

COMMUNITY PLAN

William Dunbar and William Saville Houses. South Kilburn Estate.

Summary Brochure. June 2020.

Produced by:



UCL Civic Design Exchange
The Bartlett School of Planning

In collaboration with:



William Dunbar and William
Saville Residents' Association

Project supported by:



Research England's Higher Education Innovation
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In partnership with Granville
Community Kitchen.

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This Community Plan has not been elaborated by Brent Council. The Community Plan is the output of the knowledge exchange project 'Civic Design Exchange: Co-Designing Neighbourhoods with Communities'. This is not a consultancy project, but a knowledge exchange between university and communities. Therefore no professional liability is accepted by UCL, the project coordinator nor the project team for the content of this report. If you have any question about the project, please contact Dr Pablo Sendra (pablo.sendra@ucl.ac.uk). I will be happy to discuss with you the project and answer any query.



BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Between October 2019 and March 2020, a group of researchers from University College London (UCL) has been carrying out the knowledge exchange project 'Civic Design Exchange: Co-designing Neighbourhoods with Communities'. This project has been carried out in partnership with Granville Community Kitchen, which acts as a link between UCL researchers and the William Dunbar and William Saville Residents Association.

AIM OF THE COMMUNITY PLAN

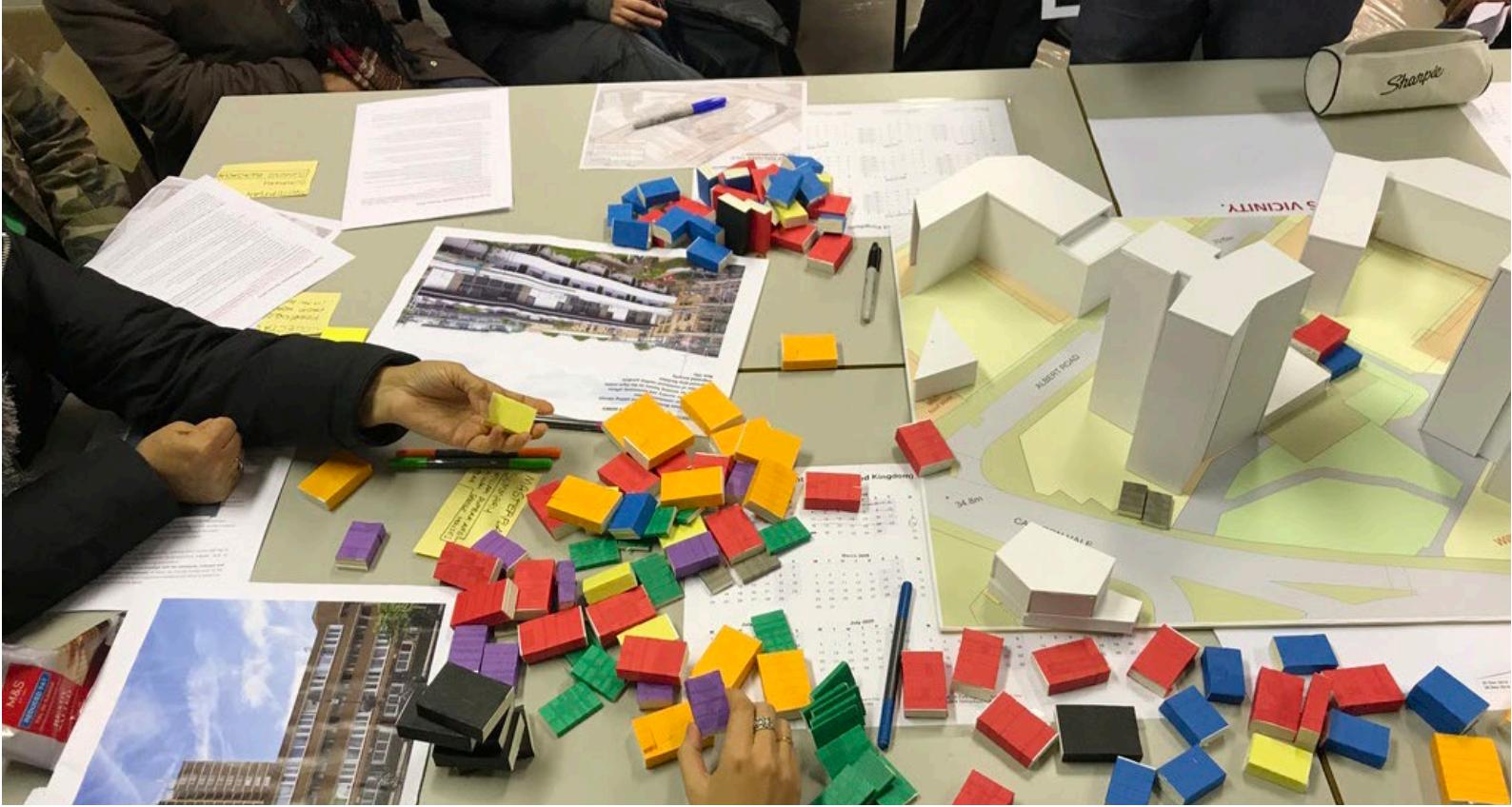
The aim of this document is to provide a community vision that informs South Kilburn SPD 2017. The document provides a proposal for refurbishment of the existing 147 homes, infill densification with 47 additional homes, which makes a total of 194 homes, nine new community spaces with 366 m² of floor space, 6 new retail units with 250 m² of floor space, and a total of 24 car park spaces for residents.

The proposed scheme follows the general principles of the 2016 Masterplan Review and the South Kilburn SPD 2017, as well as many of the specific proposals for the WDWS site (except demolishing the buildings and extending Denmark Road). Since it follows many of the principles of Brent Council's Masterplan, it can be considered as a community vision that can inform the regeneration of the WDWS site.

This document is an independent study carried out by UCL researchers. WDWS Tenants and Residents Association can, if they consider it appropriate, present it to Brent Council to show a community vision for the regeneration of the WDWS site.

HOW HAS THIS COMMUNITY PLAN BEEN DONE?

The project has engaged with residents of William Dunbar and William Saville Houses to assess the impact of the demolition of these two buildings (current proposal of Brent council) and co-design a community vision in collaboration with the community. This engagement has consisted on a series of **meetings and co-design workshops with residents, walks around the estate**, as well as a **survey** with residents.



COMPLYING WITH LONDON POLICIES ON ESTATE REGENERATION

One of the key points in the Draft New London Plan and of the The Mayor's Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration, approved in 2018, is that "when considering options to deliver estate regeneration projects, boroughs, housing associations and their partners should **always consider alternative options to demolition first**". As far as we are aware, there is not any study that has considered an alternative option to demolition for William Dunbar and William Saville Houses. This Community Plan provides a detailed urban design scheme and a financial viability study of an alternative option to demolition, which can inform the future scheme to be adopted by Brent Council.

SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This Community Plan has co-produced together with local residents a Social Impact Assessment, which is an evaluation of the social impact that Brent Council's regeneration scheme – which includes demolition of the two buildings, redevelopment of the site with new built homes, and consequent relocation of the current residents – could have on William Dunbar and William Saville residents.

To analyse the potential effects that Brent Council's regeneration proposal would generate on people living in William Dunbar and William Saville Houses, the UCL Team has assessed the current situations of residents living in the two buildings, their everyday experiences, the importance of these experiences to them, and how these might be affected in case of demolition and relocation.

The assessment concludes that demolition and relocation would mean dismantling the local community, which today signifies safety and comfort to the majority of residents. In addition to this, demolition and redevelopment would put at stake the level of attachment and ownership residents feel towards their flats. Along with the physical stress of moving out, their psychological wealth and confidence would be put at risk as they would be confronted with feelings of uncertainty about the future. **83% of the surveyed residents said they would prefer refurbishment of the existing buildings, with additional housing thorough infill and no relocation¹.**

¹ 23 out of the 26 residents surveyed replied this question: 19 preferred "refurbishment (with additional housing built through infill) - no relocation", only 4% preferred "demolition and redevelopment - with relocation" and 3 said that they did not know.

COMMUNITY PLAN

Through the co-design workshops, surveys and feedback from residents, the UCL Team have co-produced with the residents involved a Community Plan, which includes detailed urban design proposals as well as a financial viability study (produced by a Chartered Quantity Surveyor). The scheme proposed in this Community Plan consists on keeping and refurbishing the existing tower blocks (William Dunbar and William Dunbar Houses), demolishing the one-storey office building currently occupied by different offices from the council, building 47 new homes, 250 m² of new retail spaces, 366 m² of community spaces, a total of 24 car-park spaces and improving the existing community gardens with new amenities. This is achieved through an infill intensification development, which maximises the available spaces to build new homes, retail and community facilities without compromising the garden and the existing homes.





WHY REFURBISHMENT AND INFILL INSTEAD OF DEMOLITION?

In the co-design workshops, residents showed concerns about the effect that the demolition of William Dunbar and William Saville Houses (and being rehoused to other home within the estate or the local authority) would have in their social lives and wellbeing. In the workshops, when evaluating the proposals of the South Kilburn Masterplan Review 2016 and SPD 2017, all the residents who participated were against the demolition of William Dunbar and William Saville. In addition to this, in the survey, when residents were asked about the form of regeneration they would prefer, 83% of the residents preferred "refurbishment (with additional housing built through infill) - no relocation", only 4% preferred "demolition and redevelopment - with relocation" and 13% said that they did not know¹. In addition to this, demolition and redevelopment have a strong environmental impact. Therefore, it is important to test whether a refurbishment option is more sustainable (a life cycle analysis needs to be calculated to assess the environmental impact of each scheme)². Furthermore, the Mayor's Good Practice Guide to Estate and Draft New London Plan say that "when considering the option of demolishing and rebuilding homes, councils, housing associations and their partners should always consider alternative options to demolition first". One of the aims of this document is to consider an alternative option to demolition, as the Mayor's Good Practice Guide to Estate and Draft New London Plan expects.

¹ 23 out of the 26 residents surveyed replied this question: 19 preferred "refurbishment (with additional housing built through infill) - no relocation", only 4% preferred "demolition and redevelopment - with relocation" and 3 said that they did not know.

² UCL Urban Lab and Engineering Exchange for Just Space and the London Tenants Federation (Crawford K, Johnson C, Davies, F, Joo, S, Bell, S). 2014. "Demolition or Refurbishment of Social Housing? A review of the evidence". <http://www.engineering.ucl.ac.uk/engineering-exchange/files/2014/10/Report-Refurbishment-Demolition-Social-Housing.pdf>

CONTRIBUTING TO THE SOUTH KILBURN MASTERPLAN REVIEW 2016 AND THE SPD 2017 PROPOSED BY BRENT COUNCIL

While the majority of the residents that have participated or have been involved in this project do not support the demolition of William Dunbar and William Saville Homes, they were positive with many of the general aims of the South Kilburn Masterplan Review 2016 and SPD 2017 (such as more outdoor leisure facilities, green open spaces, preservation of local character), although they did not agree with most of the specific proposals for William Dunbar and William Saville site.

Brent's proposal for the regeneration of South Kilburn had an overwhelming majority on the Resident Ballot run in autumn 2019, although it is not possible to know which were the results for William Dunbar and William Saville Houses.

For these reasons, the Community Plan presented here aims to deliver the general aims, requirements, and vision of the South Kilburn SPD 2017, as well as most of the site-specific aims, requirements and vision for William Dunbar and William Saville site, but without the demolition of the two tower blocks.



Diagram showing the proposed new homes, facilities and retail units in the Community Plan.

Summary	UNITS	TOT. AREA (sqm)	AVERAGE (sqm)	4-bed flat	3-bed flat	2-bed flat	1-bed flat
TOTAL NEW HOUSING	47	3140	66.81	11	8	8	20
TOTAL NEW COMMON S.	9	366	40.67				
TOTAL NEW RETAIL S.	6	250	41.67				
TOTAL NEW PARKING	24	282.24	11.76				

Proposed new homes, community facilities and retail units in the Community Plan.

PROVIDING MORE FAMILY HOMES

During the workshops, residents mentioned that many families in William Dunbar and William Saville Houses were facing overcrowding. WD and WS's flats are either one-bedroom or two-bedroom. Currently, there are not three- and four-bedroom flats in WDWS site. According to participants in the workshops, this overcrowding situation can be one of the reasons why residents voted for going ahead with the regeneration in the Resident Ballot, since they need larger homes that respond to their housing needs.

The scheme proposed in this Community Plan aims to maximise the number of three- and four-bedrooms flats. The proposed scheme includes, out of the 47 new homes, 11 four-bedroom flats and 8 three-bedroom flats. Providing 19 new family-size homes means that 41% of the new build homes are family-home sizes. Out of these 19, 13 are social-rent homes, which can rehouse overcrowded households in William Dunbar and William Saville homes.

SOCIAL HOUSING ALLOCATION: RESHUFFLING SCHEME

It is essential to carry out a housing needs survey, which looks at the home-size need of each household. This will help to optimise the existing and proposed homes and move residents who have smaller or larger homes than their needs to a home that match their needs. 13 overcrowded families can move to the the new proposed family-size homes. This will leave 13 two-bedroom flats vacant, which can be occupied by new social housing tenants or by those that are overcrowded in one-bedroom flats. At the same time, those households that are currently in two-bedroom flats and just need a one-bedroom flat can move and leave the two-bedroom flats to larger households. Because of the new provision of housing, the rehousing of 13 overcrowded families can take place on site and they do not have to move outside of William Dunbar and William Saville site³.



³ In case there are more than 13 households that need a three- or a four-bedroom flat, they would need to be offered a home offsite. There are 6 additional family-size units on site, but they would need to be market homes to make the scheme commercially viable. For delivering more family-size social-rent homes on site and keep the scheme commercially viable, the scheme would need to be denser.

PROVIDING MORE SOCIAL RENT HOMES

This Community Plan proposes to keep the existing council tenancies with their same tenancy condition and to provide new council social-rent homes. Keeping the existing social-rent homes and adding new ones ensures an increase in the social housing provision, and does not risk the loss of social housing, which is what has happened in many council estates across London and which has frequently been justified in financial viability studies. Given the need of social-rent homes in the area, this scheme does not propose to deliver any intermediate-income home. Therefore, the Community Plan does not use the term 'affordable', which has been misused in the last years. For avoiding confusion, this scheme uses the term social-rent homes, which are homes at council social rent levels.

This Community Plan provides 14 new social-rent homes, out of which 13 are family-size flats: 7 four-bedroom flats and 6 three-bedroom flats. These 14 new social-rent homes suppose 38% (measured in habitable rooms according to the Draft New London Plan) of the new build social housing. In addition to this, the Community Plan proposes to refurbish the existing council homes and keep them with their same tenancy and tenants. If we take into account the existing refurbished social-rent homes, there will be over 70%⁴ of social-rent homes in William Dunbar and William Saville site (see table 5.3).

Flat size (in number of beds)	
1 Bed	1
2 Bed	
3 Bed	6
4 Bed	7
Total of units	14
Percentage of social-rent homes, measured in habitable rooms (according to Draft New London Plan)	38%
Percentage of social-rent homes, measured in units	30%
Percentage of social-rent homes, measured in floorspace	36%

Proposed new social-rent homes and percentages of new build social-homes.

	Leaseholder or market homes	Social-rent homes	Total homes
Refurbished existing	15	132	147
New	33	14	47
TOTAL	48	146	194
Percentage of social-rent homes (measured in habitable rooms)		72%	
Percentage of social-rent homes (measured in units)		75%	
Percentage of social-rent homes (measured in floorspace)		71%	

Proposed new and refurbished homes and percentages of social-rent homes.

NEW COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The ground floor of the scheme includes 366 m² of community facilities. This is one of the main strengths of the scheme. Currently, there is a lack of community facilities in South Kilburn Estate and near William Dunbar and William Saville in particular. These 366 m² are distributed both in William Dunbar and William Saville houses. They provide 9 new community spaces, which include a computer lab, a nursery, two community cafes (one per tower), a community makerspace, an indoor gym and other activities, which are defined according to the discussions with the residents.

⁴ It is not possible to know the exact figure since we do not have know the current tenancies in the buildings. This study has worked with the assumption that there are 15 out of the 147 flats are owned by leaseholders and the rest are council tenants (currently, some of these are temporary tenants).

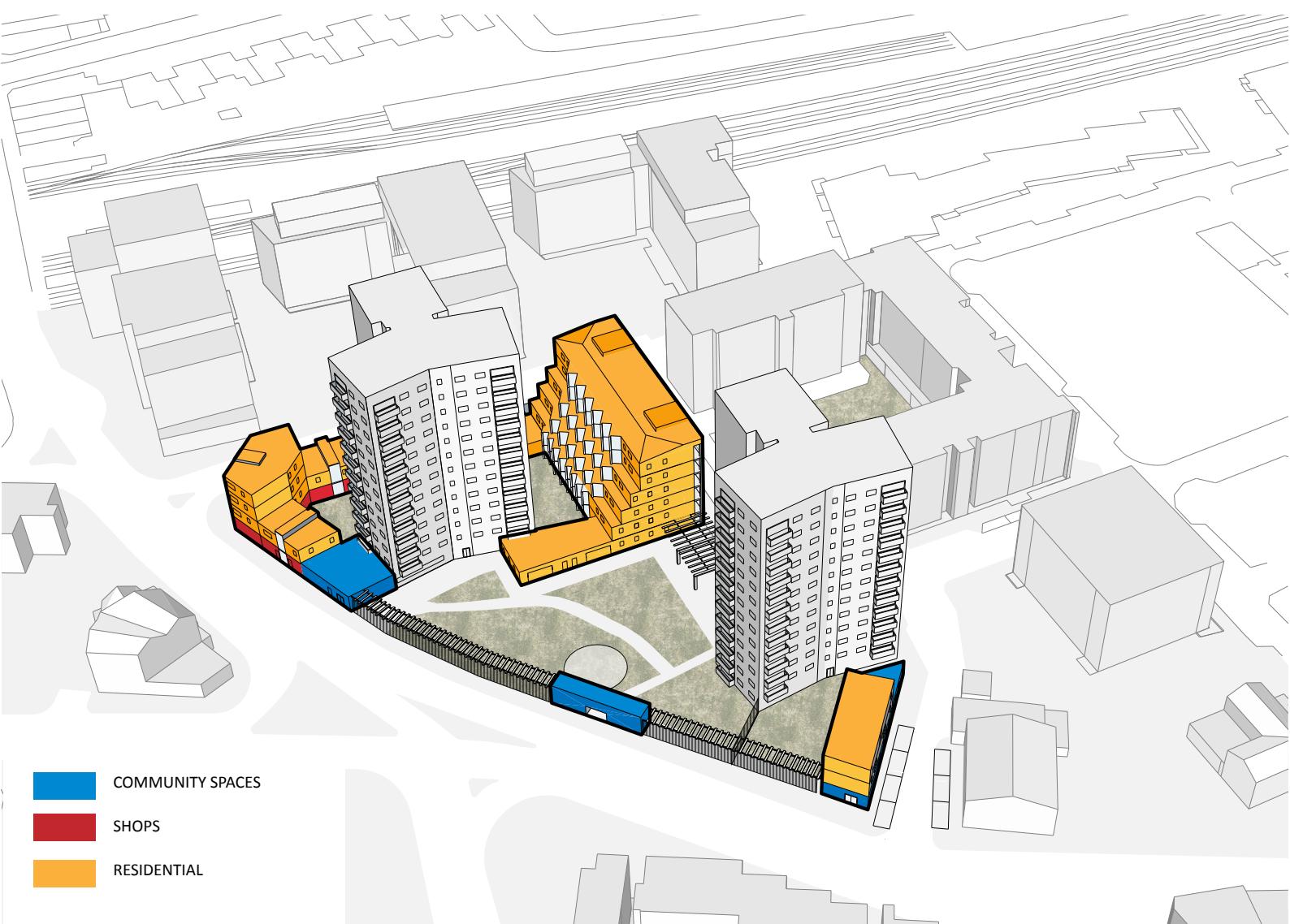
NEW RETAIL SPACES FOR LOCAL SHOPS

The ground floor of the proposed scheme also includes 6 retail units with a total of 250 m². Regeneration has caused the loss of local businesses, particularly in the Peel Precinct area. These new retail spaces can host local shops that cater for the needs of William Dunbar and William Saville residents.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE OUTDOOR SPACES AND NEW AMENITIES

During the workshops, residents discussed that green outdoor spaces were not used to their full potential. Residents reported that they liked the allotments, but there were not many. They also reported that gardens behind William Dunbar and William Saville houses were not used much and people used them to walk their dogs. The Community Plan proposes to improve the outdoor facilities:

- In the main open space, the allotments are extended and improved, and a new children's playground is built. The fence that separates the garden from Carlton Vale is substituted by a pergola, which can be used for different community activities. This pergola also includes a new entrance to the site from Carlton Vale with concierge, and a greenhouse for community use.
- The garden behind William Dunbar House is enclosed by the new construction hosting community facilities and retail units in the ground floor. This enclosed garden is turned into an outdoor gym, which is connected to the indoor gym.
- The garden behind William Saville House will be the garden of the nursery. It will be separated by a fence from the main garden.

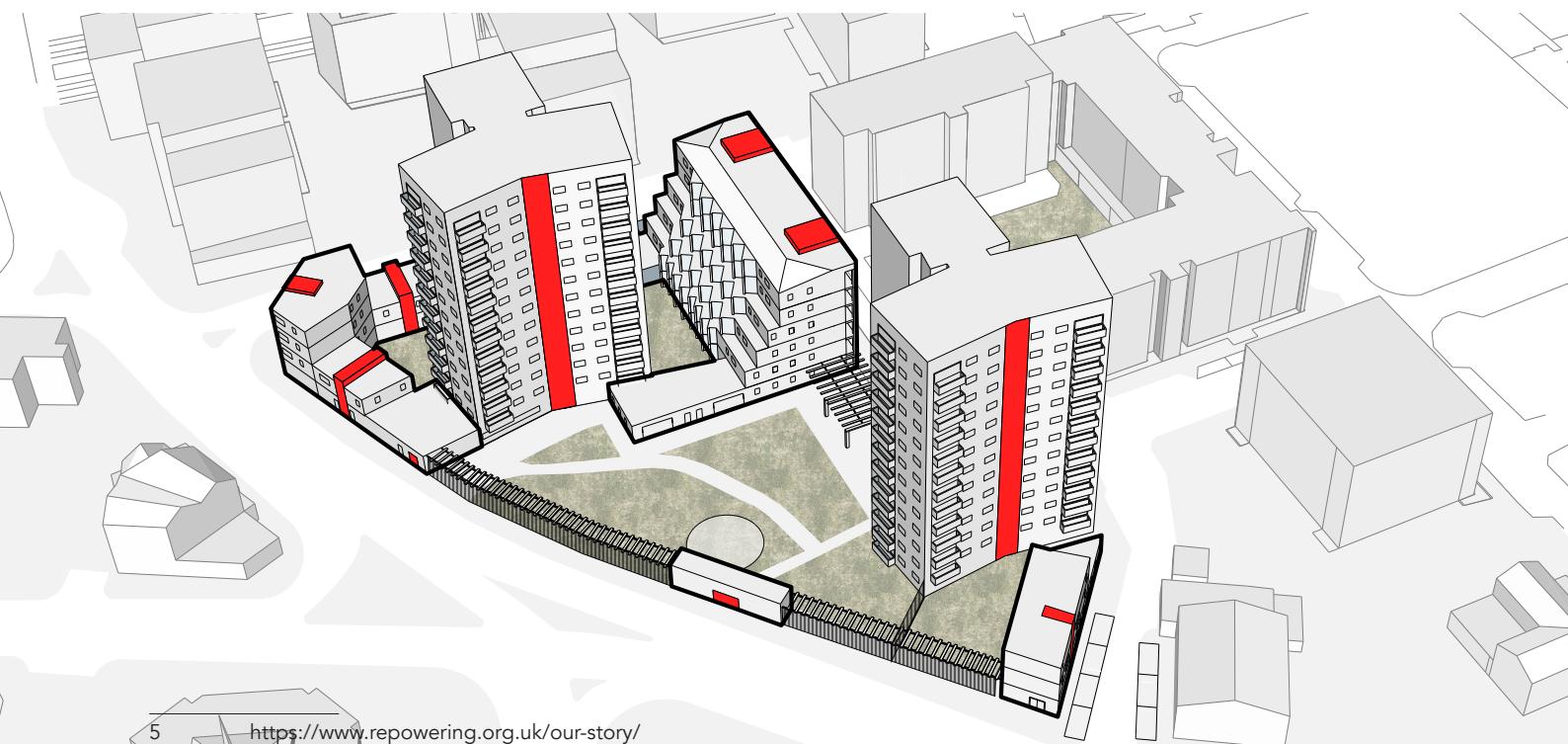


NEW AND IMPROVED ACCESSES

The scheme proposes new and improved accesses. The main new access to the gardens and to the site is through Carlton Vale. A concierge welcomes residents and visitors, which also has tools for the garden and the maintenance of the buildings. The new concierge can be one of the residents in the site, who takes care of security and also of the maintenance of the buildings. There is another entrance to the gardens near William Saville, in the walkway that links William Saville to Albert Road. From Carlton Vale, there are also direct entrances to the new homes, retail units and community facilities facing this road. The entrance to William Dunbar House is now directly from Albert Road (rather than from a car park). This provides a more direct and safer access to the building. In Albert Road, there are also direct entrances to the ground-floor homes. In the walkway that links Albert Road to William Saville, there are direct entrances to the ground-floor homes and access to the staircases leading to the upper floors. Each staircase gives access to 12 and 13 homes. The entrance to William Saville House stays the same. The fire exit in both tower blocks is modified to comply with fire regulations. This needs to be carefully studied in a detailed project. In addition to this, there will be direct entrance from the gardens to William Dunbar and William Saville house, which is not possible now because the fire exit cannot be opened from outside.

COMMUNITY-OWNED SOLAR ENERGY

The rooftop of the existing and the new buildings could be used for installing solar panels. This would generate clean energy that residents can use for their households. In case there is an excess of energy, the community could sell it to the grid and get revenue, which could be used for different community projects and for the improvement of the buildings. This solar panels have not been costed on the financial viability study. They could be installed as an additional community-led project. There are other examples of this across London. This could be done with the support of Repowering, an organisation based in Brixton that empowers "communities to fund, install and manage their own clean, local energy"⁵. These projects are funded through micro-investors that buy shares on a (community-owned) Community Benefit Society where anyone can invest, and get return for their investment.



WHO WOULD DELIVER THE PLAN?

Until now, Brent council has carried out the redevelopment of South Kilburn Estate site by site. In each site, in most cases, Brent council has partnered up with a housing association. As a result of this, council tenants are being transformed in housing association tenants. When carrying out the research for the Social Impact Assessment, both in the survey and in the workshops, residents showed their preference for remaining council tenants. Their main concerns were about security of tenancy and about repairs and maintenance.

Brent's approach to regeneration in partnership with housing association has taken place is most local authorities in London. However, local authorities are starting to build social housing on their own again and there are some examples of this across London. Brent seems to be aiming to follow this example.

This Community Plan proposes that this should be a council-led scheme. Council tenants should remain council tenants, and new tenants in the new social-rent homes should also be council tenants.

This document provides a commercially viable scheme (i.e. the costs of development do not exceed the gross development value) for refurbishing William Dunbar and William Saville Houses and for building new infill homes, community facilities and retail units. This document can be a point of departure for the council to work with residents on putting together a detailed scheme for the regeneration (refurbishment and new infill homes) of William Dunbar and William Saville site.



FINANCING OF THE SCHEME

This Community Plan includes a financial viability study, which has been carried out by a Chartered Quantity Surveyor. The quantity surveyor has worked with the following assumptions:

- "The development should be commercially viable, i.e. the costs of development should not exceed the gross development value.
- The proposed scheme would be a council-led scheme, with no sale value attached to the land.
- A GLA grant of £70,000 per social housing unit to be made available for the scheme.
- Any social housing provided shall be at council rent level".

The scheme has prioritised:

- Refurbishing the exiting tower blocks to Decent Homes + level. This includes refurbishing approximate 30% of kitchens, bathrooms, boilers, radiators and electrical systems, replacing the windows, realignment of ground floor fire exits to ensure that head heights comply with Building Regulations, repair of communal areas, replace roofs, jet blast cleaning the external surface, redecoration of balconies and panels, concrete repairs and conversion of ground floors according to the new design of the Community Plan.
- Providing as many social-rent homes as possible, but also providing as many family-size social-rent homes as possible.

The provision of new social-rent homes and the refurbishment of existing homes would be paid through:

- £70,000 per new social-rent home of GLA funding.
- Contribution from leaseholders to refurbishment.
- Rental income from the existing council housing in William Dunbar and William Saville Housing.
- Rental income from the new social-rent homes in the site.
- Rental income from new retail units.
- Profit from the sales of the market houses.



WHAT HAPPENS WITH LEASEHOLDERS?

Leaseholders would need to pay their contribution for the refurbishment works of the buildings. They would pay proportionally those repairs that are related to the buildings and the common areas, but they would not pay any repair related to the interior of the flats (since they are responsible of the interior of their flats). The financial viability study has estimated that the average cost for leaseholders would be £15,200. This is only indicative and a more detailed survey would need to be carried out to see which repairs are necessary and get a more accurate figure.

This does not mean that leaseholders need to pay £15,200 upfront. The council can adopt different schemes for leaseholders to pay their contribution to repairs. This could be paid through service charge throughout various years, ensuring that the monthly cost is affordable for the leaseholders. The council should consider each particular situation when leaseholders have difficulties to afford repair cost and reduce the cost of this repairs to leaseholders, assuming part of the cost of the repairs.

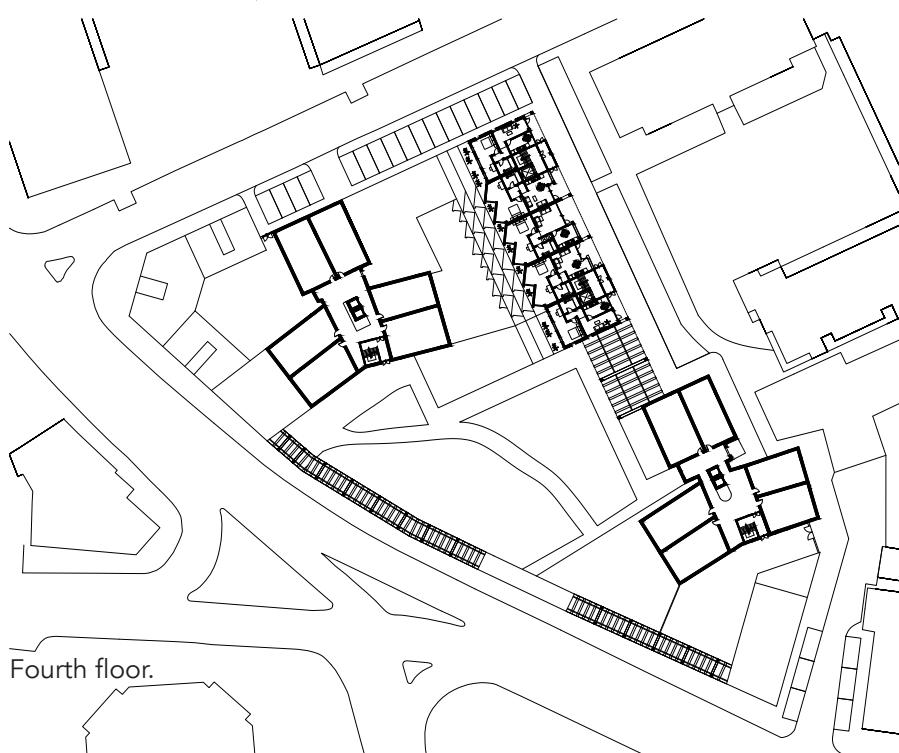
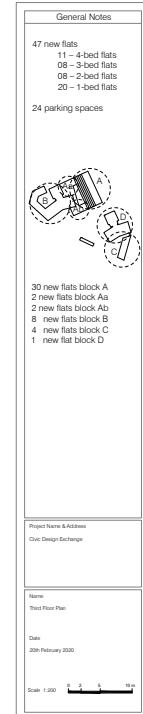
Capping and reducing service charge cost for leaseholders

In 2014, the government published directions on social landlords capping and reducing service charges to leaseholders⁶. This only applies when the repair works have received funding from the "Decent Homes Backlog Funding provided through the 2013 Spending Round; and any other assistance for the specific purpose of carrying out works of repair, maintenance or improvement provided by any Secretary of State or the Homes and Communities Agency". Even if this scheme does not receive any of these sources of funding, Brent council could follow a similar approach capping the services charges to a maximum of £15,000 in a period of five years, and looking at each particular case to apply a discretionary reduction of service charges. In this case, the council would assume the remaining costs.

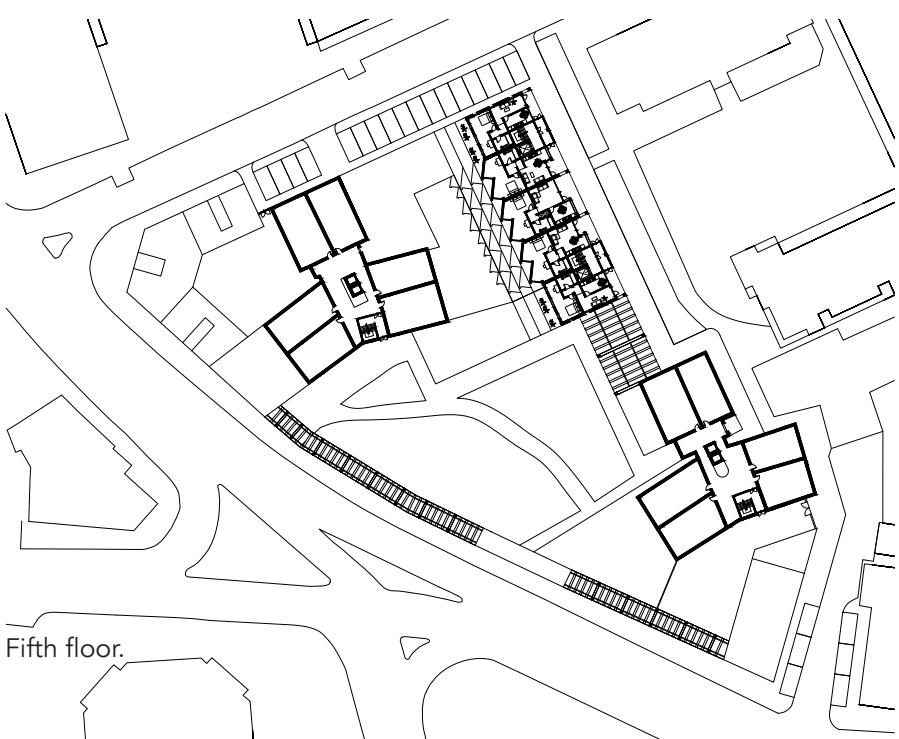
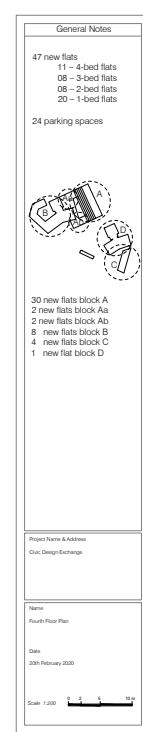




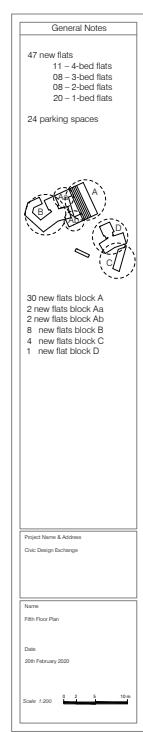
Third floor.



Fourth floor.



Fifth floor.



COMPARISON BETWEEN COMMUNITY PLAN AND SOUTH KILBURN SPD 2017

The Community Plan addresses most of the requirements of the South Kilburn Masterplan Review 2016 and SPD 2017, such as providing more community facilities, shops that provide frontage to Carlton Vale and densifying the site. In addition to this, the Community Plan proposes to deliver over 100 social-rent homes more than the South Kilburn SPD 2017's proposal.

The South Kilburn SPD 2017 proposes to demolish the whole site and build at total of 213 homes, out of which 176 will be market homes and only 37 'affordable' homes, without specifying whether they are for intermediate or low-income households. However, given that Brent Council is pretending to accelerate and bring forward this development, it will need to provide more affordable housing in order to continue its decanting and rehousing programme.

The Community Plan proposes to refurbish the existing 147 homes and build 47 new homes. The total of homes proposed in the Community Plan (refurbishment + new build) in 194, which is 19 less than the proposed in the South Kilburn SPD 2017. Although the total number of homes is lower, the proportion of social-rent homes proposed in the Community Plan is much higher than the proposed in the SPD, the scheme delivers many family-size homes, much more outdoor and green space than the proposed in the SPD, and many community facilities and retail units.

Regarding the social-rent homes, the Community Plan keeps the tenancy of the existing homes. Currently, there is a mixture of social tenants, leaseholders and temporary tenants. Following Brent's housing allocation policy amendment⁷, the temporary tenants will be transformed into council tenants and will be able to stay on site. In addition to keeping the existing social-rent homes, the Community Plan proposes to build 14 new social-rent homes, which suppose 38% (measured in habitable rooms according to the Draft New London Plan) of the new build social housing. Out of the 14 social-rent homes, 13 are family-size, which would be allocated to overcrowded households currently living in William Dunbar or William Saville House. If we take into account the existing refurbished social-rent homes, there will be **over 70%⁸ of social-rent homes in William Dunbar and William Saville site.**

This contrast with the proposal of the South Kilburn SPD 2017, which only provides 37 (17%) social-rent homes. The proposal of the South Kilburn SPD 2017 would suppose the loss of nearly 100 social-rent homes in the site compared to the current situation and a loss of over 100 social-rent homes compared to the proposal in the Community Plan.



	Leaseholder or market homes	Social-rent homes	Total homes
Refurbished existing	15	132	147
New	33	14	47
TOTAL	48	146	194
Percentage of social-rent homes (measured in habitable rooms)		72%	
Percentage of social-rent homes (measured in units)		75%	
Percentage of social-rent homes (measured in floorspace)		71%	



Site	Market	Affordable	Total
Phase 8 2026-2029			
William Dunbar House /William Saville House	176	37	213
Total Phase 8	176 (83%)	37 (17%)	213 (100%)

Community Plan. (current figures of leaseholder and social tenants is an estimated assumption)

South Kilburn SPD 2017.

⁷ <https://www.brent.gov.uk/your-community/regeneration/south-kilburn-regeneration/residents-of-south-kilburn/tenants-and-households-in-temporary-accommodation/>

⁸ It is not possible to know the exact figure since we do not have know the current tenancies in the buildings. This study has worked with the assumption that there are 15 out of the 147 flats are owned by leaseholders and the rest are council tenants (currently, some of these are temporary tenants).

Would you like to support this Community Plan?

Reply to the survey we have sent you with this document and get in touch with William Dunbar and William Saville Tenants and Residents' Association
(WDWScommittee@gmail.com)

If you would like to direct your queries about the Community Plan to the UCL team that has elaborated this document, email pablo.sendra@ucl.ac.uk



Perspective view of the communal garden and the new building from Carlton Vale.

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