HOUSING INTENSIFICATION
IN SEVEN SOUTH LONDON TOWN CENTRES

SEVEN

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IN SEVEN SOUTH LONDON TOWN CENTRES

STUDY COMMISSIONED BY DESIGN FOR LONDON

URHAHN URBAN DESIGN
IN ASSOCIATION WITH URBAN PROGRESS STUDIO AND GVA GRIMLEY

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During the 19th and 20th centuries, politicians and architects saw the city as a cause of many of the evils of the day - an understandable reaction to the extreme poverty and slums of an industrial city. This encouraged people to move out to the suburbs and new towns, which further added to the dereliction of the city.

The coming of the post-industrial city has radically changed this situation. Politicians, sociologists and architects have embraced the concept that the only sustainable form of development is the well-designed, compact, live/work, polycentric well-connected, eco-sustainable city. Intensification and recycling of the existing land and buildings have become the drivers of today's sustainable regeneration policy.

The London Plan is based on the concept of the multi-centred, compact city built around existing town centres, yet much of London is now suburban in nature. The London Plan's principal recommendation, and a world first, is that all the expected growth, estimated at over 500,000 households by 2026, will be accommodated on recycled land with all growth contained within the green belt. The challenge is now to ensure that the new regeneration principles improve Londoners' quality of life not just in the central city, but also in suburban London. To do this, we need to intensify the suburbs around public transport hubs.

Urhahn Urban Design's excellent study of how to revitalise South London's town centres develops the above principles and makes for compelling reading. It concentrates on clearly analysing the problems of facilitating good quality intensification projects and develops a series of illustrative future scenarios in the form of case studies that show the very diversity of what can be achieved.

I recommend that those interested in urban regeneration read this document.

Lord Rogers of Riverside CH

FOREWORD

Town centres should be at the very heart of civic life. They are places of exchange where locally we meet, shop, do business and where many of our schools and other public services are based. Often, they are still the focus for communities in suburban areas, providing the identity to their surrounding neighbourhoods. But these centres have undergone significant change.

Many are under pressure —with competition from out-of-town retail and employment centres, with changing business demands, increasing traffic and the accommodation of the diverse needs of the communities they support. But all of them are also under pressure to absorb the forecast growth for housing and employment opportunities, clearly set out in the Mayor's spatial development plan. Consequently, many are in need of regeneration and investment in the public realm, social infrastructure and economic vitality, having been in decline for some years, even during the past decade of growth.

In 2005, the London Development Agency and Government Office for London commissioned Urhahn Urban Design to explore strategies for intensification in 10 North London town centres: the TEN study was the result.

For this study, which follows on from the TEN report, the need to intensify – to make better and more intense use of the available land and buildings – is again the broad context. The purpose of the study is to explore how future housing intensification could unlock the potential of these town centres. It investigates the barriers to good quality intensification in the current social and planning environment, and suggests some possible solutions. It also examines the implications of different levels of potential intensification on a variety of town centre or suburban examples. In this respect, the study is timely given the context of the work of the Outer London Commission who are developing recommendations to ensure outer London realises its full potential.

Although the study has been undertaken in close collaboration with the seven London boroughs involved, it is important to note that these locations and the scenarios are intended for illustration only; they are not proposals. The scenarios are a tool to illustrate some of the opportunities and issues resulting from different levels of intensification. The intention is to stimulate debate about the nature of the suburbs and their potential to accommodate growth, about preserving local character and positive change, and also about the improvement of Londoners' well-being through good quality housing intensification.

Peter Bishop
Group Director,
Design Development & Environment,
London Development Agency

PART I

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY

This Chapter sets out the London policy context, the process of the study and the approach used.

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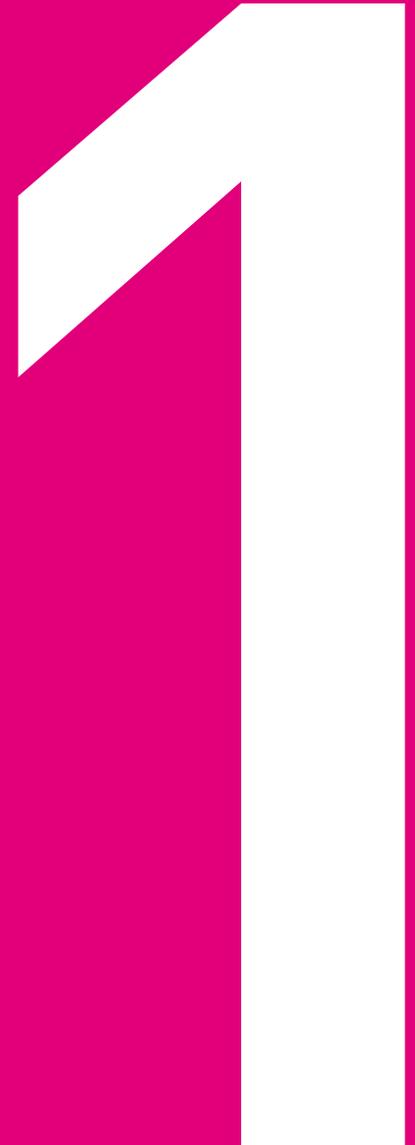
1.1 WHY THIS STUDY?

This study is set in the context of efforts to accommodate London's growing population within the city's boundaries, while transforming it into a prosperous, more environmentally responsible and liveable city through creative, careful and integrated urban design. The study was commissioned by Design for London to explore how imaginative yet practical designs and policies could deliver appropriate residential intensification in town centres and their edges. It is an independent research document and should not be interpreted as endorsed or adopted policy, but it could inform future policy development on the part of Government, the Greater London Authority family and Local Authorities, presenting possible options to enable growth and public realm enhancement beyond current policy frameworks. It aims to stimulate debate about urban change amongst the built environment community and the public.

Though set against a rapidly changing market context, with profound implications on housing delivery, the study concentrates on policy factors which currently act as constraints to delivering increased capacity and better quality, and identifies policy change which might be required to bring about future development. We have focused on seven south London locations, all of them without major ongoing planning and development projects, which are broadly representative of the diversity in London's town centres. They are mostly secondary town centres outside central London but with good public transport accessibility, which have seen relatively limited intensification in recent years. The study tests the idea that these intermediate centres, which now often fall outside the primary focus of planning and regeneration activity, can contribute significantly to sustainable housing development

in south London, and that this can add to the vitality and quality of such places. The study should inform the debate about planning and development in Outer London.

For each of the seven locations, the study presents three urban design scenarios that illustrate options for future developments. These scenarios are illustrative and conceptual. They do not seek to make detailed proposals for immediate change. They are, however based on the objectives of good quality town centre intensification, attractive and sustainable homes for different demographic groups and creating broader benefits to the public such as improved public realm and social infrastructure.

This study will be relevant to those involved in current debates about planning change in London and to the wider planning and development practitioners who seek to create good quality architecture and urban design in London and other metropolitan areas. Whilst the document should not be read as GLA or Mayoral policy, we hope it will inspire all stakeholders to strive for an imaginative, ambitious approach to intensification in future policy development, area frameworks and individual projects.

London's population is growing. The most recent projections, set out in the Mayor's consultation document *Planning for a Better London* (July 2008), estimate that from 7.51 million Londoners in 2006 growth will continue to between 7.96 and 8.14 million by 2016 and to 8.27 – 8.61 million by 2026. This leads to a growth in households of 560,000 to 700,000 between 2006 and 2026. Since the turn of the century, housing production across London has also increased; the *London Plan Annual Monitoring Report* (AMR) 5 (February 2009) confirms that in the period April 2007 - March 2008,

29,150 net new conventional dwellings (taking into account demolitions and excluding multi-occupancy homes such as student accommodation) were completed in London, the highest number since 1988. This increase follows a strong policy push through the *Housing Capacity Study* (2004-5) and the *London Plan* (consolidated with Alterations since 2004). It is widely expected that this progress has slowed down dramatically through 2008, but this will be measured and reported against in AMR6 in February 2010. The London Plan has set a target for at least 30,500 additional homes to be provided each year to 2016/17, and there is London-wide consensus about the need to continue and intensify the effort to produce homes for London within the currently urbanised areas. Equally, the London Plan emphasises the need to create more sustainable communities that both mitigate and can adapt to the challenge of climate change, and to focus growth on town centres where possible. This reflects National Policy as set out in *Planning Policy Statement 1: Sustainable Development*, in *Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing* and in *Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres*.

In the Mayor's consultation document *Planning for a Better London* and in the draft *London Housing Strategy* (November 2008), these ambitions are confirmed. While announcing a longer-term ambition to revise the London Plan comprehensively, the documents re-state the ambition to provide for London's population growth within the Green Belt, to improve design quality and energy efficiency, and the target to deliver 50,000 new affordable dwellings between 2008 and 2011.
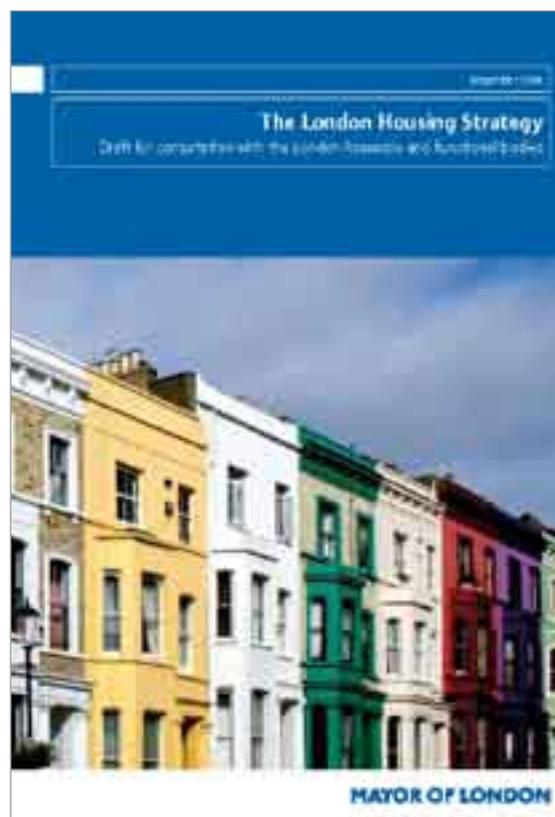
The Mayor's vision for housing is based on three principles:

- to raise aspirations and promote opportunity, for example by producing more affordable homes particularly for families;
- to improve homes and transform neighbourhoods, for example by improving design quality by greening homes;
- to maximise delivery and optimise value for money, for example by promoting new delivery mechanisms.
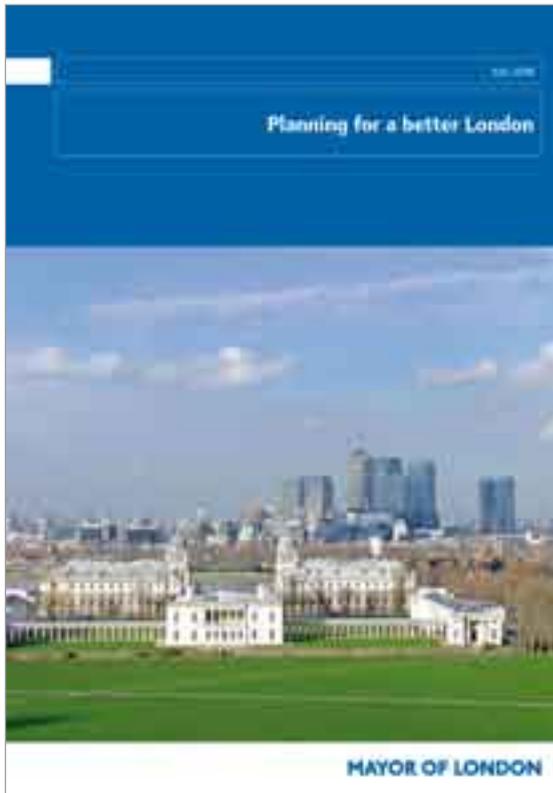
In south London, housing construction has grown considerably in the period before the current economic downturn, in line with the London wide increase. Part of this has taken place in larger urban development and regeneration projects, often with support from the LDA and other bodies. However, much intensification has happened in an incremental, unplanned manner. In many cases there seem to be obstacles in the planning or development process that impede the delivery of good quality intensification projects. This often leads to development that lacks in quality, both in terms of residential amenity (such as internal space and layout, and private outdoor amenity space) and urban design quality.

This has led to a situation in which, after several years of increasing residential densities, there has been renewed public and policy debate about the quality and appropriateness of high density building. This discussion focuses on three key aspects, which will be further explored below:

- the challenge of delivering housing that is suitable for a range of people including families with children and elderly residents, i.e. long-term sustainable quality in high-density layouts & space standards;
- the challenge of finding urban design and dwelling typologies that are appropriate and acceptable in the context of areas outside central London;
- the challenge of delivering such developments within the constraints of the current planning and development system.

Planning for a better London

MAYOR OF LONDON

1.3 SUSTAINABLE DENSITY, SUPER-DENSITY AND FAMILY LIVING

Recent studies, such as the *London Plan Density Matrix Review* carried out by URS and Patel Taylor (June 2006), show that the density of development in London has increased in recent years. However, the increasing densities have not always been matched with improved quality. Looking at new residential development in the UK between 2004 and 2007, the CABE report *Housing audit: assessing the design quality of new housing* concluded that design standards were higher in London than in the rest of the country but the overwhelming majority of developments were still found to be 'average' or 'poor'. This echoes a wider concern, also voiced in the Urban Task Force's second report *Towards A Strong Urban Renaissance* (2005), that more attention to the quality of architecture and urban design is crucial to improving the quality of life in UK cities.

A particular challenge is the need to reduce the environmental impact of building and housing, by building to higher environmental standards and to encourage sustainable lifestyles. This ambition provides a major argument for building at higher densities near public transport nodes as it will allow for a greater number of facilities to be located within walking distance as well as encouraging public transport use, thereby reducing the need for car travel. In the London Plan, this challenge has been captured through the Density Matrix which links public transport accessibility (PTAL levels), site location vis-à-vis town centres and setting (central, urban or suburban) with permissible density ranges. These densities range from 30 residential units per hectare (u/ha), or 150 habitable rooms per hectare (hr/ha) in the least accessible, suburban locations to 435 u/ha, or 1100 hr/ha in central areas with a high PTAL level.

However, it is increasingly recognised that high-density development per se will not necessarily be environmentally sustainable if design standards are low. Key issues such as energy efficiency, re-providing vegetation, encouraging passive solar gain and natural ventilation, maximising natural daylight and minimising water run-off are to be taken into account. Hence there is a need to put design at the heart of housing to shape a more attractive, well designed city and make London a healthier and better city for people to live in. *London Plan* policies, *Supplementary Planning Guidance on Sustainable Design* and *Construction and the draft London Housing Strategy*, as well as non-statutory documents such as on green roofs, specify ambitions regarding energy efficiency standards and re-providing vegetation, but there is a long way still to go to improve quality in practice.

More intense use of space by more people demands design excellence and solutions that are well thought out to prevent problems such as a lack of outdoor private amenity space, insufficient public space for children and young people, noise and a lack of appropriate facilities for bins and bikes.

In particular, new housing development has not always answered local needs, such as affordable housing for families with children and housing that is suitable for the elderly. Some of the 1- and 2-bedroom flats that are delivered in typical town centre intensification schemes are now seen as unsuccessful as they are too small and do not meet the needs of these groups. Recognising this concern, policymakers have emphasised the need to ensure that supply of new units is appropriate to demand.

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There are several policy documents outlining and detailing this ambition:

- *The Government's Planning Policy Statement 3*: *Housing* emphasises the need to produce family homes in neighbourhoods that are attractive and appropriate for children and young people, for example through the provision of play space and youth facilities;
- English Partnerships in 2007 introduced minimum space standards for dwelling units in developments supported by the organisation, which exceeded Lifetime Home space standards;
- The Greater London Authority has recently published *Supplementary Planning Guidance* on the provision of space for children's and young people's play and informal recreation, in new residential projects including quantitative guidelines for the minimum provision of space per child or young person;
- The publication *Recommendations for Living at Superdensity*, the result from a collaborative research project by a group of leading housing architecture practices, makes practical recommendations for the design and management of new residential schemes that are 'superdense', i.e. of 150 u/ha (which in the document is seen to equal 500 hr/ha) or over, which includes the top range of the London Plan Density Matrix.

This study shows how different approaches to intensification in particular localities can lead to results that suit diverse household types both in terms of unit quality and neighbourhood amenities. It also shows how a wide range of different typologies can produce better quality housing and urban design outcomes, including for affordable housing.
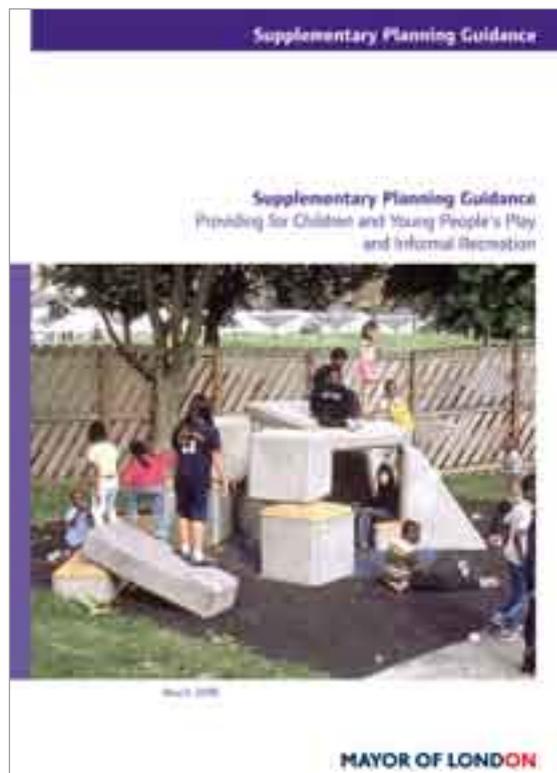
1.4 THE OUTER LONDON CONTEXT AND THE PUBLIC VALUE OF INTENSIFICATION

There is widespread public concern that many current developments are inappropriate to their context and destroy much of what people see as valuable in their daily living environments. Intensification risks getting a bad name – such as 'town cramming' – if it becomes associated with mediocre architecture, loss of greenery, insufficient social infrastructure and loss of local character to 'identikit' development. This is particularly relevant in the case of south London, which is more predominantly suburban in character than other parts of London.

SUSTAINABLE SUBURBIA

The report *Sustainable Suburbia* (2007) by MacCormac Jamieson Prichard Architects lists a series of general housing qualities that are highly valued by residents. Some of these are typically suburban, such as having your own front door and private open space, off-street parking, and minimal overlooking and overspill of noise. Much of current suburban development does not achieve some or all of such aspirations either through typological constraints or design flaws, whilst at the same time the real benefits of living at higher densities might not be achieved either. In that case, higher density development in outer London risks becoming the worst of both worlds. The report *Sustaining Our Suburbs* by Zero Zero Architects (2007) adds that some of the models underlying the idea of suburban town centre intensification are flawed as they are disconnected from the reality in which people live their lives. People may live, work and socialise in different places in complex networks, and the nearest town centre might not be where they spend much of their time. This has led some to question the notion of focusing exclusively on high density in town centres. Both reports argue that investing in models to improve suburban quality of life and create suitable suburban housing at 'mid-density' (80-120 u/ha), is necessary as well. The challenge is to find models that enable key aspects of urban sustainability such as increased public transport operation, but don't require exclusive reliance on high-rise, collective access arrangements and which are more suitable for the lifestyle of those who opt for what are sometimes called London's towns and villages.

Residential intensification increases the number of people per hectare and can lead to increased land value. But it is often not clear what local communities and the public interest as a whole

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stands to gain in return for the increased density and possible loss of amenity such as greenspace. In particular, pressure on traffic or on existing social infrastructure such as schools, GP surgeries or sports and other leisure facilities are key concerns, as is development on back gardens. Hence it is crucial to couple residential intensification to local priorities as well as other wider objectives. The former may include issues such as the improvement of the retail offer; creation of new public space or facilities for children and young people, solving local transport or parking problems, and the creation or improvement of new public amenities such as sports fields or cultural facilities. Improvements may include increased energy efficiency of the local building stock, enabling district-wide renewable energy provision, or improving pedestrian connectivity, safety and legibility of the public realm.

This study contributes to this discussion by showing explicitly how in each scenario wider regeneration value is created in the process of housing intensification.

Top & middle: The Blue House, Ijburg, Amsterdam. A community arts facility with adjacent communal allotment within a high density residential scheme.

Bottom: facilities for children as part of a new development (award-winning Accordia development, Cambridge).

1.5 BARRIERS TO INCREASING DENSITY IN SOUTH LONDON

Even before the current slow-down in building rates, there were concerns about whether the planning system and the development sector would be able to achieve long-term housing growth in line with the ambitions set in targets – both nationally and in London.
A range of factors are mentioned:

- *An existing low density context* - south London's existing density context is generally lower or moderate density, as is evident from the Minerva LSE Research Group's Density and Urban Neighbourhoods in London (2004). This sets a baseline against which the planning and development control system and public sentiment assesses proposals for higher density housing or mixed use development.

- *Public opinion* - In the context of a precedent-driven system and predominantly lower or medium densities in the existing situation, public opinion prejudiced against higher density levels can play a large role in determining planning applications.

- *Precedent- and context-driven planning control* - The UK town planning system has historically been precedent driven. This places great value on what is in place in determining appropriate scale, character and mix of uses of new development, and emphasises development control. This stands in contrast with other national planning systems, which may either offer a more property owner driven and laissez-faire approach to development decision making, or on the other hand a more pro-active public sector driven approach to plan-making and project delivery.

- *Delays in using proactive planning tools* - The 2004 Planning Act aimed to encourage positive, proactive planning and introduced new mechanisms by which plans can be created. These include stronger place-shaping capacity established through the Local Development Frameworks process which includes Core Strategies, Area Action Plans and other documents. However, the Government's White Paper *Planning for a sustainable future* (2007) recognises that, despite signs of success, some changes are needed "to ensure a more streamlined and tailored process with more flexibility about the number and type of plans, how they are produced and a more meaningful, engaged level of community involvement." A particular problem is that the process of creating these plans has proved itself to be laborious and slow, sometimes inhibiting more agile planning responses for example to smaller opportunity sites.

- *Relatively lower public transport accessibility levels* - A particular defining characteristic of south London is that many of its centres are not connected to the Underground system. The London Plan Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) index generally considers that Underground stations offer the highest public transport accessibility because of connectivity and frequency of service. As the service in south London relies more on overground rail and bus, much of south London is character-ised by lower PTAL levels than north of the Thames. This has implications for maximum density levels, as specified by the London Plan Density Matrix.

- *Approach to affordable housing provision* - The delivery of affordable housing is often tied to the development of private sector housing, where a proportion of affordable housing is usually required subject to a range of conditions. This is often seen to drive down the viability and hence the delivery of new

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projects. New delivery vehicles for affordable housing in which Local Authorities themselves can take the lead in delivery, such as Local Housing Companies, have only recently been introduced.

- *Cultural presumptions in development control guidance* - Design detail for new residential development is usually guided by supplementary planning guidance. These give guidance for aspects such as overlooking distance, private amenity space and sunlight and daylight levels. Whilst applications are judged on their merit and such provisions are for guidance only, some of these requirements and their interpretation in practice can be unnecessarily limiting for the realisation of good quality solutions permitting higher density typologies. Conversely, other aspects might become more important at higher densities. Either way, such long-standing presumptions need to be questioned.

- *Competing land-uses and adjacency effects* - Planning policies include provisions on land use such as town centre retail or industrial activities. Their underlying assumption is that town centres and employment zones play an important role for their local communities, and policy aims to protect and enhance this role. This can prevent some sites from being redeveloped for moderate or higher density housing. In protected employment areas, this might be exacerbated if adjacency effects, such as noise, dust or visual amenity, prevent good quality residential development outside the actual protected area.

- *Heritage* - Many town centre areas have religious, civic, public or infrastructure buildings of high architectural quality which are locally cherished for their contribution to

PTAL map with indication of the seven town centres.
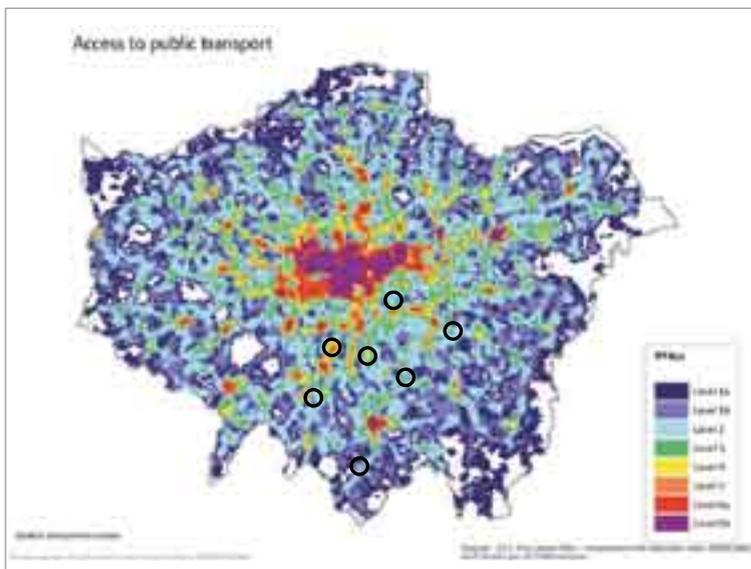
local character and identity. These may be protected through Listing or Conservation Area designation, reflecting the importance of these assets to the quality of the built environment. Though such designations do not in themselves prevent change, the interpretation of policy in practise may entail significant restraints on new development. Whereas heritage ought to be seen as a positive ingredient of future area change, sometimes it is unnecessarily seen to cast a policy shadow on surrounding properties, which can be inhibitive for creative densification.

- *Land assembly issues* - south London's town centres, like other town centres across London are often characterised by multiple, fragmented and irregular property ownerships. Assembly among multiple private sector partners is often required to create viable redevelopment sites. In the absence of a significant and overwhelming public ownership, and constraints on the use of Compulsory Purchase Orders, the room for action on the part of the public sector to achieve higher density housing development through its own development activities may be limited.

This study contributes to this discussion by an evaluation of the scenarios and analysis of the obstacles to delivering different housing typologies identified in the study.

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Locations

The case study locations were selected in collaboration with each of the seven boroughs involved and after discussion with the study steering group. We have deliberately focused on a series of centres outside the prime regeneration locations in the boroughs such as Elephant & Castle in Southwark or central Croydon. Such places will, over time, see significant change and housing growth, while a range of secondary town centres which are numerous in south London and in other metropolitan areas are getting less planning attention. Some of these enjoy good public transport accessibility so they would be appropriate for residential intensification.

We also focused on locations where no detailed Area Action Plans or other projects are currently in process, not wanting to duplicate work that has already been done. We have not directly addressed the question of how to add homes in the typical suburban fabric of south London. For this, some interesting studies have been undertaken, such as the study *Sustainable Suburbia* by MacCormac Jamieson Prichard Architects (2007).

Hence the study investigates the opportunities for delivering new homes at an intermediate level: secondary-level town centres and their edges. As such it tests the hypothesis mentioned in Section 1.1: that such intermediate centres, which often fall outside the primary focus of planning and regeneration activity, can contribute significantly to sustainable housing development in south London, and that this can add to the vitality and quality of such places. The case study locations are introduced in the next Chapter.
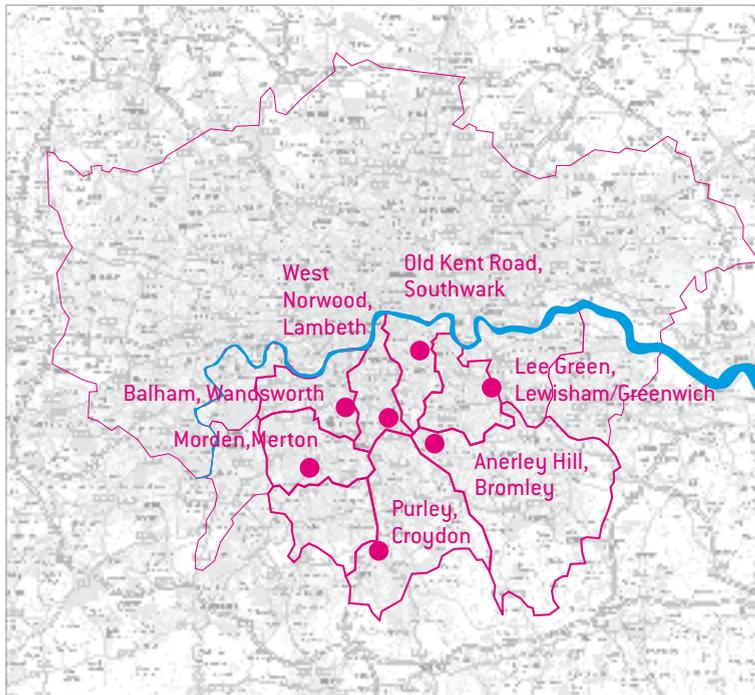
Intensification scenarios

The study has developed three illustrative scenarios for the transformation of each of seven town centres. These are not blueprints: they show how different approaches could be taken to respond to the conditions in each location, and how these can lead to significantly different outcomes. They provide 'thinking tools' that test different propositions and parameters rather than proposing a single solution for each location. The parameters of the 21 scenarios were agreed with each of the boroughs involved and with the Study Steering Group.

The scenarios also cover a series of wider key themes in the intensification challenge giving them wider relevance beyond the particular location. These themes are further explored in the next Chapter.

West Norwood, Lambeth

Old Kent Road, Southwark

Balham, Wandsworth

Lee Green, Lewisham/Greenwich

Morden, Merton

Anerley Hill, Bromley

Purley, Croydon

Principal housing typologies

The 'toolkit' for these transformation scenarios consists of a range of principal housing typologies that illustrate different approaches to intensification. The six principal typologies are derived from previous Urhahn Urban Design studies (see bibliography) and reflect the wealth of existing typologies that can be found across south London. They are based on different assumptions regarding scale, grain, developer type, use mix, height, and achievable density.

There are shared assumptions: all principal typologies are based on English Partnership's 2007 guidelines for internal space standards and assume that almost all units would be double aspect – two factors which would significantly increase use value and the quality of homes. The 'toolkit' is thus a set of development principles which can be fine-tuned to suit different specific contexts rather than providing fixed housing types with standard dimensions or aesthetic.

The scenarios are developed through applying three particular principal typologies to each location, depending on two criteria: our analysis of which development principles could be suitable to the existing context (in terms of plot and block size or building scale) and which typologies could offer particular opportunities to address major locational issues (such as the integration of employment spaces or noise from roads). This leads to very different urban design approaches in each scenario, often (though not always) on different sites in the town centre; theoretically, some of the scenarios would be complementary, not mutually exclusive, though they imply different processes and decisions in practice. The scenarios are presented in more detail in the second part of this study, Chapter 7. The principal typologies are explained in Chapter 4.

1 INDIVIDUAL INFILL / EXTENSION
   Plot size: up to 100 m²
   Net plot ratio: 1.5
   Housing density: 50-80 u/ha
   Building height: 2-6 floors
   Mixed use: sometimes lower floors
                     (retail, workspace)


2 MEDIUM SCALE PROJECT SITES
   Plot size: 100-2,000 m²
   Net plot ratio: 2
   Housing density: 100-200 u/ha
   Building height: 3-8 floors
   Mixed use: predominantly ground floor
                     (retail, workspace)

3 MID-DENSITY LOW-RISE
   Plot size: 1,000-10,000 m²
   Net plot ratio: 1.5
   Housing density: max 100 u/ha
   Building height: 3-4 floors
   Mixed use: sometimes ground floor
                     (retail, workspace)

4 MIXED TYPOLOGY URBAN BLOCK
   Plot size: 3,000-10,000 m²
   Net plot ratio: 3
   Housing density: 80-200 u/ha
   Building height: 3-8 floors
   Mixed use: sometimes ground floor
                     (retail, workspace)

5 LARGE SCALE ENSEMBLE
   Plot size: 3,000-10,000 m²
   Net plot ratio: 3
   Housing density: 80-200 u/ha
   Building height: 6-10 floor
   Mixed use: sometimes lower floors
                     (retail, workspace)

6 JOINT VENTURE URBAN INTERVENTION
   Plot size: 3,000-10,000m²
   Net plot ratio: 2.5-3
   Housing density: 50-200 u/ha
   Building height: 4-8 floors
   Mixed use: complex programmes
                     across different floors

Scenario evaluations

The 21 scenarios were evaluated by the design team with input from planning and regeneration consultants GVA Grimley. The testing process involved an in-depth planning feasibility analysis for three of the seven locations (Lee Green, West Norwood and Morden), which were assessed against adopted planning policy in the boroughs concerned. Moreover the evaluation has been informed by meetings with planners in all seven boroughs and in a series of consultant team working sessions, workshops with Design for London staff, and Steering Group presentations. The evaluation also involved a review of each of the six principal typologies used in the scenario building process. Within this project, no detailed commercial viability assessments or economic benefits analysis have been undertaken, although the evaluation sessions involved participants' expert judgement about general financial parameters and constraints. These evaluations have informed Chapter 3 and 4 and 5, which present the lessons from the study and recommendations to overcome barriers to intensification.

Policy recommendations

In Chapter 6, the policy and design recommendations summarise the lessons learnt and sketch different ways in which these can be used to achieve the objectives sketched out in Section 1.1: to generate good quality town centre intensification, providing attractive and sustainable homes for different demographic groups while also creating new forms of public value. The recommendations can inform future policy development nationally, London-wide and locally, as well as current practice both in terms of area frameworks and individual projects.

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NAVIGATING THIS STUDY

The design of this book allows readers to follow their own particular interests through the book. Rather than reading it from cover to cover, it is possible to focus on the policy recommendations and conclusions (Chapter 5 and 6), or on the detailed case study scenarios (Part II of the book). Equally one could delve deeper into the design and planning recommendations for the key themes (Chapter 3) or for the principal housing typologies (Chapter 4). In each case, cross-referencing allows for comparison between scenarios, recommendations and examples. The example below shows how the links between the key themes and the scenarios are referenced throughout the pages of the book.

Example of a page in Chapter 3.

The image on the left shows a local example.

The images on the right show national and international precedents for good solutions.

The codes in the margins refer to the relevant Scenarios, which can be found in detail in Part II of the book.

THE SEVEN TOWN CENTRES

There are unique challenges found in each of our town centres. This Chapter is based on an urban design analysis of each location and in-depth discussions with local authority planning officers. It shows how these relate to the challenge of housing intensification. It also presents how we have applied three of the different housing typologies to the case study locations followed by an overview of the approach in each town centre.

2

2.1 TOWN CENTRES

Lee Green, Lewisham/Greenwich

Lee Green is a small District centre straddling the boundaries of the London Boroughs of Lewisham and Greenwich. Located on the intersection of the busy A 20 (Eltham Road) with the A2212 (Burnt Ash Road), the town centre is dwarfed by nearby Lewisham and Blackheath; both are significantly stronger in scale and quality of retail and night-time economy offer. Lee Green itself is dominated by a single-storey supermarket and the 1960s Leegate shopping centre, which has high vacancy levels. Both the supermarket and the shopping centre are of mediocre design and impact negatively on the coherence and identity of the town centre. There are some physical and heritage assets that reflect the quality of nearby conservation areas but that are currently underused, such as traditional pubs on the main road intersection, attractive civic buildings such as the Grade II listed Police and Fire Stations, and the River Quaggy which is largely hidden from view. The town centre has few homes, although some of the Victorian shopping parades

and the Leegate shopping centre have residential units on upper floors. Altogether the town centre lacks a clear identity, and its role and function in the service hierarchy are unclear. Local residents groups aspire to a better shopping, restaurant and cafe offer as well as public realm improvements. How can housing intensification redefine the role of the town centre and its public amenities?

The 1960s Leegate shopping centre has an adverse impact on the quality of the town centre.

A20 Lee High Road

B212 Lee Road

A20 Eltham Road

Lee Rail

A2212 Burnt Ash Road

housing
social infrastr.
shops
offices
industrial

500m

PTAL level 4

West Norwood, Lambeth

West Norwood is a District Centre located in the south-eastern part of the London Borough of Lambeth, bounded in the North by Tulse Hill and by an industrial area in the south. Alhough surrounded by well-established, predominantly Victorian suburban areas, the town centre's retail profile is weak and its public realm lacks quality. Consultation around the A New Heart for West Norwood study (carried out by DTZ on behalf of the Council in 2007) has seen strong public support for retail regeneration but mixed opinions over whether a large-scale supermarket ought to be its centrepiece. The town centre is linear, extended along the busy A215 Norwood Road which forks to become Knights Hill and Norwood High Street at the Grade II* listed St Luke's church and the Grade II listed West Norwood Cemetery, both of which are included in the West Norwood Conservation Area. South of West Norwood rail station, a mixed industrial and warehousing estate forms the edge of the town centre. The Council has indicated a latent demand for small, affordable workspace units as well as a public desire for improved public services, such as a leisure centre and facilities for young people. There is variation in the quality of the built environment. It has some good retail facades from different periods but also many single-storey or otherwise low-value buildings. In many cases, land-use could be made more efficient whilst creating more attractive facades. Intensification

The town centre has a weak retail profile and lacks public realm quality.

is already happening through new developments such as Housing Association development near Tulse Hill station. The scenarios developed for this location investigate what scope for intensification there would be in addition to the Heart of West Norwood study, and how it could regenerate the town centre beyond its retail function.

How can housing intensification on the edge of the town centre complement regeneration in the core of the town centre?

housing
social infrastr.
shops
offices
industrial

Balham, Wandsworth

Balham is a thriving District Centre in the east of the London Borough of Wandsworth. Located along the north-south axis of the A24 from Clapham to Tooting, it consists of a mixed retail frontage often built as extensions from Georgian era mansions, but mixed with Victorian and more recent shopping parades. The town centre is very accessible being served both by Underground and overland rail. Its retail profile is successful, with upmarket supermarkets and multiples supported by independent retail and a growing number of cafés and restaurants. Recent years have seen many residential infill projects, both high-density low-rise developments in inner blocks and stand-alone apartment buildings along the High Road. While some is of good quality, new development particularly south of the rail viaduct is often less successful. It is out of context and seems to ignore the place's built heritage which includes the impressive 1920's Du Cane Court apartments. The new developments have added to the fragmentation of the townscape and public realm of this edge of the town centre.

Two blocks near the rail station have remarkably low-intensity land-uses. Opposite the station is a supermarket car-park that predominantly faces rear facades of the High Street, including a supermarket's loading bay and refuse arrangements. South of the rail viaduct, a large block which includes the listed Church of St Mary, also accommodates low-density offices, a single-storey primary school and a self-storage facility in a former office building. If reconfigured, both sites could have significant residential capacity and enrich the public realm, which currently lacks good quality public spaces.

How can two blocks near the station accommodate housing intensification whilst accommodating the diverse existing uses and respecting the built heritage of the place?

Blocks near the railway station have remarkably low-intensity land-uses.

↑ A24 Balham High Road

Balham

B242 Bedford Hill

A24

500m

housing
social infrastr.
shops
offices
industrial
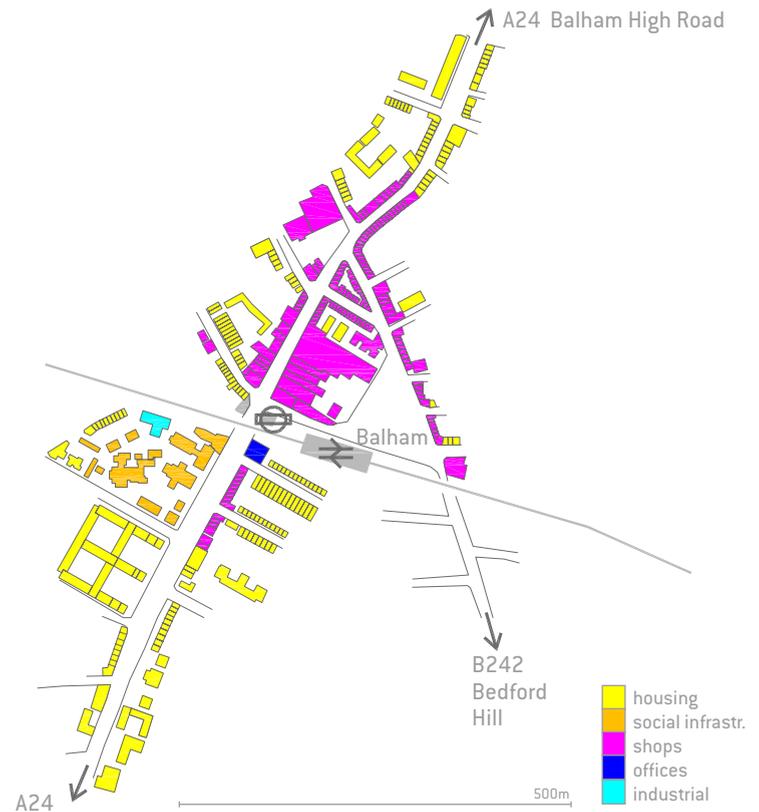
Anerley Hill, Bromley

Anerley Hill is not a designated town centre. It consists of a series of discontinuous retail parades with cores around two stations (Crystal Palace and Anerley) along the Anerley Road, sandwiched


between the larger town centres of Upper Norwood and Penge. It is surrounded by a mixture of large Victorian houses, partially within a conservation area and often subdivided into flats, as well as post-war and 1980's housing estates both low-rise and mid-rise. Both retail cores contain good quality historic buildings but are struggling commercially. Vacancy rates are high and former shopfronts have often been converted insensitively into residential units. Council planning officers report a latent demand for affordable workspace units, but few have been realised on the ground. Small-scale intensification is happening to extend and convert the premises along Anerley Road but most new development is of limited quality. However the area is likely to see change with the completion of the East London Line in 2010, the possible regeneration of Crystal Palace Park and the possible Croydon Tramlink extension. All these could lead to an increase of residential pressure on the area. The scenarios aim to think about models to guide this residential pressure and create benefits for the area by re-thinking the existing retail frontages and intensify existing post-war suburban housing estates.

With retail struggling, shop fronts have been converted into other uses.

How can a comprehensive re-think of the Victorian shopping parades and post-war suburban housing guide future intensification pressure?
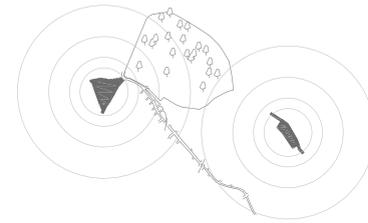
Anerley Hill: sandwiched between the larger town centres of Upper Norwood and Penge.

A212
A214
Crystal Palace
Penge West
Future East London Line
Possible future tram
Anerley
A214 Anerley Road

housing
social infrastr.
shops
offices
industrial

500m

LGN
WNW
BAL
ANH
PUR
MOR
OKR
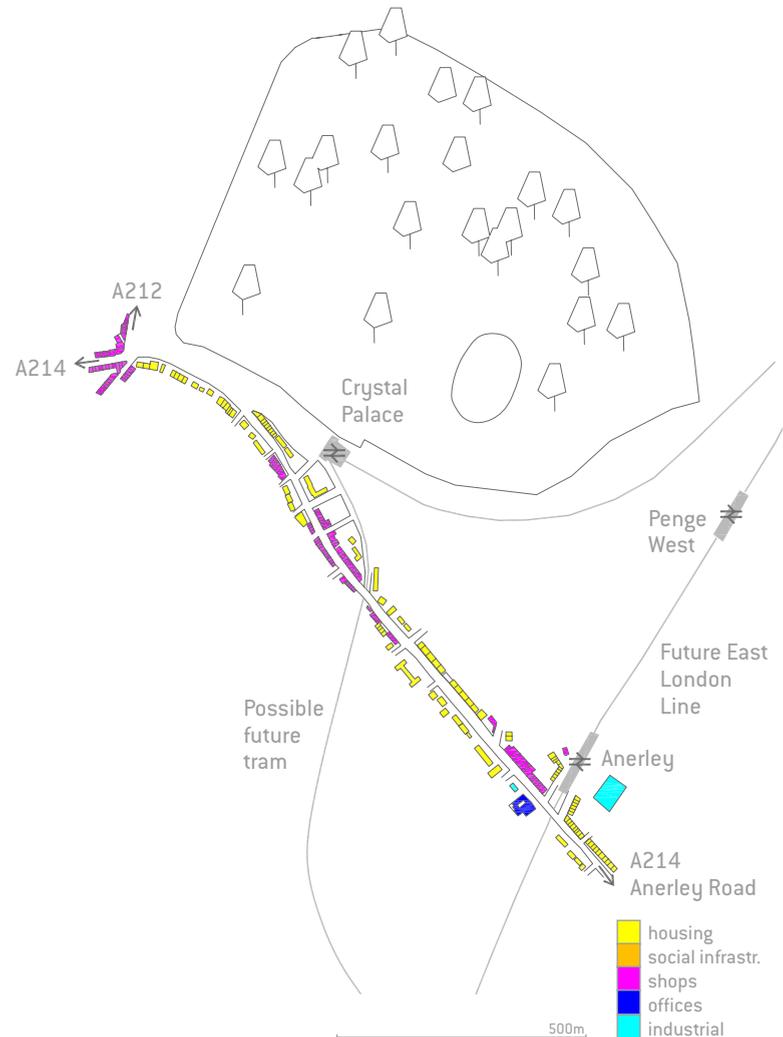
Purley, Croydon

Surrounded by some of London's most wealthy suburban areas, Purley is a District Centre to the south of central Croydon. With its train connection into Gatwick, Croydon and central London, the town is strategically well-positioned, which is evident from recent development of several apartment complexes, particularly for elderly care homes. However, the town centre has not benefited from these dynamics. Victorian in origin and containing some distinctive historic buildings and shopping parades, it is dominated by the confluence of two main arteries, the A23 and A22 which lead into London from the M25. The junction has been accommodated in an over-engineered gyratory, creating the typical multilane one-way rat runs that blight much of outer London's traditional town centre fabric. A second dominating factor is a large Tesco's superstore with adjacent car park, which dominates the otherwise struggling retail offer of Purley. Overall, the public realm lacks focus and quality, with a difficult to navigate walk from the station to the civic and shopping core. There is also evident blight and vacancies caused by the noise and grime of the roads.

At the same time there is considerable scope for improvement. Generous inner blocks within the town centre and Council land ownership create opportunities for diversifying and improving the public space and creating alternative routes. More drastic interventions in the road lay-out could also be considered.

How can intensification around the High Street provide a different housing and town centre environment, and how can this inform the regeneration of the wider town centre?

Inner blocks within the town centre offer opportunity for diversification and intensification.

A2022

A23 Purley Way

A235 Brighton Road

A23 Brighton Road

A22 Godstone Road

Purley

housing
social infrastr.
shops
offices
industrial

500m

Morden, Merton

Morden is a compact, convenience-driven District Centre in southwest London. It is south London's only example of 'Metroland' 1920's and 1930's suburban development catalysed by the arrival of the Underground in 1926. Located at the southern terminus of the Northern Line, the town centre is a hub for local bus services and accommodates a large train depot. The town centre consists of a series of three-storey 1930's perimeter blocks of shops and apartments, and more recent developments of supermarkets, their car parks and the prominent early 1960's office block of 16 storeys that houses the borough's Civic Centre, including a public library. The transition to the surrounding low-rise suburban development occurs within a 5 minute walk from the station.

Though not considered unsuccessful by the Council, the town centre lacks distinctive amenities and attractive public spaces. The bus station and A24 / A297 arteries create significant traffic pressure on the streetscape. The area's key natural assets - Morden Park and the grade II listed Morden Hall Park - lack a presence in the town centre.

Development interest in Morden has been relatively limited in the past decade, yet there are different sites that could be suitable for future (re)development. Potential interventions include spaces within the town centre blocks, the reconfiguration of the A24 London Road as a

Morden is a compact, convenience-driven town centre, lacking distinctive amenities within the retail core.

'Green Mile' that links the town centre to the two parks, and the potential of air-rights development over the Underground tracks, station, depot and sidings. Each of these could create housing and other amenities and enhance Morden's distinctiveness in the future.

How can intensification strengthen this centre's distinctive character and public offer?

▪	housing
▪	social infrastr.
▪	shops
▪	offices
▪	industrial

500m

Old Kent Road, Southwark

The Old Kent Road, the approximately 2.5 km long part of a Roman route from London to Kent, is not currently designated as a town centre, but in practice fulfils many of its functions. It has a concentration of bus routes and social infrastructure such as several schools, churches, community centres and other public services, which are particularly important to the diverse residential communities of the area. The street's shopping frontage is extensive and includes many independent ethnic retail units. However, in spite of this mix of functions and intensity of uses which are not dissimilar to town centres, the overall spatial coherence is badly affected by the surface car parks of the many suburban style retail outlets and a series of industrial and warehousing sites. Apart from the presence of some vibrant shopping zones and remarkable heritage including 19th and 20th Century housing blocks by the Peabody Trust and City of London, the overall image of the street is fragmented and confusing. The quality of the public realm is low, both because of the impact of traffic and the lack of streetscape definition. Consequently, much of the housing stock on the Old Kent Road is aesthetically unattractive. Additionally there are vacant buildings and derelict sites, leading to negative social safety perceptions, especially at night. These are typical examples of conditions that blight many A-Road thoroughfares.

The overall image of the street is fragmented and confusing, with a lack of streetscape definition.

The key question is how to create conditions for good quality housing on this through road, responding to the adverse impact of traffic and to the conditions created by the industrial estates. At the same time, any new interventions should aim to contribute to an overall improvement of the street as an urban corridor, creating legibility and clarity of direction in the streetscape and improving the local public realm conditions. How can conditions for good quality housing be created in this environment which improves the overall urban design quality of the area?

Discontinuous frontage.

A2   A100

A201

Burgess Park

A2

housing
social infrastr.
shops
offices
industrial

500m
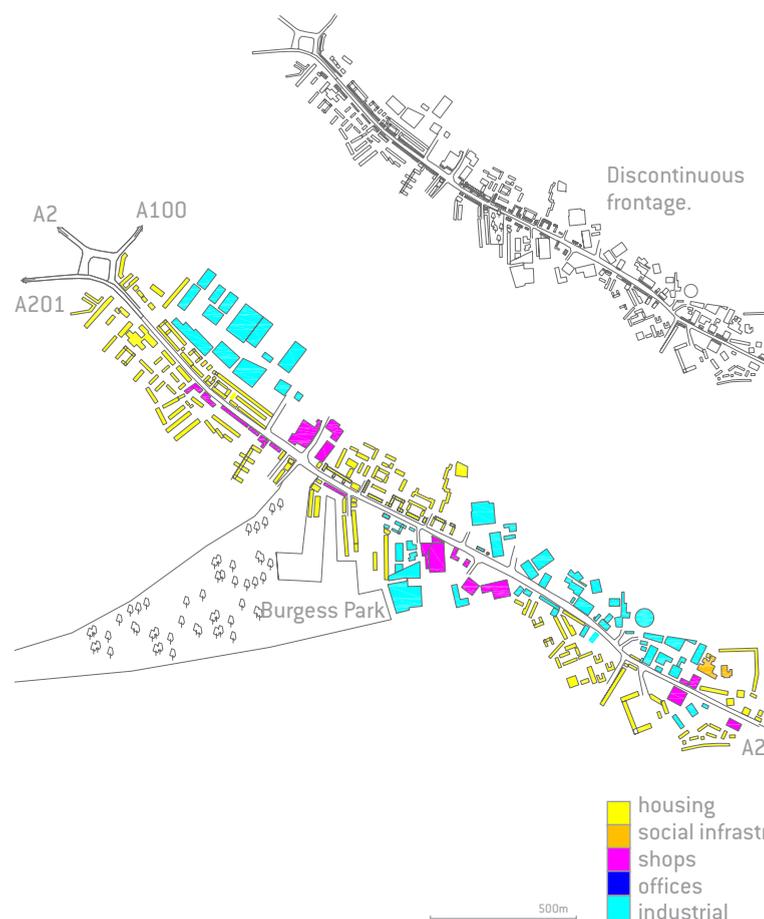
2.2 CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

The existing physical contexts and socio-economic conditions have particular relevance for the intensification challenge. They present common challenges across the town centres: preconditions for achieving residential quality, factors that need to be addressed to deliver public realm and other additional improvements, or opportunities that would gain from being addressed more deliberately.

The following cross-cutting themes are by no means the only factors, either physical or socio-economic, that these places have in common, but we assert that they are particular shared issues, that need to be better explored to achieve good quality intensification.

- *the edges of town centres* – much intensification potential can be found at the edges of town centres rather than their cores, but current development is often of mediocre quality
- *social infrastructure planning* – a necessary complement of residential intensification, the provision of social infrastructure is a challenge of significant public concern which should be integrated in town centre intensification projects in order to meet the needs of diverse Londoners beyond retail alone
- *struggling retail centres* – many sites within or near smaller town centres are struggling to maintain their retail role – what scope is there for non-retail driven regeneration approaches?
- *A-road conditions* – many of London's main roads present urgent challenges to local quality of life and good quality housing typologies
- *employment areas* – often located in or near town centres, these areas are under pressure from residential demand – can they be combined?

- *rail sites* – many sites over or adjacent to rail lines could be developed to create housing and public realm improvements, but this presents typological challenges
- *alternative procurement methods* – are there ways of providing housing in medium or high density which allow for alternative, more resident-driven procurement?
- *large-scale retail sites* – a typical low-density land-use in every town centre; how can they be combined with good quality housing?
- *relation to heritage / character* – intensification is often seen to have negative impact on the existing character of areas, but this need not always be the case – what innovative approaches can be useful?

In developing the scenarios for the different town centres, we aimed to address these thematic issues across the town centres. The diagram on the next page sets out how the different scenarios and themes are cross-connected, and which principal typologies are applied as building blocks for the different scenarios. The lessons derived from these scenarios will be presented in the next three Chapters.

LGN

WNW

BAL

ANH

PUR

MOR

OKR

2.3 SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

The scenarios apply the typologies using two main criteria: first, our analysis of which development principles could be suitable to the existing context (in terms of plot and block size or building scale) and second, which typologies could offer particular opportunities to address major locational issues (such as the integration of employment spaces or noise from roads).The summary scenarios below are treated in more detail in Part 2 of this study.

Lee Green

LGN1   **Scenario 1** applies the mid-density low-rise scenario to suit the prevailing suburban historical fabric whilst replacing the failing shopping centre with a niche residential-led mixed use scheme using alternative procurement methods.
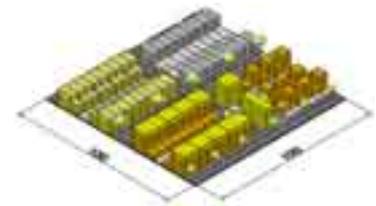
LGN2   **Scenario 2** applies the medium-scale project site typology to create a 'scaled-up' version of the niche residential-led mixed use product generated in Scenario 1, fitting into the scale of the existing town centre fabric.

LGN3   **Scenario 3** applies a joint venture urban intervention to create an integrated residential and retail core with sports and other infrastructure as the main driver of the town centre's offer.
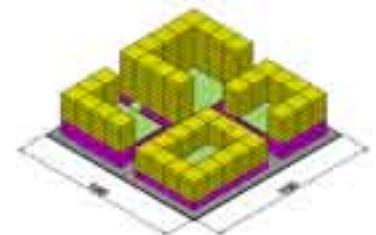
West Norwood

WNW1   **Scenario 1** uses individual infill to strengthen the built fabric of the town centre and its edge, replacing low-density single buildings whilst retaining the existing urban feel.


WNW2   **Scenario 2** applies the medium scale project site typology to a series of sites in a fragmented (protected) employment zone on the edge of the town centre in order to create convincing mixed-use intensification.

WNW3   **Scenario 3** applies a joint venture urban intervention in the same employment zone to enable more structural solutions to the challenge of combining employment and residential uses as well as social infrastructure and public realm improvement.

LGN

WNW

BAL

ANH

PUR

MOR

OKR
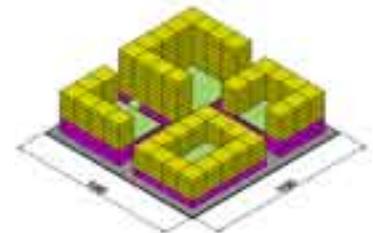
Balham

BAL1

Scenario 1 proposes a joint venture solution for the current supermarket car park, integrating the supermarket with underground parking, high-density dwellings and an enhanced public realm.
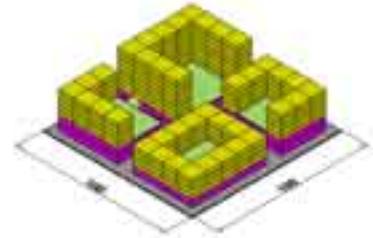
BAL2

Scenario 2 applies the medium scale project site typology to a series of underused sites within one block for a phased mixed use project adjacent to the railway, responding to the scale of the high street.

BAL3

Scenario 3 creates a mixed-use large-scale ensemble that responds to a nearby 1920s block and forms a buffer between railway and lower-density blocks which include a school remodelling.
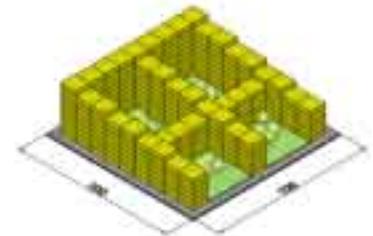
Anerley Hill

ANH1

Scenario 1 proposes a joint venture urban intervention for a struggling retail block bordering on a Conservation Area and a railway, using an comprehensive adaptive refurbishment approach to create high-quality housing and workspace.
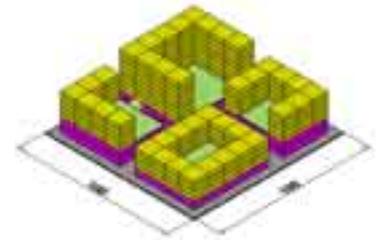
ANH2

Scenario 2 proposes a mid-density low-rise remodelling of a housing estate on the edge of the town centre next to a railway, improving overall pedestrian connectivity and creating high-density housing that fits into the existing urban fabric and building typologies.

ANH3

Scenario 3 creates mixed typology urban blocks in a struggling retail core, enhancing it with a deliberate concentration of health and community facilities in a housing block next to a railway.

Purley

PUR1   **Scenario 1** explores the potential of using medium scale project sites to create mixed-use infill within town centre blocks which is sympathetic to the existing building scale.


PUR2   **Scenario 2** creates joint venture urban interventions on existing car parks to create a high-density mix of residential accommodation, parking and play space next to a railway, and a retail and social infrastructure block off the high street.
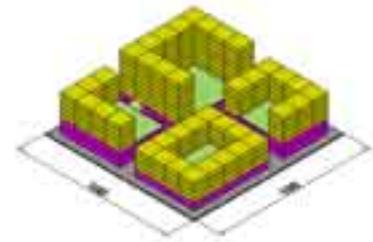
PUR3   **Scenario 3** proposes a joint venture approach to solve the large-scale approach to the complex issues of improving the public realm of the road junction, integrating the superstore and achieving high-quality housing on the main thoroughfares.

LGN

WNW

BAL

ANH

PUR

MOR

OKR
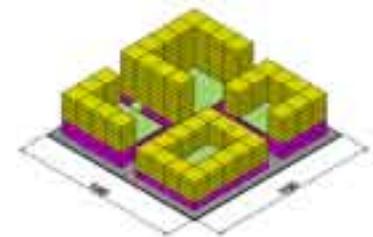
Morden

MOR1

Scenario 1 explores how mixed typology urban blocks can be used to create a more fine-grained public realm offering housing, retail, café's and spaces to meet away from the main roads.


MOR2

Scenario 2 explores how a series of medium scale project sites could be part of a framework to create a 'green boulevard' between two major parks, creating a coherent façade and improved street section on the edge of the town centre through gradual intensification.
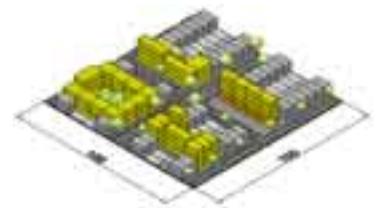
MOR3

Scenario 3 explores how an ambitious joint venture approach to build over the existing Underground infrastructure could create a new urban realm, including large scale active leisure facilities to strengthen a distinctive image for Morden.
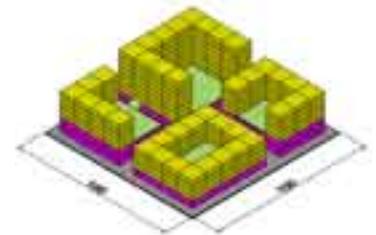
Old Kent Road

OKR1

Scenario 1 explores how strategically located individual plot infill projects could improve the quality, use value and legibility of the street whilst creating better quality housing, both where there are concentrations of shops and elsewhere along the street.

OKR2

Scenario 2 applies mixed typology urban blocks to create a larger-scale version of Scenario 1, with an emphasis on residential typologies that can respond to adverse environmental conditions.

OKR3

Scenario 3 tests how large scale ensemble developments can form a mixed-use transition between an existing industrial estate and the surrounding residential areas.

LGN

WNW

BAL

ANH

PUR

MOR

OKR
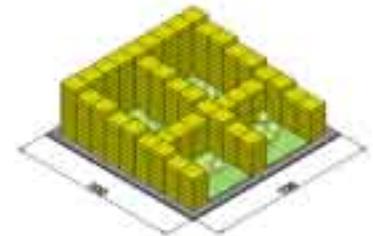
LESSONS LEARNT: KEY THEMES FOR TOWN CENTRES

The cross-cutting themes introduced in the previous Chapter need to be addressed to achieve good quality intensification, and are further explored in this Chapter. Cross-reference is made to particularly relevant case study scenarios from Part II of this book.

3

3.1 STRENGTHEN THE EDGES OF TOWN CENTRES

Top: this housing project in Islington presents a typical edge-of-town centre condition. Its retail ground floor is not part of a clear shopping route and has difficulty finding tenants.

Bottom: this thoroughfare is in fact a grey zone.

Because of London's historical growth pattern, there is not always a clear structure of nodal town centres with clearly defined edges. Instead, it is the edge condition itself that is ubiquitous. Different former 'villages' have gradually merged, especially along main thoroughfares which often have secondary retail, petrol stations and showrooms and various other employment uses. This 'grey zone' has a clear role to play for such lower value uses, which themselves often border higher value suburban development in side streets. Typically at about 10 minutes walking from a main public transport connection, it is also a primary 'soft site for redevelopment' because of town centre growth or because of the contraction of town centre functions where retail decline occurs. Intensification often takes places at such edges as low-density lower-value land-uses get replaced by residential development. However the process usually happens in an unplanned manner, through incremental, developer driven projects. Too often, this leads to low quality development with little added value for the locality. It is such small-scale projects that give 'intensification' its bad name. It is seen to erode local character and, by failing to provide for new public spaces and social infrastructure, leads to 'town cramming'. Moreover the distinction between actual town centre and surrounding suburban areas gets blurred, while the transition to suburban streets is often badly designed. It is time to take this edge-of town centre condition more seriously.

Our case studies in West Norwood, Morden, the Old Kent Road and Anerley Hill present such edge conditions and, to varying degrees, deal with the transition between town centres and more suburban streets. They show that:

- town centre uses can sometimes be extended, but typologies and planning strategies are needed for non-retail uses. We need to move beyond the automatic assumption that 'residential over retail' is always appropriate to guarantee good urbanism and social safety through natural overlooking;

- a strategy can be to accept contraction of retail functions and to invest in alternative uses instead, such as social infrastructure (schools, health or sports facilities, community services) or well-planned workspaces where there is demand. Investing in non-use specific 'casco'- or loft buildings with generous ceiling heights could be one way to create an adaptable town centre edge that can respond to changing economic needs and uses;

- residential typologies must be suitable to town centre edges and be attractive for families with children or elderly people. The challenges are to create good residential ground floors, to manage the transition to suburban side streets, and imaginatively design out overlooking instead of maintaining suburban overlooking distances;

- this can also lead to small new public spaces which become civic gathering points beyond the retail shopping cores. This includes deliberate strategies for greenery, since loss of green character through edge of town centre development is often cause for local concern.

This suggests that the edges of town centres would profit from more proactive planning and design strategies so that these locations are

The codes in the margins refer to the relevant scenarios, which can be found in detail in Chapter 7.

WNW1 OKR1
OKR2 ANH1
ANH3 MOR2

ANH1 ANH3
WNW1 WNW2

WNW1 WNW2
OKR1 OKR2
MOR2

OKR2 ANH2

LGN

WNW

BAL

ANH

PUR

MOR

OKR

strengthened, with existing qualities maintained and new qualities added. This is not about fixing or freezing those edges once and for all – the urban process is dynamic and the role of such locations may shift over time. The challenge is to create strategies that reflect the character of these edge areas and encourage a positive intensification process that is open to changing needs.


Top 2: small public spaces can be appropriate to create new civic gathering points at the edge of a town centre. Fumihiko Maki's project in Tokyo combines this with social infrastructure and greenery.

Middle left: this flexible workspace in a former harbour zone in Amsterdam (design Dedato) is a typical example of a 'casco' style building. The generous ceiling heights allow for future change of function.
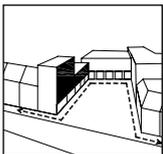
Middle right: there are other ways to encourage social safety through natural overlooking; a slightly raised ground floor prevents passers by from looking in, but maintains a friendly public realm with passive surveillance, though access issues have to be fully considered and resolved. This project on Centaur Street, London SE1 by dRMM Architects, shows how a robust housing typology may be suitable for an edge of town centre location.
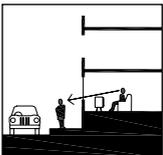
Bottom 2: courtyard typologies can create attractive family environments at the edge of the town centre, and manage the scale transition to the suburban built fabric. This block in Rue des Suisses, Paris by Herzog & De Meuron is an example of a deep block with a courtyard.
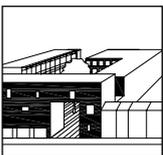
3.2 INTEGRATE SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

Improvements to social infrastructure such as playgrounds, schools, health facilities and public space investments are an important way to generate tangible 'public value' from the intensification process. At the moment new residential development and intensification through residential conversions are often associated with adding pressure on existing services rather than their improvement. But it is possible to integrate social infrastructure into the very heart of residential development projects, in conjunction with public space improvements. An increase in numbers of residents can actually improve service levels by helping to sustain or expand the critical mass needed for social infrastructure investment. This link, often made via Section 106 payments, ought to be made more visible and direct to make community benefits clearer to the general public. Equally, social infrastructure investment in secondary centres funded from Section 106 contributions of developments in larger centres could be used to incentivise development in the former.

Our case studies deliberately aim to integrate social infrastructure provision in the housing intensification process. They show that:

- strategic use of social infrastructure such as health or sports facilities or schools can be the backbone of regeneration projects, enhancing the public realm in ways that enable increased new housing development – this may include provision for certain target groups such as large families or the elderly;   ANH3 MOR3

- this can be the driver to reposition areas on mental maps of Londoners and visitors by tapping into emerging lifestyle trends such as the active outdoor leisure economy;   LGN3 MOR3 PUR2

- this requires typologies, designs and strategies that successfully integrate e.g. education, sports and health provision in comprehensive urban design and architectural projects.   ANH3 BAL2 BAL3

This suggests that more daring combinations of social infrastructure with residential accommodation are technically possible and potentially beneficial. Investments in social infrastructure, whether for NHS facilities, SureStart centres and Building Schools for the Future projects need to be linked in the planning and design process, and funding models further developed to maximise potential in the light of changing economic circumstances. This requires more proactive planning by social infrastructure clients and planning authorities in the Local Development Framework process.
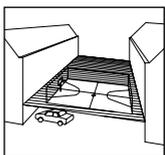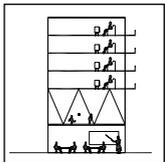
Top : there are designs and strategies that success-
fully integrate schools and school playgrounds within
residential buildings, such as this building by Hertzberger
and HM Architects, with 8 apartments on top of an
elementary school in Amsterdam Westerdok.

Middle: a vertical school design enables its integration in
the cityscape (Oostende, Belgium, award winning design
by ARJM architects).

Bottom: social infrastructure such as playgrounds or
multi-games areas can often be integrated with housing
and smart parking solutions. The Basketbar in Utrecht, The
Netherlands, combines a bar and sports field, framing a
public space in a densely built up university area.

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3.3 RE-THINK STRUGGLING RETAIL CENTRES

Anerley Hill is a struggling retail centre; many retail premises are no longer used as such.

Our case studies, numerous Town Centre Health Checks, discussions with local authority officers, and recent research such as the URBED report *Over the Edge: Town Centres and the London Economy* (2008) show that already before the current downturn retail functions have been suffering in many of the smaller traditional centres or isolated shopping parades. Vacancies or low-quality retail uses can negatively affect the quality of life and sense of safety and local pride in a neighbourhood. A shift away from retail is often incremental, when individual units get new, non-retail uses such as for office space or even residential accommodation. The policy ambition in most boroughs is to consolidate and regenerate the retail offer, but there are cases where this may not be possible or even desirable. Adding housing helps to support retail thresholds, but in many cases this will not be sufficient to change the structural trends that underpin long-term retail change. Nor is it realistic to assume that local residents will necessarily use local services. Our case studies in Lee Green, Anerley Hill and West Norwood deal with these dynamics of struggling retail. They show that:

- assuming a scenario of retail decline or no-growth can enable imaginative thinking about alternatives such as affordable workspace, adaptable building typologies, social infrastructure or the creation of attractive new residential environments; ANH1 LGR1 LGN2

- in addition to large scale retail regeneration, small scale additions and upgrading of individual high street buildings can revive the character and identity of the retail stock whilst adding residential accommodation; WNW1

- a different employment basis can be considered, by encouraging their adaptation in ways that are relevant to the contemporary city. This needs additional investment, such as in retrofitting of retail parades for affordable employment space – for which, many borough planning officers contest, there is more demand than is evident in official studies. WNW1 WNW2 ANH1

It is worth considering alternative strategies and tools for those ex-retail spaces to create attractive transformation options. If long-term changes in the operation of the retail market are negatively affecting town centres, conceptualising them as primarily retail-driven places can impede innovative solutions, whereas other town centre functions (leisure, local services, meeting places, employment space) might offer equal or more potential. There are cases where a more proactive planning approach could actively seek for such alternatives, and acknowledge an ensuing change in the retail hierarchy in planning policy. Potential barriers in retail and town centre policy could be removed by a review and reconsideration of the retail role of the town centres to see if requirements for retail space (and associated parking) and the maintaining of retail frontages can be reduced. Such an approach needs to be based on detailed analysis reflecting the policies and aspirations of the London Plan as well as changing trends and emerging opportunities on the ground.

Top: accommodating education and skills initiatives in former shop units can revitalise town centres.

Middle: Startgoed Amsterdam, an inititiative by the Economic Development Department of the City of Amsterdam, together with a housing association and a private developer, offers affordable small work units for starting entrepreneurs, by retrofitting vacant shops or former industrial buildings.

Lower middle: there are possibilities to encourage adaptive reuse of shopping parades in ways that that are relevant to the contemporary city. This needs additional investment, such as in retrofitting of retail parades for affordable workspaces, not dissimilar to Urban Splash's regeneration of Victorian housing terraces.

Bottom: LDA-supported not-for-profit initiative to provide short-term display space to arts and craft activities in Clerkenwell. A 'shop' unit can be rented on a week-by-week basis by those using the upstairs workspaces.

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3.4 IMPROVE A-ROAD CONDITIONS
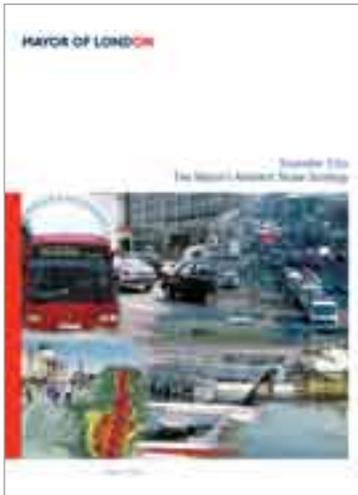
London's A-Road thoroughfares are often unattractive public spaces.

A-road thoroughfares are crucial for London's connectivity by car, bus or bicycle. Most of these are traditional routes that over time have increased in importance. However the traditional streetscape is not necessarily suited for accommodating such high volumes of traffic. In the absence of conscious planning for transport or regarding the impact of traffic on its surroundings, it often leads to severe impacts on the public realm and residential amenity. Noise and local pollution and an unattractive public realm often go hand in hand. However because of their centrality and connectivity, as well as the presence of lower-value land-uses or dereliction, such streets can be attractive for residential developers and many are seeing new development. In order to be truly desirable and sustainable as places to live, such developments require a higher level of investment to achieve higher design standards which address issues such as noise mitigation and air pollution. New residential projects along these roads often fail to tackle these issues, exacerbating negative living conditions and creating problems for the future. Our case studies on the Old Kent Road, in Morden and in Purley address the challenges posed by the environmental conditions of A-roads, and show that:

- there are ways of responding to the impact of high traffic volumes in housing design, creating both a high quality urban streetscape and enhancing residential amenity by protecting dwellings, for example, through double glazing and the orientation of windows and outdoor space;

  OKR1 OKR2
  OKR3 MOR2

- deliberate urban design strategies and interventions can change the character of these roads into more attractive corridors and boulevards, by creating well-articulated blocks, emphasising 'corner buildings' and strategically creating building set backs to improve urban design coherence and public realm conditions. Such corridor strategies could also unlock higher-quality private investment;

  OKR2 MOR2

- there should be wider debate about the structural reconfiguration of particularly problematic transport corridors or nodes to improve the cityscape and unlock good quality higher density housing development. While costly, it would have multiple benefits;

  PUR3

- strategic use of greenery can add to the quality and character of these reconfigured roads – not just by tree planting and improving the street section to create good pavements, but also by integrating greenery in façades and roofs.

  MOR2

A-road thoroughfares could become places of civic quality, pride of place and good desirable housing, but extra effort is needed to make such development happen. A number of policies could achieve this. Firstly, London's Air Quality management policy and the introduction of the Low Emissions Zone could improve air quality which would be an important factor. But a more deliberate planning approach is also needed, in which the management of the transport corridor is viewed in conjunction with the positive use of its pavements as public spaces throughout the day and evening, and the development of sites along the road. Corridor-length planning strategies

or design codes should complement streetscape guidance, which focuses on de-cluttering and other public space interventions. Together, such frameworks provide long-term guidance so that individual developments contribute to overall improvement. Structurally, London needs to realise that there is not just nodal centrality but also corridor centrality – and invest in improving these places.
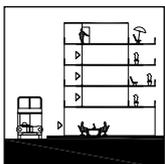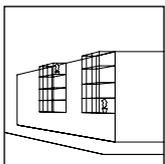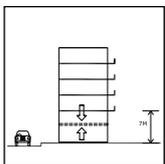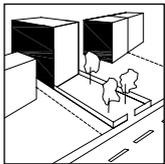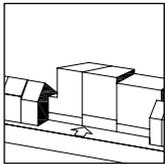
Top: in the King Spadina neighbourhood in Toronto, building setbacks are used to create an attractive streetscape and public gathering spaces.

Middle left: design of and investment in double-height, flexible ground floors can be used to mitigate against noise as well as create affordable workspace (design Rudy Uytenhaak, Amsterdam).

Middle right: green facade in Avignon, France.

Lower middle: outdoor balconies designed as winter gardens are another way to protect dwellings and their outdoor spaces from the street impact; the winter gardens can be closed depending on traffic, and then provide extra space within the dwelling (Architecten Cie, Amsterdam).

Bottom 2: a combination of ground floor use and smart access strategies towards the road can effectively isolate dwelling units from the source of noise, especially if amenity space is provided at the back. This has been applied in Amsterdam where apartments above a supermarket have access galleries situated behind a an outside facade which acts as noise barrier (Marlies Rohmer Architects).

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3.5 INCORPORATE EMPLOYMENT AREAS

Many industrial sites, such as those along the Old Kent Road, present difficult challenges for realising good quality housing in the direct vicinity.

Employment land-uses are often under pressure from residential development. The difference in land value between residential and employment space makes them 'soft sites' especially where they are relatively close to town centres or public transport hubs. Recognising the value of local employment sites for local job retention, business start-ups and sustainable supply chains for goods and services, current policy seeks to prevent wholesale loss of such sites, giving them protected status in planning terms.

Protective policies for Strategic Employment Locations and Locally Significant Industrial Sites, as provided for in the London Plan and in Local Development Frameworks, do not always succeed in upgrading employment spaces or intensifying employment; sites often remain 'frozen' in low value / low intensity uses, which might not be tenable or desirable in the long term. Moreover, such sites often have adverse yet preventable impact on surrounding housing and the public realm.

Our case studies in West Norwood, the Old Kent Road, and Balham show different ways of integrating employment space. They show that:

- WNW2 WNW3 mixing employment uses such as light industry, warehousing and logistics with residential accommodation is possible using different building typologies both small-scale and large scale. In new projects, activities usually seen as incompatible with residential uses because of negative impacts (noise, dust, vibration or smell) can often be combined within blocks, on adjacent sites or even vertically within buildings;

- WNW2 WNW3 OKR3 in the case of existing adjacent employment areas, the impact of negative spillovers should be overcome through extra compensation measures in the housing design – at masterplan level as well in detailed design such as better glazing, orientation of windows and private outdoor spaces, and compensatory qualities such as courtyards away from sources of noise. Financial mechanisms should oblige developers to contribute to such additional investment;

- OKR3 BAL2 BAL3 certain employment uses (for example, light industrial workspaces, flexible 'casco' buildings, storage or self-storage) can be used strategically to manage the transition between heavier industry or rail lines and housing. They can act as buffer between uses or as a podium upon which housing can be created.

There are different strategies to create good conditions for working, living and the public realm in close proximity. However, the delivery of projects or area strategies is hard to achieve, despite the design possibilities. Innovative mixed use projects are often considered risky, expensive or merely too hard work. Paradoxically, many local authority planning officers report a 'latent' demand for affordable small workspaces of various specifications, which has also been acknowledged as a priority for action in Sustaining Success, the Mayor's *Economic Development Strategy* (LDA 2005). However, developers maintain they are unviable. Particularly in light of the changing economic circumstances, this calls for further research into incentives for these typologies including, for example, developing affordable workspace strategies.

Additionally, in order to reduce the potential barrier set by employment land policy and utility regulations, a detailed review could lead

to refinement of industrial activity performance standards, adjacency and distance standards and a case sensitive rather than blanket approach to distances between utility and residential development activities. However, in many cases investing in a high-density mix of residential and industrial employment space may not be a local priority, as there are less difficult housing sites available. In the short term this might limit the application of these typologies and strategies to high-value locations and large-scale projects.

Top: a podium of workspaces, such as used here in Amsterdam (Van der Waals / Zeinstra Architects) can be used to create distance and amenity space for the residential units above.

Middle: the environmental depot in Kensington & Chelsea (by Arup) has residential uses and generous outdoor spaces above heavy vehicle parking, although at street level the facade is less successful.

Bottom: certain employment uses such as this light industrial unit in Tokyo's Shinagawa harbour district can be used strategically to manage the transition between heavier industry and housing.

Three thumbnails: different strategies, on the level of block and building design, can overcome the challenge of negative impacts from the adjacency of industry: for example, creating podiums of workspace and storage with green roofs and residential amenity space (top); using parking as a buffer between industrial and residential uses (middle); or creating courtyards with non-industrial workspaces as a buffer (bottom). Deliberate access strategies that separate industrial from other traffic will often be beneficial, a role traditionally fulfilled by a mews.

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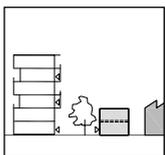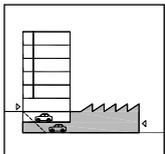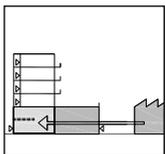
3.6 UNLOCK RAIL SITES FOR INTENSIFICATION

Norwood Junction, south London.

Intensive residential land-use next to railways is historically very common throughout London and not seen as overly problematic, despite proximity issues such as noise. However, rail sites and station car parks provide underused assets both in terms of adjacency and air-rights development; unlocking them could create intensification sites especially close to public transport stations. Our case studies in Morden, Purley, Balham and Anerley Hill include sites where Underground or train lines provide challenges for intensification. They show that:

PUR2 BAL2
BAL3

- adjacency issues can be overcome through investing in good quality facades and buffer uses such as self-storage units. This would address requirements from *Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 Planning and Noise* and create long term extra value;

ANH1 ANH2
ANH3

- changes in public transport accessibility levels through Tram and East London Railroad projects are often the trigger for redevelopment but that locations do not always have planning strategies in place to respond to such change, even where they would clearly profit from it;

MOR3

- significant investment can lead to a step change in an area's housing capacity. Strategies can include decking over rail sites to create open space adjacent to which new development can take place, as well as building over rail.

There is significant potential to use rail sites much more intensively. Air-rights development is technically possible and can create different benefits. Depending on London's future growth and changing market circumstances, this type of project could become increasingly necessary and feasible in many locations across the city. It can become a key structural enabler of future intensification projects. However, viability constraints would need to be overcome. At the moment, costs invariably prove inhibitive. The key issue lies in the value proposition of such sites. What approach can add value to the locality as a whole, make use of the proximity of the rail, and provide an attractive context for residential uses? This requires proactive planning and in many cases would require significant development density as well as capital subsidy, as has been the case with future development of Dalston around the East London line.

Another factor is the rail operators and Network Rail who may pose access, safety and operational requirements during the construction process, which will impact on proposals and costs. Rail infrastructure operators will often require payments linked to the commercial value of a development. An increased emphasis on collaborative project design and stakeholder engagement is needed to overcome such obstacles.
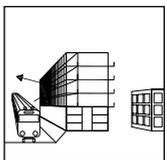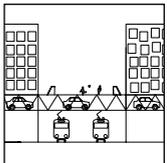
Top: strategies can include decking over rail sites to create open space adjacent to which new development can take place. The example in Paris shows building over the rails in a comprehensive urban transformation.

Middle: the Arundel Square project in Islington creates a deck over the North London railway, thus completing the historic square cut in half by the railway (left) whilst enabling the development of attractive housing adjacent to the railway (right).

Bottom 2: adjacency issues can be overcome through investing in good quality facades. In the Amsterdam Funen Area, Cie Architects created effective screening in the façade.

3.7 ENCOURAGE ALTERNATIVE PROCUREMENT METHODS

Publications such as the CABE report Housing audit: assessing the design quality of new housing and the Urban Task Force report Towards a strong urban renaissance highlight the challenges facing the volume house building industry to achieve the high standards and quality needed for truly sustainable housing, especially in difficult locations or changing market circumstances. There is also an intrinsic value to giving future residents a greater stake and more active role in the development process, such as achieving greater individual expression and sense of ownership, increasing quality of architectural and building standards;, strengthening social cohesion and identity of neighbourhoods, and providing incentives for resource and energy-efficient building methods. Hence alternative, resident-driven development methods for housing procurement, especially in the affordable sector, could increasingly be attractive to Local Authorities, Housing Associations, and other stakeholders such as the Homes and Communities Agency. This is sometimes misleadingly called 'self-build', leading to associations of prospective residents actually building their own, stand-alone dwelling. In fact there is a wide array of individual and collective alternative procurement methods, such as self-commissioning, enabled self-procurement, collective self-build, collective self-commissioning and cooperative development. The scale and density of projects varies widely.

Our case studies in Lee Green and West Norwood explore different examples of such alternative procurement processes. They show:
• how a struggling retail centre could be comprehensively re-imagined through offering a differently procured housing product by creating opportunities for enabled self procurement or collective / cooperative self-procurement processes; LGN1 LGN2
• how individually driven extensions and redevelopment can have a significantly positive effect on high streets when aggregated and guided by planning and design regulation. WNW1

Alternative procurement methods can be helpful in creating highly attractive typologies at densities that are moderate to high for locations outside central London (between 80 and 200 u/ha). Research publications such as The current state of the self-build housing market (published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 2001) have confirmed the latent demand for alternative housing products which so far has remained unmet. This has been due to the limited range of outputs achieved through the conventional house building process, pressure on land and lack of experience in the planning system and development finance to guide the process. These factors can be addressed, but they need explicit support in planning and delivery frameworks. On an urban design level, there may be a need to create guidance to achieve overall design coherence in terms of urban layout and building volumes.
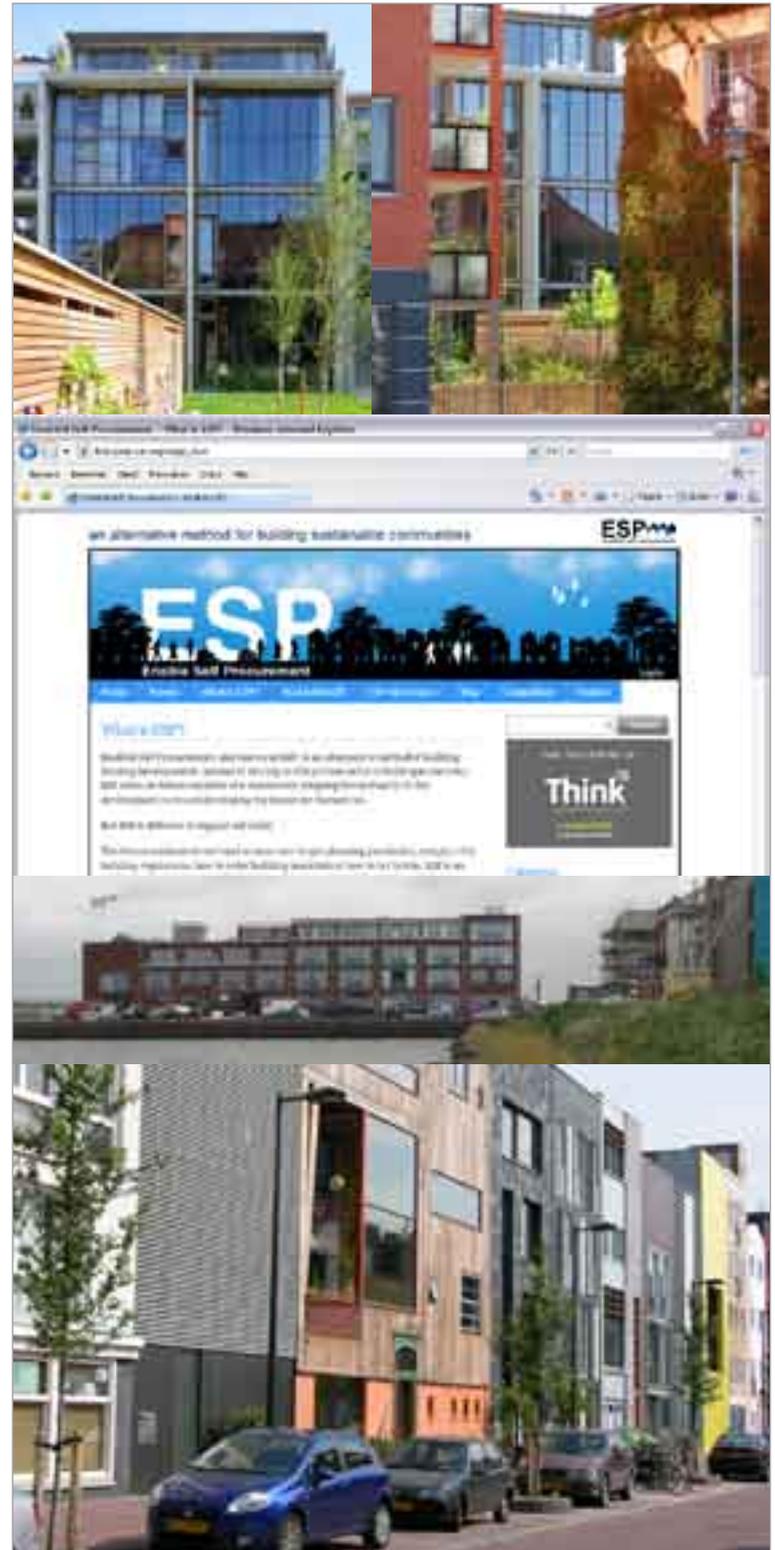
Top: in locations of weak housing demand and stagnating development interest, niche approaches can generate interest and increase the profile of a particular development. This example shows the framework for collective self procurement in the Franzosisches Viertel in Tubingen, which turned an unpopular area into a huge success.

Middle: there is a wide array of individual and collective alternative procurement methods, such as Enabled Self Procurement, also known as ESP. "ESP is an alternative method of building housing developments. Instead of relying on the private sector to build speculatively, ESP relies on future residents of a community stepping forward early in the development cycle and developing the houses for themselves." (Source: esp-sim.org).

Bottom 2: IJburg Amsterdam shows two examples of alternative procurement methods. Vrijburcht is an individual building initiated by a collective of households. Public facilities like a bar, a theatre and guest rooms complement the building. The project was supported by a Housing Association, who gave full freedom to the future residents and the architect. The Steigereiland neighbourhood, however, is the product of a masterplan that explicitly aimed to encourage individually procured houses.

3.8 INTEGRATE LARGE-SCALE RETAIL SITES

Large supermarket in Purley.

Many large retail sites are underused assets, essentially relics from a different planning context that favoured low-density car-driven development. Moreover, these 'big box' retail sites often create severe negative adjacency effects through servicing and access needs, blind facades, badly configured refuse arrangements and car parking. However, they are also important economic anchors of town centres, with high land values. For many new large-scale retail (re)developments, combining the retail element with high-density housing has become more common. Also, and because of the scale of some of these developments, access and servicing arrangements can be addressed holistically, providing an improved urban design and housing environment.

Our case studies in Purley, the Old Kent Road, Morden and Balham include significant supermarket sites. They show that:

- addressing the configuration of big box retail sites with their car parks and access roads can hold the key to long-term regeneration of an area. It can be a primary catalyst to achieving transformational change;   **OKR3, PUR3**

- regulations regarding out-of-town retail might impede significant residential development coupled to retail expansion outside the core of town centres;   **OKR2 PUR3**

- there are many design solutions to mitigate the impact of big box retail sites on the public realm, such as through wrapping smaller shops around them and by carefully integrating or orientating car parks and loading bays;   **BAL1**

- it is possible and advantageous to create collective access provision and amenity space above supermarkets, thereby overcoming prejudices against 'living over the shop'.   **BAL1**

Many design principles and strategies exist to integrate large-scale retail sites. In recent years, residential value often outstripped the retail value of town centre sites so that such developments were very attractive to market parties. At the same time, project development appeared very difficult in practice. Viable solutions sometimes require a larger scale perspective beyond individual retail site ownerships to achieve comprehensive regeneration. This may be needed to deal with transport, parking and to provide additional public realm benefits. This requires a creative attitude and sufficient skills levels among all stakeholders to deal with such projects in their full complexity.
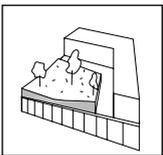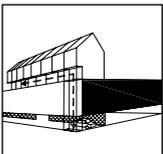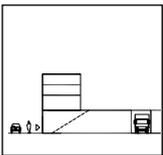
Top and middle: smartly integrating or orientating housing access and integrating loading bays can mitigate the impact of big box retail sites on the public realm., such as in the well-designed loading and refuse arrangements in Stadshagen, Zwolle (NL).

Bottom: collective access provision and amenity space above supermarkets can overcome prejudices against 'living over the shop', such as in the new shopping centre in Almere (NL).

3.9 CREATE POSITIVE PROPOSITIONS FOR HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION AREAS

Listed building
in Anerley Hill.

Many of the seven town centres studied possess historic buildings. The built heritage of town centres and suburban areas is a huge asset, and needs to be appreciated. The Mayor's consultation document 'Planning for a Better London' highlights a renewed priority for protecting the built and natural heritage of London. In practice, heritage and character-related concerns are one of the most common ways through which resistance against intensification is expressed; for example, when proposed developments are considered 'too dense' for the existing context, or seen to compromise an area's identity in other ways.

Clearly listed buildings and Conservation Areas deserve a degree of protection, such as currently provided through the restrictions imposed through the planning system. However, as English Heritage's Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance highlight, the challenge should be seen as one of managing, not preventing, change. Creeping, cheek-by-jowl change often poses a more fundamental and more pernicious threat to the local characteristics that people value than a more deliberate strategy of interventions based on thorough assessments of an area's potential. Careful yet imaginative planning is needed to ensure that interpretations of heritage and conservation status enable such a proactive approach which could enhance the character of such cherished areas and sites in their direct vicinity. Our case studies in Anerley Hill, Old Kent Road, Balham and Lee Green include or partially include conservation areas and / or listed buildings. They show that:

- structural reconfiguration of failing Victorian shopping parades, with conservation of the

built fabric, can facilitate their adaptive reuse. Such bold transformations can give listed buildings or ensembles of buildings new value and meaning to residents;
- responding to the scale and grain of individual historic buildings in the vicinity is possible whilst making a step change in density;
- (re)creating an urban fabric in keeping with the grain of surrounding conservation areas can generate innovative residential environments and a rich diversity of dwelling types;
- through careful design it is possible to create intensification that is unobtrusive and can reinforce and build upon the existing sense of place while adding significant numbers of dwellings.

ANH1 OKR3

BAL2 BAL3

PUR1 MOR1
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ANH2 LGN1
LGN2

The research thus suggests that innovative design solutions can overcome the supposed obstacles of heritage, while enhancing buildings and their settings. Examples of good practice where new development has creatively addressed a historic context need to be promoted more widely to show market parties, planning officers, elected members and the public what can be achieved. More structurally, it is possible to create strategic projects for the intensification of conservation areas and their immediate surroundings that go beyond 'defensive' policies. Full use should be made of Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans to achieve this potential. They need to start with a thorough assessment and analysis of an area's character, which includes the views of residents and other stakeholders. Findings from such a process can inform propositions to analyse and enhance an area's existing qualities and characteristics through deliberate intensification. Equally, issues such as social safety and elements that currently detract from an area's character can be addressed, improving

the quality of life for Londoners. This requires a consistently positive, proactive approach to heritage and conservation areas, including creative consultation methods with the public.

Top left: changes to the urban fabric in keeping with the historical urban pattern, such as this central London example, can generate innovative residential environments and a rich diversity of dwelling types.

Top right: a positive strategy to enable area change while respecting cherished qualities can be found in the 'Welcome In My Back Yard' project in Hoogvliet, Rotterdam. A flexible framework for medium-term development was created based on a systematic classification of urban design characteristics that are crucial to the area's quality. Within this framework, development would be permitted as long as it contributes to the strengthening of these characteristics (text in image translated from the original).

Middle: this project in Battersea, London, is cited in the English Heritage / CABE publication 'Building In Context' as a good example of high-density, carefully scaled intervention in a difficult setting. Providing eight flats for social rent in a typical Medium-scale project site, it enhances its context by mending the fragmented mix of historic buildings and subsequent developments. It does so without resorting to historical pastiche. (Gwynne Road Housing, Walter Menteth Architects for the Ujima Housing Association).

Bottom: sometimes listed buildings or ensembles of buildings are better served by a bolder transformation than by keeping them in their current state (Light Factory, Amsterdam, transformed by Kother Salman Architects).

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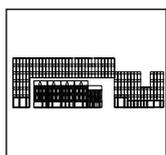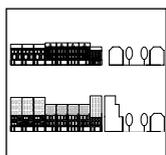
LESSONS LEARNT:
PRINCIPAL TYPOLOGIES FOR INTENSIFICATION

The evaluation of the scenarios has lessons for the different principal housing typologies we identified. These lessons, in terms of planning and design strategies, are presented here, on the scale of the neighbourhood, block and building.

4

4.1 INDIVIDUAL INFILL / EXTENSION

Plot size:	100m²
Net plot ratio:	1.5
Housing density:	50-80u/ha
Building height:	2-6 floors
Mixed use:	sometimes lower floors (retail, workspace)

This principal typology focuses on the level of the individual site or building. Many (edge of) town centre sites have buildings of lower height than their surroundings. Initiatives by individual landowners could be encouraged to achieve gradual, good-quality intensification. This is not dissimilar to the process where residential streets see individual roof extensions to add bedrooms, but here the explicit aim is to add units – through building extension or replacement. Although new buildings themselves may only be three or four stories, they may represent a doubling of height and household density, and can have consider-able cumulative impact. Whilst practiced in many overseas contexts, this emphasis on the quality and expression of the individual unit is a more recent development in the UK.

ANH1 OKR1 This typology has been tested in Anerley Hill and the Old Kent Road, which both present discon-tinuous streetscapes that could improve through gradual infill. Our design scenarios and precedents of successful existing examples show that:
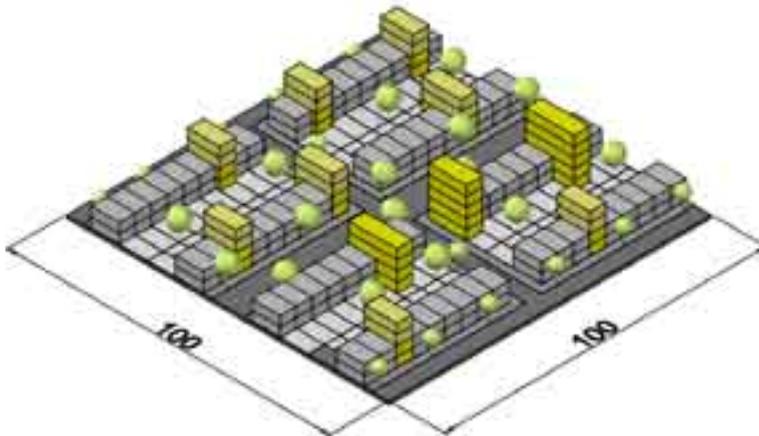
- creating family units through this typology is possible but care needs to be taken that good quality private outdoor space is provided;
- high quality guidance on residential standards is needed to ensure units are of good quality rather than merely small, subdivided flats;
- there are possibilities to vary overlooking distances if an area has a clear 'town centre' character. Windows can be strategically placed / directed to avoid overlooking. Also, noise overspill can matter more to people than visual proximity so good noise insulation is essential;
- off-street parking is hard to accommodate at this scale level except through drive-in garages at ground floor level; car-free development would be preferable
- spaces for services – recycling bins, bikes need to be intelligently incorporated into the ground floor to ensure quality of the streetscape;
- retail is not always the only possibility for ground floor use. It can also be focused on informal social space. A usable 'encroach-ment zone' outside front door and street can be designed to allow for personalisation of the street and to encourage sociability, thereby improving safety. Individual building set-backs, though not very common in the UK, could add to the quality of the public realm if they are well designed;
- whilst back gardens need to be protected for their ecological value and potential to absorb rainfall, many paved-over high street back yards could be brought into denser use. If combined with more stringent requirements for green roofs and green facades, this could actually increase greenery and biodiversity.

This typology, though relatively limited in terms of building scale and number of units added, raises many of the fundamental issues associated with

introducing higher densities into new settings. In addition to issues such as overlooking, rights of light, parking management and servicing, it needs to be recognised that planners, the public and elected members may have concerns about the quality and coherence of individual designs. Therefore, a clear and predictable design framework for this principal typology would be necessary in particular localities to provide guidance and confidence to all involved. This could encourage or allow such development on sites that meet certain criteria such as end of blocks, corners or neighbourhood and arterial street junctions. Alternatively, certain street segments could be defined where this approach was encouraged. Policy guidance should also engage with the current debate around the question of whether getting all units to comply with Lifetime Homes Standards can be problematic because of access issues to upper units. Likewise, clarity is needed about the expectation that renewable energy should be provided on an individual building level. An alternative approach would be to assemble such dispersed sites into one landownership, for example by the Council, a regeneration vehicle or a Housing Association and develop a coherent approach to their development over time.

Top: two Amsterdam examples of an 'encroachment zone'.

Middle: this project by De Blacam+Maegher in Temple Bar, Dublin fits in its context despite its height and articulation of the roof.

Bottom left: small infill in Groningen (NL) by Foreign Office Architects.

Bottom right: in some carefully considered locations, well-designed higher buildings may be appropriate as part of an individual infill strategy (King Spadina, Toronto).

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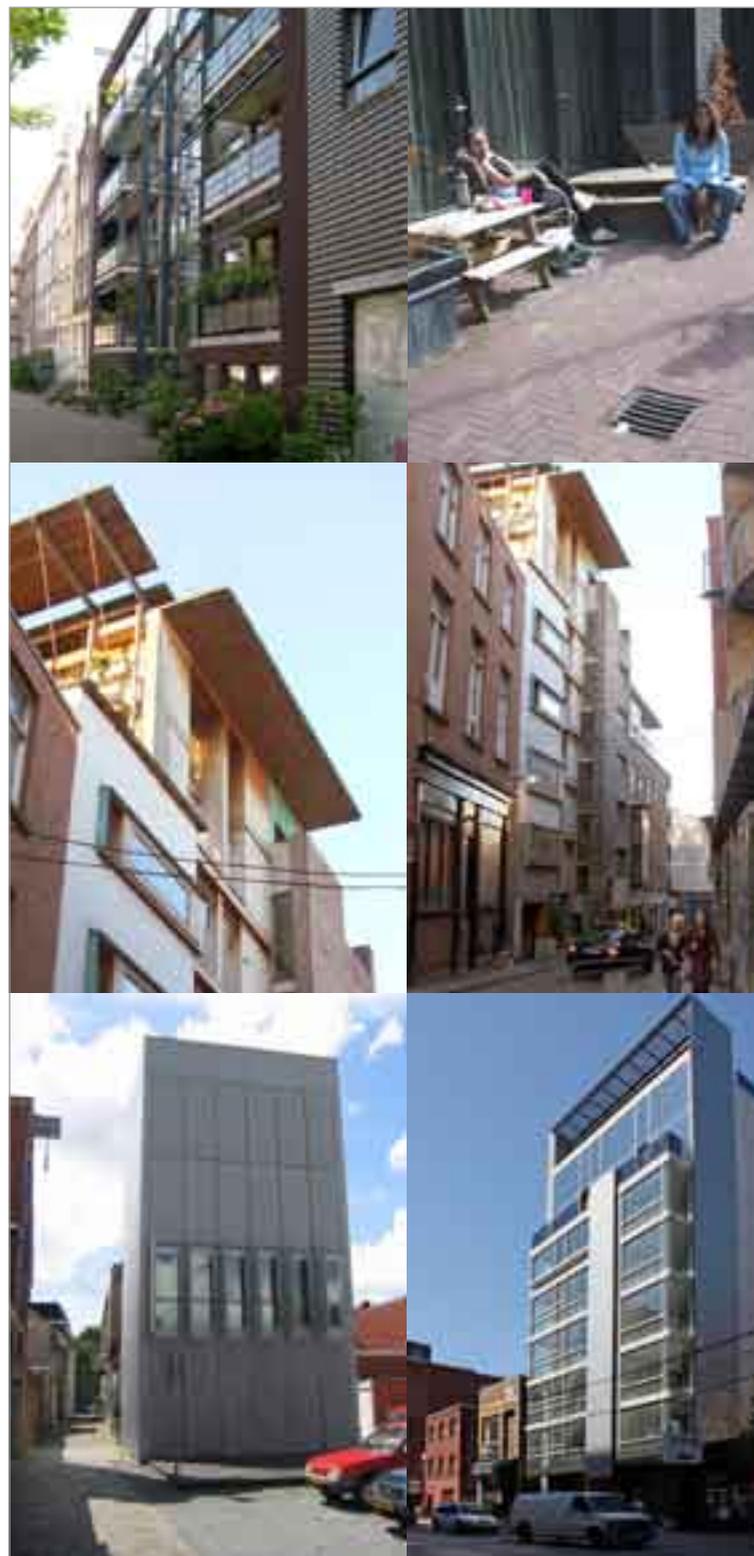
4.2 MEDIUM SCALE PROJECT SITES

Plot size:	300-2,000m²
Net plot ratio:	2
Housing density:	100-200u/ha
Building height:	3-8 floors
Mixed use:	predominantly ground floor (retail, workspace)

This principal typology represents a typical town centre redevelopment approach, where part of a block is redeveloped at higher density. New developments of this principal typology are usually for mixed-use with residential / workspace units over ground floor retail or workspace units, although there are examples of good quality solutions without retail or workspace premises on the ground floor. The scales proposed are relatively moderate and the sites would usually involve assembly of a limited number of sites, with the possibility of being developed by Housing Associations.

The typology has been tested in Lee Green, West Norwood, Balham, Purley, Morden and the Old Kent Road, where many sites of this medium scale tend to be available. Our design scenarios and precedents of successful existing examples show that:

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- a wide variety of housing typologies and procurement types can be accommodated on this scale, from inner block infill in the core

of the town centre to collective self-commissioned dwelling cooperatives, and from perimeter block development to 'îlots' with large collective courtyards;

- a mix of uses is possible beyond the residential over retail, by incorporating industrial, workspace and live-work uses;
- usable private outdoor amenity space is crucial to guarantee quality, including roof terraces, balconies and winter gardens;
- for this typology and for others, double-aspect flats should become the norm. They can be created at high densities and have considerable advantages over single-aspect flats;
- collective outdoor play facilities can be accommodated on courtyards and roofs;
- parking is a major issue for this typology, but good quality solutions are available both for off-street parking and for integration into the streetscape.

This is, and will continue to be, a highly feasible grain and scale of development. It is also a familiar approach with the Boroughs, who do not see major obstacles to delivery. Planning and design challenges relate to the transitions of such developments to other surrounding uses and lower densities and the visual impact of the elevations on other neighbouring properties. Access, parking and servicing requirements need to be addressed in a sensitive manner. However the overall scale is not significant enough to challenge the wider urban infrastructures that service a typical south London town centre. Development control negotiations are likely to focus around more general issues of managing mixed use, tenure integration and long term site and building management arrangements. There may be considerations relating to residential mix in terms of the tenure and in terms of house-hold types and sizes.
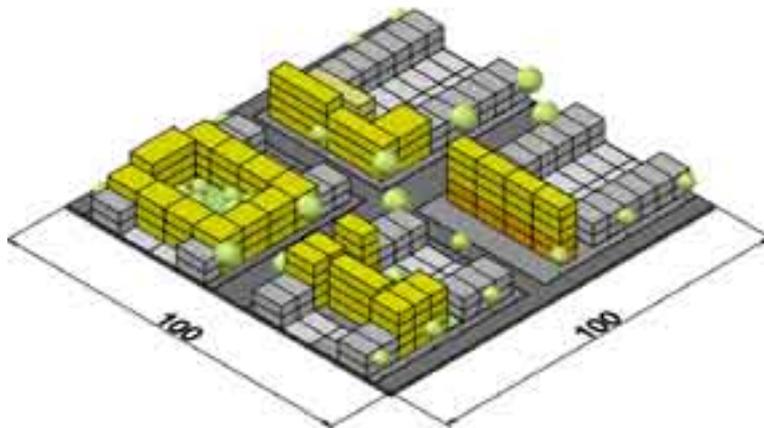
Top: medium scale project site in London (by Loates, Taylor, Shannon, Islington).

Middle: a good quality solution for street parking such as in the Western Harbour district in Malmö, combined with a sustainable urban drainage system, enhances the streetscape rather than detracting from it.

Bottom: this block in Rue de Meaux, Paris by Renzo Piano is an example of a medium scale deep 'îlot' block with a courtyard.

4.3 MID-DENSITY LOW-RISE

Plot size:	1,000-10,000m²
Net plot ratio:	1.5
Housing density:	max 80u/ha
Building height:	3-4 floors
Mixed use:	sometimes ground floor (retail, workspace)

This principal typology incorporates densities found in many of south London's historic neighbourhoods and is generally sympathetic to surrounding building heights. The key design challenge is to find successful ways of developing larger sites using such low-rise townhouses in close proximity rather than increasing the building height. Mews dwellings and courtyard housing are typical expressions of this principal typology. Due to its nature as predominantly single-household housing these units will typically be very suitable for families, with opportunities for providing private outdoor space. This remains true even if densities are pushed up to 4-storeys overall by including maisonettes.

LGN1, ANH2 The typology has been tested in Lee Green en Anerley Hill, as it responds particularly well to the contiguous suburban context of such smaller town centres. Our design scenarios and precedents of successful existing examples show that:
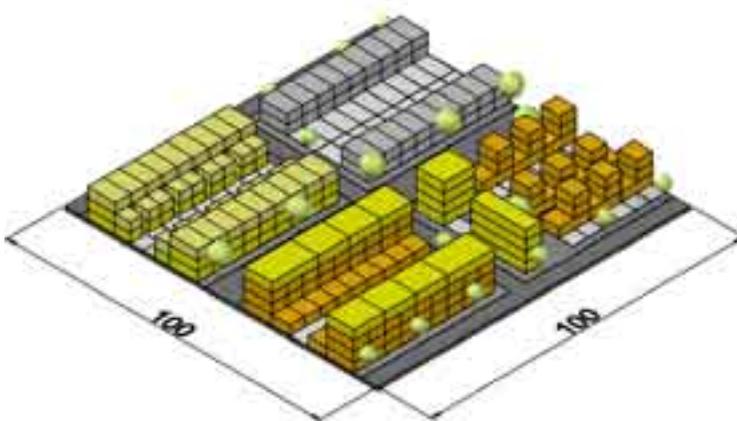
- this may not be 'high density' but represents a density (up to 100 u/ha net) which in many cases is higher than the suburban context, whilst retaining a strongly suburban character and feel;
- a wide variety of unit typologies can be achieved beyond the typical suburban terrace. They include maisonettes, courtyard houses, apartments in urban villas, and lower ground floor flats, thus suiting many different household types;
- such typologies can be combined with Home Zones to create pedestrian-priority, child friendly neighbourhoods;
- good quality residential amenity can be achieved without maintaining traditional suburban overlooking distances through the careful design, placement and orientation of windows to prevent overlooking;
- there is a need to address the interface between the street and the dwelling to encourage safety through natural overlooking, and opportunities for neighbourliness. Deliberate design or management can make these into personalised and sociable spaces. There are many strategies such as car ports or kitchens as suitable ground floor uses towards the street, with living rooms above – though current interpretations of the Lifetime Homes Standard often makes this difficult;
- while a degree of on-street parking can enliven the street and enhance social safety, care needs to be taken that it does not dominate the streetscape and detract from green qualities or playability;
- this typology would be highly suitable for alternative procurement methods although this needs considerable encouragement from the planning system and landowners.

The study suggests that, in the context of increasing efforts to provide housing suitable for families, such mid-density typologies will become increasingly relevant. This approach is partially dependent on the ability to assemble sites and to master-plan and build a whole block. This is not a form that can be assembled over time by construction of individual sites, because of its integrated architectural approach, which might typically look for shared parking solutions, configuration of shared public spaces and play spaces for children. Development Control challenges are likely to focus on the ability of such schemes to meet social housing requirements. In particular there will be financial viability questions. In the absence of a Housing Association or RSL partner that can engage in development on a different basis, delivery of this model may be difficult. However these challenges are not insurmountable and have been addressed successfully with a number of projects.

Top: the Eastern Harbour District in Amsterdam is famous for its high density (which achieves up to 100 u/ha but is mostly low-rise), with very high architectural and public realm quality.

Middle: architect Peter Barber's Donnybrook Quarter in East London is a dense mixed use scheme that includes community space, shop units and a range of housing types. Roof terraces, courtyards and a pedestrian central space provide both privacy and opportunities for sociability.

Bottom: this project in Bruges, Belgium by Heylen Architects, is contemporary in its design yet successfully blends into the grain of the historic cityscape.

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4.4 MIXED TYPOLOGY URBAN BLOCK

Plot size:	3,000-10,000m²
Net plot ratio:	3
Housing density:	80-200u/ha
Building height:	3-8 floors
Mixed use:	sometimes ground floor (retail, workspace)

In many ways, and like the medium scale project typology, this principal typology is characterised by the larger scale of intervention – typically an entire or half block. The layout can be a perimeter-courtyard block but other layouts are also possible, including more complex combinations of mid-rise apartment blocks and low-rise family housing in close proximity. In particular, there may be potential for collective open spaces in the centre of the block or additional residential accommodation. Ground floor uses can be retail or community uses as well as workspace, but residential-only ground floors can be considered depending on location.

ANH3 MOR1
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The typology has been tested in Anerley Hill, Morden and the Old Kent Road, where such mixed typology blocks can help resolve larger-scale urban design challenges across several blocks. Our design scenarios and precedents of successful existing examples show that:
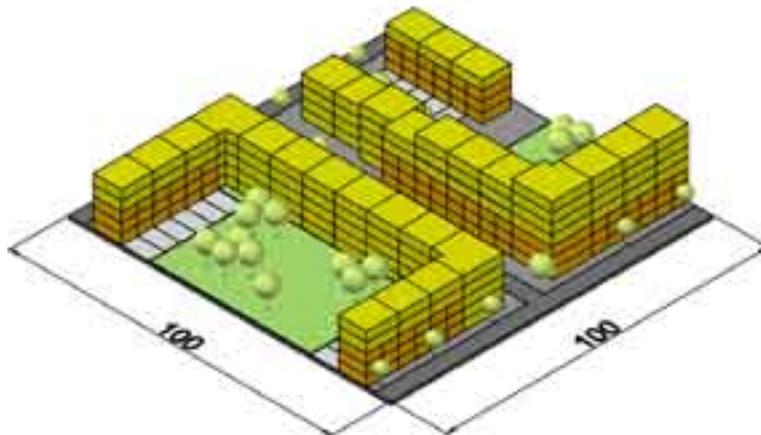
- the larger block scale allows for a wider variety of housing typologies, which can better accommodate the full diversity of household types in a given area;
- the quality of urban design and dwelling layout is crucial to ensure the quality and amenity of individual units as well as the streetscape aspect;
- the typology may be suitable for larger regeneration projects involving a number of blocks;
- because of the larger, comprehensive scale of development, there are particular opportunities to include heritage buildings in a creative, proactive manner, and volumes can be broken up and scaled to respond to different aspects of the existing context;
- this scale of development may be needed to overcome the problems posed by complex infrastructure barriers such as adjacency to rail lines or roads;
- because of very high densities, often going towards 'superdensity', the design and management of the public realm is crucial for the long-term quality of such developments. A particular challenge is to integrate amenity space for children and young people intelligently within the development.

The study suggests that the issues raised by this principal typology relate primarily to the scale of development proposed. The number of buildings and the overall housing outputs raise questions which ultimately need to be addressed at a local neighbourhood scale. The impact of this redevelopment will go beyond the site on which it will occur, and scale and volumes need to be calibrated with the surroundings. Many of the aesthetic and servicing issues will need to be addressed by the detailed design of individual buildings as well as the overall masterplan.

Other challenges associated with this principal typology will relate to the day-to-day operation of a variety of uses within the development. Long term management issues will need to be addressed, as housing above retail, and in particular above entertainment or night time uses, leads to a potential for conflicts of use. The allocation of different housing tenures will also need to be considered carefully and weighed against social integration and community cohesion objectives on the one hand and financial viability on the other.

Top 3: the Iroko project by Coin Street Community Builders, (Community Centre by Haworth Tompkins) houses a variety of housing typologies as well as other functions.

Middle left: residential ground floor that is suitable for future use as shop or work space, Amsterdam.

Middle right: residential ground floor with well designed front gardens, London.

Bottom 2: the regeneration of Falkenried, Hamburg provides a wide range of residential units within large urban blocks that include shared pedestrian and play spaces.

4.5 LARGE SCALE ENSEMBLE

Plot size:	3,000-10,000m²
Net plot ratio:	3
Housing density:	80-200 u/ha
Building height:	6-10 floors
Mixed use:	sometimes lower floors (retail, workspace)

This principal typology represents opportunities for large scale development for any urban environment whether in the central city, suburban town centres or elsewhere, based on the introduction of a single or combined volume – for example, a prominent block or tower. While there are a significant number of successful historic and more recent precedents, including mansion blocks built in the first half of the 20th century, their impact should not be under estimated. Historically they have been located along primary streets or arterial routes within the street hierarchy. They are particularly suitable near significant on-site open space provision, adjacent to major urban open spaces, or next to waterways such as docks or river front locations.
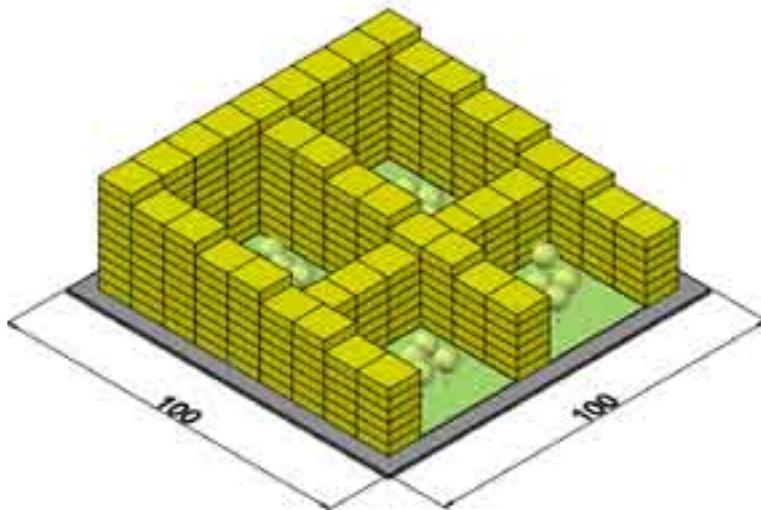
The typology has been tested in Balham, Anerley Hill, and the Old Kent Road, where this large scale intervention fits in with the existing context and can create scale advantages in the physical layout or in the development process. Our design scenarios and precedents of successful existing examples show that:

- this scale of development can create significant urban design opportunities for landmarks that improve legibility of streets and town centres;
- this typology can be coupled to new large-scale public realm proposals promoted by the Mayor or the boroughs;
- the choice of location for this scale of development is often driven by their visual impact. Some relief will need to be offered from the scale of buildings involved;
- the typology offers good opportunities to deal with parking and servicing on a block-wide level
- a variety of private open space types can be introduced even if the unit typologies will typically be limited to apartments and maisonettes;
- the ground floor level of such large ensembles is critical to ensure its long-term success.

The study suggests that there are a number of location issues relating to such developments. There are significant adjacency issues that would need to be addressed, particularly relating to surrounding properties and the impact on overlooking, shadowing, parking and servicing. The scale of this type of intervention might raise acceptability issues in the local context, even if similar scale historical examples do exist. The density of such developments requires excellent public transport accessibility. In a high-density setting, any market demands for

generous parking provision would mean that undercroft parking or parking podiums need to be included, affecting the street level of the building and raising the height of a building overall. Particular care will need to be taken to ensure this does not lead to negative effects to the public realm. Car-free development or low parking ratios would be preferable.

Top 2: Du Cane Court, a 1920s apartment block on Balham High Road, is markedly higher (up to 9 storeys) than its surroundings but its scale and clarity has a positive effect on its surroundings.

Bottom 3: in Milan, a development of several residential towers next to the site of a supermarket increases the density significantly, while offering added value like a well designed public space, underground parking and the renovation of a former garage into small offices (project: Portello, architecture by Cino Zucchi).


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4.6 JOINT VENTURE

Plot size:	3,000-10,000m²
Net plot ratio:	2.5-3
Housing density:	50-200 u/ha
Building height:	4-8 floors
Mixed use:	complex programmes across different floors

Buildings and projects of this principal typology are truly mixed use beyond a mere 'residential over retail' typology. They integrate a larger amount of non-residential uses, usually over one or more floors as an integral part of one project. Examples of such non-residential uses could be schools, large supermarkets, car parks, health facilities, sporting facilities or employment spaces. As such they require joint working between different stakeholders and investment streams, increasing the complexity both of project delivery and long-term management.

The typology has been tested in Lee Green, West Norwood, Balham, Purley, and Morden, all of which would benefit from joined-up approaches to achieve a complex but rich, integrated mix of uses. Our design scenarios and precedents of successful existing examples show that:

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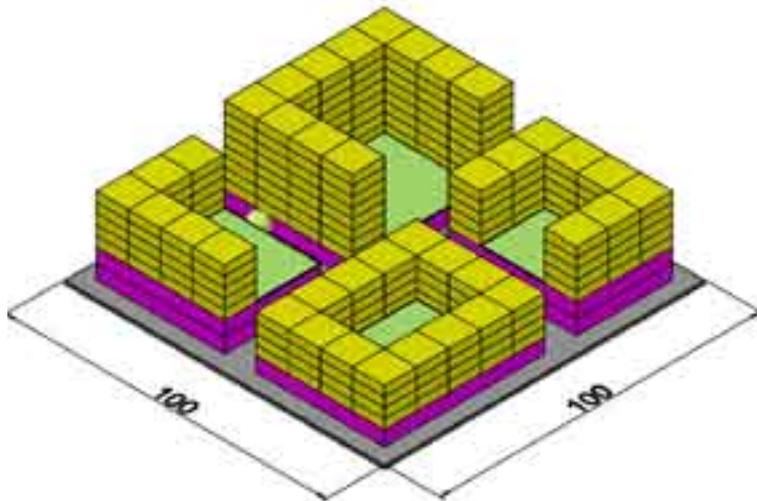
- tackling specific urban design challenges, such as integrating large-scale retail sites, infrastructure and workspace will often require this development scale to accommodate their full complexity;
- access, servicing, and engineering measures to mitigate environmental overspills (noise, vibration) across uses are integral to this typology and need to be tackled head-on;
- the typology offers opportunities to create excellent residential amenity even in difficult sites and with complex mixes of uses;
- the complexity of the typology does not preclude a variety of dwelling typologies, including affordable housing. Housing Associations can take an active role in developing such projects;
- the complexity of such projects poses professional challenges to all parties involved, but can offer great benefits to neighbourhoods and residents.

The study suggests that the scale and complexity of the development proposed by this typology requires highly specific masterplanning and urban design solutions. A design-led approach would be required to ensure an appropriate relationship to adjacent uses and to achieve high quality solutions to any transport, masterplan and housing challenges.

Whilst smaller-scale health or educational facilities will pose relatively limited issues, it is likely that the more complex examples of this typology (such as with large-scale retail or other employment space or car parks) will only be realised in high-value locations or with significant steering by the public sector. The public sector could create development briefs where there is public sector ownership or in the context of specific area strategies. A supplementary planning

document approach may also be taken. This allows the public sector and local partners to define the appropriate density and mix of uses through a community based, proactive planning process. A more comprehensive approach is offered by an Area Action Plan process.

While the public sector can play a significant role in defining locations, volumes, forms and uses, it is also likely that local authorities will be concerned with long term management issues. It will be important to define which elements of the development will be considered to be within the public realm and public responsibility (streets, public open spaces, community facilities) versus those which will be in the hands of private management including retail and housing components.

Top: the town core of Almere, Netherlands (masterplan by OMA, complex by Christian De Portzamparc) provides a diversity of residential units, accessed from a collective green roof above the shopping centre.

Bottom: a dentist, GP surgery and other functions are situated on the ground floor of this apartment building in IJburg, Amsterdam (KCAP Architects).

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LESSONS LEARNT: PLANNING AND DELIVERY

This Chapter explores how the obstacles to good quality intensification can be overcome, and looks at a series of more detailed development control issues which have arisen from the design scenario evaluations. A series of general policy recommendations are presented to encourage the delivery of good-quality intensification.

5

5.1 DELIVERY AND IMPLEMENTATION – A PROACTIVE FRAMEWORK

The case studies demonstrate the benefits of proactive planning. A shift is needed from the sometimes reactive nature of the planning system towards a propositional planning culture with a strong public sector role, based on excellent urban design and housing expertise. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 already had this ambition and much has been achieved. However more progress is needed.

The 2008 Planning Act has changed the Local Development Framework system introduced in 2004 to further enable a more agile local place-shaping role. It facilitates quicker production of urban design framework documents and faster responses to opportunities as and when they arise. This includes faster procedures for Supplementary Planning Documents such as Development Briefs and Site-Specific Allocations, which are more limited in scope and generally take less time to prepare than Area Action Plans. In localities like our case studies, such proactive planning exercises could be undertaken to explore and encourage higher density approaches to future development. These could serve as evidence base or advisory documents. Development Briefs could be prepared for areas where there are obviously under-used sites which are or could be in the public ownership. Fragmented land ownership often impedes such proactive planning. There are, however, triggers which will allow public intervention. One such is where a significant area of need has been identified and there has been obvious failure in the housing or property market to secure change, and where a significant structural decline in retail or employment activity has occurred. This can justify public sector intervention in compulsory land assembly through the Compulsory Purchase Order process, developer partnership and site disposal. The new Homes and Communities Agency can play an important role here too. Further opportunities for public sector intervention arise where there is the potential for significant change on a larger single public sector site within a town centre. In this case housing estate renewal or the redevelopment of an existing school, leisure-centre or community facility site can justify or leverage a wider redevelopment scheme.

5.2 A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

The case studies point to the key role of planning control. They bring up a range of issues that may hinder higher density residential or mixed use schemes in the Development Control process. The studies also suggest the crucial importance of good quality, assertive planning officer involvement and residential standards guidance to guarantee residential amenity and good urban design.

Privacy, distance and separation
One obvious challenge is introducing taller residential buildings in a neighbourhood or town centre where the prevailing residential density is lower – for example, where a tall building would be in an area of historically terraced or semi-detached stock.

A set of property-owner privacy issues are typically raised. There has been a significant historic concern with issues of overlooking. There is a perception that the ability to see into another unit or garden from a new unit is undesirable. In addition there are a number of historic approaches to setting minimum distances between fronts, rears and ends of buildings, historically based on visibility between rear windows as in the case of the 20 metre back garden distance between suburban Victorian dwellings.

Many of these were set in an era prior to double glazing, natural gas or electric heating, washing machines and tumble driers and indoor toilets. There was a general assumption that separation

Top: an older example of the successful use of upper floor gardens and terraces: Odham's Walk, in London, by GLC Architects Department.

Bottom: high-density development in IJburg, Amsterdam, achieves good quality outdoor spaces and avoids overlooking through careful design.

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distances were necessary in order to allow privacy and maintain distances between households and families. Today, there is a wealth of typologies for dwelling and private amenity space, such as units focused on internal courtyards or roof terraces. Coupled with and creative design of facades and windows, these typologies can help to overcome this perceived obstacle while ensuring daylight and ventilation needs.

Residential-led mixed use schemes also raise a set of issues regarding separation between upper level residential uses and ground floor retail or workspace uses. This is particularly so where retail uses include restaurants. These are areas where there are potential for conflicts of use relating to noise, smells, deliveries and evening and night-time activities.

The form of higher density development may also raise distance issues. In many cases, increasing densities will also entail increasing building heights. This raises questions of rights of light particularly where newer taller buildings may cast shadows on neighbouring properties for much of the day. Again, many typologies exist to overcome these issues, such as courtyard schemes or roof top gardens and terraces. A further area of concern is the approach to side and rear elevations. The investment in architectural interest and quality is often reserved for facades that face the streets. However, the facades of rear and side elevations will be as important to neighbouring properties and existing property owners as they are the facades they are most likely to see on a daily basis.

There is a clear argument for reconsidering some of the long established distances and standards given changing building technologies and lifestyles and instead focus on resolving other more contemporary concerns such as noise and smell between neighbours, the detailed treatment of side and rear facades, and security. Best design and planning practices and guidance in these areas can be further highlighted, consolidated and promoted.

Logistics and services
A further issue likely to be examined in development control processes is the approach to logistical arrangements and servicing of new residential buildings. Given that many of these buildings will have a higher residential base than the buildings they replace, there may be additional parking requirements associated with them, even though London Plan policies seek to minimise this. Depending on their location within London, even areas with moderate or high public transport accessibility levels, the market may expect close to one parking space per one or two units; car-free development may not always be commercially feasible yet. This can have a significant impact on the architecture of the development.

Other issues are raised by the approach to servicing of buildings. This includes the location of bins and the manner in which refuse is stored prior to collection. In an era in which recycling is increasingly important, the provision of storage areas for recyclable domestic materials must also be addressed. Equally, secure bicycle storage will have to be considered in any housing design. Furthermore, where more complex mixed-use arrangements are proposed, such as the integration of large-scale retail or workspace components, servicing and delivery becomes crucial to the quality of the overall scheme. The case study scenarios cite design strategies by which this can be resolved.

Emerging sustainability requirements may also have implications for the outward appearance

of buildings: photo-voltaic installations, wind turbines and water retention systems will need to be addressed in the development control process. Ultimately such elements are design challenges that require creativity in the design process and careful review through assertive planning control. The organisation of good practice into a simple design guide for architects and developers could serve to reduce unnecessary delays or obstacles in this area. This is an area that calls for informed leadership and design championing.

Aesthetic appearance and performance

There are a number of design aspects of contemporary moderate and higher density residential development that create problems. Issues which are often raised include the transparency of buildings - particularly at the ground floor level. It is all too common that because of security concerns, ground floors have limited window or door openings, or the site is lined by security fencing and a building set-back leaving up to two meters of unused space. Equally, Development Control requirements for active ground floors may lead to provision of shopping frontages outside viable retail spaces. Without additional fit-out provisions to make them suitable for retail or workspace, this often leads to boarded up ground floors with the same effect of reducing a street's aesthetic appeal and social safety. Furthermore,

Top: integrated parking (Rotterdam, NL).

Bottom: storage areas for recyclable domestic materials as well as secure bicycle storage are integrated in the design of Coin Street, London.

greenery such as trees, green roofs or integrated in the façade is still too often seen as a luxury add-on rather than something inherent to good design. As examples throughout the study show, these issues are avoidable.

Finally there is the residential amenity of dwelling units. This study argues that space standards and usable private outdoor space, as well as collective or public play space for children and young people, is critical to long-term social sustainability of new housing. Much of the current practice, such as projects reviewed in the 2007 CABE report *Housing audit: assessing the design quality of new housing*, suggests that a more assertive planning control, backed up with clear policy and design guidance and housing standards, has a critical role to play to move towards better outcomes.

Higher density buildings need approaches that are more sympathetic to the neighbouring environment. More creative approaches to ground floor residential facades, integrating greenery and outdoor amenity space should be promoted. This is again an area where there is a record of good practice from within the UK and from higher density cities around the world that merits further championing.

Top: even on busy roads, balconies are well used and add amenity to the dwelling (Dalston Lane, London, housing block by Hawkins Brown).

Bottom: successful example of a high density residential area, creating an informal 'encroachment zone' between dwelling and street, encouraging sociability and safety (Eastern Harbour Area Amsterdam).

A range of actions could encourage, clear the path for or address barriers to the delivery of good quality higher residential densities in town centres such as these in south London. This may not always be about 'super-density', i.e. densities over 150 u/ha. Achieving good quality mid-density homes for families is just as important, as is creating typologies that are acceptable and attractive in the suburban context. The recommendations below are presented along a spectrum from the least interventionist to the most assertive on the part of the public sector.

Design championing and guidelines
More effective design championing can improve the appearance, functioning and acceptability of new high density housing. The 2008 Planning Act emphasises the role of local authorities to have regard to the desirability of achieving good design. Proactive use of good practice guidance to developers, local boroughs and the GLA could encourage proposals that avoid the most obvious pitfalls. The Mayor's consultation document *Planning for a Better London*, outlining the ambition for a more consensual approach to planning in the capital, mentions the ambition that the GLA group can 'help improve the quality of planning policy and decisions'. One particularly relevant project currently underway is the creation of a Mayor's Housing Design Guide. Commissioned by Design for London, it aims to give urban design guidance and aspirational standards for housing on unit, block and neighbourhood scale. It is partially based on a review of existing housing standards such as the Code for Sustainable Homes, Lifetime Homes Standard, Housing Quality Indicators and the London Plan. It will be completed in 2009, and covers affordable housing and projects with a large public sector stake.

Another way of making GLA expertise available to borough partners could focus on public sector staff capacity building and providing support for innovative policy development. This should including imaginative formulation of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans. Furthermore capacity building should provide information to local authorities, other public sector partners and the private sector on how concerns typically raised by neighbouring property owners and local political representatives can be addressed in the design and development control process. Design championing and sharing of expertise will enable more assertive and proactive, propositional policy-making and development control.

London wide policy refinements
The current town centres hierarchy in the London Plan is a carefully considered analysis of the current economy and future policy aspiration informed by ongoing detailed research. Few of south London's town centres are designated as metropolitan or major centres when compared with other sub-regions within London. This reflects their current retail performance. However this study found significant potential for growth in most of the town centres studied, including in some that are not currently designated as such – for example, in Anerley Hill and the Old Kent Road. Whether south London's town centres could play a more significant role to provide local services, social infrastructure, employment space or residential accommodation would be a highly relevant area for investigation beyond the design-led approach in this study as well as beyond current retail capacity studies.
One possible approach would be to 'up-zone' town centres. This policy refinement would revise the underlying allowable density applied to centres across south London. The relationship between

Public Transport Accessibility Levels and housing density is a fundamental aspect of London's planning system which has been thoroughly researched and adopted through a rigorous and consensual policy process. However, the *London Plan Density Matrix Review* carried out by URS and Patel Taylor (June 2006) reveals that in some cases, proposed development densities already exceed recommended densities, which may, for example, be justified on the basis of the strong urban design character of the development or the site's good accessibility to public transport. This discretionary freedom exists, but a wider discussion is needed to assess the potential of a design quality-led, rather than purely density-led approach. London Plan reviews, including a further review of the Matrix, could acknowledge this in the process of simplifying the Matrix. Of course this needs to go hand in hand with further improvements to transport infrastructure for rail and bus. If the relationship between density and public transport access were to be reviewed, definitions of sub-urban and urban centres and the allowable habitable room area ratio allowed could also be considered. In some areas, 'down-zoning' could be considered to reflect changes in the retail hierarchy, to promote non-retail uses or protect the existing character of areas. Evidently this would require a rigorous research process which is beyond the scope of this study.

Another area of policy refinement could be to reduce parking requirements further. Further research and investigation could identify actual parking requirements associated with developments and how this varies with tenure and unit size mix. With ongoing investment in rail links, increased public transport capacity and frequency, London-wide promotion of car-clubs and cycling schemes, car-free development is becoming increasingly feasible throughout the city. There is the potential, through Mayoral Early Alterations to the London Plan to adjust policy in operation without requiring a full review of the London Plan, though *Planning for a Better London* does recognise that a longer-term revision of the London Plan may be appropriate in the near future. Either way, re-consideration of planning policy relating to town centres generally, and by implication south London's town centres, could be undertaken by the GLA in partnership with all other relevant public bodies, wider stakeholders and the public.

Local town centre policy tools
Within current planning policy, Supplementary Planning Documents could be used more often. While many of the recommended approaches to intensification suggested by this study could be addressed for individual centres through Area Action Plan processes, these can take considerable time. A Supplementary Planning Document route can set development frameworks in a more direct and timely manner. For example, London boroughs could prepare Supplementary Planning Documents that address smaller town centre development frameworks or urban design frameworks for edges of town centres and corridors, housing intensification issues and amenity standards, mixed-use development requirements, site specific allocations, and locally recalibrated relationships between public transport, parking and development.

Active development implementation
In town centres where there is a significant public sector property land or ownership in the form of housing estates, schools or health facilities or similar community facilities, there is the opportunity for the public sector to leverage change through re-development of its own assets. The public sector

can also engage with town centre transformation through the assembly of privately held land. This may be appropriate where small and fragmented sites inhibit good quality intensification but also where large-scale land-ownerships such as by institutional retail landowners would inhibit the transformation of underperforming shopping centres.

This land can then be assembled into a re-development portfolio which can be issued to the market for private sector led redevelopment. In this way the public sector can play an active role in realising good quality housing provision. Innovative partnership delivery methods such as Local Housing Companies and Local Asset-Based Vehicles are now being pioneered across London to capitalise on this potential, and a proactive role of the HCA could have powerful benefits in this regard. Equally, it is possible to give local communities a more direct stake in such developments through the creation of Asset Based Trusts, Community Interest Companies and other locally-rooted organi-sational forms which link development directly with long-term community asset ownership and the delivery of social infrastructure. This may play an increasingly important role in delivering housing, overcoming local opposition to new development as well as sustaining and generating social cohesion in the long term.

This process can be supported by the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents as discussed earlier. This can be followed by the preparation of specific site development briefs by the local authorities which can define the expected density of housing that would be delivered as part of town-centre redevelopment schemes. It will be in the hands of individual boroughs to define aspirations for higher density housing within town centres, in close collaboration with the GLA family.

Density incentives
A more radical approach to allowing and encouraging higher density development is the potential use of structural density incentives or bonuses. This is an approach used in a number of planning systems outside the UK. In essence, in certain zones property owners are offered the opportunity to build to higher densities than certain baselines set by the planning policy framework, if specific features or amenities are incorporated or contributions made. These must all be seen as having a locally relevant public benefit, in the context of a strategic plan. The range of benefits and investments can be:

- Public use areas on site including public-access gardens, squares and pedestrian through routes;
- Building design features such as green roofs and/or façades, upper level setbacks, lower level landscaped terraces, corner setbacks, active ground floor spaces or affordable workspace;
- Off site public realm improvements: streetscape investments, open spaces or landscaping over and above Section 106 contribution;
- Contributions to public transport; bus stops, station upgrades or revenue funding;
- Design excellence should be an absolute precondition for such density increases.

Variations on this system exist in many US cities such as New York, Chicago and in San Francisco. Whilst the current planning policy and Section 106 framework in practice allows for such trade-offs on a case by case basis, this system makes it more predictable and transparent. Engagement of CLG is encouraged as this would entail re-consideration of some fundamental aspects of how development proposals are reviewed and negotiated.

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CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The seven locations illustrate the diversity of town centres and their edges. The social, economic and physical features of each location are unique, and each needs locally suitable intensification strategies. The study shows that intensification is always site-specific and complex in nature. Therefore, the need for increasing residential densities in London is not a trend towards homogenization of places but an opportunity for enhanced place character and distinctiveness. This is the planning challenge — a call for proactive, propositional planning for town centres and their edges.

The study also shows that a range of types and strategies can be applied to each location. I in each of the seven case studies, we have generated three site specific scenarios, based on different assumptions and responding to unique site characteristics. In practice, the choice for the most appropriate strategy will depend on a range of factors, including strategic housing targets, local policy objectives and regeneration ambitions, the expressed desires of the public, market conditions and land ownership structures. Therefore the challenge may not always be about 'super-density', i.e. densities over 150 u/ha. Achieving good quality mid-density homes for families is just as important as creating typologies that are acceptable and attractive in the suburban context.

6

6.1   CONCLUSIONS: TOWN CENTRE INTENSIFICATION AS A HOUSING STRATEGY

Three core objectives should underpin any town centre intensification strategy: increasing housing supply and density, improving housing quality, and creating wider public benefit.

Increasing supply

Both national and GLA policies call for more homes, in particular more family homes and more affordable homes. Our design scenarios shows that the transformation of town centres and their edges can deliver a significant contribution to the provision of homes called for by the Mayor. Most of the proposed scenarios deliver between 200 and 500 new homes, and in many cases there is no need to assume that scenarios would be mutually exclusive - they can often be combined, leading to an addition for each town centre of between 400 and 1,000 homes. The seven locations combined could cater for two thirds of the targeted housing production for the seven boroughs in one year. Discussions with borough partners throughout this study confirmed that there are many locations in south London like the ones investigated in this study, so these secondary town centres and their edges could make a considerable contribution to the quantitative housing challenge.

Some of the principal typologies specifically address the need for family homes, while others propose a mix of apartments and houses. The need to make the wider public realm more family-friendly has been addressed in both cases.

The overall housing numbers per scenario remain on a consistently high level. There are differences between the various principal typologies and their average density, but the variation is relatively limited. Imaginative combinations of apartments and houses can be made for optimum results. The choice for different typologies should be based on ambitions for the unit mix, character and public

value in any location.

It is clear that delivering complex, mixed and dense town centre schemes is not an easy task. The complications are manifold; perseverance, creativity, partnership working and site-specific approaches are needed to overcome potential barriers. Much has been achieved since the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, and the further changes in the 2008 Planning 2008 are welcome. Other potential barriers include the problematic nature of land assembly among multiple partners, and development control issues including sustainability requirements, parking and servicing solutions. More agile approaches are still needed, particularly in the current economic context. An emphasis on design championing, change in development control guidance, further capacity building and resourcing for Local Planning Authorities needs to be complemented by additional tools to enable propositional planning and delivery by the public and third sector. As argued in the previous Chapter, this should include increased emphasis on developing 'framework strategies' within the LDF process to provide guidance and opportunity for small scale intensification.

Improving quality

The study is design-led and demonstrates how the provision of good quality homes (in terms of architecture, response to urban context, environmental performance and residential amenity) is possible through a diversity of urban design approaches. All scenarios are based on sound principles for good quality housing that can respond to changing needs over time and which includes adequate outdoor spaces. The proposals follow English Partnership's 2007 guidelines for internal space standards and generally avoid single-aspect units.

In particular, the study emphasises two strategies for improving quality:

- *Making good housing on difficult locations* – The study demonstrates how good quality housing can be provided in a series of locations that are often seen as difficult. Such sites include combinations with other uses, such as industry, shops, large-scale retail and social infrastructure, for example schools. It is possible to arrive at better solutions than is currently the norm. A wealth of principal typologies, precedents and design principles already exists. Throughout Outer London, there are exciting opportunities to think of new combinations of housing with other urban crucial functions. We have shown some of the potentially successful types that create the step change in quality needed to achieve sustainable development. This does, however, require a more proactive attitude on the part of the public sector, as well as stronger policy attention to certain specific challenges. Proactive, propositional planning is needed for long road corridors, edges of town centres and protected industrial estates if the ongoing effort for housing intensification is to be successful. With the A1 Borough Project in Islington and the High Street 2012 project in the Olympics area, a conceptual start has been made for the first of these. The challenge now is to go beyond public space improvement to wider objectives, and to apply the available planning policy tools and an increasing public sector role in delivery to achieve such ambitions.
- *Housing quality guidance* – Housing quality guidance is critical. We need to ensure space standards and usable private outdoor space, and go further. For example, existing practice

around A-Road corridors shows that, in comparison with other cities in Europe, there are relatively few legal barriers for housing development in difficult locations in terms of noise and air quality. Delivery of good as well as bad quality housing is the result. The forthcoming Mayor's Housing Design Guide will play an important role in driving up housing quality. Whilst guidance and design codes can never be a substitute for creativity in the design process, they can improve overall standards and can be used as a focus for debate, such as on the need to think differently about residential ground floors.

Wider benefits of intensification

The London Plan emphasises housing provision in conjunction with the need to sustain diverse economic growth, improve social cohesion and enhance quality of life and environmental performance. These wider 'public value' elements are crucial to this study. Across the seven locations, the design scenarios include proposals to improve the quality of the public realm and the coherence of the urban pattern, responding to site-specific issues. For example, one scenario for the Old Kent Road proposes to add residential buildings on the corners as a way of improving the definition of the street itself. In Purley, scenario 3 proposes a radical transformation of infrastructure in order to reconstruct the urban fabric of the town centre. Our conclusion is that imaginative design and joined-up investment can create benefits and tangible value for places and their inhabitants. The design scenarios show that this can be done, and can be delivered. Four particular points should be made:

- *Economic opportunities* – The importance of employment in suburban locations is

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underlined in Planning for a Better London, which emphasises that Outer London employment growth has been lagging and that there is value in maintaining and expanding possibilities for people to have jobs near where they live. We show the potential for thinking about and investing in suitable employment space across south London. Flexible provision of employment land or retail frontages can provide opportunities for new businesses by maintaining affordability. Investing in new adaptable buildings is important so that the built environment can continue to respond to changing dynamics in the future. Combinations of residential development with employment uses are also possible and the comprehensive redevelopment of employment sites can help achieve this. Such development would always depend on strategic economic analysis and requires investment in people and skills as well as in places. But the study indicates that housing intensification does not have to affect the diversity of economic activities across London as a whole.

- *Social cohesion* – Whilst social cohesion cannot be 'built' in physical terms, it can be facilitated through good quality meeting places and social infrastructure. All proposed design solutions can have benefits for their localities in this regard. For example, the addition of homes helps to sustain community services or shops in places where they are currently struggling. Similarly, links should be made with school (re)development projects and provision of health and leisure services. Strategies to involve community members in the design process can help to strengthen this aspect of town centre intensification, and propose further alignment of public sector investment.

Through strategic public realm programmes like the Open City framework, projects can deliver such 'public value' in conjunction with residential intensification.

- *Local identity and quality of life* – The identity of the case study locations needs to be promoted. While the design scenarios are inherently limited in scope and did not include engagement with the wider public, the proposals demonstrate how good urban design can strengthen the identity of places. The design scenarios all respect the existing heritage. They advocate a positive and sometimes bold approach to change while adhering to the size, scale and grain of the town centres involved. Within these parameters, significant increases in density can be achieved. This shows that adding homes to town centres need not be a threat. It is an opportunity to improve places so that both local residents, and London as a whole, benefit.

- *Environmental performance* – The provision of housing in town centres and their edges is an attractive option, even though the largest impact on sustainability performance will be at the level of a more detailed urban design and architecture, and in strategic energy policies. But it remains the case that town centres, their edges and major road corridors are generally well linked to public transport and already play an important role in the everyday lives of Londoners. Successful regeneration in these places will reinforce their role, helping to avoid undesirable pressure on other parts of the London landscape – Metropolitan Open Land as well other greenery and heritage. Moreover, if combined with significant investment in architectural qualities such as in green roofs

and facades, intensification could also become part of a comprehensive urban greening strategy.

In summary, the approach to town centre intensification suggested in this study can provide a significant contribution to the housing and regeneration ambitions central to London's spatial planning policies. Perhaps the most important conclusion is that 'public value' can and must have many faces. To strengthen public support, the improved qualities should be visible to the public. From a more attractive townscape and Section 106 investments in social infrastructure, to affordable housing and energy performance, this is as much a communication issue as a policy issue. Local boroughs, the GLA and other public sector bodies such as the HCA should strive to capture and communicate these benefits and improved quality standards to the community at large.

Finally, the town centre scenarios are no blueprints for immediate change, but ideas for London's dynamic debate about housing and area change. The potential additions in dwellings are substantial in numbers. The proposed principal typologies include substantial number of family dwellings and provide good quality housing for a mixed population and the scenarios also illustrate that substantial benefits for the wider community can be achieved.

A key area of concern is the delivery aspect, not only in terms of numbers, but also the delivery of good quality. The summary of recommendations outlines some lessons from the study that can help to support this.

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6.2 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations focus on planning policy arrangements and processes that are needed for the successful delivery of sustainable, high quality, town centre intensification schemes. They are intended to generate and inform discussion on future policy development rather than as proposals for immediate policy change.

Recommendations on the key themes for town centres (Chapter 3)

The study identifies nine themes that are central to the challenges for town centre intensification in south London and similar areas. The strategic recommendations for each theme area are summarised below, whilst more detailed design aspects can be found in Chapter 3:

- *Include the edges of town centres in transformation efforts* – Design studies should not just address the traditional 'heart of the town centre' but also their edges, nearby corridors and industrial areas, as well as adjacent suburban residential zones. Edges of town centres would benefit from more propositional planning so that existing qualities are maintained and new qualities created. This would include development oriented framework planning as well as proactive design strategies. We need to move beyond the automatic assumption that 'residential over retail' is always appropriate to guarantee good urbanism and social safety through natural overlooking. Other opportunities include a less limiting approach to overlooking distances and the creation of new public spaces to achieve residential environments that are attractive to all, including families and the elderly.
- *Align social infrastructure planning and housing development* – It is critical to appraise where housing developments can strengthen social infrastructure provision and vice versa. Housing development can support investments in social infrastructure and the public realm beyond the existing Section 106 framework. Integration of social infrastructure requires long-term planning, bringing together local partners and thinking creatively about joined up investment. This can enable town centres to fulfil the full range of town centre uses, including places for leisure, local services, meeting and socialising.
- *Make clear choices for struggling retail centres* – Strategies that would create an attractive alternative for ex-retail spaces can be feasible and attractive. We recommend establishing more propositional policies and transformation strategies for struggling retail centres. Options may include the retrofitting of retail parades for affordable employment spaces, new provision of education, leisure and health services, or more wholesale transformation into housing, mixed use or flexible 'casco'-buildings.
- *A-road corridors: linear investment* – The A-road corridors dominate the structure and image of south London, but too often present an unattractive environment both in terms of the public realm and the quality of recent development. Strategic investment in these routes is needed to create conditions that encourage high quality, sustainable housing and other uses. Public realm interventions and building typologies can respond to problematic environmental conditions such as noise and pollution. The key is to acknowledge that extra public as well as private efforts are needed to make development along these corridors happen in a sustainable manner. London and other metropolitan areas should recognise that

'centrality' does not just occur in (nodal) town centres, but also along (linear) corridors – and invest accordingly.

- *Diversify selected employment areas* – Industrial and other employment uses are increasingly pushed out of town centres and their edges, but their retention facilitates a more diverse and sustainable urban environment. London Plan policies reflect this. There is potential to apply proactive architectural and urban design strategies to create good conditions for working, living and the public realm in close proximity. Yet the delivery of such projects is hard to achieve. Mixed use categories are often considered risky, expensive or merely too hard work even if many Local Authorities report a 'latent' demand for affordable small workspaces of various specification. We recommend further investigation of delivery incentives for mixed use typologies and use-flexible, adaptable 'casco'-buildings, as well as affordable workspace strategies.

- *Unlock rail sites* – The key issue for unlocking rail sites lies in the value proposition of such sites. Building over railways or sidings can create good quality public spaces and create the conditions for good quality housing. The design studies illustrate that in project design many of the obstacles and conflicting demands can be overcome, although we recognise that cost issues can seem prohibitive. We recommend that TfL maximises the use of such potential sites in the medium and long term. Their involvement can help other network managers to realise the benefits of unlocking rail sites.

- *Stimulate alternative procurement methods* – There seems to be hesitation at all levels to allow for ways of procuring housing that achieve greater individual expression and sense of ownership. Yet these procurement methods can increase affordability, improve architectural standards and strengthen social cohesion and the identity of neighbour-hoods. We recommend incorporating more experimental approaches in town centre intensification schemes, and routinely establishing planning frameworks and urban design guidance that encourage a diversity of procurement methods.

- *Appraise possibilities for the integration of large scale retail sites* – We recommend a systematic analysis of big box retail sites to appraise if (1) integration into the town centre is viable; and (2) appraise what social benefits could be achieved. This analysis provides a basis for selective integration of big-box retail sites into the urban fabric.

- *Re-imagine the relation to heritage / character* – Understanding the character of places is crucial for successful urban regeneration efforts. We recommend a combination of thorough analysis of heritage assets and imaginative approaches to managing change in order to enhance, not just maintain, their quality. While the individual design scenarios are not elaborated at the level which addresses heritage issues in detail, the studies do illustrate that proposals for new urban form can and should be sensitive to the character of their surroundings.

Recommendations for principal typologies (Chapter 4)

The study applies six distinct housing and delivery typologies. Each of these types has its value characteristics, density range, private outdoor space types, delivery mechanisms, and target group. Applying different typologies can generate highly distinctive approaches to the challenge of urban intensification. This demonstrates that the need for density does not have to be interpreted as a trend towards homogenization of places. Instead, town centre intensification is an opportunity for enhancing place character and distinctiveness. Medium project sites and large scale ensembles are now the dominant 'mode of production' in much of London. We recommend broadening the range of solutions. The typologies used in this study provide a start, but town centre intensification should not be limited to these types. Communities, residents and investors will benefit from a wider range of possible approaches to town centre intensification and this will support the sustainability of town centre intensification. We recommend the further study of typologies that do not necessarily achieve 'super-density', but that successfully achieve what ought to be considered as 'mid-density' (80-120 u/ha) outside central London, with good quality apartments and substantial numbers of family dwellings. This density enables key aspects of urban sustainability such as increased public transport operation, but does not require exclusive reliance on high-rise, collective access arrangements. Such an approach may be particularly suitable for more suburban locations and will be more attractive for the aspirations of those who opt to live outside the central city.

Recommendations on planning and delivery (Chapter 5)

Chapter 5 outlines a comprehensive set of recommendations to improve planning and delivery. These are summarised in the following five recommendations:

- *Intensify soft advocacy and design guidelines* – Encouragement through promotion of best practice or project-specific collaboration will provide expertise and confidence to local authorities, other public sector partners and the private sector. Guidance could be applied in areas including design and overlooking, in the design of logistics and services and in the aesthetic performance of buildings.
- *Refine London-wide policies* – There are several areas in which London wide policies could be reviewed to support sustainable town centre intensification. This includes an increased emphasis on non-retail functions of town centres, and revising the underlying allowable density applied to centres across south London. A more rigorous reflection of PTAL levels and improvements in public transport connections and frequency in borough policy would also be advantageous. Similarly, it could be worthwhile to find a more explicit formulation of criteria that would allow for the exceeding of density levels set by policy based on criteria such as design quality. Also, parking requirements could be reduced to allow for more deliverable schemes.
- *Reassess local town centre policy tools* – It is recommended that within the current planning policy environment that the more frequent use of Supplementary Planning Documents be considered.

- *Enhance active development implementation* – In town centres with a significant public sector property ownership in the form of housing estates, schools or health facilities, the public sector could lead the delivery of housing through redevelopment of its own assets. Public sector involvement in town centre intensification can be enhanced through a range of strategies, including the assembly of privately held land, the encouragement of alternative procurement methods, partnership delivery methods such as Local Housing Companies and the creation of Asset Based Trusts, Community Interest Companies and other locally-rooted organisations that involve the public directly.

- *Develop imaginative approaches for density incentives* – A more radical approach to allowing and encouraging higher density development is represented by the potential use of density incentives or bonuses. This is an approach used in a number of locations outside the UK. In essence property owners are offered the opportunity to build to higher densities than that set by the baseline policy framework, if certain features, amenities or other public benefits are incorporated or contributions made.

PART II

THE SCENARIOS IN DETAIL

The scenarios presented here have been introduced in Chapter 2. They enable further discussion of what a proactive planning approach to urban change could entail in different contexts. The scenarios are location-specific but are not blueprints. They are conceptual models and illustrations of what could be possible. Reading these scenarios in conjunction with the analysis of the principal typologies and cross-cutting themes will reveal their wider relevance beyond the particular location.

7

A2212 Burnt Ash Road

A20 Eltham Road

A20 Lee High Road

B212 Lee Road

Lewisham
Greenwich

LEE GREEN

Lee Green is a small District centre straddling the boundaries of the London Boroughs of Lewisham and Greenwich. How can housing intensification redefine the role of the town centre and its public amenities?

For a more detailed description of Lee Green, see page 24.
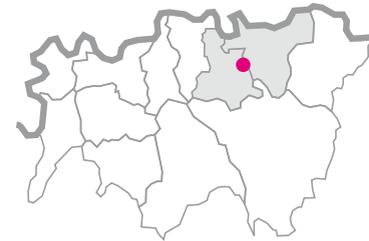
PUBLIC VALUE OF LEE GREEN INTERVENTIONS	LGN1	LGN2	LGN3
Public realm improvement: connection to river, greening, public space away from A-road	++	++	++
Residential typologies along main roads with targeted noise-mitigation measures	+	+	+
Emphasis on family units	++	++	+
Child-friendly public realm	++	++	+
Potential to create and cross-subsidise workspace	++	++	+
Improvement of retail / social infrastructure viability thresholds	+	+	+
Renewal of retail function and restaurants / cafes		+	++
Potential to create new outdoor sports, leisure and other social infrastructure			++

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A2212 Burnt Ash Road

A20 Eltham Road

A20 Lee High Road

B212 Lee Road

Lewisham
Greenwich

LGN1 LEE GREEN: SCENARIO 1

High density-low rise

SCENARIO LGN1 (LEWISHAM):
Development area: 2 ha
- Dwellings: 200 units
- Shops: 1,600 m²
- Offices: 4,500 m²

SCENARIO LGN1 (GREENWICH):
Development area: 0.8 ha
- Dwellings: 90 units
- Shops: 800 m²
- Offices: 1,300 m²

Scenario one applies a mid-density low-rise concept across two blocks of the town centre. A series of new blocks connect to the existing streets, improving overall permeability and legibility across the town centre, including an enhanced and accessible embankment along the River Quaggy. In this scenario, parts of Lee Green would lose their town centre character and would become primarily residential, though the principal typology is flexible and allows for integration of retail and workspace units, which would be especially appropriate along the main road intersection. While the added residential accommodation would improve retail viability, the driver of this scenario is an assumed decline in retail floorspace and hence a fundamental re-thinking of Lee Green in the town centre hierarchy. Its future would be as a high-quality mid-density neighbourhood characterised by a green setting and local amenity provision.

The principal typology would fit in with and enhance the setting of the existing built heritage, creating an environment highly suitable for single family dwellings, mixed with small-scale apartment blocks or maisonettes. All units would have gardens or generous roof terraces. Detailed design of the dwellings would have to ensure

appropriate insulation from noise and adverse environmental conditions along the A20. A mix of on-street and off-street parking would be appropriate; the residential streets should be HomeZones with ample playable space. Drive-in individual garages would be appropriate for some of the dwellings. This principal typology would lend itself to innovative procurement methods such as releasing the site for individual self-commissioning which would create a person-alised, varied aesthetic. Such a niche market could enhance Lee Green's distinctive identity.

Individual housing developments create one coherent neighbourhood, IJburg, Amsterdam (top) and Berlin Mitte (bottom right).

Bottom left: the corners of the blocks are particularly suitable for small scale retail or workspace units (Amsterdam IJburg).

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.3 Re-think struggling retail centres
3.7 Explore and encourage alternative procurement methods
3.9 Create positive propositions for heritage and conservation areas

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A2212 Burnt Ash Road

A20 Eltham Road

A20 Lee High Road

B212 Lee Road

Lewisham
Greenwich

LGN2

LEE GREEN: SCENARIO 2

Medium scale project sites

SCENARIO LGN2 (LEWISHAM):
Development area: 2,2 ha
- Dwellings: 310 units
- Shops: 1,900 m²
- Offices: 5,000 m²

SCENARIO LGN2 (GREENWICH):
Development area: 0.8 ha
- Dwellings: 100 units
- Shops: 100 m²
- Offices: 1,200 m²

This scenario explores how redevelopment could take place using a medium scale development grain with project sites between 500 and 2,000m2. Like Scenario 1, a new street pattern creates a series of urban blocks with individual perimeter apartment buildings between four and six storeys high that have access to collective courtyards. Such buildings could accommodate different dwelling types from family maisonettes to units for the elderly. Private amenity space will be provided through balconies, loggias or roof terraces. By using different architectural practices and / or developers per building, a differentiation in architecture could be achieved which will be beneficial in establishing a distinct identity for Lee Green. Along the main street intersection, the building line can be set back to create a generous pavement with trees and seating, activated by retail, workspace and café / restaurant units. In order to minimise the impact of parking on the streetscape, parking provision should mostly be off-street and could be incorporated in undercroft structures below the courtyards. Car clubs would be an interesting alternative.
Like Scenario 1, this development method has significant potential for using alternative procurement methods, such as collective self-commissioning arrangements which have recently been used with success in Amsterdam and in many German cities. Subject to a design code and a public realm strategy, these have proven to create successful niche developments which can improve an area's profile, as well as deliver diverse, affordable dwelling and live/work typologies even in a weak residential market. Though not detailed further here, this approach would also be very suitable for the entirety of the land west of the A2212 Burnt Ash Road, which is currently used by a low-rise supermarket and car park.

Top: Vrijburcht is a residential block initiated by a collective of households. Public facilities like a bar, a theatre and guest rooms complement the building. The project was supported by a Housing Association, who gave full freedom to the future residents and the architect (CASA architects).

Bottom: a group of initiatives together form the multi-program urban block in Freiburg Germany.

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.3 Re-think struggling retail centres
3.7 Explore and encourage alternative procurement methods
3.9 Create positive propositions for heritage and conservation areas

A2212 Burnt Ash Road

A20 Lee High Road

A20 Eltham Road

B212 Lee Road

Lewisham
Greenwich

LGN3

Joint venture urban intervention
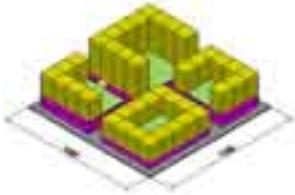
SCENARIO LGN3 (LEWISHAM):
Development area: 2 ha
- Dwellings: 330 units
- Shops: 2,500 m²
- Offices: 4,200 m²
- Social infrastruture (market): 1,600m²

SCENARIO LGN3 (GREENWICH):
Development area: 0,8 ha
- Dwellings: 150 units
- Offices: 900 m²

This scenario aims to strengthen the position of Lee Green as a retail and service centre. It explores the potential to develop more complex mixed use programmes in Lee Green. Grouped around a new civic space that provides relief from the busy roads, a collection of retail premises of different sizes, a market and small-scale offices provide a focus for the town centre. Although a larger scale proposition, individual volumes would not exceed the scale of current building stock. Most of the development would still be residential, creating up to 400 units in a mix of predominantly apartments and maisonettes. Private amenity space would be provided by balconies, loggias and roof terraces; collective play facilities could be located on the roof of buildings as well as in the heart of the new public space. The larger scale of the intervention provides the opportunity to integrate significant social infrastructure provision within the blocks: a health practice, such as already exists in the tower of Leegate House; sports facilities such as basketball, tennis courts and climbing walls. These could be integrated in the built fabric in an iconic manner, creating a strong identity as well as encouraging healthy life styles. They would add to the significant sports facilities already present in the area and give them a clear public expression. A wider range of town centre functions (leisure, socialising) could benefit from the identity and social life of the town centre. Parking both for dwellings and for visitors could be integrated into undercroft structures under collective courtyards or in a multi-storey car park which is wrapped around by retail, office or residential units.

Top left: the Swiss Cottage development in London combines a theatre, park, outdoor sports field, swimming pool, climbing wall, library and playground with high-density residential accommodation and complements the retail functions of the town centre.

Top right: shared greenspace and play facilities within a residential block, Malmö.

Bottom left: living and working (offices and light industry) mixed in harmony in this Amsterdam building by Van Der Waals / Zeinstra architects.

Bottom right: Brewery Square in London (Hamilton Associates) shows a good example of integrating a mixed programme within the existing fabric.

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.2 Integrate social infrastructure planning

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A215 Norwood Road

West Norwood Cemetary

West Norwood station

A215 Knights Hill

Norwood High Street

WEST NORWOOD

West Norwood is located in the south-eastern part of the London Borough of Lambeth, bordering on Tulse Hill in the North and on an industrial area in the south. How can housing intensification on the edge of the town centre complement regeneration in the core of the town centre?

For a more detailed description of West Norwood, see page 25.

PUBLIC VALUE OF WEST NORWOOD INTERVENTIONS	WNW1	WNW2	WNW3
Strengthening West Norwood as location for town centre living	++	+	+
Revitalisation and reconfiguration of struggling retail stock	+		
Improvement of retail / social infrastructure viability thresholds	+	+	+
Potential to create new public realm and social infrastructure		++	++
Potential to create and cross-subsidise workspaces / to upgrade & intensify industrial employment uses	+	++	++
Improvement of traffic / social safety of current industrial site		+	++

LGN
WNW
BAL
ANH
PUR
MOR
OKR

A215 Norwood Road

West Norwood Cemetery

West Norwood station

A215 Knights Hill

Norwood High Street

WNW1

Individual infill / extension

SCENARIO WNW1:
Development area: 1.2 ha
- Dwellings: 240 units
- Shops: 6,500 m²

This scenario explores the potential for intensification on individual sites in the town centre. A number of sites currently have single- or two-storey buildings, often of low quality, with significant vacancy rates and underused back yards. The approach shows how these could be redeveloped on a site by site basis. Extensions to existing buildings or individual new buildings with footprints similar to the existing high street could easily be 4 to 6 storeys high. This implies a significant increase in plot ratio but it need not adversely affect the centre's character, as it retains the existing structure and grain. The approach would also be suitable for underused yards behind high street buildings and on side streets, but primarily suits the mixed and discontinuous streetscape of the main thoroughfares. In practice, a careful assessment of individual properties should be undertaken to determine which could be redeveloped and which retained because of their historical or architectural quality.

New buildings would contain apartments and maisonettes but could also include workspace or live-work units if these were viable and supported by proactive policy; ground floors can be for retail and workspace or services and access to yards. Roof terraces and balconies are essential to optimise residential amenity. Combined with an urban design code and assertive planning to encourage excellent design, this approach could lead to reinvigoration of the town centre fabric, carefully juxtaposing old and modern architecture. Special attention would need to be paid to the quality of the ground floors to ensure good quality access and servicing arrangements, for refuse, recycling and cycle parking. Potentially, individual buildings could have a setback to create wider pavements with cafés and terraces; these would have to be well designed to maintain the overall coherence of the public realm. This approach would need off-street parking in order to prevent further congestion on the main roads. Given the proximity of rail stations, many projects could be car-free.

Left: apartments in keeping with the historic scale in the Indische Buurt neighbourhood Amsterdam (Zeinstra Van Der Pol Architects) have attracted a new target group to the area.

Middle: more addresses on the street (Amsterdam, Claus & Kaan Achitects).

Right: small-scale, iconic apartments projects such as these in Tsukiji, Tokyo may be appropriate in specific locations and if they show excellent design.
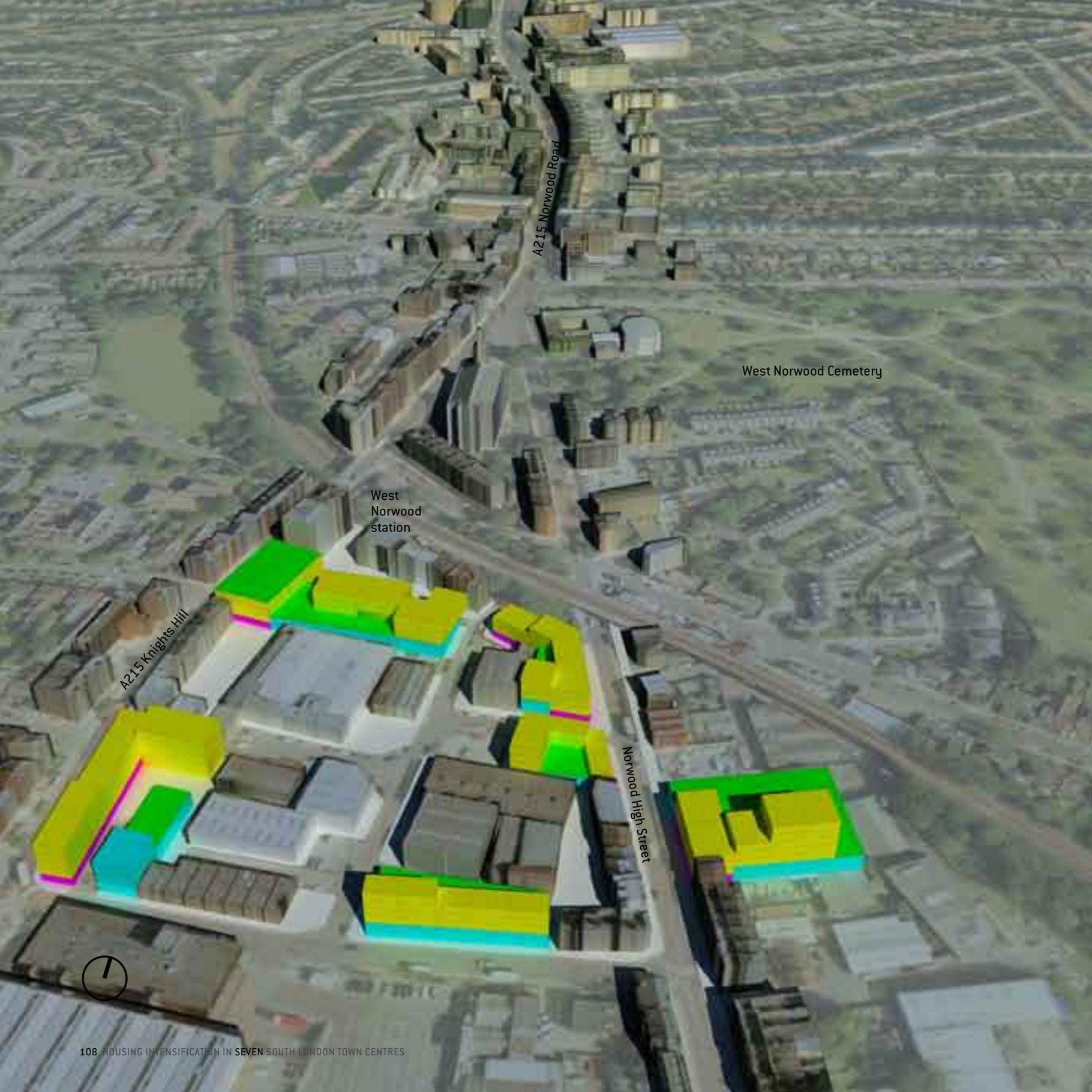
KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.1 strengthen the edges of town centres
3.3 Re-think struggling retail centres
3.7 Explore and encourage alternative procurement methods

West Norwood Cemetery

West
Norwood
station

A215 Norwood Road

A215 Knights Hill

Norwood High Street

WNW2

LGN

WNW

BAL

ANH

PUR

MOR

OKR

WEST NORWOOD: SCENARIO 2

Medium scale project sites

SCENARIO WNW2:
Development area: 1,2 ha
Dwellings: 160 units
Shops: 2,400 m²
Industry: 4,800 m²

The southern edge of the town centre includes a protected employment area, parts of which have a historical fine grain pattern of residential units mixed in between the warehouses and light industrial units. Some business premises and sites are vacant and could be redeveloped. Following the principle that 'no net loss' of employment space should occur, it is possible to create good quality residential units to replace existing, lesser quality housing as well as increase overall employment floorspace. Many of the sites in this area are relatively large due to their industrial function; redevelopment could therefore take place on a site by site basis.

This strategy would lead to different workspace typologies including live-work, studio spaces and light industrial / storage units. The mix could be vertical (with residential units above workspaces) or with residential and workspace units in separate buildings. Flexible, mixed-use 'casco'-buildings could be created as a buffer between homes and heavier industrial activities. Careful design can protect residential amenity as well as business utility. Building insulation, differentiated orientation, design of ground floor facades and a good quality private outdoor space can ensure vibrancy and quality of life for families as well as childless couples and singles. Car access to

workspace units should be organised to minimise impact on residential units, while on street parking should be limited. This part of the town centre would also be appropriate for the provision of youth spaces and hard surface sports fields and other small scale community infrastructure.

Top: B-architects transformed an old diamond factory (Antwerp, BE) into a mixed use building with offices and apartments. By adding a new building with parking underneath, a small courtyard was created, which offers a hidden quality to the desolate street it is situated on.

Bottom: Kaap Noord, Amsterdam, by BBVH architects, combines artists' studios, offices and commercial programme, with parking on the roof. The building can be converted to apartments in the future.

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.1 strengthen the edges of town centres
3.3 Re-think struggling retail centres
3.5 Incorporate employment areas
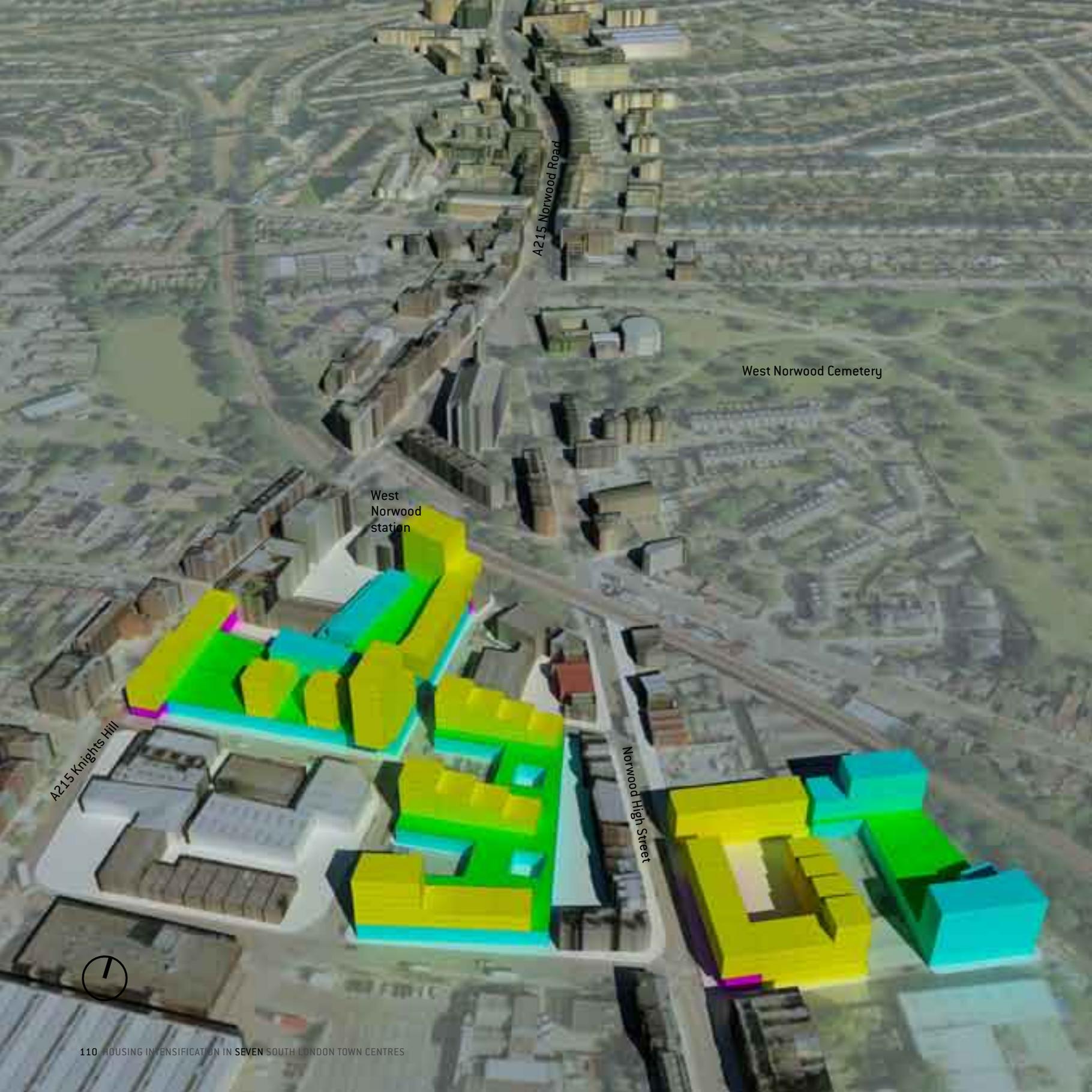
West Norwood Cemetery

A215 Norwood Road

West
Norwood
station

A215 Knights Hill

Norwood High Street

WNW3

WEST NORWOOD: SCENARIO 3

Joint venture urban intervention
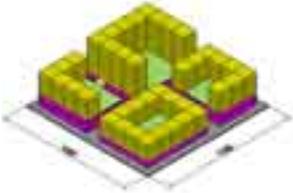
SCENARIO WNW3:
Development area: 1,9 ha
- Dwellings: 200 units
- Shops: 1,400 m²
- Industry: 12,800 m²

This scenario focuses uses a more comprehensive approach. Assembling individual sites allows for a larger-scale reconfiguration of industrial, warehousing and other employment uses, creating logistics solutions (access, storage yards, refuse) that minimise negative overspill to the surroundings. Residential accommodation can be integrated with these new buildings in blocks and small towers of up to 8 storeys, carefully located to limit impact on the townscape. Access to the dwellings could be from the roof of industrial buildings, essentially a collective greenspace with play spaces for children and young people. This scale of development could accommodate much-needed social infrastructure such as a swimming pool, GP surgery or even a replacement theatre to the north of the site, creating a transition in scale between the existing town centre and the new development. The larger scale approach could enable the cross-subsidising of workspaces as well as the upgrading and intensifying of industrial employment uses. This method is also used elsewhere in the borough albeit on a smaller scale. It is important to ensure that the external articulation of the ground floor units creates an attractive streetscape, enhancing main thoroughfares by a more generous public pavement. A clear street hierarchy could help achieve this by creating an access street for industry through the centre of the block whilst organising receptions, retail units and dwelling access from the main streets. The intervention as a whole would possibly require a significant pre-investment which would depend on whether this location is seen as suitable for upgraded, larger-scale employment uses in the long term.

Top: Archipelontwerpers placed a penthouse on top of an existing industrial building in the Scheveningen harbour, The Hague, and brought some variety to the area.

Bottom: the environmental depot in Kensington & Chelsea (by Arup) has residential uses and generous outdoor spaces above heavy vehicle parking, though the facade is less successful at street level.

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.5 Incorporate employment areas

B242 Bedford Hill

Balham station

A24 Balham High Road

BALHAM

Balham is a thriving District Centre in the east of the London Borough of Wandsworth. How can two blocks near the station accommodate housing intensification whilst accommodating the diverse existing uses and respecting the built heritage of the place?

For a more detailed description of Balham, see page 26.

PUBLIC VALUE OF BALHAM INTERVENTIONS	BAL1	BAL2	BAL3
Efficient utilisation of 'dormant assets' on highly accessible location	++	++	++
Improvement of local town centre pedestrian connectivity	++	++	++
Creation of new civic spaces	++	++	++
Child-friendly public realm and provision of family units	+	++	++
Provides structural solution for servicing / refuse issues and off-street parking	++		
Integration of extended school / BSF programme, in combination with key worker housing?		+	++
Creation of business village concept		++	+
Strengthening of town centre retail function south of rail line		++	++

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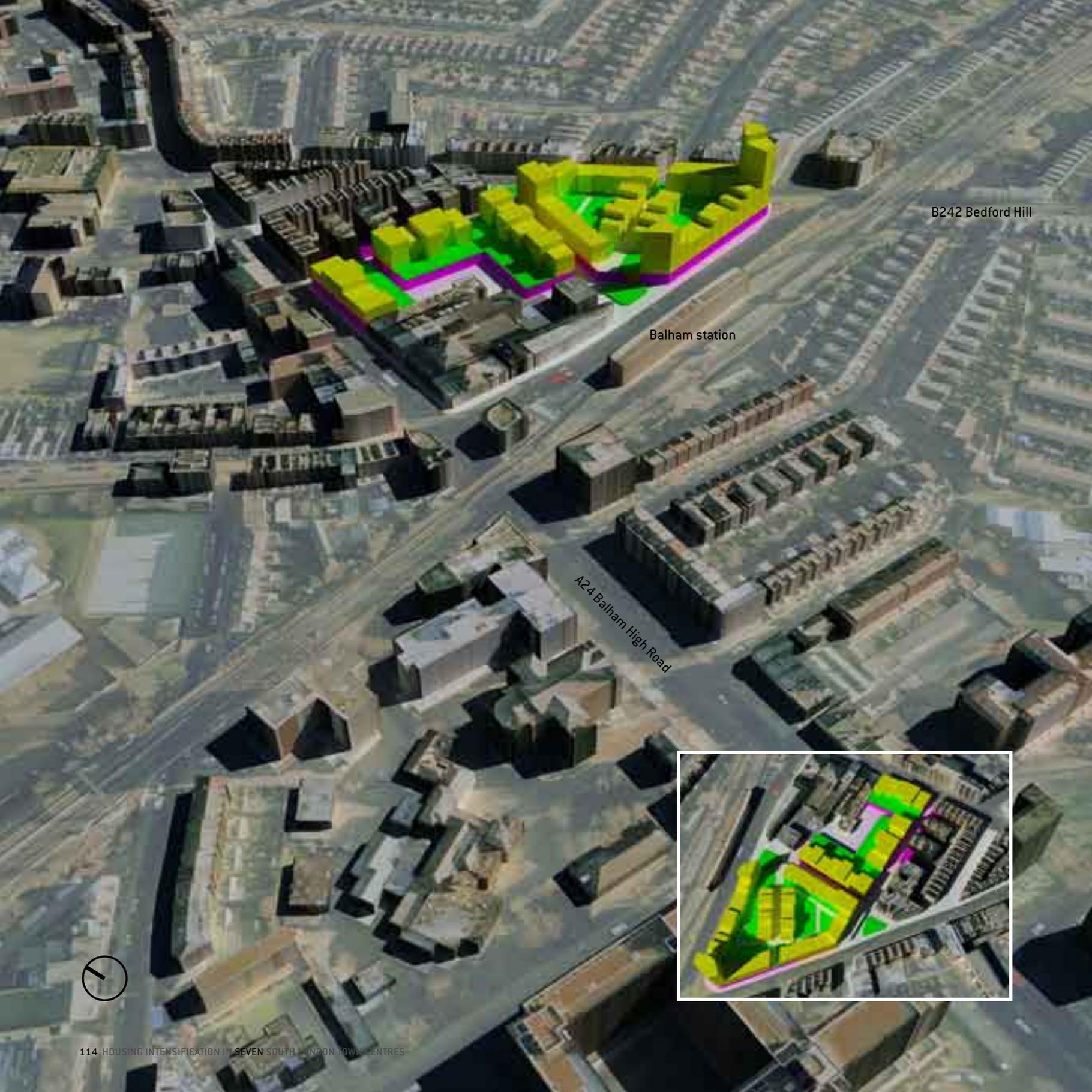
B242 Bedford Hill

Balham station

A24 Balham High Road

BAL1

Joint venture urban intervention
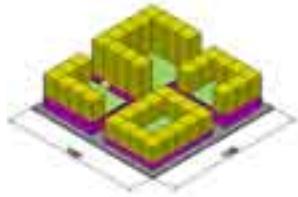
SCENARIO BAL1:
Development area: 1,4 ha
☐ Dwellings: 180 units
☐ Shops: 9,200 m²

A comprehensive 'joint venture urban intervention' is needed in order to solve multiple challenges: to provide a much needed civic space, to accommodate off-street car parking, create a supermarket and associated retail units with acceptable servicing and refuse arrangements, and to provide residential accommodation.

A new urban block could be created for the supermarket between two small squares, one in front of the station and one on Bedford Hill. The pedestrian route in between would be connected to Balham High Road by a widened pedestrian alley with retail frontage, which connects to recent mews development off Hildreth Street. Retail units wrapped around the supermarket would reduce the impact of its scale on the streetscape and reinforce the existing scale and character of Bedford Hill.

Above the supermarket, up to 400 apartments and maisonettes could be created surrounding a semi-public open space which provides access and play space. Individual units would have roof terraces and balconies and would be suitable for a wide range of residents including families. A small tower marks the town centre for those approaching by rail. The proposal takes cars off the street by accommodating them underground, while the residential development itself can be car-free because of the town centre's excellent PTAL profile. Refuse and logistics arrangements for the supermarket, now severely impacting on the

quality of public space, can be integrated within the development. As such the scenario creates a significant expansion of high-quality pedestrian space including areas to sit and rest and spaces for events.

A double-level main street in the new centre in Nijmegen (Marienburg by Soeters Van Eldonk Architects) doubles the effective shopping space. Housing is situated above the shops. The architecture was designed in close harmony with the existing buildings.

High-quality amenity space and dwellings on top of a shopping centre in Almere (block by Christian de Portzamparc). The homes are surrounding a roof-top courtyard to create a relaxed and silent living environment away from the busy the shopping area.

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.8 Integrate large-scale retail sites

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OKR

B242 Bedford Hill

Balham station

A24 Balham High Road

Boundaries Road

BAL2

Medium scale project sites

SCENARIO BAL2:
Development area: 1,8 ha
- Dwellings: 260 units
- Shops: 600 m²
- Offices: 4,700 m²
- Social infrastructure: 2,600m²

In this scenario, the multiple ownerships of a large mixed-use block are taken as a starting point for a masterplan which can be executed in phases by different site owners. The masterplan establishes a series of pedestrian and cycling routes through this large block which form the backbone of a series of residential and mixed use buildings. The green space surrounding the grade II listed St Mary's Church can be the focal point for a town square with cafés and small-scale retail forming a focus for the town centre south of the railway. The reconfigured school is concentrated on a smaller site where its massing will better respond to Du Cane Court. It can be accessed from the new square and use the pedestrian realm for games and play, though it also has play space on its roof.

Residential accommodation will be a mix of townhouses and maisonettes in the centre of the block and apartments near the railway. The massing provides a transition in scale between the surrounding residential neighbourhoods and the centre of the town, and the village-like atmosphere created will suit families as well as young professionals and the elderly. All ground and first floors of the development should be suitable for retail and office uses; near the railway viaduct, larger office and workspace units could be created as a podium for the residential blocks. The entire development can be car-free, but with some undercroft parking provision for visitors of the church and other town centre uses.

Top: various housing typologies and a mixed program (police station, offices, shop, restaurant) together create a special public realm (Muller pier, Rotterdam, masterplan by KCAP).

Bottom three: the Falkenried Quarter in Hamburg by Bolles+Wilson combines shops, offices and dwellings in vertically mixed typologies.

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.2 Integrate social infrastructure planning
3.5 Incorporate employment areas
3.6 Unlock rail sites for long-term intensification
3.9 Create positive propositions for heritage and conservation areas

B242 Bedford Hill

Balham station

Boundaries Road

A24 Balham High Road

BAL3

Large scale ensemble
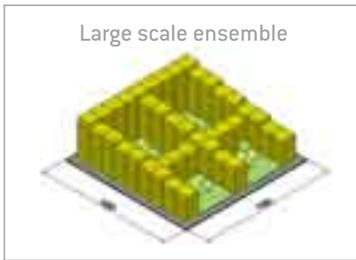
SCENARIO BAL3:
Development area: 1,9 ha
- Dwellings: 300 units
- Shops: 1,200 m²
- Offices: 4,000 m²
- Social infrastruct.: 4,000m²

This scenario presumes site assembly for the entire block, allowing for comprehensive redevelopment. Like scenario 2, the principle for the development is the creation of a permeable and legible public realm framework for pedestrians and cyclists with residential and mixed use accommodation. The large scale of the intervention allows for an architectural ensemble at the railway mirroring in scale the nearby Du Cane Court, whilst careful positioning ensures that the impact of its scale on nearby dwellings is minimal. This larger scale block reduces the railway noise, allowing the inner block to have a series of quiet, smaller scale urban villas that respond to the scale of the existing church and Georgian villas. Apartments and maisonettes can have small ground floor gardens and terraces as well as roof terraces and balconies.

As part of this development, the school could be integrated into a larger residential block, with play and sports spaces on the roof as well as in the public realm. It would be positive to realise the concept of an extended school in this location, with complementing social infrastructure provision such as a day centres for the elderly and evening adult education. The size and scale of the railroad block allows it to accommodate a significant amount of office and workspace, as well as potentially maintaining the existing self-storage facility as a podium for residential development. The development would be largely car free with car clubs provided on site in an underground or undercroft car park.

Top: residential blocks ranging from five to eight floors shield a quiet, car-free courtyard from a busy road and railway noise.

Bottom left: high density apartments with roof terraces and balconies in San Diego, CA.

Bottom right: apartments above a school in Amsterdam (Hertzberger and HM Architects).
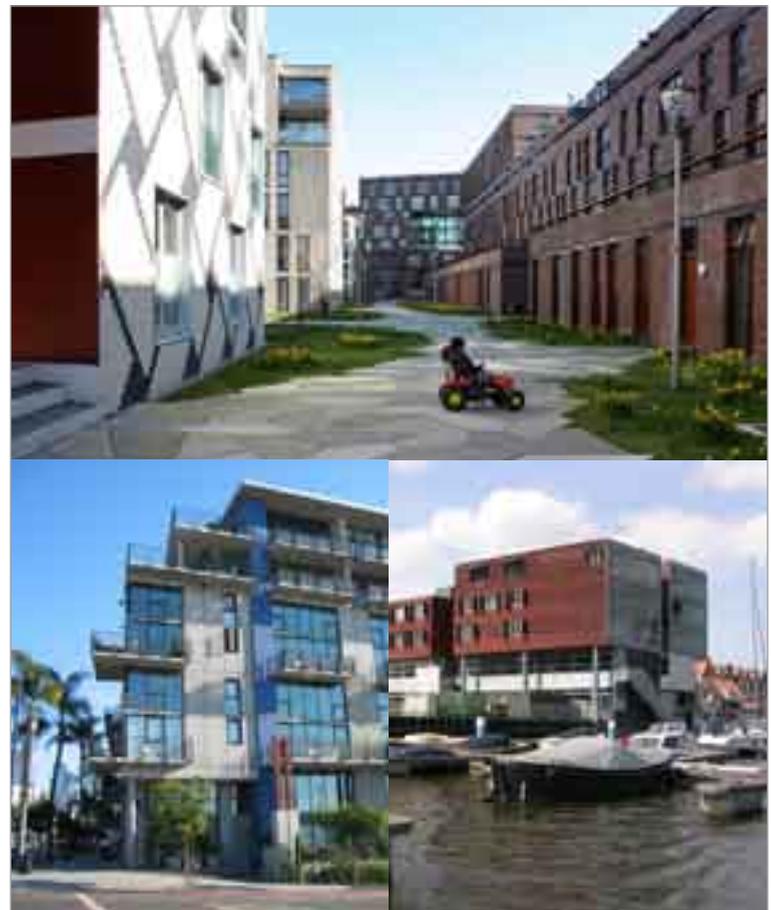
KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.2 Integrate social infrastructure planning
3.5 Incorporate employment areas
3.6 Unlock rail sites for long-term intensification
3.9 Create positive propositions for heritage and conservation areas

Crystal Palace
station

Crystal Palace Park

A214 Anerley Road

Anerley station

ANERLEY HILL

Anerley Hill is technically not a town centre. It consists of a series of discontinuous retail parades with cores around two stations (Crystal Palace and Anerley) along the Anerley Road, sandwiched between the larger town centres of Upper Norwood and Penge. How can a comprehensive re-think of the Victorian shopping parades and post-war suburban housing guide future intensification pressure?

For a more detailed description of Anerley Hill,

PUBLIC VALUE OF ANERLEY HILL INTERVENTIONS	ANH1	ANH2	ANH3
Can pre-empt gradual, lower quality private-led intensification after future PTAL changes	++	++	++
Contribution to annual borough housing targets considerable	+	++	++
Opportunity to create and cross-subsidise workspaces	++		+
Addresses retail vacancy by reducing and consolidating retail	++		++
Addresses ASB / social safety issues	++		++
Opportunity to provide and cross-subsidise social infrastructure: improved NHS, dental, community space			++
Opportunity to create / cross-subsidise town centre public space			++
Replacement of carbon-inefficient old housing stock	++	++	+

LGN

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Crystal Palace station

Crystal Palace Park

A214 Anerley Road

ANH1   ANERLEY HILL: SCENARIO 1

Joint venture urban intervention
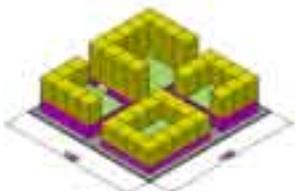
SCENARIO ANH1:
Development area: 1,6 ha
■ Dwellings: 230 units
■ Shops: 3,800 m²
■ Offices: 2,800 m²

This scenario explores the benefits of a structural transformation of struggling Victorian shopping parades to workspace and residential uses. Inspired by the successful regeneration of entire streets in the North of England, the scenario proposes to look at the potential of the buildings on a block basis rather than individually, seeking what efficiency and quality gains can be made such as collective parking and servicing arrangements. The starting point is site assembly and the creation of a new access framework, essentially reconfiguring the units behind the facades. Some facades are part of a Conservation Area and should be maintained, while others might be replaced. In this way new residential units could be created with good quality outdoor spaces, which are often lacking in current intensification developments. A mix of apartments, maisonettes and family dwellings could be created which triples the current number of residential units. As part of this approach, a facade would be created to provide a clear front to the rail line and potential future tram link which would be particularly suitable for workspace premises. Parking could be accommodated in a secure undercroft structure on ground floor level with gardens and play space on the decks above. As a result of this approach, the number of retail units might be reduced in favour of flexible workspace and good quality residential facades. This transformation would have benefits to the attractiveness and safety of the public realm but would not happen without structural investment. This could be cross-subsidised by residential sales.

Top: Exodus in Zwolle, NL by Onix Architects has a built parking facility on the ground floor, surrounded by shops, and the main entrances to the apartments along a quiet 'mews' on +1 level.

Bottom: the Vondelparc project (Utrecht, NL) by Mecanoo situates town houses around a shared garden on top of a parking garage.

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.1 strengthen the edges of town centres
3.3 Re-think struggling retail centres
3.6 Unlock rail sites for long-term intensification
3.9 Create positive propositions for heritage and conservation areas

Crystal Palace
station

Crystal Palace Park

A214 Anerley Road

Anerley station

ANH2 ANERLEY HILL: SCENARIO 2

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Mid-density low-rise

SCENARIO ANH2:
Development area: 3,7 ha
▢ Dwellings: 450 units
▢ Shops: 1,000 m²

Two residential estates behind Crystal Palace station, from the 1960s and 1980s, are low density with scope for significant improvement. A comprehensive redevelopment of these estates to increase density could benefit the public realm by creating better quality pedestrian and cycling routes between the station and the surrounding neighbourhoods. The resulting pedestrian-priority public domain (with disabled and short term car parking only for logistical purposes) creates distinctly suburban housing of high density, in urban villas and mews-like terraces in a green setting. These mirror the area's predominant typology of terraces and large Victorian villas or semi-detached houses, often now subdivided into smaller units. The new buildings and terraces would be up to 5 storeys high and might include lower ground floor flats. This creates the potential for a wealth of different unit types and sizes from townhouses and courtyard units to maisonettes and apartments, with the provision of private gardens, balconies, loggias and roof gardens. The development would be very suitable for families with children and the elderly. Play and youth space could be a natural part of the public domain, and a community centre with sports pitch could be included as well. Parking is minimised because of the future improvement in public transport accessibility. Some individual family units might have drive-in garages but cars would mostly be accommodated in separate car parks off Anerley Road.

Top: car ports below private terraces take parking pressure off the street in Amsterdam (by Atelier Kempe Thill).

Middle: self-procured houses in Berlin-Mitte create a high-density urban pattern.

Bottom: urban villa typology in Malchover Weg, Berlin, creates a relaxed public realm, despite the high density.

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.1 strengthen the edges of town centres
3.6 Unlock rail sites for long-term intensification
3.9 Create positive propositions for heritage and conservation areas

Crystal Palace
station

Crystal Palace Park

A214 Anerley Road

Anerley station

ANH3 ANERLEY HILL: SCENARIO 3

Mixed typology urban block

SCENARIO ANH3:
Development area: 2,7 ha
- Dwellings: 390 units
- Shops: 3,200 m²
- Offices: 1,400 m²
- Social infrastructure (GP Surgery): 800 m²

The scenario addresses the need to fulfil a wider range of core town centre functions beyond retail, which include places for leisure, local services, meeting and socialising. A large number of public services and community infrastructure is currently located in the direct vicinity of Anerley station. However, the buildings housing a GP surgery, two dentists, community and youth service and church do not create a cohesive public realm. Existing shopping parades are largely vacant and partially occupied by residential or other uses. A small industrial estate and a rat-run road towards Penge further compromise the quality of the public realm.

This scenario proposes to concentrate the health and community services in a mixed use building fronting a new civic square adjacent to the railway station and opposite the locally listed old town hall, which is already used for community events and small businesses and which could be extended in a sensitive manner. This creates a clear public focus for the area at the station, soon to be part of the new London Overground system. Concentrating the existing social infrastructures on one site frees up nearby land for residential development, which could accommodate almost 400 dwellings. Some convenience shopping can be accommodated on the ground floors of

residential blocks on Anerley Hill, although this retail function would remain limited.

The majority of the dwellings would be apartments and maisonettes, mirroring the existing, subdivided Victorian mansions, but with sunken or undercroft parking arrangements and shared gardens and play spaces in addition to balconies and loggias. There would be potential to develop specialist accommodation for the elderly integrated with the health services hub. Existing employment uses, such as an existing kitchen and bathroom supplies store could be integrated on a ground floor of the new development along Oakfield Road if it was seen as desirable to retain or increase the uses on the existing employment site.

Top: a GP surgery, a shop and housing are combined in this urban block in IJburg, Amsterdam (KCAP).

Bottom: maisonettes in Plagwitz, Leipzig.

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.1 strengthen the edges of town centres
3.2 Integrate social infrastructure planning
3.6 Unlock rail sites for long-term intensification

LGN

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A235 Brighton Road

A2022 Foxley Lane

A23 Purley Way

A22 Godstone Road

Purley station

Whytecliffe Road S

A235 Brighton Road

PURLEY

Surrounded by some of London's most wealthy suburban areas, Purley is a District Centre to the south of central Croydon. How can intensification around the High Street provide a different housing and town centre environment, and how can this inform the regeneration of the wider town centre?
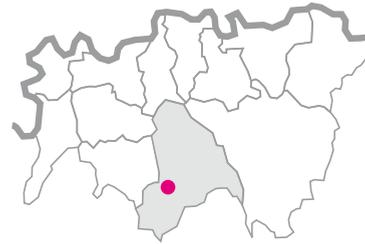
PUBLIC VALUE OF PURLEY INTERVENTIONS	PUR1	PUR2	PUR3
Efficient use of underused town centre sites for residential, decreasing the pressure on suburban areas	++	++	++
Upgrading of retail stock	++	+	++
Provision of culture / leisure uses		++	+
Opportunity for pedestrianisation of High Street	++	++	++
Fundamental re-thinking of traffic infrastructure, cross-subsidised by housing			++

LGN

WNW

BAL

ANH

PUR

MOR

OKR

A235 Brighton Road

A2022 Foxley Lane

A23 Purley Way

A22 Godstone Road

Purley station

Whytecliffe Road S

A235 Brighton Road

PUR1

Medium scale project sites

SCENARIO PUR1:
Development area: 0,9 ha
■ Dwellings: 130 units
■ Shops: 200 m²

This scenario explores the potential of a series of small interventions in three existing urban blocks, creating a sequence of alternative routes leading from the station to the heart of the town centre. These can create a series of mews-like development sites as well as opportunities to replace some of the existing low density and low quality fabric along the High Street, whilst maintaining characterful local buildings. This would enhance the frontages to the existing public realm whilst adding significantly to the residential density and pedestrian navigability of the town centre.

Along the newly created routes, small blocks of 3-5 storeys could be created with retail and employment spaces on the ground floor and apartments and maisonettes above. Some of these could be aimed particularly at the elderly who are seeking to live independently in the vicinity of public amenities. Family accommodation can be created as well, with good opportunities for roof terraces and courtyard development. The westernmost mews could be predominantly residential in character with integrated garages.

This approach creates significant 'hidden' intensification without impacting on Purley's best shopping facades, and could be progressed even within the constraints of the current traffic situation. It would provide a new, pedestrian public realm shielded from the exiting noise conditions.

Given the vicinity of the station and pressure of car traffic on the public realm it would be advantageous to consider car free development and encourage car clubs.

Top: the Regent Quarter in London (P&O development) shows a sympathetic re-use of existing urban structure and some buildings, while adding new facilities to the area.

Bottom: this modern mews (award-winning Accordia development, Cambridge), is a perfect example for increasing density with a popular typology.

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.9 Create positive propositions for heritage & conservation areas

A235 Brighton Road

A2022 Foxley Lane

A23 Purley Way

A22 Godstone Road

Purley station

Whytecliffe Road S

A235 Brighton Road

PUR2

Joint venture urban intervention
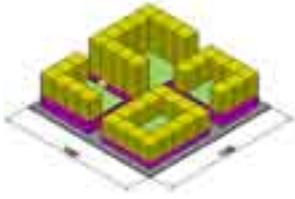
SCENARIO PUR2:
Development area: 2,7 ha
- Dwellings: 180 units
- Shops: 3,600 m²
- Social infr. (gym): 2,800 m²

Two existing car parks in the direct vicinity of the train station provide opportunities for redevelopment and suburban town centre living - the first, integrated with a council leisure centre which is slated for redevelopment and the second a surface car park servicing the station. The former already serves as a pedestrian route from the station to the centre, but in an illegible and convoluted manner. By creating a well-defined and legible pedestrian street, a development site can be created for two 5-6 storey apartments blocks with an integrated cultural facility such as a cinema or small theatre. Collective gardens and play space could be accommodated within the blocks in elevated courtyards.

The station car park site could accommodate a partially underground car park of up to three layers, acting as a podium for an apartment development of up to six storeys fronting the railway. Access from suspended galleries, similar to a recent scheme in Rotterdam by KCAP Architects, could both mitigate against any noise from the railway and create entry stoops that can be personalised by residents and used in addition to private balconies and loggias. Because of the opportunity to create collective gardens and play spaces above ground level, both types of developments could cater to families with children as well as to elderly people and young couples.

Top and middle: underground parking, shops on ground floor level and apartments around a +1 level courtyard in two carefully sculpted blocks fronting a pedestrian space (Ciboga, Groningen, NL by S333 Architects).

Bottom left:winter gardens can mitigate the impact of the outside environment, whether noise or climate (Malmö Western Harbour).

Bottom right: a double skinned facade such as in this apartment building along the Amsterdam Ring Road creates a noise barrier and an attractive entrance environment to the dwellings.

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.2 Integrate social infrastructure planning
3.6 Unlock rail sites for long-term intensification

A235 Brighton Road

A2022 Foxley Lane

A23 Purley Way

A235 Brighton Road

A22 Godstone Road

Purley station

Whytecliffe Road S
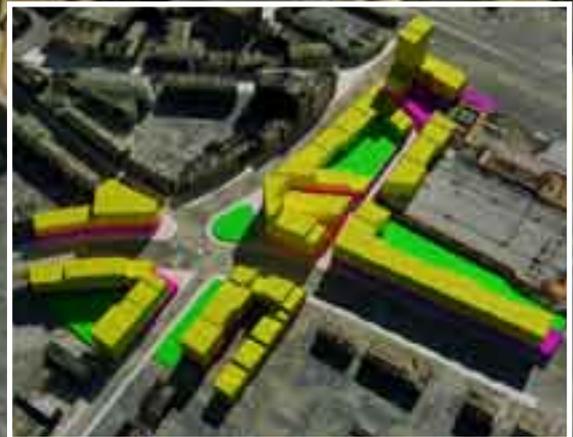
PUR3

Joint venture urban intervention
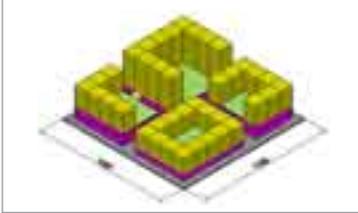
SCENARIO PUR3:
Development area: 2,1 ha
- Dwellings: 270 units
- Shops: 6,800 m²
- Social infrastructure (library): 2,200 m²

The traffic impact upon the town centre's quality requires a long-term solution for the junction of the A22 and A23 arteries. A comprehensive scheme could integrate retail, residential and transport reconfigurations. Such a scheme would be complementary to the more small-scale infill and redevelopment proposed in Scenario 1 and 2. The scenario below is based on an urban design assessment rather than a transport assessment and would need to be tested from the latter perspective. Blight created by the road impact has already led to a large number of sites, often former suburban housing or small scale town centre fabric, being vacant or derelict. If site assembly were undertaken, this could lead to a significant opportunity to simplify the current gyratory, which increases tarmac and car miles in the town centre. The A22 could meet the straightened A23 at a T-junction, creating a clear and legible road layout which is easier to navigate for pedestrians and cyclists than the current situation. It would free up Foxley Lane as a secondary street leading to the listed 1950s Library building on a small green. The road intervention would free up considerable land for generous pavements, a small public square at the historic centre of Purley, and with apartment buildings of sufficient scale and size to configure the roads as town centre boulevards instead of a suburban motorway. The buildings could wrap around or replace the current big box Tesco, integrating it into the scale and size of the existing town centre and providing space for intermediate scale retail units. Near the railway station there is scope for a higher building without detracting from the overall character of the town centre.

The new shopping street in Arnhem, NL (Musiskwartier by Robert Stern Architects) perfectly blends in with the existing buildings, while the apartments above the shops offer a new, relaxed urban quality.

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.4 Improve A-road conditions
3.8 Integrate large-scale retail sites

Mosque

Rail depot

A24 London Road

Crown Road

Crown Lane

Abbotsbury Road

Morden

A297 Morden Hall Road

A24 London Road

MORDEN

Morden is a small convenience-driven District Centre in southwest London. It is south London's only example of 'Metroland' 1920s and 1930s suburban development catalysed by the arrival of the Underground in 1926. How can intensification strengthen this centre's distinctive character and public offer?

For a more detailed description of Morden, see page 29.

PUBLIC VALUE OF MORDEN INTERVENTIONS	MOR1	MOR2	MOR3
Repositioning of Morden as town centre for retail and leisure	+		++
Significant creation / redefinition of public realm to enhance image change (e.g. 'green' theme)	+	+	++
Integration of large-scale leisure centre	+		++
Replacement of carbon-inefficient old housing stock	+	++	+

LGN

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MOR

OKR

Mosque

Rail depot

A24 London Road

Crown Road

Crown Lane

Morden

Abbotsbury Road

A297 Morden Hall Road

A24 London Road

MOR1 — MORDEN: SCENARIO 1

Mixed typology urban block

SCENARIO MOR1:
Development area: 2,3 ha
- Dwellings: 340 units
- Shops: 5,000 m²

The small scale and potentially attractive suburban atmosphere of the retail core is currently let down by the lack of pedestrian public space, café terraces and town centre spaces for children's play and informal recreation. Opening up some of the relatively large retail blocks would be an opportunity to create such spaces. It could introduce new apartments, maisonettes and employment or retail premises, and make space for a series of car-free secondary routes and pocket public spaces such as grassy knolls, town centre orchards or playable spaces that can be shared by different generations. This would allow Morden to strengthen its character as a relaxed, family-friendly suburban centre while at the same time diversifying its housing offer to include starter apartments and accommodation for elderly people wishing to stay in the area. Such interventions would allow for a moderate increase in the town centre's retail offer, potentially offering larger, more efficient units as well as a cinema or other night-time and cultural facilities. At the same time the impact on Morden's scale and feel would be limited with development between four and eight storeys. Because of the vicinity of the Underground and bus facilities, and potentially a tram connection to nearby suburban centres in the future, car parking ought to be highly limited. Excellent cycle parking, car-free development and car clubs would be preferable.

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.9 Create positive propositions for heritage and conservation areas

Top: a series of small connected courtyards (Hackesche Hofe in Berlin) offer a very popular shopping area with apartments, theatres, restaurants and other functions.

Bottom: the 'grassy knoll' off London Wall is an attractive pocket public space.
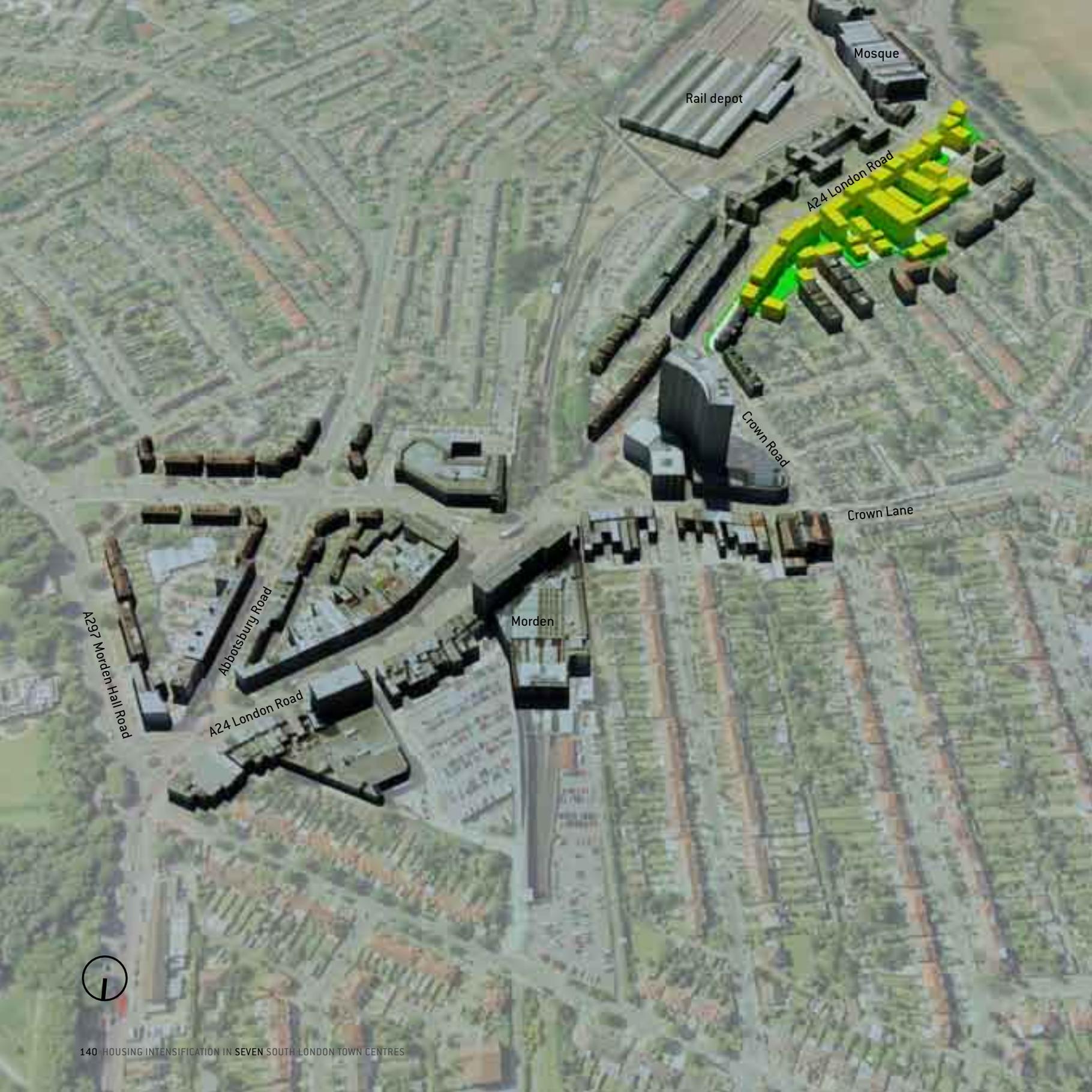
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Mosque

Rail depot

A24 London Road

Crown Road

Crown Lane

A297 Morden Hall Road

Abbotsbury Road

Morden

A24 London Road

MOR2

MORDEN: SCENARIO 2

Medium scale project sites

SCENARIO MOR2:
Development area: 1,7 ha
☐ Dwellings: 290 units

Though less heavily trafficked than some of south London's other A-road arteries, London Road is not a successful street. With the exception of a few well-defined 1930s mansion blocks, its built fabric consists of relatively dilapidated shopping parades, semi-detached dwellings and low-quality apartments. Located between the two parks and with the presence of the Merton civic centre, a prominent mosque and a suburban rail station, it could become a green boulevard with a clearly defined section and clear civic quality. New residential development of an appropriate scale would complement the axis, with units designed to minimise impact of noise on amenity.

A proactive development framework could be created to encourage such development over a period of time, specifying building line, massing and key elements of housing amenity such as private amenity space provision. The definition of ground floor frontage is crucial. Not all of London Road would be viable for retail or even workspace and the design challenge is to include good ground floor residential units. Towards the rear, the transition to the existing suburban stock needs to be carefully managed to ensure compatibility between the 4-6 storey boulevard development and the existing, 2-3 storey homes. Mews-like developments and smaller blocks in the relatively deep plots could achieve this transition.

In order to give salience to the notion of a 'green' boulevard, the provision of green roofs, green facades and balcony or loggia planting should be strongly encouraged. Equally, car parking needs to be minimised, although imaginative solutions for undercroft parking would be feasible.

Top left: townhouses in Berlin (by Ingenbleek Architects) are located on a set back plot, thus creating a hidden quality.

Top right: on a very deep plot on the Rue de l'Ourcq in Paris (by Philippe Gazeau), an apartment building behind the main street building, is accessed by a gated courtyard.

Bottom three: the Luycksterrein (by McCreanorLavington Architects) is a very deep block adjacent to one of Amsterdams busiest A-roads. Townhouses are situated in a quiet courtyard, within a surrounding apartment building.

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.1 strengthen the edges of town centres
3.4 Improve A-road conditions

LGN

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PUR

MOR

OKR

Mosque

Rail depot

A24 London Road

Crown Road

Crown Lane

Abbotsbury Road

A297 Morden Hall Road

A24 London Road

MOR3

Joint venture urban intervention
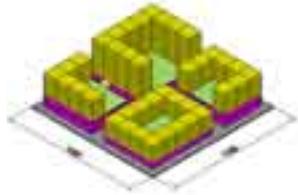
SCENARIO MOR3 (station area):
Development area: 1,7 ha
- Dwellings: 210 units
- Shops: 3,700 m²
- Social infrastructure (station): 1,600 m²

SCENARIO MOR3 (rail depot area):
Development area: 5,4 ha
- Dwellings: 650 units
- Shops: 7,400 m²
- Social infrastructure (sport/leisure): 8,400 m²

A larger scale approach could fundamentally change the spatial characteristics of Morden, and allow it to develop a more distinct identity based around outdoor leisure, sports and play. This scenario is based on the utilisation of air-rights over land owned and operated by Transport for London for a variety of Underground-related purposes – something unlikely without significant public subsidy.

North of the existing station, this scenario could accommodate apartment development over the already sunken Underground tracks and a redevelopment of the station to contain other uses. To the south, the widening of the tracks towards the depot and sidings would be difficult to build over, but if this were possible, then it could be decked over for the creation of a new public space. Land on either side, currently occupied by car parks, could then accommodate high-density housing. Such a development could include a comprehensive refurbishment of some dilapidated yet high quality, locally listed Art Deco and Modernist apartments along Morden Court and London Road. The site of a large supermarket car park could be incorporated in this development. The significant public space created by this interven-tion could be strongly themed, for example as an area for active leisure pursuits with a meandering running track, fields for various sports purposes and play space. This would enhance Morden's identity as an attractive suburban centre with strong public quality. Apartments, care homes, maisonettes and stacked family units on either side could be developed in accordance with this identity by integrating green landscaping, green roofs and green walls and environmental features. Car-free development, car clubs and a limited amount of town centre car parking should be integral to the approach.

Bottom left: the Sociópolis project in Valencia, proposes a running track through the neighbourhood.

Bottom right: in Rue Candie in Paris (by Massimiliano Fuksas), a tennis court above a car park offers a unique quality to the apartments.

Top: the apartment buildings and the collective garden are covering to the railway tracks (Rue Chevaleret, Paris, by Brenac & Gonzalez).

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.2 Integrate social infrastructure planning
3.6 Unlock rail sites for long-term intensification

LGN
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MOR
OKR

A2208 Rotherhithe Road

A2 Old Kent Road

A2 Old Kent Road

B240 Albany Road

Burgess Park

OLD KENT ROAD

The Old Kent Road, the approximately 2.5 km long stretch of a Roman route from London to Kent, is not currently designated as a town centre, but in practice fulfils many of its functions. How can conditions for good quality housing be created in this environment which improves the overall urban design quality of the area?
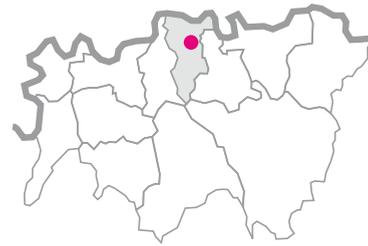
For a more detailed description of the Old Kent Road, see page 30.

PUBLIC VALUE OF OLD KENT ROAD INTERVENTIONS	OKR1	OKR2	OKR3
Opportunity to redefine urban structure / visual quality of (parts / all) of OKR	+	++	+
Opportunity to create high quality housing that can respond to adverse environmental conditions	+	++	++
Including public realm improvements (better pavements, small squares) into residential projects	+	++	++
More efficient retail / workspace spaces	+	++	++

LGN

WNW

BAL

ANH

PUR

MOR

OKR

A2208 Rotherhithe Road

A2 Old Kent Road

A2 Old Kent Road

B240 Albany Road

Burgess Park

OKR1   OLD KENT ROAD: SCENARIO 1

Individual infill / extension
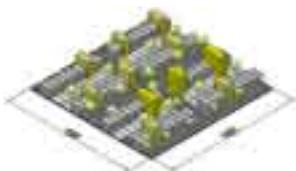
SCENARIO OKR1:
Development area: 2,5 ha
- Dwellings: 390 units
- Shops: 18,000 m²
- Social Infrastructure: 6,600 m²

The Old Kent Road is already seeing gradual infill and intensification as individual vacant or low density sites are being redeveloped. Such developments, usually residential with retail on the ground floor, vary in quality. Developed stronger urban design guidance and investing in the public realm could create an opportunity to achieve more. Creating such preconditions for high-quality redevelopment could improve the overall visual coherence of the street whilst encouraging bottom-up regeneration to suit the needs of the diverse population. This would overcome the seeming inevitability that residential units on a street like this would be undesirable.

This scenario would be compatible with the incremental and individually-driven intensification process, but develops a strategic corridor approach. It identifies sites along the entirety of the Old Kent Road and would give design guidance for their future redevelopment, as well as instituting a series of minimum requirements regarding set-backs, ground floor uses, building heights, private amenity space, use of rooftops as collective gardens, noise-mitigating measures etc. Emphasis is placed on main street corners and key intersections, including where they are currently occupied by parking for the car-driven retail. A thorough audit of the local built heritage, including many Grade II-listed buildings, should be part of this approach and could lead to refurbishment and adaptive reuse opportunities. Alongside the currently dominant 1 and 2 bedroom flats, there could be a great diversity of typologies: stacked maisonettes, large apartments, and flexible, open plan live-work units. Parking would have to be accommodated on a site-by-site basis, although due to the mixed accessibility profile of the street it might not be feasible to have car-free development everywhere. The treatment of the ground floor plinths is important as not everywhere will be suitable for retail. Integrating social infrastructure investment or formulating an affordable workspace policy would be highly beneficial.

Top: a corner complex in Old Kent Road anticipates retail uses in its plinth.

Bottom: this flexible structure (in the Amsterdam wood harbours by Dedato), offers room to small scale industrial programmes in the building and future neighbouring developments to its sides.

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.1 strengthen the edges of town centres
3.4 Improve A-road conditions

A2208 Rotherhithe Road

A2 Old Kent Road

A2 Old Kent Road

B240 Albany Road

Burgess Park

OKR2

OLD KENT ROAD: SCENARIO 2

Mixed typology urban block
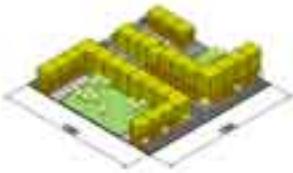
SCENARIO OKR2:
Development area: 9,0 ha
- Dwellings: 2,270 units
- Shops: 7,700 m²
- Offices: 11,600 m²
- Social infrastructure: 3,900 m²

This approach starts from the same principles as Scenario 1 but takes a more large-scale view, identifying a number of larger opportunity sites that could be redeveloped at higher densities. Depending on the location and size of blocks, developments between 5 and 10 storeys could be created, structured to facilitate the development of the road in a well-defined urban boulevard with both horizontal and vertical accents. A series of small towers creates a strong sense of direction.

The larger scale of development would also accommodate integrated parking solutions, larger scale public services such as schools, sports facilities and other community infrastructure, as well as the creative integration of some of the existing built heritage along the road. A next generation of superstores could be included in such a framework too. Equally, such larger sites can provide the frontage to more significant new squares and widened pavements to improve the pedestrian environment and provide zones of civic focus.

Such development could take place both through an overall urban design framework for the entire Old Kent Road and through a series of site briefs and open architectural competitions. Ensuring amenity of dwellings would be particularly important; an example is the use of loggias / winter gardens that could be used both open as balcony and closed as an extension of the living room. Equally, rooftop collective gardens and play facilities will provide a counterpoint to the streetscape.

Top: the continuous facade of the apartment blocks and the commercial activities in the plinth help define the character of a boulevard (Rotterdam by KCAP).

Bottom: in Milan, a development of several residential towers next to the site of a supermarket increases overall density significantly, while offering public value like a well designed public space, underground parking and the renovation of a former garage for small workspace uses. (Project: Portello, architecture by Cino Zucchi).

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.1 strengthen the edges of town centres
3.4 Improve A-road conditions

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OKR

A2208 Rotherhithe Road

A2 Old Kent Road

B240 Albany Road

A2 Old Kent Road

Burgess Park

OKR3

Large scale ensemble
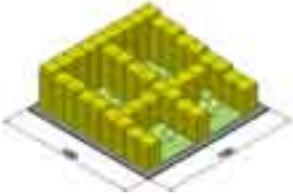
SCENARIO OKR3:
Development area: 1,6 ha
☐ Dwellings: 180 units
☐ Industry: 6,300 m²

This scenario addresses one of the issues that many residential developments have to deal with, namely the problem of adjacency with industry. It focuses on an industrial site which both the GLA and the borough intend to retain as a designated site for employment use only, and redevelop in the long term. However its frontage to the Old Kent Road and side streets is currently very poor, with limited natural overlooking and ground floor definition. This leads to problems of social safety and dereliction. Residential uses would be desirable and possible, but the industrial uses (combined with the often hostile condition of the road itself) create difficult sites. The scenario proposes two proactive approaches that offer possible solutions to maximise residential amenity without affecting industrial operations. Along the Old Kent Road, a double-storey plinth of workspaces is created with a coherent frontage and access for cars and vans from the back. This acts as a platform to distance the residential development from the industrial site and the road. The dwelling units are shielded from the road by access galleries which screen the entrances whilst creating small informal entry porches. Collective rooftop gardens create extra amenity.

Along St James Road, a light industrial mews is created towards the industrial estate, while residential apartments front the street. Shared, green residential courtyards overlooked by balconies give a quiet quality to the typology and isolate it to a degree from its hostile surroundings.

Top:a large residential development with double-storey plinth wrapping around a listed building (Light Factory, Amsterdam, transformed by Kother Salman Architects).

Bottom: the apartments of this project (Amsterdam, by Faro Architects) are situated on the street side, while offices, workshops and an archive are located at the back.

KEY RELEVANT THEMES:
3.4 Improve A-road conditions
3.5 Incorporate employment areas
3.8 Integrate large-scale retail sites
3.9 Create positive propositions for heritage and conservation areas

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