

New River Place Public Consultation

WELCOME TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION FOR NEW RIVER PLACE AT THE RIVER CHRISTIAN CENTRE. WE ARE PLEASED TO SHARE WITH YOU OUR INITIAL THOUGHTS, BUT IMPORTANTLY WE WANT TO HEAR YOURS.

ABOUT THE TEAM

IXO are an innovative, purpose-driven organisation, delivering sustainable projects that balance; People, Profit and Planet. We deliver holistic transformation to places, bringing social impact and prosperity to stakeholders. The original founders have 100+ years of project experience, and have grown a network of development experts around them with a community Impact Projects range in GDV from £5m to £200m.

STUDIO EGRET WEST (SEW) is a London-based, transdisciplinary design practice integrating urban design, architecture, and landscape into a unified approach. Since 2005, we've been shaping distinctive, people-focused places across the UK through thoughtful design, ecological sensitivity, and strategic urban planning.

MONTAGU EVANS is a multi-disciplinary property consultancy with offices in London, Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Our planning team has worked on some of the largest development and regeneration projects in London and Southeast England combining tactical and technical expertise to achieve planning permissions in negotiations with planning authorities as well as consultative bodies such as the GLA, Historic England (formerly English Heritage) and borough design panels.

FIGURA STRATEGY is integrated communications and community engagement consultancy. We have worked on range of housing and mixed use schemes across London and the South of England, working to engage communities to create better and beautiful places.



Illustrative sketch of the proposed pedestrian east-west route

Site Context

The existing site

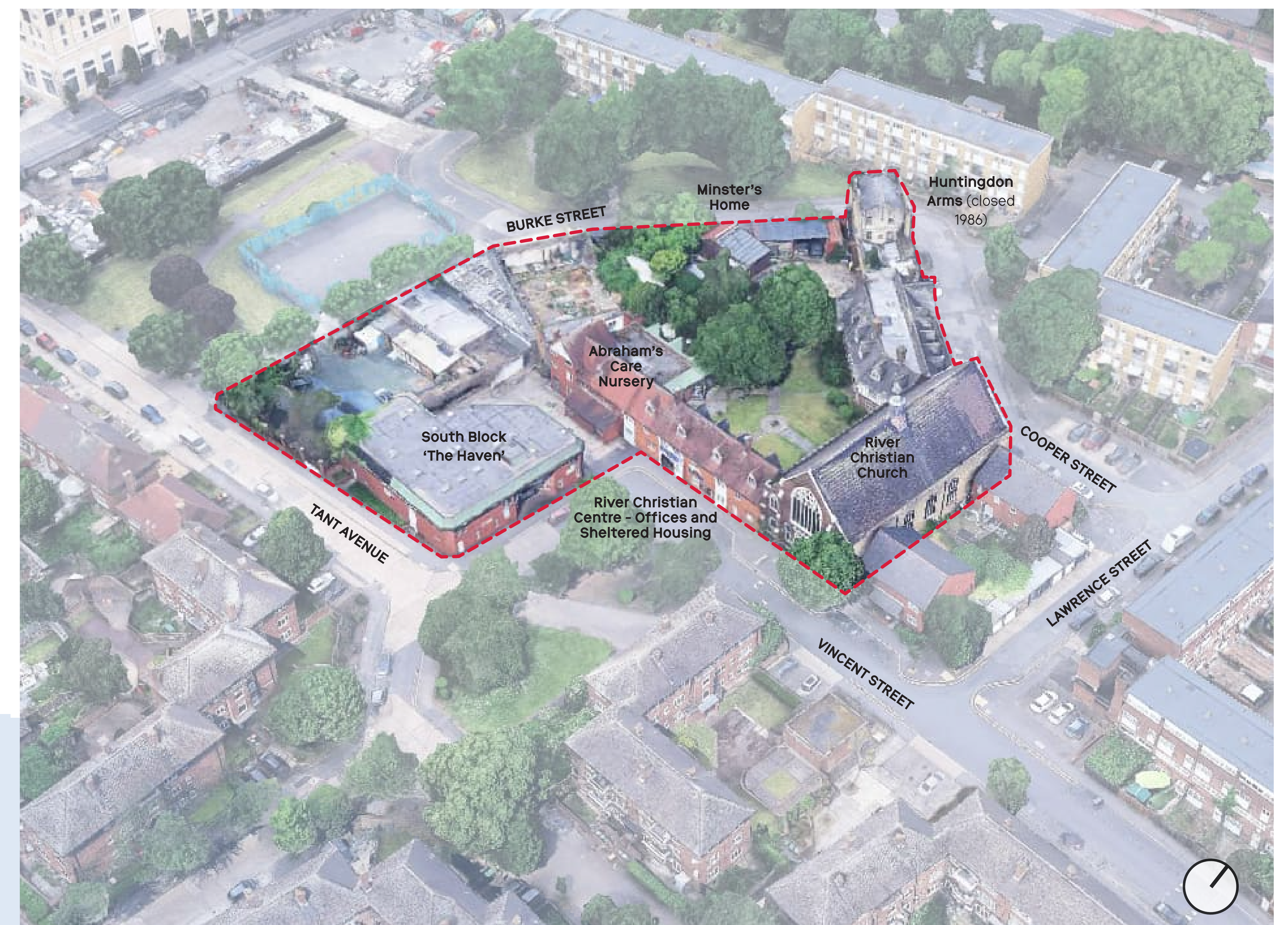
THE SITE IS IN CANNING TOWN SOUTH, WITHIN THE CANNING TOWN ESTATE. IT IS AN 'ISLAND' SITE SURROUNDED BY LOCAL ROADS; BURKE STREET AND COOPER STREET TO THE NORTH, LAWRENCE STREET TO THE EAST, TANT AVENUE AND VINCENT STREET TO THE SOUTH. THE SITE CONTAINS A NUMBER OF BUILDINGS OF VARYING CONDITION AND QUALITY.

SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN 1894, THE RIVER CHRISTIAN CENTRE (RCC) HAS BEEN A KEY COMMUNITY ASSET FOR THE SURROUNDING DOCKWORKER COMMUNITY.



Its role has grown and shifted alongside the changing context of Canning Town. Following decline in the 1980s, the centre merged with a local Elm church to become the RCC Centre, bringing new life to the site's core; however, it was too late for some of the periphery buildings, which were in a bad state of disrepair. Plans were made for the site's comprehensive redevelopment in 2006 and preparations for this reduced community activity and paused building maintenance.

However, this has also meant the continued decline of many buildings beyond their usable and economic life.



The River Christian Centre

What they offer today

THE EXISTING SITE SERVES THE CANNING TOWN COMMUNITY. THE RCC CURRENTLY RUNS A NUMBER OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT GROUPS FROM ITS EXISTING FACILITIES, TO CREATE A SAFE PLACE WHERE EVERYBODY IS WELCOMED AND FEELS VALUED REGARDLESS OF THEIR SOCIAL SITUATION OR BELIEFS.

However, many of these activities and groups would benefit from update facilities to create more accessible and long-lasting spaces for the wider Canning Town community. This would also greatly improve the setting of the Grade II listed church. The RCC Foundation's current facilities include:

CHURCH & COMMUNITY CENTRE:

Home of the River Christian Centre and two other church congregations with a wide range of community facilities.

NURSERY & KIDS CLUB:

Private service for working and supported families (ages 0-11) with dedicated children's outdoor playspace. Since reopening it is fully subscribed, offering the most affordable fees in Newham and supporting return-to-work pathways and wrap-around care.

EDUCATION & TRAINING CENTRE SPACE:

Employment training and mentoring, ESOL, parenting/work skills, third sector office space, business incubator space.

FOOD BANK:

The River Christian Centre operates a food bank out of the front of the church.

YOUTH AND HEALTH COMPLEX:

Service to young persons (11-19) in a multi-purpose space that will be geared to detached outreach, mentoring, training, sports/multimedia. Health and fitness suite with emphasis for people with special needs and keep public multi-use games area, managed and run by the RCC.

KEY WORKER HOUSING AND SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION:

Key worker housing including the minister's home, and supported accommodation including 30 en-suite rooms and a guest flat.

CHURCHES & COMMUNITY CENTRE



FOOD BANK



NURSERY & KID'S CLUB



YOUTH & HEALTH COMPLEX



EDUCATIONAL SPACE & TRAINING CENTRE



KEY WORKER HOUSING & SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION



Historic Context

A 125-year long community legacy

THE SITE FALLS WITHIN THE POSTWAR COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT ZONE.

The RCC was formerly known as Docklands Settlement No.1 - the first in a network of amenity centres in deprived areas of London. These centres were created to meet the social and spiritual needs of the local population at a time when there was no public provision of such services.

The church became a centre for a number of clubs and societies meeting a variety of practical and spiritual needs.

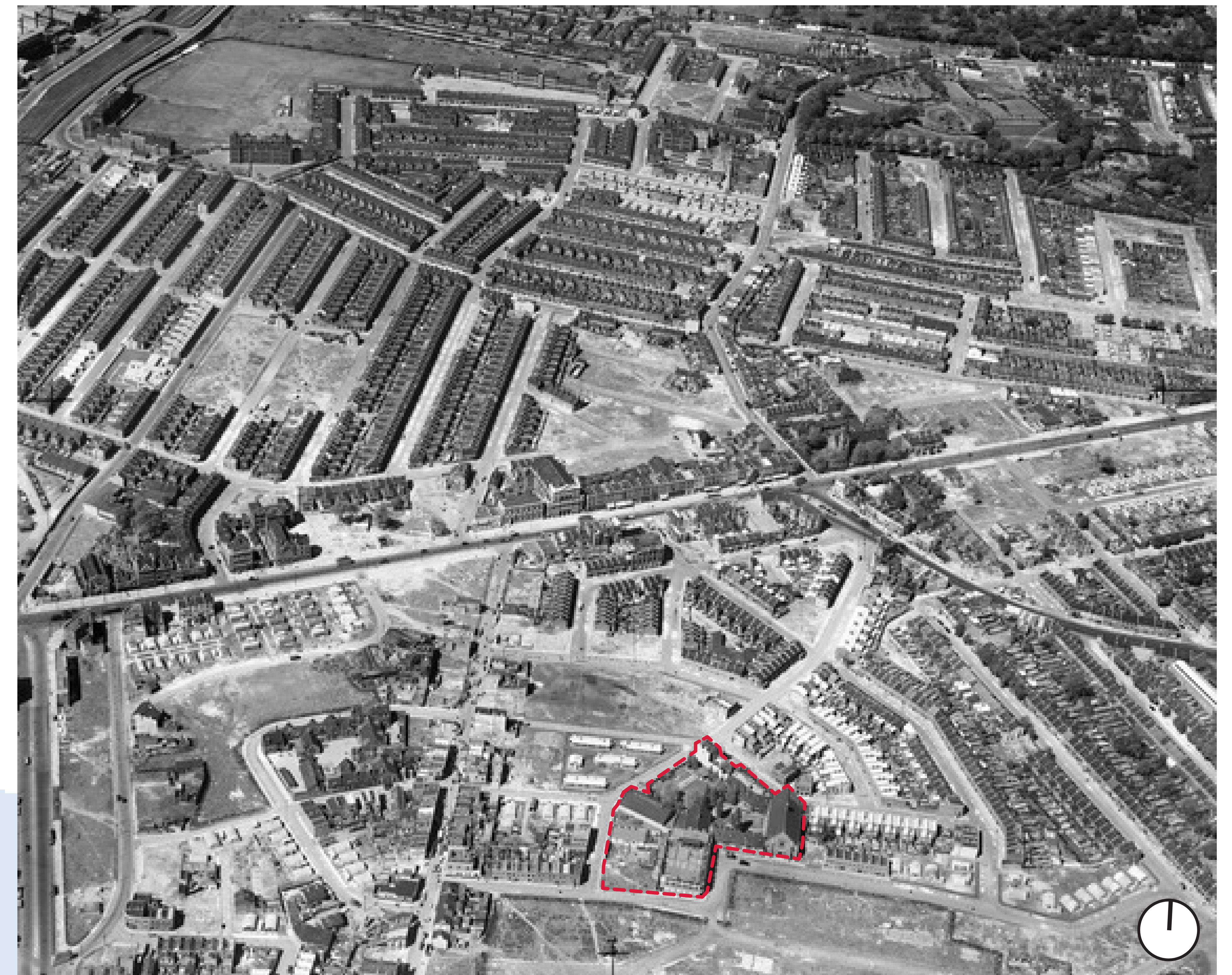
The programme of extensive rebuilding at Settlement No. 1 continued through the 1920s and early 1930s, and eventually included a large activity hall, a gym, a swimming pool, a theatre, a roof garden, and additional residential accommodation.

In 1929 the original iron chapel was replaced by a new chapel building dedicated to St George and St Helena.

Queen Mary was present at the chapel's dedication.



"THE SUNDAY GROUP".
Some senior leaders discuss a point.



Bomb damage in Canning Town, 1946.

Historic Context

History of the chapel

THE RCC'S ROOTS TRACE BACK TO 1892, WHEN AN VINCENT STREET, CANNING TOWN WAS IDENTIFIED AS "THE WORST STREET IN LONDON". BY 1894 THE 'MALVERN COLLEGE MISSION' WAS SET UP IN CANNING TOWN TO BRING WELFARE AND RECREATION TO THE YOUTH OF THE DOCK AREA SLUMS.

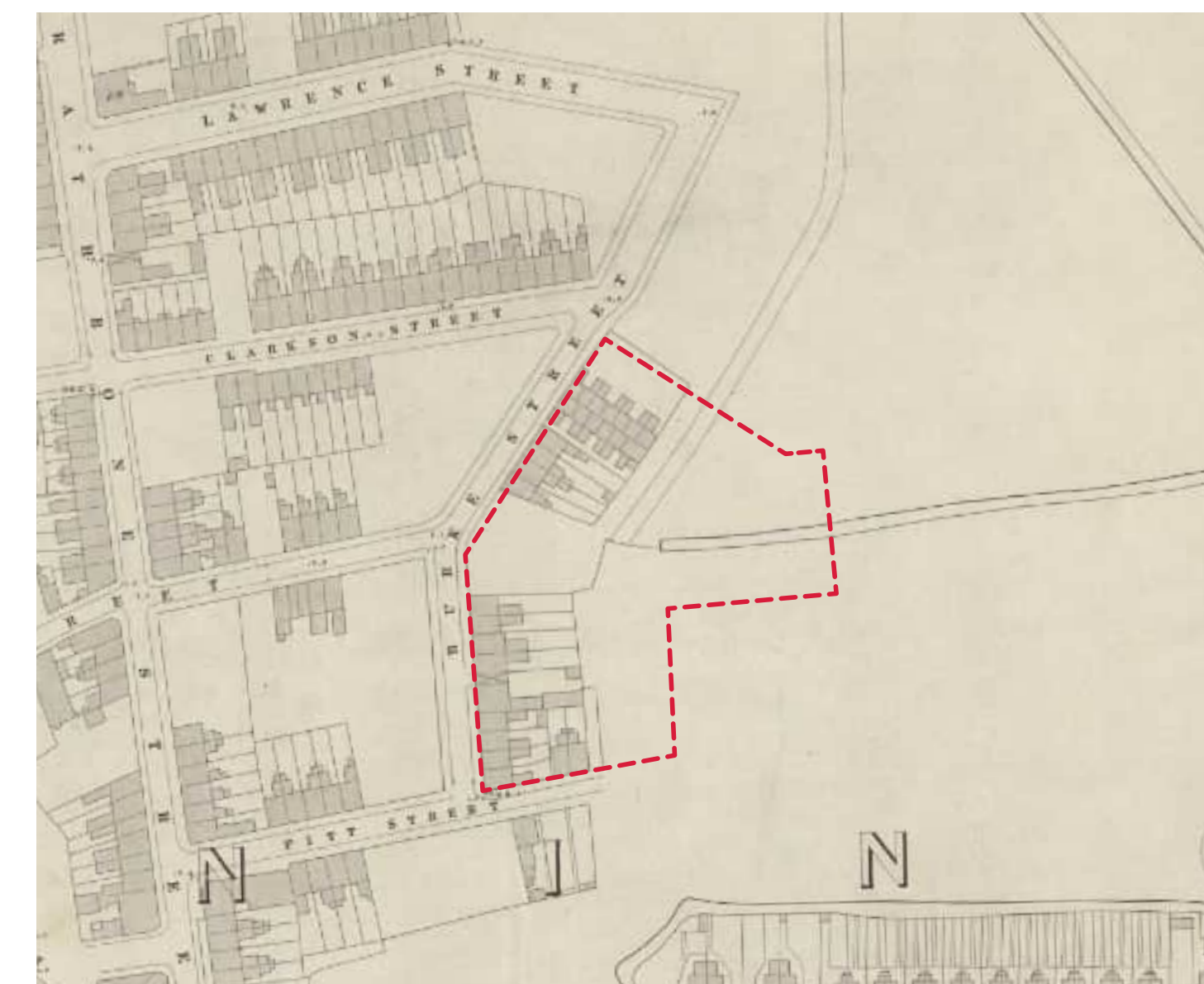
In 1918, a Malvern schoolboy returned after a successful theatre career - Sir Reginald Kennedy-Cox - who purchased property for the charity, founding what became The Dockland Settlement.

The Settlement Mission quickly became a beloved haven of friendship, warmth, and refuge. Its success led to the opening of other Dockland Settlements across the UK, gaining Royal Patronage.

In 1929, the Chapel at Canning Town was opened by Queen Mary, followed by further buildings. Although WWII disrupted progress, the Chapel survived the bombings.

By the 1980s, the centre pioneered social enterprises that created jobs and accommodation—breaking the cycle of 'no job, no home; no home, no job'—and giving people a chance at a stable life.

In 2003, the centre merged with a local Elim church to form the RCC. The RCC Foundation brought fresh energy and creative community initiatives, but redevelopment uncertainty and the COVID shutdown have since stalled much of the activity.



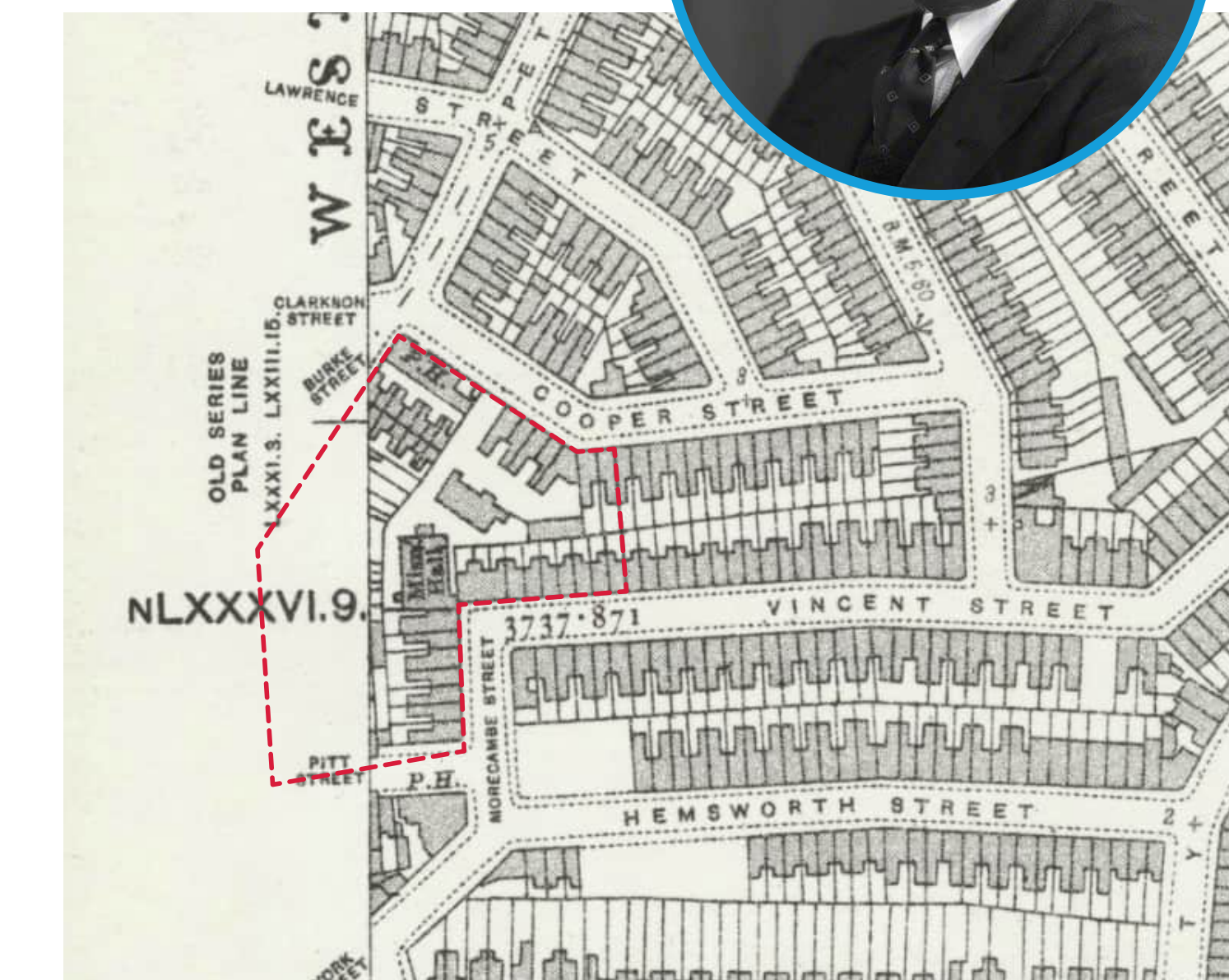
1867: A developing neighbourhood

Canning Town developed from marshland to a residential neighbourhood for dock workers from the early 1800s, quickly accelerated by the opening of the Royal Victoria Docks in 1855. The communities here had poor access to water and sanitation, creating poor living conditions, poverty and illness.



1894: The site is founded

In 1892, Vincent St was named "the worst street in London". By 1894 the 'Malvern College Mission' was set up to bring welfare and recreation to the youth of Canning Town's dock area slums. They founded the current site and built a little iron church of St Alban and the English Martyrs.



1914: Dockland Settlement No.1

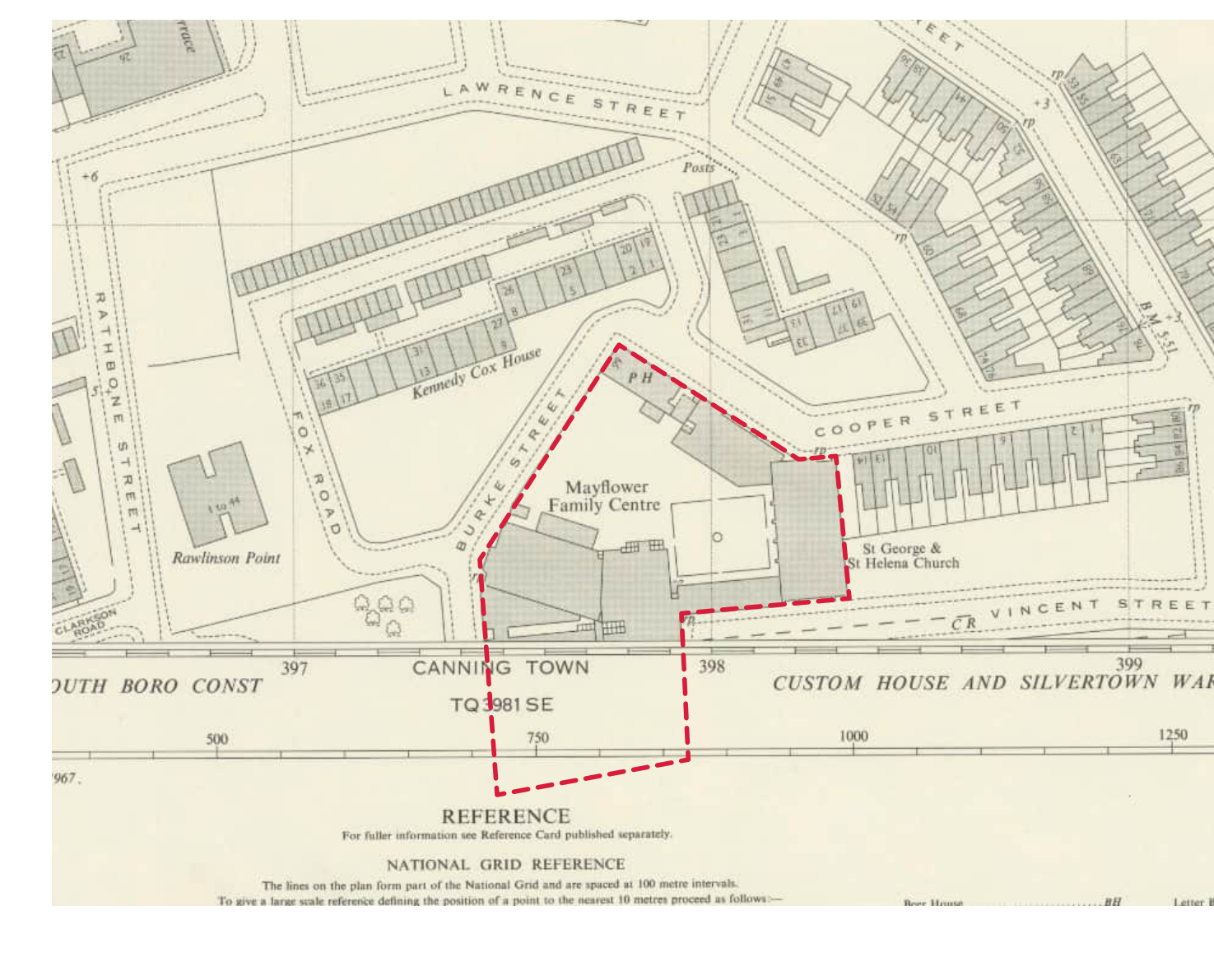
Between 1918 and 1937, the settlement expanded organically under the leadership of Reginald Kennedy-Cox, and was renamed Dockland Settlement No. 1.

The original iron church was replaced by the current listed church of St George and St Helena in 1930.



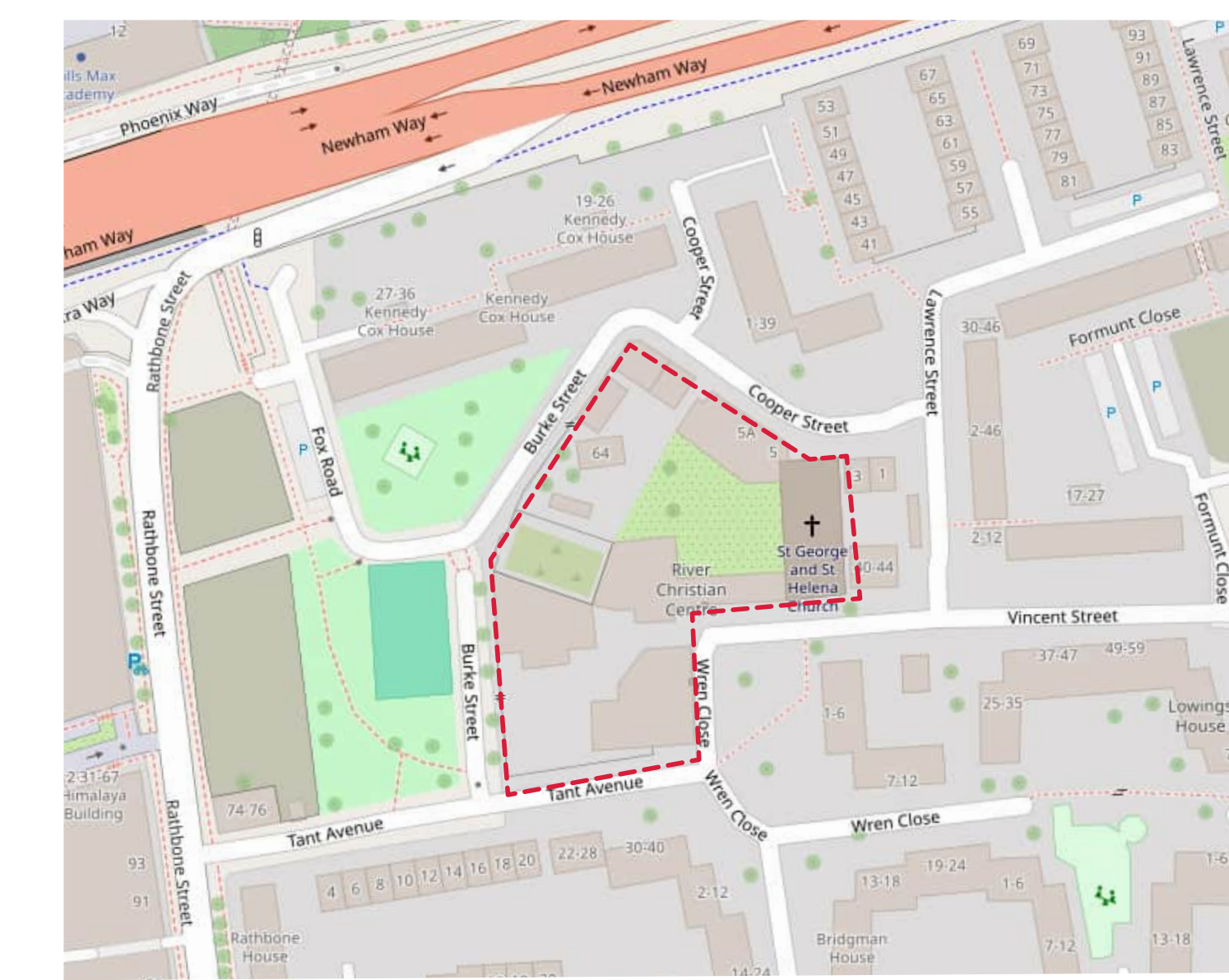
1945-49: During the War

During World War II, most activities ceased; the military requisitioned many buildings, and there was extensive bomb damage in the local area. Temporary huts can be seen in this aerial around the church



1965: The Mayflower Family Centre

After struggling post-war, England cricketer David Sheppard arrived and re-branded 'The Mayflower Family Centre' in 1958. The focus shifted to pioneering a new form of youth work. It became an exemplar of the welfare state and, through training programmes, became a national resource.



2003: River Christian Centre (RCC)

The centre continued to pioneer social enterprise projects for the following 50 years, throughout the closing of London's docks in the 1980s. In 2003 it merged with a local church to become the RCC, injecting new energy with pioneering creative initiatives.

The Existing Site

Building conditions and state of repair

SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN 1894, THE RCC HAS BEEN A KEY COMMUNITY ASSET FOR THE SURROUNDING DOCKWORKER COMMUNITY.

Its role has grown and shifted alongside the changing context of Canning Town. Following decline in the 1980s, the centre merged with a local Elm church to become the RCC, bringing new life to the site's core, but it was too late for some of the periphery buildings, which were in a bad state of disrepair. Plans were made for the site's comprehensive redevelopment in 2006 and preparations for this reduced community activity and paused building maintenance.

However, this has also meant the continued decline of many buildings beyond their useable, economic life. The facilities require modernisation and adaptation to support a changing community.

Due to the delay in redevelopment, most of the existing buildings are no longer fit for purpose.

CURRENT FACILITIES ON THE SITE AND THEIR CONDITION



SUPPORTED LIVING ACCOMMODATION

Is in a state of disrepair, lacking thermal insulation and in need of modernisation. There is a large amount of vegetation growing on the roof and within gutters.



SOUTH BLOCK

The nursery and play area were recently relocated following structural issues in their previous location on-site. The former swimming pool lies derelict and has been partially demolished



COMMUNITY SUPPORT SPACE (prev. Huntingdon Arms)

A derelict building that is no longer in use. Upper storeys have been condemned.



THE CHURCH

Has water damage on the eastern façade



SOUTH BLOCK

Is in state of disrepair with a leaky roof & Water damage.



MINISTER'S HOUSE AND STUDY

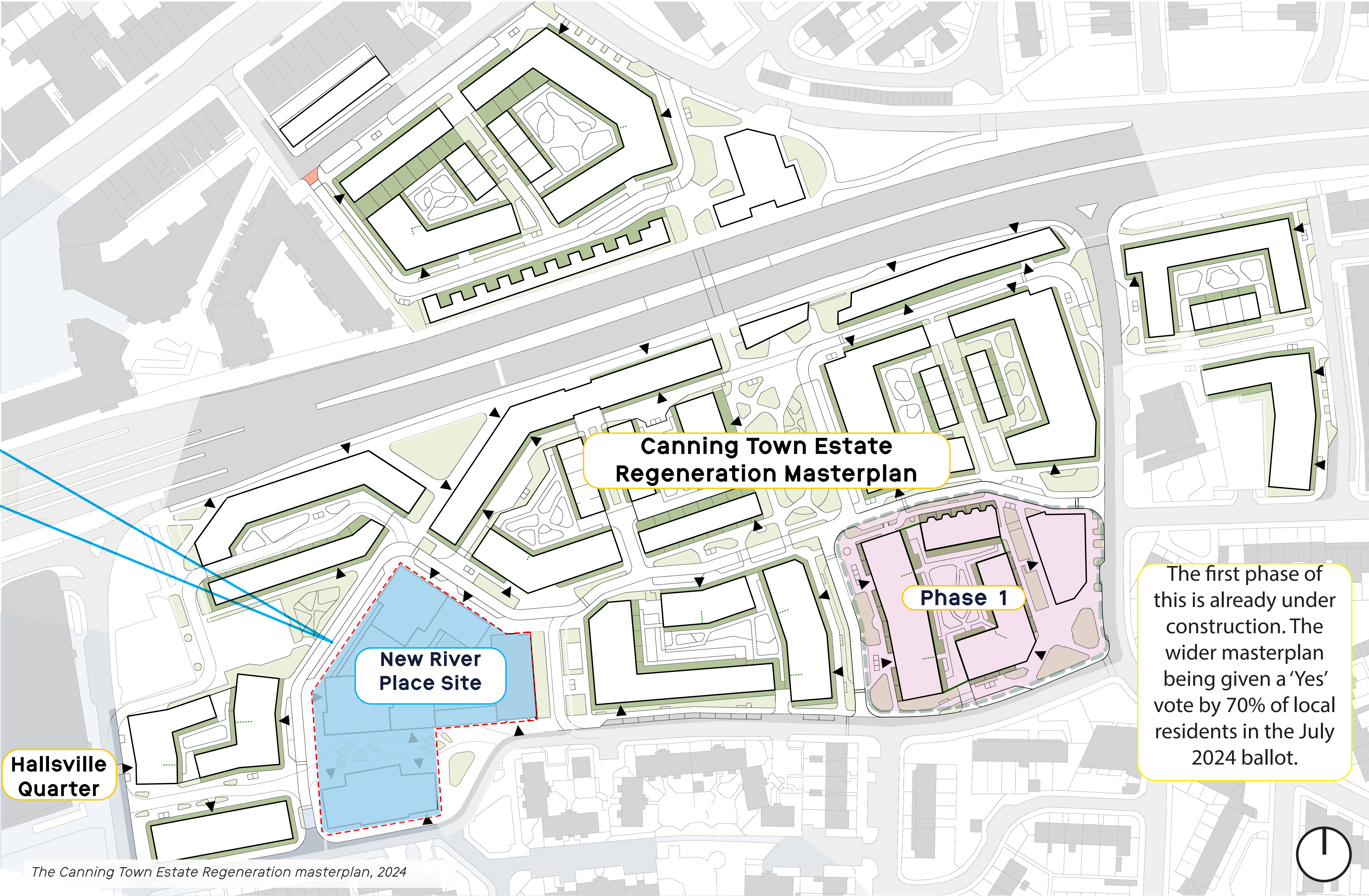
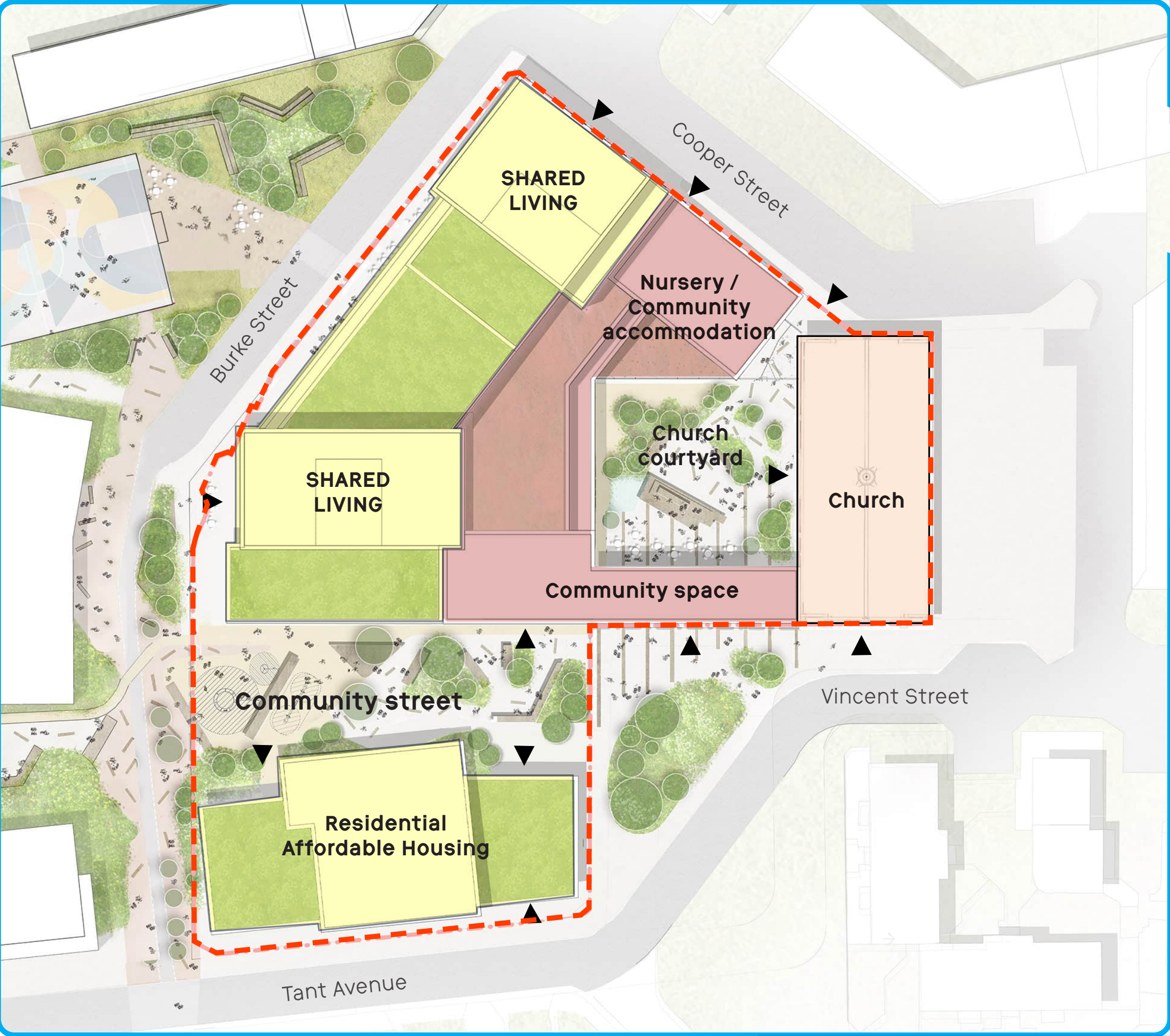
Is in poor condition, and lacks private amenity space.

Canning Town Masterplan

The wider context surrounding New River Place is changing

THE EMERGING CANNING TOWN MASTERPLAN WILL REDEFINE THE CONTEXT SURROUNDING THE SITE OVER THE COMING YEARS. THIS WILL INCLUDE THE STREETScape AND BUILDING HEIGHTS.

EMERGING PROPOSALS FOR NEW RIVER PLACE



The Canning Town Estate Regeneration masterplan, 2024

The Aspiration of IXO and the RCC

A community-led approach

IXO ARE A PURPOSE-DRIVEN ETHICAL DEVELOPER COMMITTED TO “COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING”, FOCUSING ON SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT. IXO’S MAJORITY INVESTOR IN NEW RIVER PLACE IS A REGISTERED CO-OPERATIVE AND COMMUNITY BENEFIT SOCIETY AND FCA REGULATED ETHICAL INVESTOR WHO HAS HELPED OVER 10,000 HOMELESS PEOPLE AND IS PROVIDING HOMES FOR 1,500 FORMERLY HOMELESS PEOPLE TONIGHT.



ETHICAL INVESTMENT

IXO is a purpose-driven ethical developer focused on “Community Wealth Building” with social, environmental, and economic impact. Its majority investor in New River Place is an FCA-regulated Co-operative and Community Benefit Society that has supported over 10,000 homeless people and which currently houses 1,500 people.



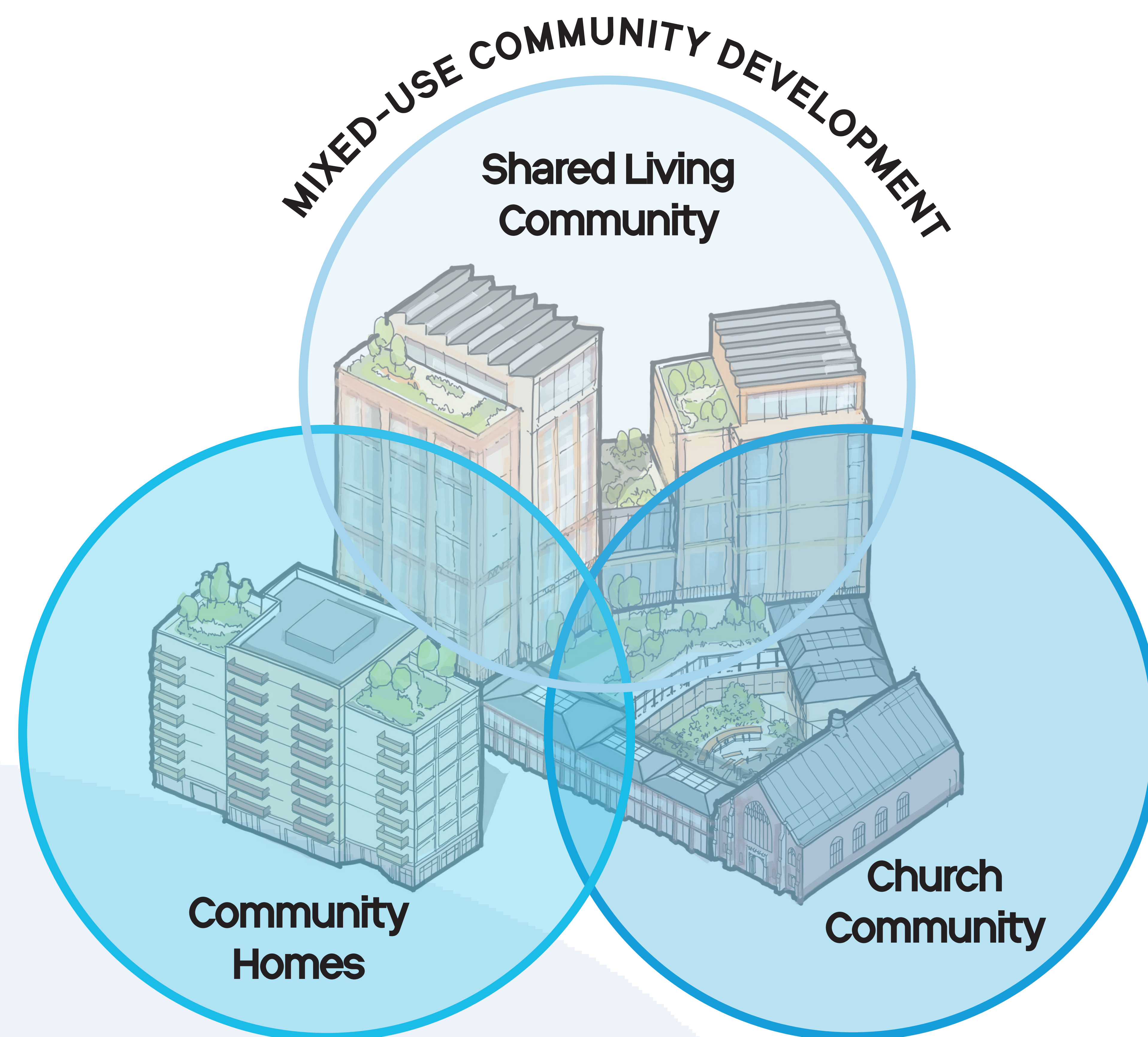
EMBEDDED COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

IXO is working with the 125-year-old RCC charity (now the RCC Foundation) to redevelop the site into a modern, flexible community hub. The proposal builds on RCC’s legacy and supports services including the food bank, supported living, youth groups, and a fully-subscribed nursery with wrap-around care.



ASPIRATIONAL

IXO aims to replace the community hub while meeting Newham’s strategic goals, to improve connectivity and enhance the setting of the Grade II listed church. To support these goals and increase affordable housing, the proposal includes shared living (Purpose-Built Shared Living), within a mixed use community offer that places sustainability at its core.



Shared Living

What's on offer

A SUMMARY OF THE EMERGING PROPOSALS:

SHARED LIVING

Provides housing for a variety of types of individuals, and combines well with Community and Social Housing. This will contribute towards the delivery of mixed and balanced communities in the Canning Town area.

The RCC site provides a fantastic opportunity for a Shared Living operator to work alongside an existing organisation, to create a bespoke offer - rooted in its place and integrated into the local community from day one.

MASSING AND STREETScape

Our response is evolving to complement the retained heritage assets on the site, as well as the needs of the local community.

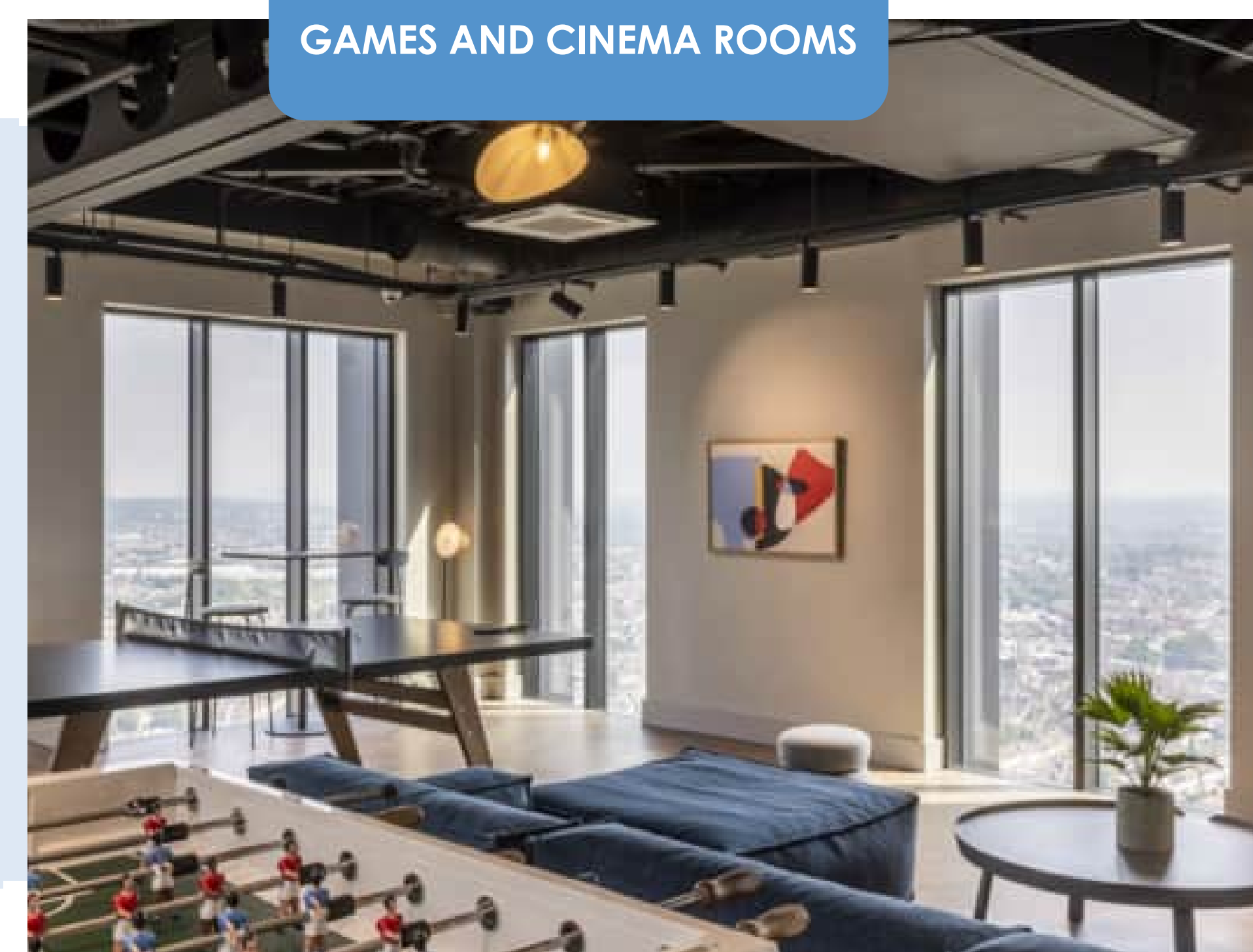
COORDINATION WITH THE CANNING TOWN MASTERPLAN

Integrating proposals with the wider masterplan, including public space, heights, parking and servicing.

RESPONDING TO EMERGING LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Recognising Newham's Draft Local Plan

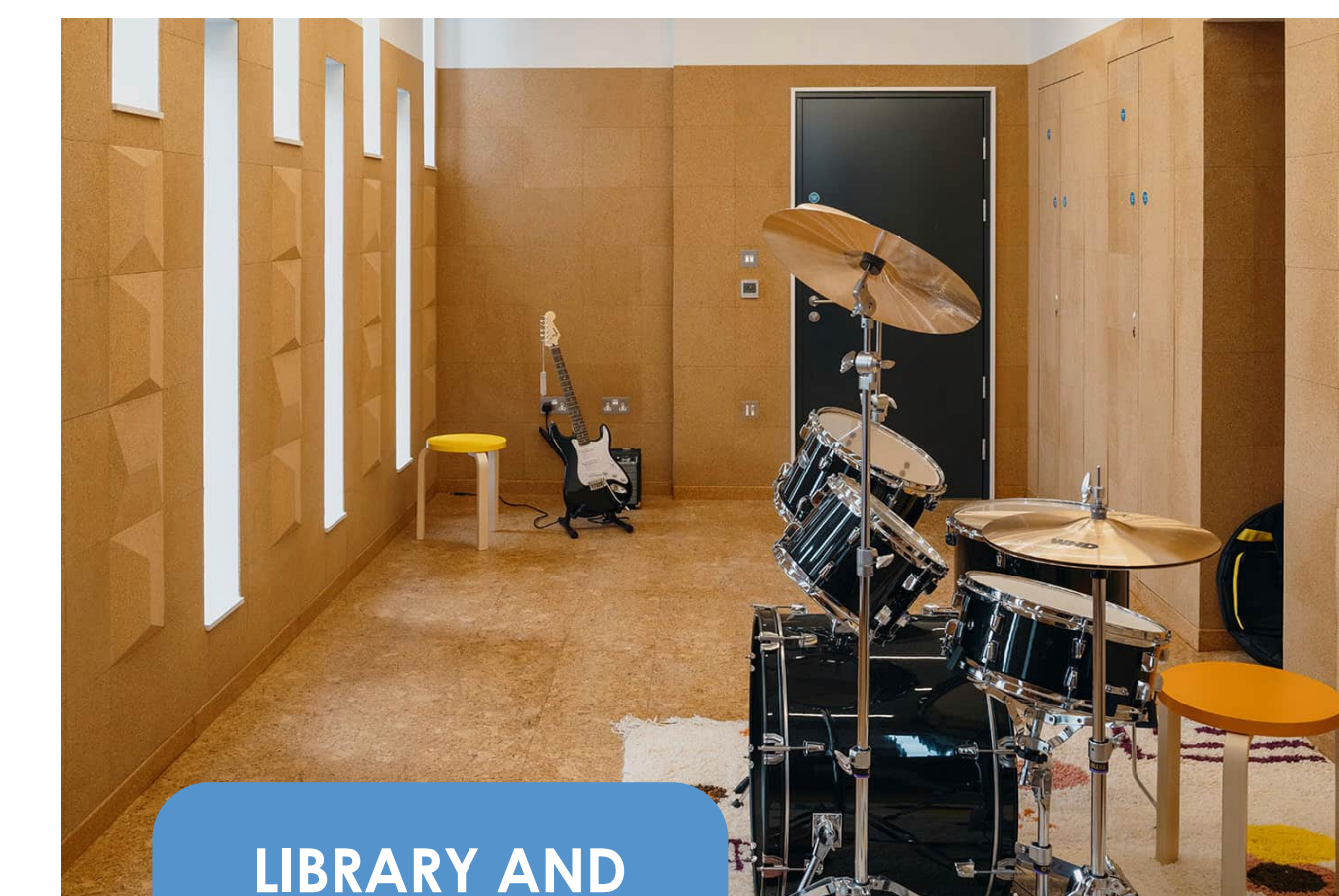
GAMES AND CINEMA ROOMS



ROOFTOPS AND TERRACES



LIBRARY AND HOBBY ROOMS



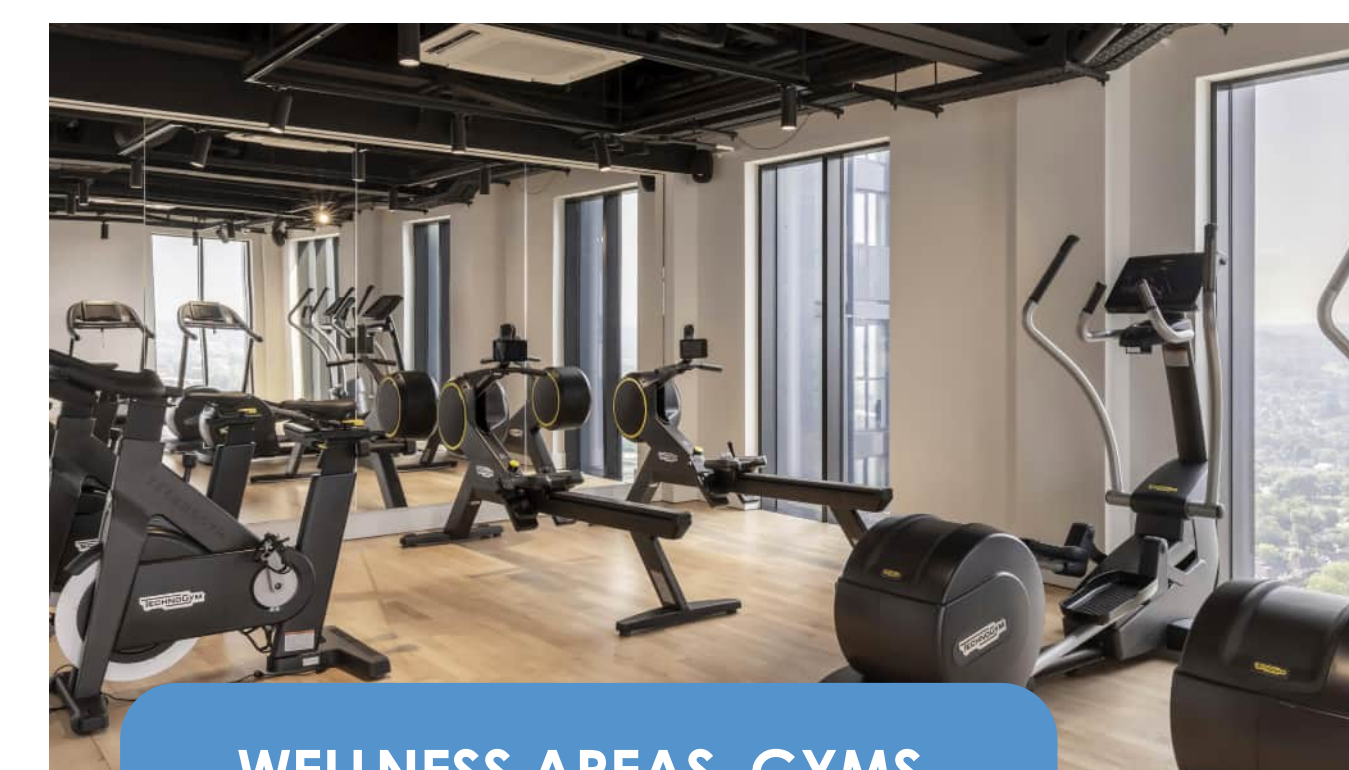
SHARED KITCHEN AND DINING SPACES



RESIDENT LOUNGES



WELLNESS AREAS, GYMS, POOLS, SPAS AND SAUNAS



COWORKING SPACES, BOOKABLE MEETING ROOMS



ON-SITE RESTAURANTS AND CAFÉS



PET SPA AND WASH ROOMS



CONCIERGE, POST ROOMS AND BUILDING MANAGEMENT



Examples of what Shared Living Communities typically provide

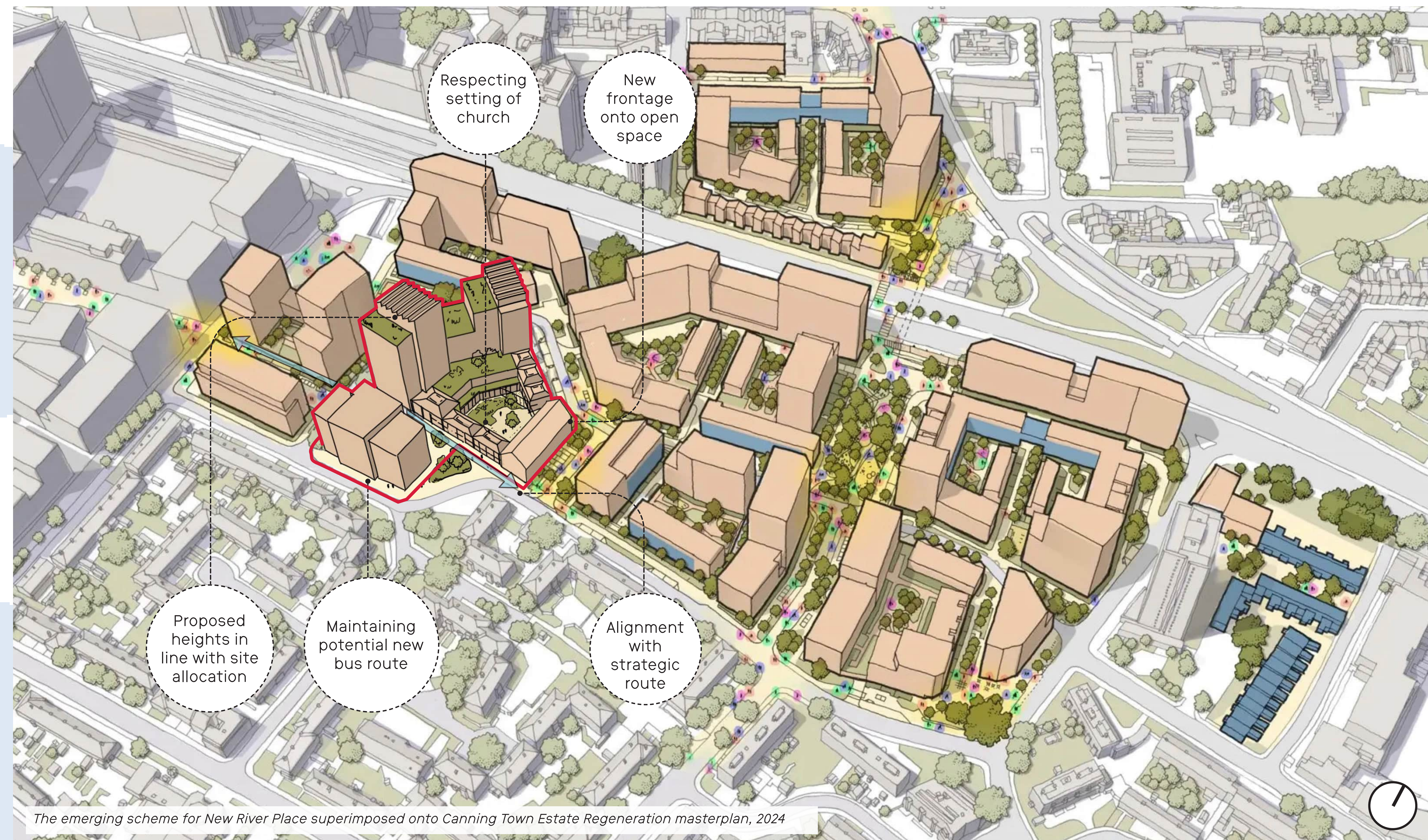
Scale and Building Heights

Integration with the emerging context

IXO HAVE BEEN IN CONTINUOUS DIALOGUE WITH NEWHAM COUNCIL

WE HAVE:

- Adopted heights in line within the Site Allocation (up to a maximum of 15 storeys)
- Introduced height datums that reinforce the legibility of the wider masterplan, in framing key routes, safeguarding desire lines, and optimising ground level microclimate (daylighting, noise and wind)
- Extended the key strategic route and public open space, linking Canning Town Station with the wider Masterplan, through the designs of a living street - rich in biodiversity and providing play space for a variety of age groups.
- Developed designs that prioritise local community needs.



The emerging scheme for New River Place superimposed onto Canning Town Estate Regeneration masterplan, 2024

Scheme Benefits

Benefits for the local community

OUR ASPIRATIONS

To grow the established community offer through creating a Shared Living Community, a Church Community, and an Affordable Housing Community.

SHARED LIVING AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

Targeting 35% affordable on the site, meeting Newham's policy targets and contributing to mixed and balanced communities within Canning Town.

CREATING NEW PUBLIC REALM:

Weaving strategic routes and open space through the site to marry proposals with the wider masterplan.

IMPROVING COMMUNITY BENEFITS:

Improving the affordable nursery, food bank and supported living already provided and operating on the site.

CREATING LOCAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

Providing employment to run and operate the shared living community

A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

Embedding sustainable design from the outset, to create high performing buildings with low energy demands, along with improved play, greening, biodiversity and public realm on the site.



Thank You & Next Steps

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO ATTEND OUR PUBLIC CONSULTATION FOR NEW RIVER PLACE.

WE WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD FILL IN THE FEEDBACK FORM, SO THAT WE CAN CAPTURE YOUR NEEDS IN OUR DEVELOPING PROPOSALS, AND RETURN IN THE BALLOT BOX OR SEND BY POST.

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