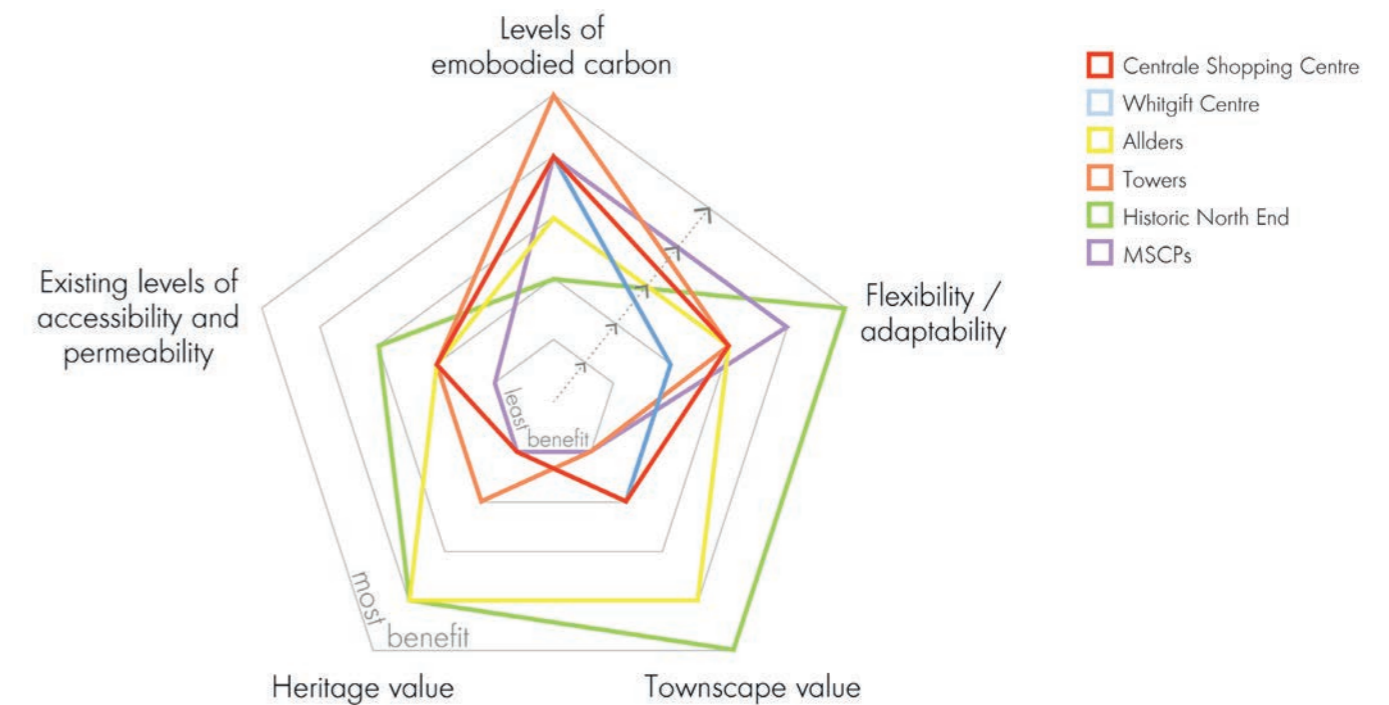


Fig 70 Composite indicative qualitative assessment of benefits of retention



# 10.1

## RETENTION AND REUSE

- **North End frontage** – existing retail properties along the North End high street frontage characterise the essence of the NEQ. The strong and continuous commercial retail frontage along North End is one of the NEQ’s most enduring characteristics and has proven to be one of its most resilient and enduring features. The typical narrow fronted and plan deep retail unit is a highly flexible and versatile high street retail format. The potential benefits of the retention and reuse of North End’s high street frontage are therefore significant in terms of townscape and heritage factors as well as flexibility.
- **Whitgift basement** – The Centre’s basement structure directly informs the location and alignment of public and open routes outlined in this Masterplan Framework. Basement access will need to be maintained, and the basement environment will continue to play a critical servicing role in redevelopment of the Whitgift site. The alignment of the existing malls and internal retail streets largely reflect the public routes proposed in this Masterplan Framework. This approach has very significant carbon and wider deliverability benefits. Whilst itself complex in nature and delivered incrementally, the existing basement has been designed to respond to level changes across the site. The opportunity for the NEQ’s long-term transformation to take advantage of this historic investment has major sustainability, practical and delivery benefits.

Existing built elements of the NEQ with some potential scope for retention:

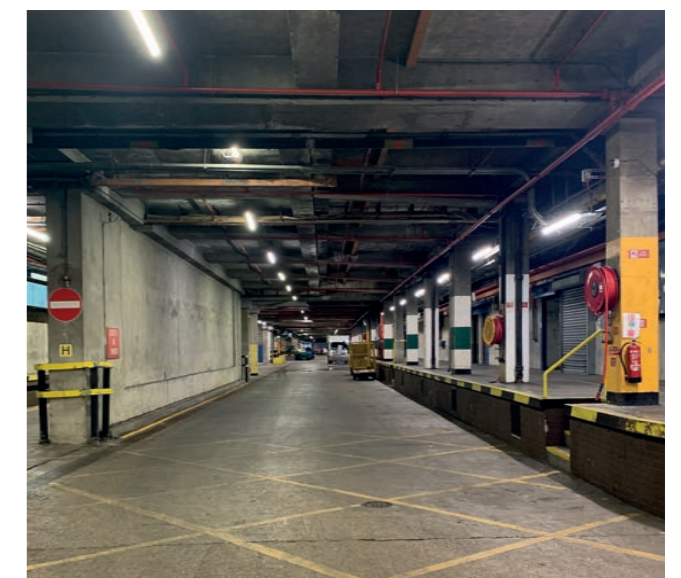
- **Existing towers** – the network of routes defined in the Masterplan Framework generally fall around the existing commercial / office tower building footprints. The

Framework is not therefore dependent on their demolition. These significant buildings have large amounts of embodied carbon within their structure and retention and reuse these buildings would deliver the potential for significant sustainability benefits in this regard. The structures are however not considered to be particularly positive in townscape terms, and their age and construction methods render them limited in terms of flexibility. The Masterplan Framework itself is however flexible in that, generally, all of its key elements work well with or without the retention of these buildings. Further technical assessment work is required on each of the individual buildings to determine the contribution they can make to an overall retention and reuse strategy.

- **MSCPs** – whilst the level of parking provision for new residential uses within the NEQ’s long term transformation is likely to be limited, publicly accessible visitor parking will continue to play an important role in supporting the economic viability of retail activities in the town centre. Parking capacity will need to be retained within the overall NEQ masterplan, but whether these existing parking structures prove to be fit for purpose will need further consideration and review.

Existing built elements of the NEQ unlikely to be retained and more likely to be redevelopment include:

- **Whitgift Shopping Centre** – dating from the 1960s, whilst the centre will have significant levels of embodied carbon, there are very few other potential benefits of retaining this outdated structure. In townscape and heritage value terms it has little merit and the retail floorspace within it offers little scope in terms of flexibility.



There are a number of substantial existing buildings on the site, above and below ground, some of which might lend themselves to re-purposing or re-use.

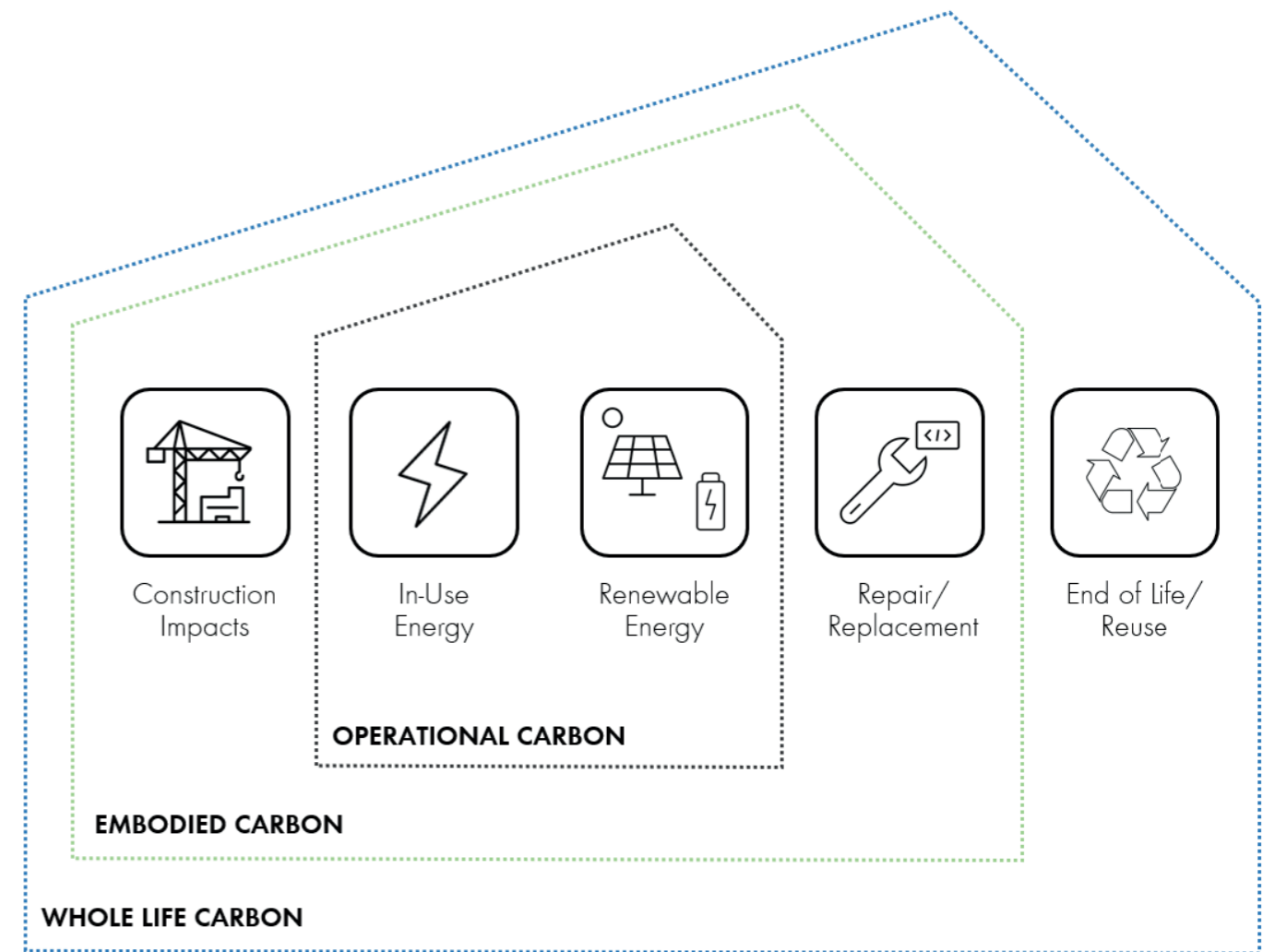


# 10.2

## WHOLE LIFE CARBON

**Sustainability is a cross-cutting theme underpinning all aspects of investment and change in the heart of Croydon. The embodied carbon of buildings means that often the most sustainable building is one which is flexible, adaptable and durable, allowing it to have a long lifespan.**

- 1 Achieving a net zero carbon development will be a key ambition.
- 2 An ambition to minimise energy use will drive key design decisions around reusing and adapting existing structures (where appropriate), energy efficiency and on-site renewable energy generation, making better use of town centre land, promoting active and sustainable travel patterns and behaviours, and creating ecologically rich and biodiverse public and private spaces.
- 3 New and existing developments within the NEQ will be designed and managed to promote high standards of resource management, energy efficiency and use, minimising water use consumption, minimising waste generation, minimising air pollution and facilitating and promoting recycling.
- 4 New development within the NEQ will need to demonstrate a strategy to reduce the generation of or mitigate against the adverse impacts of air pollution, odour, noise and vibration on existing and new residents.
- 5 Designing for flexibility, buildings can look to use regular grid spacing so internal arrangement of spaces can be changed to suit a range of tenants needs. Buildings might also be designed to accommodate change of use, therefore finishes and fixings should be designed for disassembly and reuse on or off site.
- 6 Durable, low carbon, materials can look to be specified where appropriate for building elements which require the longest design life. Where a material's useful life can be extended through maintenance, these could also be specified.
- 7 Design principles that seek to incorporate and promote high standards of resource management, addressing areas such as minimising energy use, water consumption, and waste and methods of minimising waste production, facilitating recycling, etc.
- 8 Off-site manufacturing of building elements should look to be used where appropriate to minimise construction waste and improve quality control.
  - Passive design principles including good fabric, air tightness, heat recovery, sensible glazing ratios, adequate shading and operable windows should be central to design.
- 9 Water efficiency measures such as grey water harvesting and recycling should be explored.
- 10 Adequate waste storage provision should be given to enable recycling streams.



**Fig 71** As detailed designs for buildings come forward, their designs will consider whole life carbon and the circular economy.



