

NextGen Panel

Session 3 report

Held on 9 July 2025



UNIBAIL-RODAMCO-WESTFIELD



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Introduction

About this session

The panel was given the opportunity to read all the public exhibition material and shared their thoughts on the early vision for Croydon town centre.

The panel then delved into the detail of landscaped spaces during this workshop, with a presentation from project landscape architects, Camlins, before being tasked with designing their own public spaces.



Workshop 3

Following the presentation, the panel was split into groups and asked to create their own landscaped space.

To do this, the groups used a map of the site and were given photos from other public spaces to help inspire their designs. Camlins and the rest of the project team then provided feedback on the groups' designs.

They were asked to reflect on:



Target audience and feel

Who the spaces were for and what they should feel like.



Safety and accessibility

How the spaces can be designed to feel safe and accessible for everyone.



Greenery and seating

What level of greenery there should be alongside the amount and types of seating.



Celebrating Croydon

What makes this landscaped space feel special to Croydon.

Summer 2025

Consulting on our early vision

The panel was given the opportunity to read through all the Summer 2025 exhibition materials, and were encouraged to fill out the survey on our early vision to redevelop the Whitgift Centre, refurbish Centrale and reimagine Allders. Below is a summary of the panel's responses:



All NextGen panellists **support the overall vision** for the future of the town centre.



71% of the panel want to see **leisure uses in Allders**.



Members of the NextGen would like to see **youth-focussed venues and community spaces** on the ground floor of the redeveloped Whitgift Centre.



The panel feel having **greenery, seating and accessible areas** are important features in public spaces.



Pedestrian-only streets and dedicated cycle lanes were supported to help encourage active forms of travel.



In our next phase of consultation, **the panel would like to see more information** about housing, pedestrian access, sustainability, leisure and culture activities, alongside tours around the site.

“ I would suggest more water fountains and bins in the area to keep it clean ”

“ Having a wider variety of things to do in the area with friends. More communal areas, sit-down restaurants and arcades would bring the place to life and make it more inviting ”

“ Ensure there are safe places for people to leave their bikes, many people don't use them for fear of them being stolen. Also maybe more santander/ lime/forest rental bikes available ”

“ Potentially a new food plaza. Similar to that of Westfield or Battersea, or a new venue like a Puttshack ”

Designing a public space

The panel was then split into three groups and tasked with designing their own public space. The groups were given a blank map of the proposed public spaces on site and used sketches, labels and precedent imagery to share their ideas.



Group 1



Key priorities for public space which were supported across all three groups included:



Space for music and culture.



Flexible spaces to be used for seasonal events such as markets or an outdoor cinema.



Increased urban greenery.



Inclusive areas for relaxation and play.



Art and vibrant public spaces.

A vibrant town square with activities for people of all ages

This first group's designs reflected the different characteristics proposed for the two public squares, with more of an active cultural hub to the south and a relaxed residential character to the north.

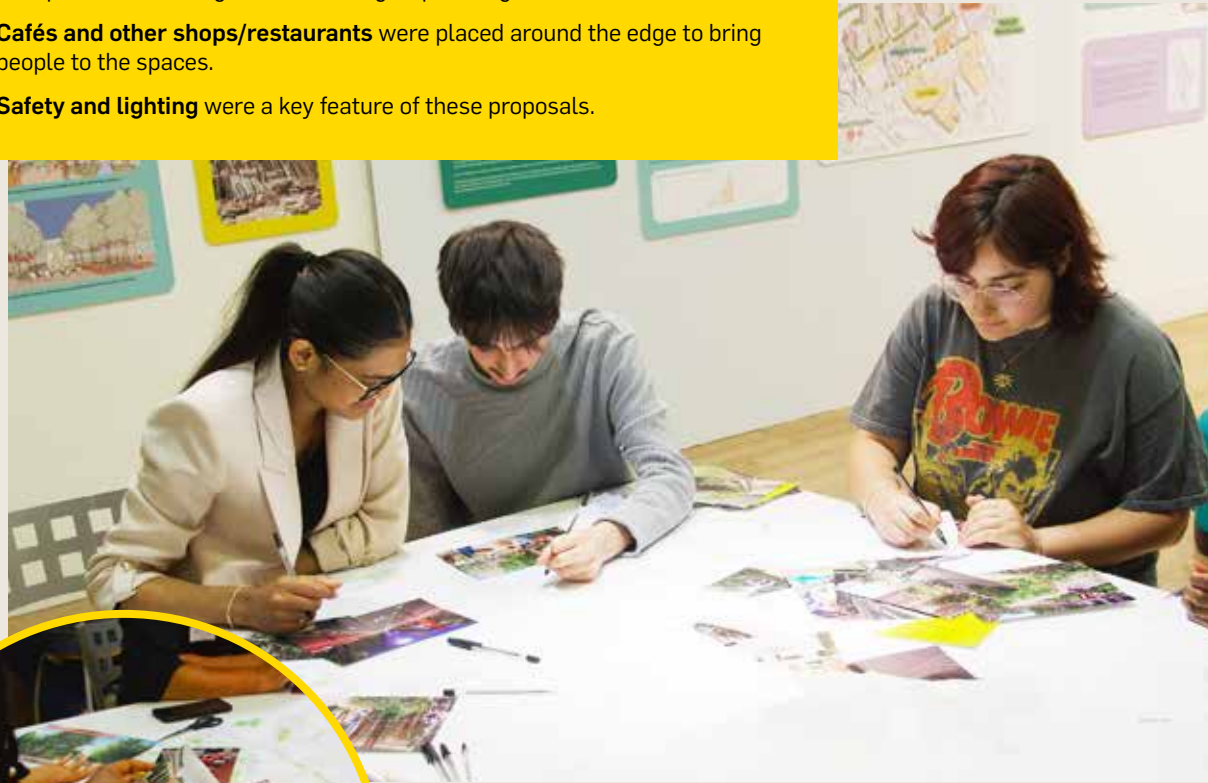
- **Space for live music, performances and a cinema** was important to this group, and how we consider activating the town centre to make Croydon a destination.
- **Active space for young people** such as a fountain to play in, a skate park and sensory areas proposed on site.
- **Opportunities for the main southern public square** to be used for seasonal cultural celebrations such as religious events, a winter food market and festive lights.
- **Well-lit cycle routes** to make cycling safer.

A performance and cultural hub

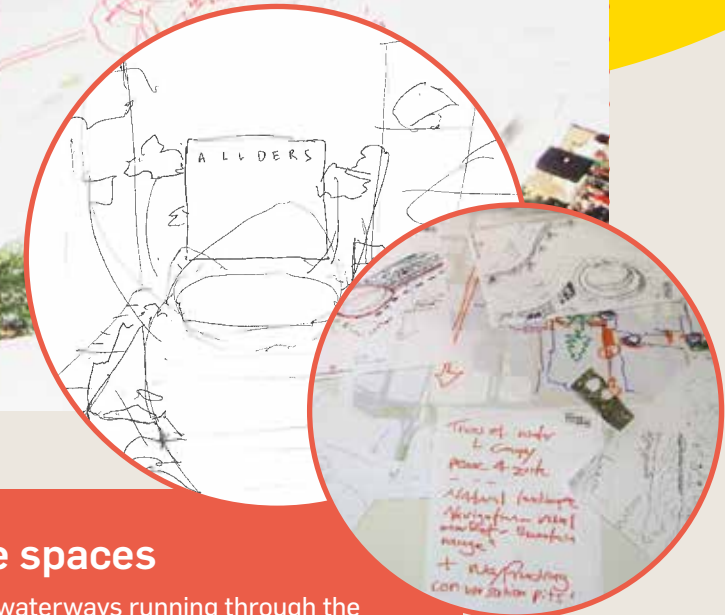
Culture was this group's main focus, with thought given to how people would be drawn to and use performance spaces.

- **Spaces for live performance** formed the centrepiece of this group's proposals, with the focus on a stage surrounded by ample seating.
- Natural features, including **grassy areas to sit in and planting** to break up the spaces, were integrated into this group's design.
- **Cafés and other shops/restaurants** were placed around the edge to bring people to the spaces.
- **Safety and lighting** were a key feature of these proposals.

Group 2



Group 3



An urban oasis with performance spaces

This group's proposal focussed on a series of planted waterways running through the site, providing ample places to stop, rest and socialise. As with other groups, music and performance were central to their proposals, with open mics and showcase spaces featured.

- **Conversation pits** modelled on the Barbican provided places to sit and socialise.
- **Natural features including planting and waterways** aimed to create a relaxing journey through the site.
- **Wildflowers and natural grasses** helped to incorporate nature into the proposals.
- **A flexible cultural hub** facing Allders featured in their design, with an idea to utilise it by providing a weekly music showcase for local young people.
- **Uplighting** helped to make the planned space a pleasant place to be after dark.
- **Clear wayfinding** helped ensure the space is easy to use and navigate.

What's next

We are excited to show how we have used the panel's feedback as we progress our plans for Croydon town centre.

The public space designs created at this workshop and feedback from both the panel and wider community will be used to inform our evolving designs and future masterplan.

The next workshop session will be careers-focussed, offering the panel an opportunity to explore what a career in the built environment could look like, alongside the different roles that exist.

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