

# NEW RUINS

## THE DECLINE & REGENERATION OF COUNCIL HOUSING

by

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I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including and required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

## ABSTRACT

01. Appadurai, Arjun. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press. 1986. 6

The thesis explores the emergence, decline, and regeneration of council housing in the United Kingdom, and specifically London. It presents a conception of housing as a commodity derived from Arjun Appadurai's *The Social Life of Things*, suggesting that commodities possess "a particular type of social potential", a value realised only in their use or consumption.<sup>1</sup> Housing understood in these terms provides an essential utilitarian and social function as a means of shelter, the domain of human association and its reproduction.

Recognising a need for consistent, sanitary, and fairly priced housing, the 1890 Housing of the Working Classes Act established the role of the state in maintaining quality standards of living as a right. Council housing, housing built and maintained by local authorities directly mobilised the social potential of housing as a commodity. Within a restricted commodity context, its value was realised through its consumption – a domestic use-value realised through rent.

The strategic removal of council housing from this restricted commodity context was promoted as a progressive redistributive policy under Thatcher as "the Right to Buy". Through the diversification of tenure, it has enabled the transfer of housing capital from local authorities to stable council tenants, establishing a "property-owning democracy" while reducing council housing stock and the presence of the welfare state. Since 1980, the right to buy and subsequent housing reforms have promoted a political and ideological disinvestment from council housing, intensifying the process of its social, and economic devalorization.

The thesis examines the regeneration of council housing as the product of two parallel processes each manipulating the ground rent or land value of a given site. In this way, the gentrification of council housing is directly initiated by local and regional authorities. Though maintaining a rhetoric of social improvement, the neoliberal strategies promoted by such practices instead intensify the social exclusion and deprivation it alleges to address. The gentrification and demolition of council housing concludes a broader historical narrative describing its slow deliberate privatisation, and diminishing value ascribed to the state provision of housing, since its peak in the 1970s.

Appropriating the new ruins of the welfare state as sites of agonistic potential within the city, the project demands a theoretical re-foundation, and critical recuperation of the social and ideological objectives of council housing. Mobilising the latent social potential of housing as a commodity it describes a projective model of development separating financial form and social function. The project pursues the financialization of property under neoliberalism to its most illogical extremes, abstracting housing from the financial armatures that enable investment in the built environment. Specifically, it proposes the development of high quality, permanently *affordable* housing realised through the exploitation of speculative property investment.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

I first moved to London in February 2010 taking up residence off Walworth Road a few minutes south of the Heygate Estate. The Estate was designed in late 1960s by Tim Tinker for the Southwark Council Architects' Department and completed in 1974.

Tinker's design arranged five long slab blocks between eight to twelve storeys around the site's perimeter to enclose eleven blocks of four-storey maisonettes and communal gardens. Based on the principals of the Athens Charter the design separated vehicular and pedestrian traffic; buildings were accessed from a network of elevated walkways, while the ground plane was devoted to parking, play areas and communal gardens.

In 2007 Australian developer Lend Lease was selected by Southwark Council as the "regeneration partner" for the redevelopment of the Elephant and Castle and Heygate Estate. The process of "decanting" more than 3000 council tenants and leaseholders from the Heygate began the same year, and by October 2008 the estate was more than half emptied. By March of 2010 only 20 of the 1,107 flats remained occupied. The final tenant of the Heygate Estate was evicted in November 2013, and the buildings demolished shortly before the beginning of 2015.<sup>1</sup>

When redevelopment is completed in 2025, only 74 of the approximately 2470 units will be available for social rent, and a 180 available for "affordable rent" - between 50-80% of market value. In June 2015, one bedroom flats in second phase of the development were listed from £563,000 and two bedroom flats started at £720,000. To put that in context, the maximum obtainable mortgage on an estimated median household income of £37,000 in Southwark, is £148,000.<sup>2</sup>

While the Heygate Estate is perhaps the most publicised and well documented example, across London numerous council housing estates are facing imminent demolition as the result of "regeneration".<sup>3</sup> Their demolition concludes a broader historical narrative describing the death of council housing in the United Kingdom, or more specifically its slow, incremental privatisation.

01. "Regeneration Timeline." Heygate Was Home – Digital Archive. Accessed April 2015. <http://heygatewashome.org/timeline.html>.

02. GLA Household Income Estimates 2012/2013 for Southwark.

03. Figures from the Greater London Authority documenting regeneration schemes with current planning permission estimate a net loss of 7,326 social rented units.

The thesis is structured in three parts; the first, A Social History of Housing attempts to understand a conception of housing as a commodity and argues that its social potential, or social use-value can only be realised within a restricted commodity context. It details history of council housing in the UK, from its establishment through its decline and eventual diversion from its restricted commodity context.

The second part, New Ruins, examines the regeneration of council housing as the result of its social, political and economic devalorization. It describes the role of the image and rhetoric of the skin estate in the current practice of regeneration, and examines the economics of the gentrification of council housing.

The third part of thesis is a design proposal for the redevelopment of the Heygate Estate proposing the separation of housing from the financial implications inherent to its neoliberal conception as a commodity.



1.0

# A SOCIAL HISTORY OF HOUSING

## HOUSING AS A COMMODITY

The thesis describes a conception of housing as commodity derived from social-cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai's "The Social Life of Things". Appadurai suggests that commodities possess "a particular type of social potential".<sup>1</sup> And amending Marx's definition, a commodity is thus a product intended for exchange, produced not solely for its intended personal use-value but a use-value for others – a social use-value or social potential.<sup>2</sup> For Marx, use-value describes the utility of a thing for human life, a value released only in its use or consumption.<sup>3</sup> Housing, understood in these terms provides an essential utilitarian and social function as a means of shelter, the domain of human association, and its reproduction. Beyond the symbolic understanding of the domestic realm, housing as a commodity describes the social potential of housing mediated through politics. Abstracted from a domestic use-value, housing is broadly understood in terms of "real estate" or property. While this designation describes an exchange-value, and facility to function as a commodity in an economic sense, it conceals an inherent, critical social potential of housing as commodity.

Citing sociologist Georg Simmel, Appadurai supports a notion that value is ascribed through economic exchange. If the demand for exchange – real or speculative – describes our mutual social and economic valuation of a commodity, the association between exchange and value, he argues, "is politics, constructed broadly".<sup>4</sup>

Appadurai proposes the term "commodity situation" to define the condition wherein the exchangeability of a *thing* emerges as its primary, socially relevant feature.<sup>5</sup> He further disaggregates the term to define "commodity phase", "commodity candidacy", and "commodity context" three concepts crucial to understanding the social life and trajectory of a given *thing*. Commodity phase describes *things* "moving in or out of the commodity state"; commodity candidacy describes the criteria "that define the exchangeability of things"; and commodity context describes the "social arenas" that enable a candidate *thing* to move into a commodity phase.<sup>6</sup> Commoditisation thus occurs at the "complex intersection of temporal, cultural and social factors."<sup>7</sup> Here, the word "commodity" is used to identify those *things* in society at a phase in their trajectory, and in a particular context, that satisfy the conditions of commodity candidacy.<sup>8</sup>

01. Appadurai, Arjun. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press. 1986. 6

02. Marx. "The Commodity 1867." Accessed October 6, 2015. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/commodity.htm>

03. Ibid

04. Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, 3 - 4.

05. Ibid, 13.

06. Ibid, 13 - 15.

07. Ibid, 15.

08. Ibid, 16

09. Ibid, 22

From a temporal perspective, the movement of *things* as they transition in and out a commodity state, illustrate what Appadurai describes as “paths and diversions”. At such points things reveal the common social and political agreements understood as commodity candidacy and commodity context – here the effects of politics are most visible. Paths describe patterns of commodity circulation from a social context responsible for our mutual construction of value. This does not remain fixed through the social life of a given thing, but is subject to constant negotiation and political redefinition - a process most discernible where new paths are established by means of diversion. When strategically engaged through politics – both individual and institutional – diversions mediate value by introducing or removing objects from relevant social commodity contexts.<sup>9</sup>

## FREEHOLD, LEASEHOLD & RENT

To adequately understand the strategic implications of diversions it's necessary to first identify the culturally conventionalised paths that describe our perceptions of housing as a commodity. These paths are illustrated through the social history of housing, its circulation and consumption, and originate from the politics of property and ownership. The historic development of London, was predominantly governed by feudal property rights promoting the speculative construction of housing under a system of leaseholds. As a model of ownership, the 99 year lease catalysed the development of the city while directly, and intentionally inscribing in its urban form the class system inherent to the ownership of property.

The commodification of property under capitalism is extended through rent. As indicated by Harvey, all rent is based on the principals of ownership and private property. In a classical economic sense, it is income received by landlords as owners of property, and arises from the potential of realising an increased income over an extended period "by virtue of this exclusive control over some directly or indirectly tradable item".<sup>10</sup> The direct or indirect nature of exchange identifies a necessary distinction between freehold and leasehold when describing housing as a commodity. Freehold, defines the "permanent and absolute tenure of land or property"<sup>11</sup> and is both directly and indirectly exchanged as a commodity. Freehold property is indirectly exchanged through leaseholds, enabling ownership via the right to property over a given duration. It is thus not the property itself which is exchanged but the commodity produced through its use.<sup>12</sup>

More commonly, rent is used to describe household rent, fixed term or periodic tenancy. While property remains the underlying commodity which is indirectly exchanged it removes the dimension of ownership enabled through leaseholds. Instead, where a landlord produces a service on land, the functions of production and ownership are combined, and a site's capitalised ground rent is appropriated through the rent paid by tenants.<sup>13</sup> Where precluded from the ownership of property, the working class is instead dependant on the consumption of housing as a commodity enabled through rent. In the context of Appadurai's definition of a commodity, rent therefore emphasises the social potential of housing as a commodity by directly mobilising use-value through its consumption.

10. Harvey, David. 'The Art of Rent: Globalization and the Commodification of Culture', Spaces of Capital. New York: Routledge. 2001. 395.

11. Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "freehold"

12. Harvey, The Art of Rent: Globalization and the Commodification of Culture, 395.

13. Smith, Neil, The New Urban Frontier Gentrification and the Revanchist City. London ; New York: Routledge. 59



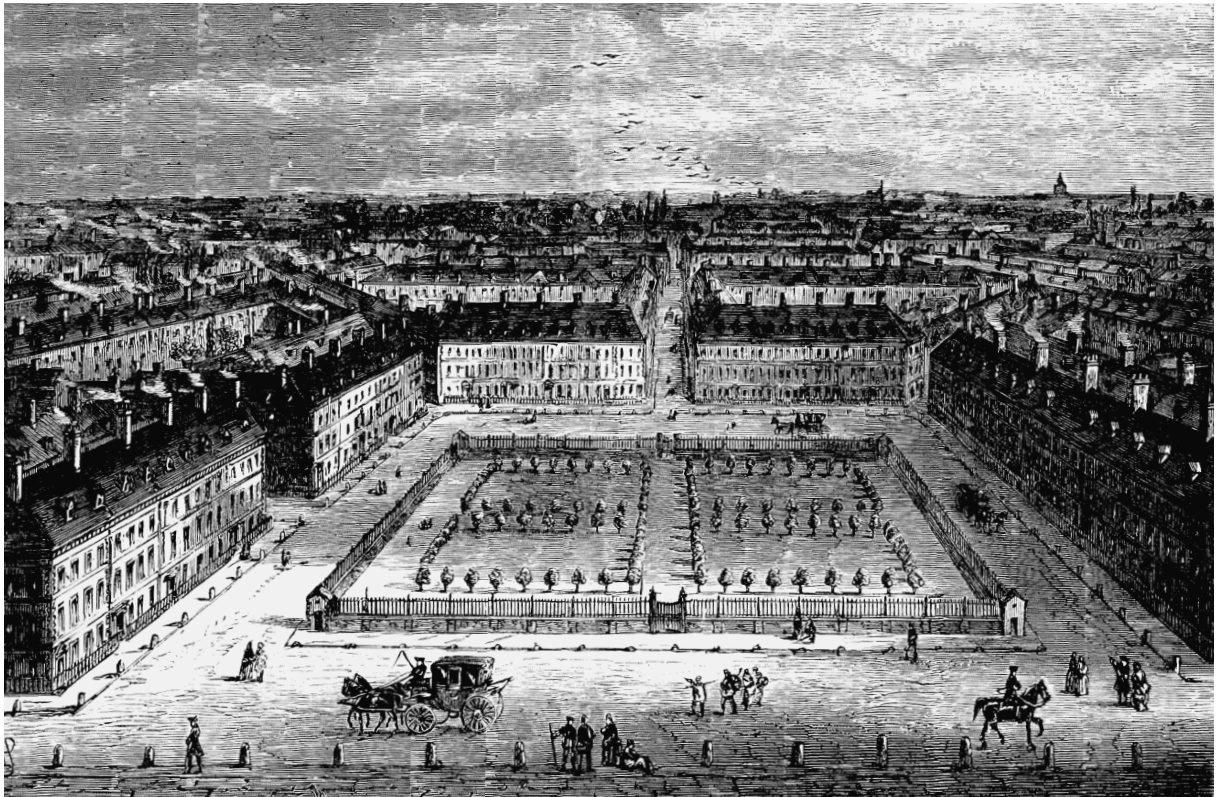


Fig 01 Red Lion Square, 1800.



Fig 02 Gustave Doré, Dudley Street, Seven Dials, 1872.  
Depicting a Victorian slum in the City of Westminster.

## PRE-WELFARE STATE

The section that follows is intended to illustrate the paths and diversions that have defined a collective perception of housing as commodity. Critically observed, the social history of housing – specifically that of working class housing in the United Kingdom – reveals a complex trajectory defined through politics, from which we describe its social potential, or agency.

14. Swenarton, Mark, Tom Avermaete, and Dirk Van Den Heuvel, eds. *Architecture and the Welfare State*. New York: Routledge, 2015. 7

The basis of the welfare state emerged in the nineteenth century in response to a period of rapid urbanisation, development and intense population growth induced by the industrial revolution. This radically altered social, cultural, economic, and political life in a shift which “destabilised the traditional forms of welfare provided by family networks, charity organisations, feudal ties, guilds, municipalities and religious institutions.”<sup>14</sup> In response to wide spread poverty and a growing Labour Movement it became necessary for the development of institutional initiatives at the local, regional and national levels addressing the “social question” and demand for a redistribution of resources exploited through industrial capitalism.

15. Roberts, Andrew. *Salisbury: Victorian Titan*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999. 286

Amid rising protest against the inadequate living conditions prevalent amongst the urban poor, a Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes was established in 1884. As a result, the Housing of the Working Classes Act was introduced to House of Lords in 1885 where it met criticism by the Liberty and Property Defence League as “strangling the spirit of independence and the self-reliance of the people, and destroying the moral fibre of our race in the anaconda coils of state socialism”.<sup>15</sup>

16. Beattie, Susan. *A Revolution in London Housing : LCC Housing Architects & Their Work 1893-1914*. London, Greater London Council Architectural Press 1980. 15

It was not however until the creation of the London County Council (LCC) in 1889 that previous working class housing legislations were consolidated in the Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1890.<sup>16</sup> The act extended provisions for the construction of working class housing by local authorities, and formalised the role of government in the maintenance of quality standards of living as a right.

By 1893 pressures on the LCC's Works and Improvement branch to produce designs for the Public Health and Housing Committee were such that superintending architect, Thomas Blashill would recommend the designation of an independent Housing of the Working Class Branch to oversee the design and construction of new council housing.<sup>17</sup>

17. *Ibid.*, 15

The first council estate, the Boundary Estate, was built on the site of the Old Nichol slums, between Shoreditch and Bethnal Green in East London. To confront the association between poor living conditions, social immobility, and early mortality, the London County Council recognised the need for consistent, sanitary, and fairly priced housing.<sup>18</sup> Housing, built and maintained by local authorities, exemplifies a critical diversion from the paths characterising the consumption of housing as a commodity through private rent. Within this restricted commodity context council housing operates as a “terminal commodity”, that is a commodity intended for consumption by the working class, and restricted from entering a commodity state.<sup>19</sup> Precluded from exchange, value becomes a complex product of consumption – a domestic use-value realised through rent – thus emphasising the social potential of housing as a commodity.

18. Hanley, Lynsey. *Estates: An Intimate History*. London: Granta, 2007. p. 56

19. Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, 23.

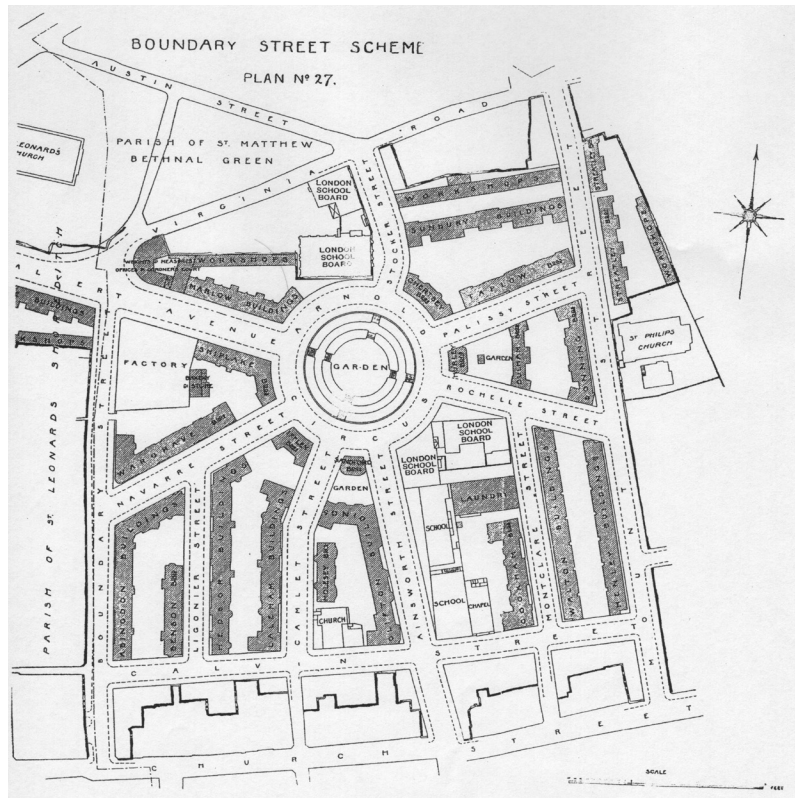


Fig 03 Arnold Circus Looking West, Boundary Estate, 1907.  
 Fig 04 Boundary Street Scheme, 1900.

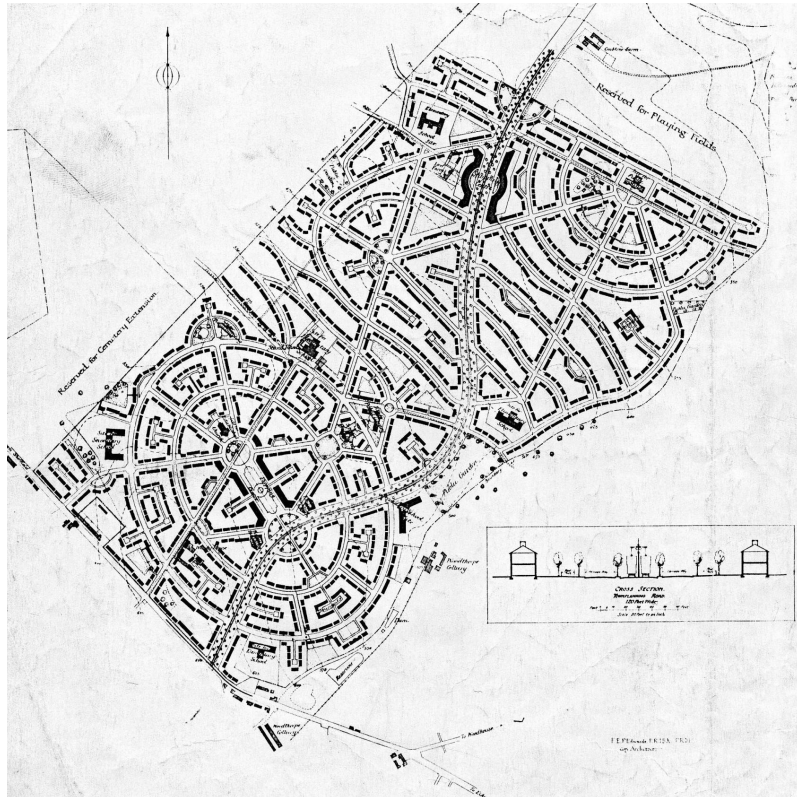


Fig 05 Manor Estate Housing Scheme, Sheffield 1919.  
 Fig 06 Construction of the Manor Estate, Sheffield 1927.

## INTER-WAR

20. 'Public Housing in Poplar: The Inter-war Years,' in Survey of London: Volumes 43 and 44, Poplar, Blackwall and Isle of Dogs, ed. Hermione Hobhouse London: London County Council, 1994. 23-37.

The inter-war years would witness the construction of state built housing at a national scale. Under the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1919, or "Addison Act", after Minister of Health Dr. Christopher Addison, local authorities were now required to assess need and carry out plans for the provision of homes to meet working class demand. The Act had been conceived in the belief that, unless working class aspirations were quickly met postwar, Britain might be faced with a revolution, similar to that in Russia.<sup>20</sup>

21. Hanley, Estates: An Intimate History, 65

*Not only could revolution be averted through the provision of a decent lifestyle for working men and their families, but council housing was seen as an investment: a national asset.*<sup>21</sup>

On a national level it was architecture deployed as a social palliative, in effect, a pragmatic state socialism. It did little to ameliorate a prominent social inequality, but proposed progressive spatial ideals under the Tudor Walter Standards, furnishing the working class in cottage estates – an inclination to the socialist ideals of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City. The spatial legacy of interwar housing, however noble its intentions towards improving the individual living conditions, had consequential negative implications on its communities. The process of slum clearance and rehousing very often fragmented complex community associations of high-density inner city living. Families were regularly displaced numerous times throughout redevelopment before finally being rehoused in comparatively isolated areas of the city. Intentionally, or not, the geographic isolation and atomisation of populations proved an effective counter-revolutionary practice.

## POSTWAR

The onset of the Second World War catalysed the need for an expanded role of social welfare at a national level. The 1942 Social Insurance and Allied Services Report or Beveridge Report after its author Sir William Beveridge, established a model of welfare provision and social support addressing what Beveridge termed the “five giants” confronting social inequality and poverty; want, ignorance, disease, idleness and squalor. It proposed a system of social security extending “from cradle to grave”, administered by the state, to be implemented at war’s end. The progressive report insisted that war provided the opportunity to make good – a British revolution.<sup>22</sup>

*Now, when the war is abolishing landmarks of every kind, is the opportunity for using experience in a clear field. A revolutionary moment in the world’s history is a time for revolutions, not for patching.*<sup>23</sup>

Beveridge argued that social progress could only be achieved through coherent government policy. The report, implemented in 1945 established the social and political motive of what would become known as the Welfare State. Following the 1945 General Election victory, the Labour Party began implementation of its manifesto commitments to introduce a programme of extensive social reforms as outlined in the Beveridge Report. Aneurin Bevan was appointed Minister of Health, an assignment that included Housing, and therefore the responsibility of instituting the postwar reconstruction.<sup>24</sup>

22. “The Plan for Social Security: Full Outline.” The Guardian. December 2, 1942. Accessed Aug 31, 2015.

23. Ibid.

24. Brooke, Stephen. Reform and Reconstruction: Britain after the War, 1945-51. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995. 18





Fig 07 Sir William Beveridge, 1944.



Fig 08 Watercolour image depicting blocks of 10 floor flats,  
County of London Plan 1943.

25. Hanley, Estates: An Intimate History, 77-78

The bitter destruction of the war had presented the opportunity to build social equality into the fabric of the nation. To avert the failures of the interwar housing, planner Thomas Sharp warned against the segregation of the working classes in mono-tenure estates. To establish a classless society in which all inhabitants would share an equal sense of pride in their home, postwar development instead advocated for class diversity, promoting social mobility and cohesion on which the success of the welfare state relied.<sup>25</sup>

26. Hebbert, Michael. 1998. London : More by Fortune Than Design. Chichester: Chichester : John Wiley. 72

For architects and advocates of a “new architecture” the postwar political context was ideal. The 1945 General Election had put into office the Labour politicians “who had been the strongest protagonists of planning within LCC.”<sup>26</sup> However, faced with an austere housing shortage, wartime ideals promoting new standards of housing and planning were set aside, instead favouring a return to interwar models in an attempt to meet ambitious construction targets.<sup>27</sup> Nationally, the harsh realities of postwar material shortages, and allocations towards the war-damage repair program caused major deficits in the housing program. The slow materialisation of Labour’s “New Jerusalem” would contribute to a Conservative victory in the 1951 General Election, promising to end the perception of incipient crisis.<sup>28</sup>

27. Bullock, Nicholas. 2002. Building the Post-war World : Modern Architecture and Reconstruction in Britain. London ; New York: Routledge.

28. Hanley, Estates: An Intimate History, 80.

## PROPERTY-OWNING DEMOCRACY

In the shift towards Conservative pragmatism, housing became a means through which to maintain a stable postwar social democratic consensus. Under founding minister, Harold Macmillan, housing was isolated from the Ministry of Health to form the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, and given priority with a commitment to postwar reconstruction.<sup>29</sup> Aided by a recovering economy, and unencumbered by material shortages, Macmillan encouraged the resurgence of private sector construction towards achieving ambitious government housing targets.

29. Hanley, *Estates: An Intimate History*, 89.

At a national scale council housing was deployed as a palliative response to the immediate question of crisis. This differed from the postwar optimism of Aneurin Bevan, for whom the political agency of housing resided in its potential to encourage social transformation and equality. Under Macmillan, housing was extended as a product to be consumed by the welfare state – an expedient towards achieving a Conservative “property-owning democracy”.<sup>30</sup> It was no longer treated as a national asset – an investment in the collective wealth of the nation – but a pragmatic, temporary solution towards eventual individual legacy.<sup>31</sup>

30. *Ibid*, 92.

31. *Ibid*

The “tower block” emerged as a response to housing need and technological innovation; prefabricated building systems were to play an important role in the construction of the Welfare State. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government allocated subsidies towards Local Housing authorities, paid out per dwelling and promoting height. In the late fifties this would encourage construction density, and the tower block emerged as the prevalent typology during the period of increased housing output as the topic of reconstruction shifted to one of the modernisation, replacement and the clearance of slums.

For general population, system built housing would come to represent “modern architecture” and everything that was wrong with it. Public investment, “conceived to narrow the gap between rich and poor, eventually served to create a firm and visible wall between them.”<sup>32</sup> Tower blocks, while visible signs of progress in the image of a new society, ultimately failed to establish long term social equality, and diverse communities sharing an equal sense of pride in their home. Instead council housing became a foundation from which to promote upward social mobility. In a way the provision of council housing did succeed in building a new society, but at the expense of those left behind.

32. *Ibid*, 97.



Fig 09 Brandon Estate, Ted Hollamby & LCC Architects' Department 1960.



Fig 10 Margaret Thatcher pictured holding a copy of the 1979 Conservative Manifesto.

33. Jack Self. "Derivative Architecture" in *Real Estates: Life Without Debt*, eds. Jack Self and Shumi Bose. London: Bedford Press, 2014. 83

With increased postwar production and the availability of affordable council housing, by the early 1970s income inequality and household debt had reached historic lows. Steady capital gains through the 1960s had promoted homeownership as the preferable tenure amongst the newly affluent masses, and liberal lending by banks would eventually contribute towards a 1973 property market collapse wiping 73% of the value from the London Stock Exchange and thrusting the British Economy into recession. In an attempt to readjust property prices fixed rents were eliminated – a measure which ultimately uncoupled the previously interrelated factors of house prices, wage growth, and household debt.<sup>33</sup>

34. *Ibid*

The foundations of the neoliberal project emerged in response to the economic crisis of the 1970s, having destabilised the postwar social democratic consensus. By 1975 household borrowing had increased to the extent that it had effectively replaced wage growth – which had stalled under the compounded effects of the 1974 Oil Shock, globalisation and the deindustrialization of the British economy. This established the basis for an economic model financed by credit and bound to household equity and therefore private property.<sup>34</sup>

## THE RIGHT TO BUY

“The Right to Buy” was introduced under Thatcher in 1980, the policy would benefit millions of stable council tenants, enabling them to buy their homes from local authorities at a significant discount. As a political act, “Right to Buy” marks a collective shift in the perceived value of housing as a commodity. We can consider this to have originated with Macmillan under whom the provision of housing became an expedient towards achieving a conservative property owning democracy. While Macmillan understood council housing as a pragmatic step towards acquiring an individual legacy, the right to buy instead mobilised council housing to create a property owning democracy.

The enclaved nature of council housing made it an attractive target for diversion and the “interested” removal from a restricted commodity context “to one where exchange is less confined, and more profitable in some short-term sense.”<sup>35</sup> It enabled the mass transfer of capital from the national housing asset, and the collective wealth of the nation to individual homeowners, simultaneously establishing the property-owning democracy as envisioned by Macmillan while reducing council housing stock and the presence of the welfare state. Notably the policy would also prohibit councils from reinvesting revenues from the sale of council housing in maintenance of existing stock or construction of new housing. The strategic removal of council housing from a restricted commodity context, was promoted as a progressive redistributive policy under Thatcher. It redefined a perception of council housing extending a neoliberal financialisation of housing as commodity to a property-owning democracy.

35. Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, 25.





Fig 11 The King family of Milton Keynes receive the deeds to their council house from Margaret Thatcher in 1979.

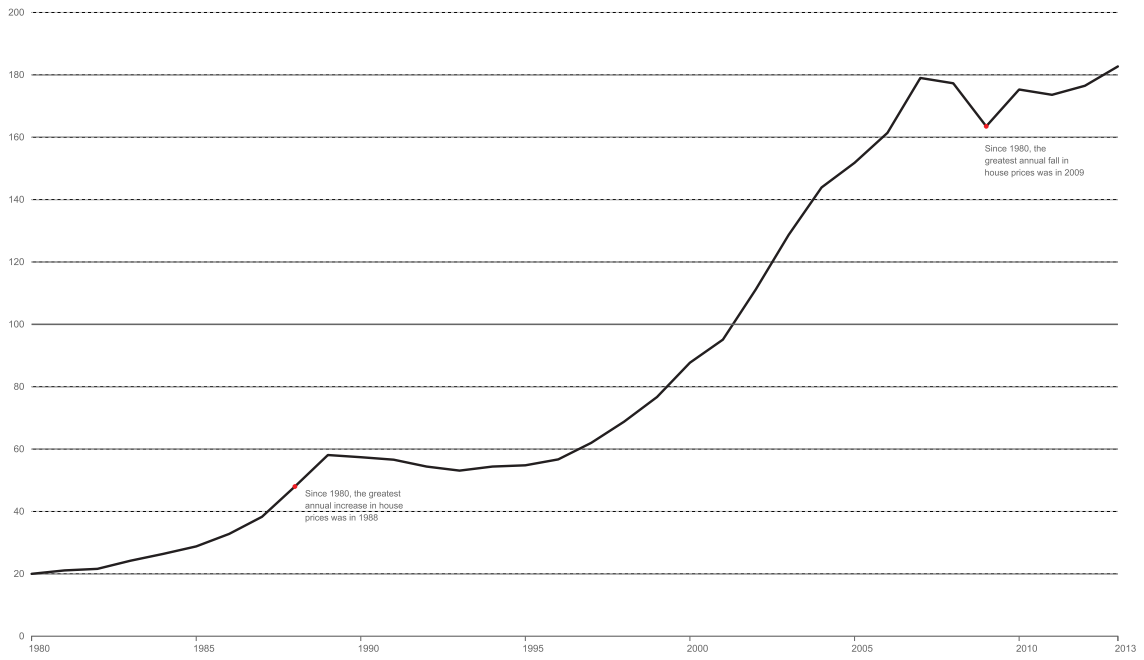


Fig 12 Mix-Adjusted House Price Index, UK, 1980 - 2013

## NEOLIBERALISM

36. Neil Brenner. "Neoliberalisation" in *Real Estates: Life Without Debt*, eds. Jack Self and Shumi Bose. London: Bedford Press, 2014. 16

Housing and the built environment are fundamental to a process of aggressive wealth redistribution inherent to neoliberal economics. This considers the free market as the best, most efficient means of allocating social resources and has enabled the redistribution of wealth from public sources, institutions and society at large to a class of economic and political elite.<sup>36</sup> At an individual level this process is enabled through the logic of credit, or conversely debt, a relationship that begins to define a neoliberal conception of housing as a commodity.

37. Self, "Derivative Architecture". 83

38. Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, 13.

In the pursuit of capital accumulation neoliberal strategies neither promote or sustain stable long term growth, but rely on the infinite capital gains of property markets to further the extension of credit.<sup>37</sup> Accumulation-centric politics promoting the real or speculative exchange of housing as a commodity demand that it exists within a continuous "commodity situation", a condition described by Appadurai wherein the exchangeability of a *thing* is its primary, socially relevant feature.<sup>38</sup> In this context, housing as a commodity is abstracted from a domestic use-value and broadly understood in terms of real estate or property. This designation describes its facility for exchange, but deceives a critical social potential of housing as a commodity mobilised through its consumption.



2.0

## NEW RUINS

## REGENERATION

The regeneration of the Heygate Estate began as early as 1998. Lend Lease was named as a “development partner” in 2007, and despite a lack of replacement homes, Southwark Council began a process of “temporarily” decanting tenants into existing council housing stock elsewhere in the borough. By October 2008 the estate was half emptied, and by June of 2009, the majority of tenants had been decanted from the site. In March of 2010, only 20 flats remained occupied. The final tenant of the Heygate was evicted in November 2013, and the estate demolished shortly before the beginning of 2015.<sup>1</sup>

In the context of a national housing crisis, one might question why perfectly sound council flats are left empty for as many as five years only to be demolished and replaced with increasingly inaccessible market rate housing. The regeneration of the Heygate Estate has therefore become an object of debate, documented in over a hundred articles written between 2007 and 2015.<sup>2</sup> Those in favour of its demolition insist the inhumane nature of its architecture is responsible for the crime and social decay broadly considered symptomatic of such problem estates. Those who oppose its demolition condemn the eviction of thousands of council tenants before they can be adequately rehoused, only to replace a significant stock of council housing with primarily market rate housing. In the context of a housing crisis the demolition of the Heygate is, therefore, an act of social cleansing “clearing the area of its lowest-income inhabitants” and creating opportunities for “unbridled property speculation”.<sup>3</sup>

The regeneration of the Heygate is only a single case in a broader historical narrative describing the premeditated decline of council housing under neoliberalism. As Francesco Sebregondi writes;

*In fact, the absence of change in the plot narrating its death sustains the collective perception of the council estate as an atavism; and of its burial, as progress. In this way, the liquidation of each of the numerous remaining estates can carry on slowly but surely, without encountering much resistance.*<sup>4</sup>

The case of the Heygate will thus serve as an example “through which we can trace the diminishing value UK governments have attached to the state provision of housing [...] since [its] peak in the 1970s”.<sup>5</sup>

01. “Regeneration Timeline.” Heygate Was Home – Digital Archive. Accessed April 2015. <http://heygatewashome.org/timeline.html>.

02. A survey of local, national and international media identified through the LexisNexis database using the search terms “Heygate Estate” and “regeneration” between January 2007 to December 2014, returned 112 individual results.

03. Francesco Sebregondi, “The Event of Void; Architecture and Politics in the Evacuated Heygate Estate.” (MA diss., Goldsmiths University of London, 2011)

04. Sebregondi. “The Event of Void”

05. Ben Campkin, *Remaking London: Decline and Regeneration in Urban Culture* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 78



Fig 13 "Elephant Park", Heygate Estate Regeneration, Lend Lease.



Fig 14 Site Context 1870





Fig 15 Site Context 1890

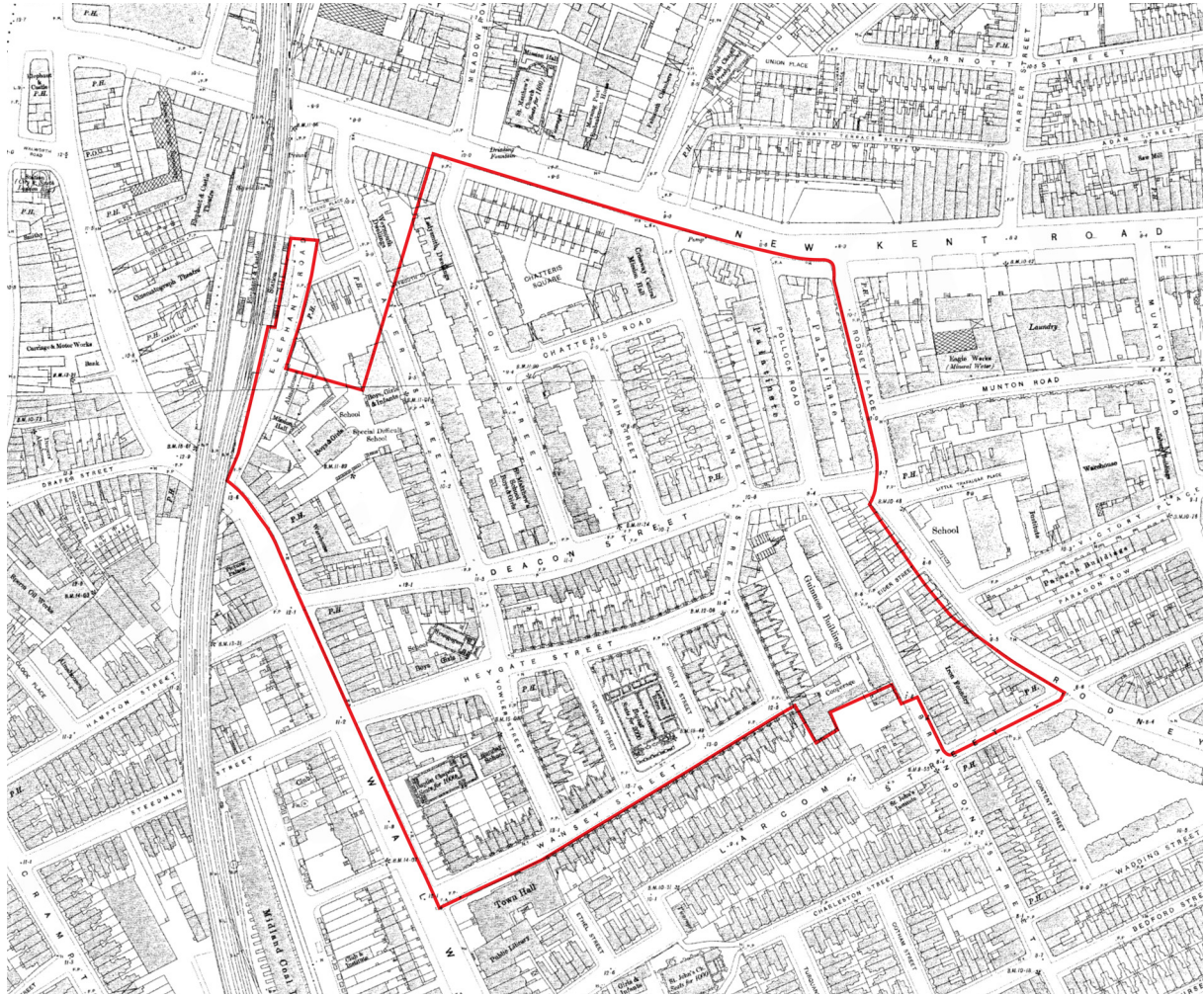


Fig 16 Site Context 1910

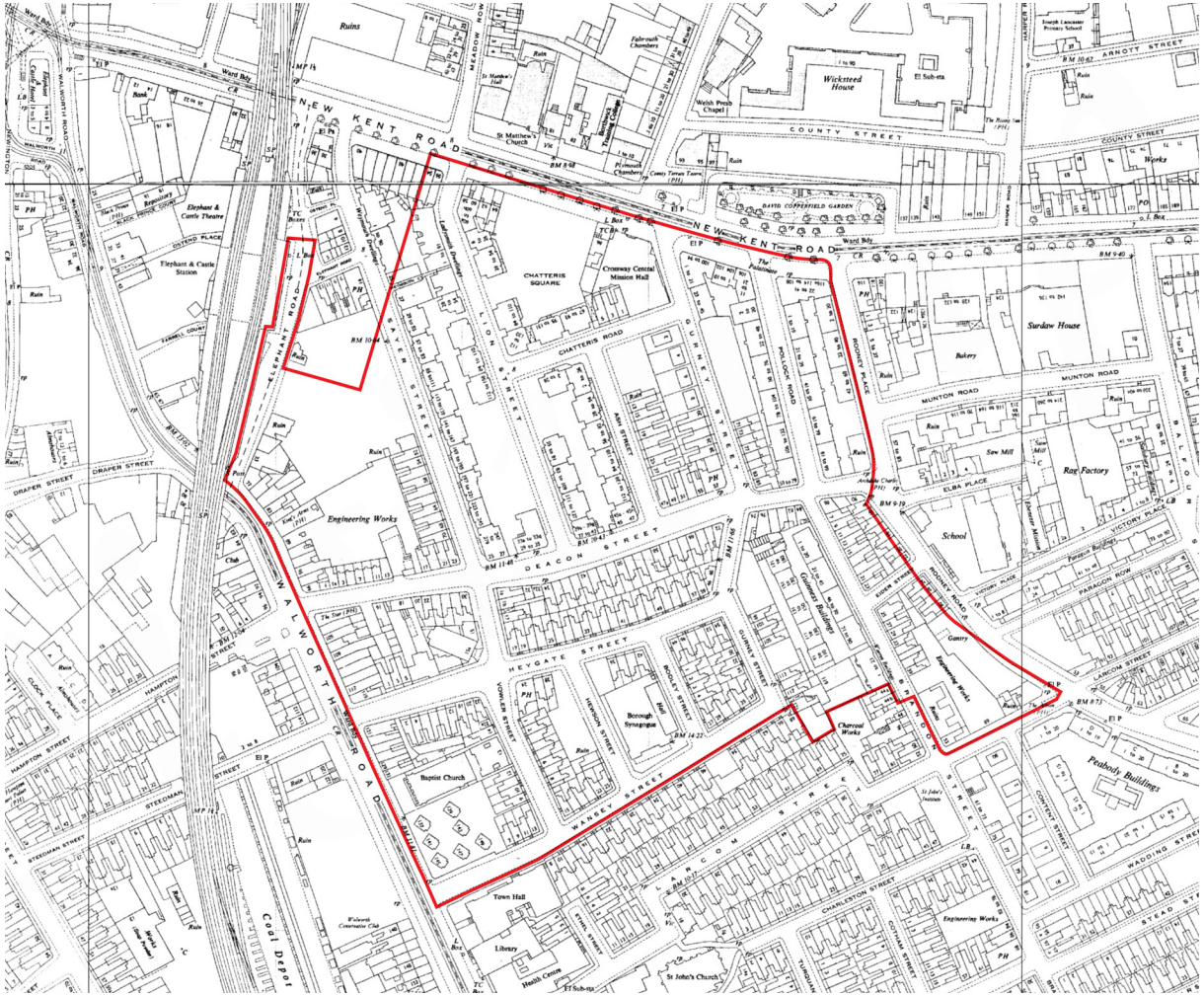


Fig 17 Site Context 1950



Fig 18 Site Context 1960

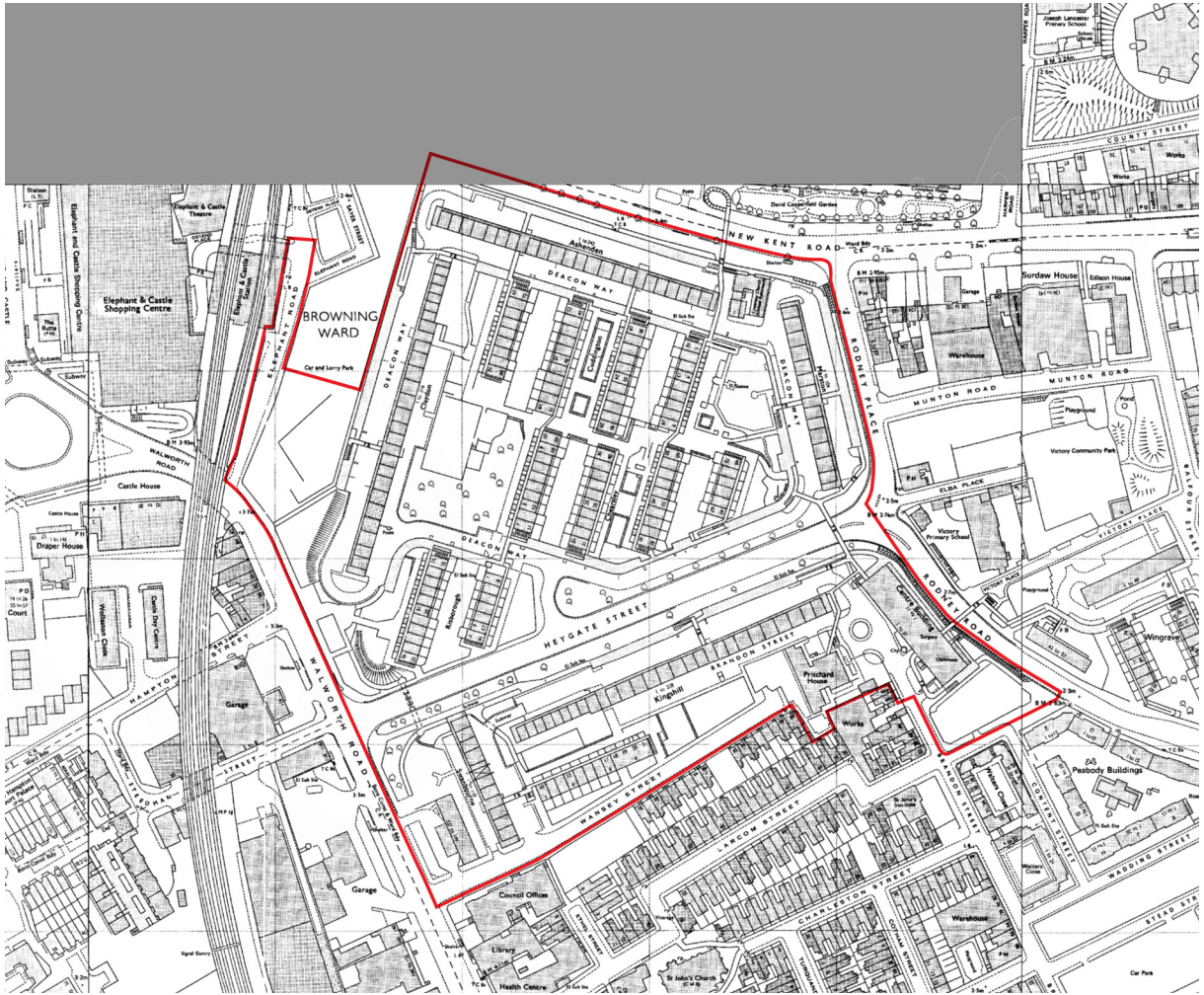


Fig 19 Site Context 1980

## THE SYSTEM-BUILT ESTATE

Prior to its construction, the site of the Heygate was characterised by “late Victorian, Italianate tenement blocks interspersed with World War II bomb sites”.<sup>6</sup> Existing blocks were purchased under compulsory purchase orders, their inhabitants decanted and the buildings demolished. The Heygate, like its sister estate the Aylesbury was characteristic of a postwar tabula rasa development, intending to impose an effective structure and order through the principals of modernist planning.

06. Ibid, 81.

It was designed from 1968-1969 by the Architects’ Office of the newly formed London Borough of Southwark and constructed from 1970 to 1974.<sup>7</sup> Both the Heygate and larger Aylesbury Estate (date) were planned as a means “efficiently rehousing thousands from Southwark’s waiting list” moving residents from substandard living conditions into new council homes.<sup>8</sup>

07. Southwark was formed in 1965 from an amalgamation of the Metropolitan Boroughs of Southwark, Camberwell and Bermondsey.

08. Campkin, *Remaking London*, 81.

Under Prime Minister Harold Wilson’s Labour Government, large local authorities were required to adopt industrialised building systems as their primary means of construction. This offered a certain speed and efficiency over conventional construction while decreasing the need for skilled tradesmen at a time of a severe shortage within the industry. Given its strong Labour majority, Southwark Council enthusiastically embraced industrialised construction methods and the system-built estate as an efficient and economical solution towards an acute shortage of adequate housing.<sup>9</sup>

09. Ibid, 80.

To finance new development, local authorities were encouraged to pursue loans from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. These were issued over 60 years and calculated based on the number dwellings and overall density of development. Preferential interest rates were secured by local authorities that adopted the Ministry of Housing’s “cost yardstick”, a standardised formula used to determine the maximum allowable cost per dwelling with the intention of producing “good value for money”. In practice, Campkin notes “it was a crude system in which long-term value was often overlooked”.<sup>10</sup>

10. Ibid, 82.



Fig 20 Heygate Estate under construction, early 1970s.

Fig 21 Pollock Street prior to demolition, 1969.

Constructed using *12M Jespersen*, a Danish system of large prefabricated concrete panels, the Heygate and Aylesbury estates are described by Bridget Cherry and Nicholas Pevsner as “some of the most notorious products of industrialised building”.<sup>11</sup> The architects of the Heygate arranged five slab blocks between eight to twelve storeys to enclose eleven blocks of four-storey maisonettes and communal gardens. Based on the principals of the Athens Charter (1933), the design separated vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Buildings were accessed from a network of elevated walkways, while the ground plane was devoted to parking, play areas and communal gardens.

11. Bridget Cherry and Nikolaus Pevsner, *London 2: South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 562

There were certain problems that arose from various design decisions, and scale and nature of its construction. However, as Campkin explains; critiques of both the Heygate and Aylesbury fail to describe the implications of the original financing, procurement, and management structures on the premature physical deterioration and economic devalorization of these estates. He suggests that compromises in the design and construction process as a result of the way in which financing was procured through the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, were responsible for a general lack of investment in the overall material quality of communal spaces – consequently increasing their susceptibility to physical deterioration and vandalism. A problem only further exacerbated by inadequate financial planning necessary towards ensuring the long-term maintenance and management of Southwark’s growing stock of council housing.<sup>12</sup>

12. Campkin, *Remaking London*, 86.





Fig 22 Aylesbury Estate under construction.

## DEFENSIBLE SPACE

It's within this context that in 1974, the BBC documentary series, *Horizon* invited Canadian author and architect Oscar Newman to visit the Aylesbury Estate where he was filmed critiquing its design for its lack of "defensible space". Defensible space describes "a sense of individual ownership and responsibility over a clearly defined territory".<sup>13</sup> Newman suggests the stigma of crime and vandalism associated with public housing are the direct result of its design, and proposes design should instead be used to instil a "refined sense of property and ownership", an idea "fundamentally in tension with the values embodied in communal public housing."<sup>14</sup>

13. Ibid, 86.

14. Ibid, 88.

His theory of defensible space is based on "a speculative environmental and behavioural determinism" which reduces a complex relationship between environment and human behaviour to selective examples of crime and vandalism. He prioritises design as both its cause and solution, while overlooking the implications of social and economic deprivation – factors against which vandalism and neglect sociologist Lee Rainwater considers fundamental human reactions.<sup>15</sup>

15. Ibid, 89-94.

Despite this, Newman's work has had considerable influence in the UK, "particularly through Alice Coleman's anti-modernist *Utopia on Trial*".<sup>16</sup> In the early 1980s, Coleman, together with the *Land Use Research Unit* at King's College London, documented examples of social and physical deterioration – including violence, crime, litter, and vandalism – to determine the association between the design of modernist public housing, and "lapses in civilised behaviour".<sup>17</sup> Again, while consciously neglecting the effects of social and economic deprivation, Coleman attributes antisocial behaviour to the design of these "problem estates".<sup>18</sup> In 1986, under Thatcher, Coleman was made an advisor to the Department of the Environment and given a five-year, £50m contract to redesign "seven misery estates".<sup>19</sup> Her work providing "a convenient 'independent' justification for the government's drastic scaling back of public housing provision."<sup>20</sup>

16. Ibid, 90.

17. Alice Coleman, *Utopia on Trial: Vision and Reality in Planned Housing* (London: H. Shipman, 1985), 2

18. Ludovic Hunter-Tilney, "Architecture: Paradise Lost." *New Statesman*, March 12, 2012.

19. "It set about making various physical changes to the most problematic estates such as removing overhead walkways and creating private gardens for ground-floor dwellings out of underused communal space."

20. Campkin, *Remaking London*, 93.

Ideas of defensible space have only served to reinforce a narrative describing the failures of the modern project, while disregarding the role of the state, and the diverse socio-economic conditions of individual sites. It's instead increased a fear of crime, promoting individualism, the enclosure of communal spaces, and the enclaving of communities – an antagonistic approach towards the original intentions of its architecture.<sup>21</sup>

21. Ibid, 95.



Fig 23 Oscar Newman, BBC Horizon "The Writing on the Wall" 1974



Fig 24 Minister of Housing, Ian Gow and Margret Thatcher, 1984.

## DISINVESTMENT

The strategic removal of council housing from a restricted commodity context was promoted as a progressive redistributive policy under Thatcher as the “right to buy”. Through the diversification of tenure, it has enabled the transfer of housing capital from local authorities to stable council tenants, establishing a “property-owning democracy” while reducing council housing stock, and thus the presence of the welfare state.

22. Alison Ravetz, *Council Housing and Culture: The History of a Social Experiment* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 202

The introduction of the right to buy in 1980, allowed secured council tenants to purchase their homes from local authorities, at a discount of 30 to 50 percent. Half of the purchase price was paid to central government, while half was retained by local authorities themselves – an amount reduced to a fifth in 1985. The majority of this was allocated towards debt redemption, and could not be used towards limiting rent increases; the maintenance of existing council stock; or the construction of new council housing, thus forcing local authorities to pursue a policy that directly restricted use of their own housing capital.<sup>23</sup>

23. *Ibid.*, 201.

24. *Ibid.*

Essential to Thatcher’s housing reforms was the introduction of “housing benefit” in 1982.<sup>23</sup> This transferred housing subsidies from property to tenants as a contribution towards rent determined by income and together with the removal of rent restrictions in 1988, promoted the free market provision of government subsidised housing through private landlords. To induce council rent increases following the deregulation of the rental market, “central government support to local authorities [was systematically withdrawn] in proportion to expected rent rises”. In addition, councils were restricted from the “transfer of either surpluses or deficits between their housing and general accounts”, thus preventing the practice of subsidising of rent with general funds.<sup>24</sup>

Under Thatcher, the right to buy and subsequent housing reforms have promoted a financial and ideological disinvestment from council housing, directly restricting the autonomy of local authorities, and consequently intensify the physical deterioration and economic devalorization of council housing.



Fig 25 Tony Blair at the Aylesbury Estate in 1997.

25. Ibid, 202-203.

26. Hanley, *Estates: An Intimate History*, 78.

By 1996 the right to buy had removed two million council homes from stock once totalling approximately six million units. Its success varied both regionally, and locally “where sales were higher in houses than flats, and suburban rather than inner city estates.”<sup>25</sup> While reducing council housing stock, the right to buy simultaneously removed the mechanisms through which council housing had accommodated a diversity of social classes fundamental to promoting the “social mobility and cohesion on which the success of the welfare state relied”.<sup>26</sup> Local authorities were therefore left with what Ravetz describes as “residualised housing stock, and population analogous to the poorest, most immobile slum tenants [of the late nineteenth century]”.<sup>27</sup>

28. Campkin, *Remaking London*, 97.

Following his election in 1997, Tony Blair delivered his first speech as Prime Minister from the Aylesbury Estate. The estate, and generalised image of postwar council housing would serve exemplify “ruined Britain at the end of an era of Conservative government, and to place in those ruins a vision of future *regeneration*”.<sup>28</sup> Describing an alienated “underclass” of Britain’s “poorest” and “forgotten”, the estate and its residents embodied the social exclusion and deprivation New Labour’s emerging rhetoric of “Urban Renaissance” intended to address.

## REGENERATION & THE LONDON PLAN

Regeneration, when used in reference to place, is defined as the “renewal, specifically of a geographical area by the improvement of its economic and social conditions.”<sup>29</sup> The term “urban regeneration”, first appears in the late nineteenth century describing the improvement of living conditions through the clearance and reconstruction of working-class slums. In the twentieth century its used as a socio-biological metaphor describing the post-war renewal of bomb-damaged neighbourhoods – a process promoted through programs of extensive state-led reconstruction. There are notable similarities to the areas identified in the 1943 County of London Plan as “opportunity areas”, and those identified in the current London Plan as “regeneration areas”.<sup>30</sup>

*The London Plan (2015)* is the current strategic planning and spatial development strategy for Greater London. Its definition of regeneration is not directly apparent, but broadly emphasises “economic growth and more intensive use of land.”<sup>31</sup> It defines areas for regeneration as those “in greatest socio-economic need” identified through the UK’s “Index of Multiple Deprivation”.<sup>32</sup> These are often neighbourhoods strongly associated with council housing. As Reinier De Graaf writes; the same architecture that once embodied equality, and social mobility now serves to prevent it.<sup>33</sup>

Beyond a rhetoric of social improvement the neoliberal strategies promoted by the Plan instead intensify the social exclusion and deprivation it alleges to address. In practice it produces “varied forms of gentrification, often state-led, benefiting commercial interests and dispersing existing communities”.<sup>34</sup>

29. Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “regeneration”

30. Campkin, *Remaking London*, 4-5.

31. *Ibid*, 5.

32. The Index combines information from multiple sources including; income, employment, education, health, crime, housing, and environment to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation. Mayor of London, *The London Plan* (London, Greater London Authority 2015), 387

33. Reinier De Graaf, “Building Capital” *Architectural Review*. April 24, 2015. Accessed July 6, 2015.

34. Campkin, *Remaking London*, 6.



**MAYOR OF LONDON**



**THE LONDON PLAN**  
THE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR LONDON  
CONSOLIDATED WITH ALTERATIONS SINCE 2011

**MARCH 2015**

Fig 26 The London Plan, 2015.

## GENTRIFICATION

Both land and the improvements built onto it become commodities in a capitalist economy.<sup>35</sup> Since the two are inseparable, value is expressed as a combination of land value, or ground rent, and the value of its built improvements.<sup>36</sup> The value of improvements on a piece of land or surrounding land will also influence its ground rent, which represents “a claim made by landowners on users of their land”.<sup>37</sup> Though impermanent, built improvements require large initial investments and “have very long turn over periods both physically and in terms of value”.<sup>38</sup> The fixity of investment in the built environment therefore prevents redevelopment from occurring until the invested capital has experienced a rational economic devalorization. As the “rational outcome of the land and housing markets”, physical deterioration and economic devalorization are fundamental to producing the possibility of profitable reinvestment in the built environment.<sup>39</sup>

As a claim made by land owners, ground rent is a means of capturing surplus value created by producers on a site. Capitalised ground rent is therefore the “actual quantity of ground rent that is appropriated by the landowner, given the present land use.”<sup>40</sup> In the case of rental housing where a landlord produces a service on land, the functions of production and ownership are combined, and capitalised ground rent is directly appropriated through the rent paid by tenants. Given its land use, a site “is able to capitalise a certain quantity of ground rent” – its potential ground rent is therefore “the amount that could be capitalised under the land’s highest and best use”.<sup>41</sup>

The disparity between a site’s capitalised ground rent and its potential ground rent, is identified by Smith as the “rent gap”.<sup>42</sup> This is “produced primarily by capital devalorization”, which decreases the portion of ground rent that is able to capitalise under the present land use. Continued urban development simultaneously increases the potential ground rent that could be capitalised under a more intensive land use.<sup>43</sup> This disparity, or rent gap is what creates the possibility for the profitable reinvestment in the built environment. Gentrification occurs when the rent gap is sufficiently large that developers can extract an adequate financial return from the disparity between a site’s capitalised ground, and its potential ground rent.

35. Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London: Routledge, 1996), 55

36. “Here it is preferable to talk of ground rent rather than land value, since the price of land does not reflect a quantity of labor power applied to it, as with the value of commodities proper.” Smith, *The New Urban Frontier* 59.

37. Smith, *The New Urban Frontier*, 56, 59.

38. *Ibid*, 56.

39. *Ibid*, 56, 58.

40. *Ibid*, 59.

41. *Ibid*, 59,60.

42. *Ibid*, 65.

43. *Ibid*.



Fig 27 Gentrification graffiti on the Heygate Estate.

## RUINATION

In 1998 Southwark Council published its Regeneration Strategy, addressing a range of issues confronting the borough's social, economic, and environmental improvement. Citing a lack of central government support towards local authorities, the report identifies the need to attract private investment through the disposal of its own assets, noting:<sup>44</sup>

*The use of Council assets to lever in investment to achieve physical regeneration will have considerable impact on the Council's finances – positively through the realisation to cash values and the reduction in future obligations (maintenance etc.) and negatively – in the short-term through the loss of land and rents. However, if the Council is successful in attracting investment through disposals, and re-investing resources in remaining assets [...] It is possible, in the long term, that the value of the Council's remaining assets may exceed their current value through this investment in the regeneration process.*<sup>45</sup>

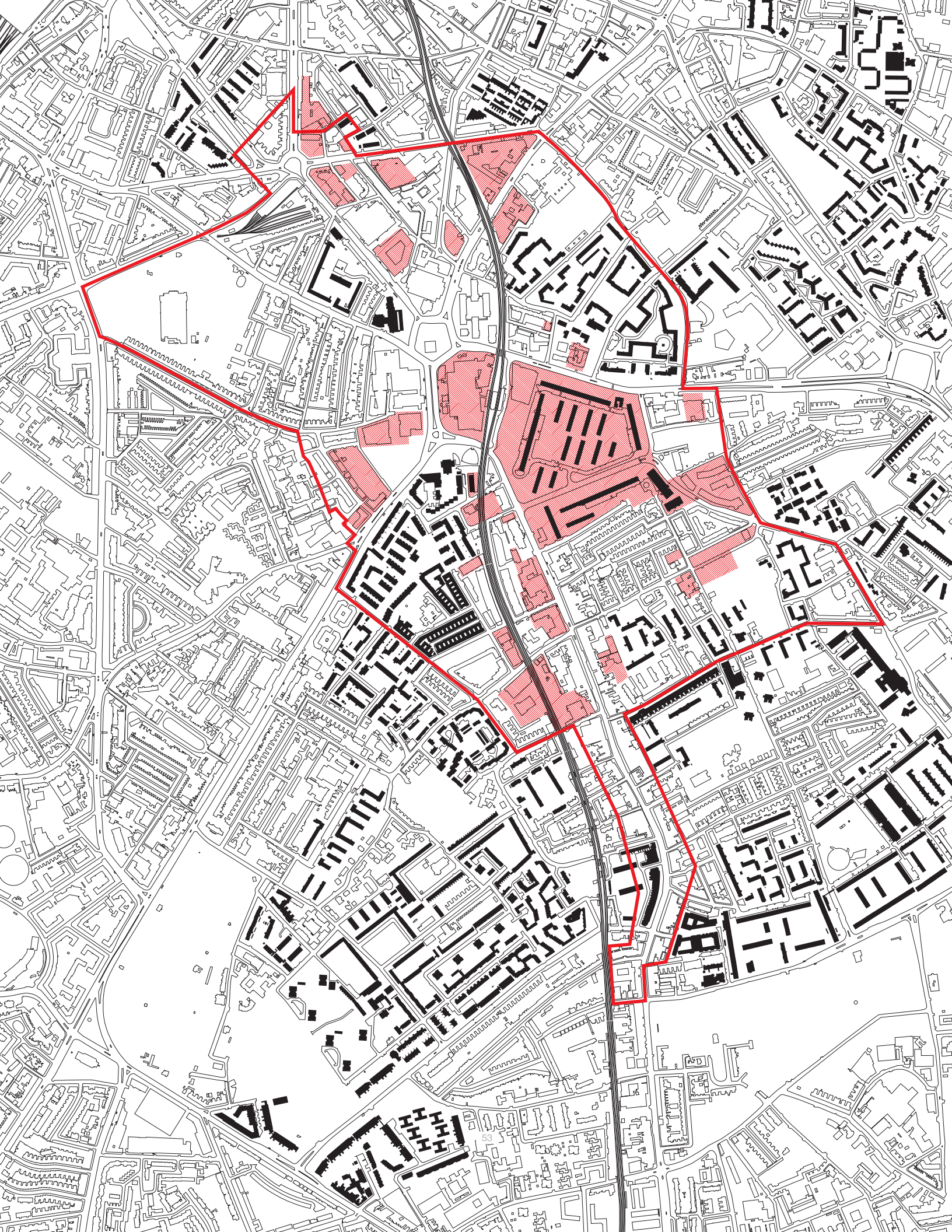
Given its central location and expectations of attracting “considerable private sector investment”, the Elephant and Castle was identified for regeneration and the decision was taken to dispose of, and eventually demolish the Heygate Estate.<sup>46</sup> The Elephant and Castle Opportunity Area was formalised in the 2002 draft of the London Plan, later published by the Greater London Authority in 2004. At the same time Southwark Council published its Elephant and Castle Development Framework, Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), describing where, how and what regeneration might take place.

44. Southwark Council, “The Regeneration Strategy”, July 29th 1998, Paragraph 4.2.3

45. Ibid, Paragraph 5.2

46. Ibid, Paragraph 4.2.4

**Fig 28** Opp. The Elephant and Castle Opportunity Area 2012, with council housing estates indicated in black, and “potential development sites” indicated in red.



Lend Lease was selected as the regeneration partner in 2007, and the decanting of the Heygate Estate began the same year. Minutes from a 2008 Council Assembly meeting note “the Heygate Estate is now nearing the end of its natural life [and no longer a] fit place for people to live, [the cost] reactive repairs and maintenance of the estate buildings [its lifts and heating system] place a disproportionate burden on the council’s repairs service”.<sup>47</sup>

47. Southwark Council Assembly Meeting, November 5th 2008.

*[The] council believes that for these reasons, the decision taken in 1998 to demolish the estate was the right one and further believes that – given the rapid deterioration of the estate – the decision taken in 2007 to bring forward the demolition date, and re-house people before replacement housing would be complete was also the right one.*<sup>48</sup>

48. Ibid.

The regeneration agreement between Southwark Council and Lend Lease was formalised in 2010, and in 2012 Lend Lease submitted its planning application for the redevelopment of the estate. Southwark Council simultaneously published the Elephant and Castle Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF), “a framework which will guide development over the next 15 years”.

This begins to reveal the regeneration of council housing as the product of two parallel processes, each manipulating the ground rent, or land value of a given site. The designation of opportunity areas encourages investment in the built environment through the development of adjacent land, increasing a site's potential ground rent. Disinvestment, meanwhile accelerates the physical deterioration and economic devalorization of council housing, reducing its capitalised ground rent to produce a rent gap – thus encouraging its gentrification.

Though the rent gap is produced primarily through capital devalorization, the social devalorization of council housing is perhaps equally important to the process of its regeneration. This is most apparent in the rhetoric employed by both the council and developer when describing the estate;

49. Lend Lease, "Masterplan Principals: Setting the Scene", July 2011.

*The revolutionary ideas of the 1960s have not stood the test of time. Instead, the developments have, on the whole, made life more difficult for local residents, and discouraged people from visiting the Elephant and Castle. [...]*  
*In June 2002 Southwark Council decided the only way to improve the Elephant and Castle was to remove the physical barriers blighting the area, and approach the design and layout afresh. These barriers include: outdated, badly constructed buildings in need of massive investment; poor quality housing in dense estates; and a hostile environment, leading to crime and the fear of crime.*<sup>49</sup>

50. David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*, (London: Blackwell, 1996), 411.

51. Sebregondi. "The Event of Void"

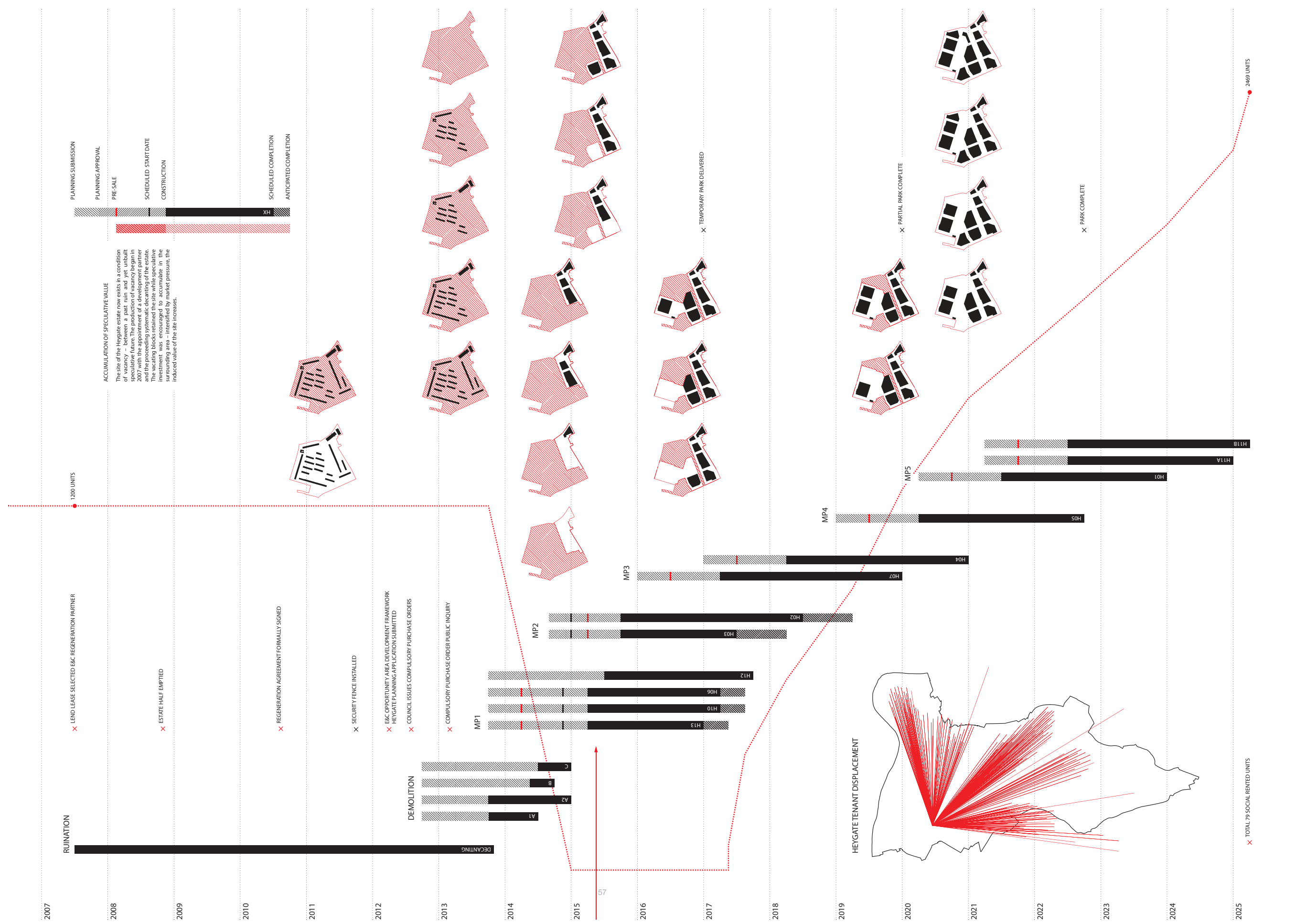
52. Ibid.

Employing a rhetoric similar to that of the London Plan, the estate is described as a barrier to the improvement of the area's social conditions. In practice however, the Heygate Estate and council housing in general is rather economic barrier to capital accumulation. As David Harvey writes: "Capitalism as a mode of production has necessarily targeted the breaking down of spatial barriers and the acceleration of the turnover time as fundamental to its agenda of relentless capital accumulation."<sup>50</sup> In this sense, active disinvestment, or ruination is essential to creating opportunities for the profitable reinvestment in the built environment. While the fixity of investment in the built environment should prevent redevelopment from occurring until the invested capital has experienced a rational economic devalorization, when buildings do not fall into ruin quickly enough "ruins are actively constructed upon materially sound objects".<sup>51</sup> The creation of ruins is not only a process economic devalorization through active disinvestment, but also social devalorization – "a process which involves the ruination their image, or their imaging as ruins."<sup>52</sup>





# HEYGATE ESTATE NEW RUINS, VACANCY & INDUCED VALUE





3.0

## COUNCIL HOUSING INVENTORY

## COUNCIL HOUSING IN SOUTHWARK

Southwark Council is largest local authority landlord in London—housing 4.9% of its population in almost 55,000 tenant and leasehold properties.<sup>1</sup> Though, despite 12,600 households currently on Southwark’s Housing Waiting List, figures from the GLA project the net loss of more than 2000 council homes based on regeneration schemes with current planning permission alone.<sup>2</sup>

The council housing inventory is intended to illustrate the extent and diversity of council housing in Southwark. The estate map indicates the locations of council housing estates within the borough, and the accompanying matrix presents a 120 of the largest estates organised chronologically by their approximate date of completion. These are the new ruins of the welfare state.

1. Southwark Housing and Community Services Annual Report to Tenants 2014/2015.

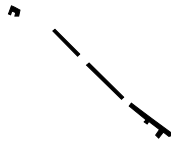
2. Darren Johnson, “Estate regeneration to cause large losses of affordable housing”, London Assembly Press Release, February 04, 2016.

**Fig 29** Southwark Council Housing Map, showing council housing estates indicated in black.





Caroline Gardens 1858  
171 Units



Devon Mansions 1899  
169 Units



Webber Row Estate 1906  
71 Units



Swan Road Estate 1910  
70 Units



Pullens Estate 1918  
167 Units



Sunray Estate 1922  
Units 133



Glebe Estate 1932  
243 Units



Vauban Estate 1933  
78 Units



Whites Grounds Estate 1934  
70 Units



Albion Estate 1934  
51 Units



Harold Estate 1935  
71 Units



East Dulwich Estate 1935  
Units 588



Elim Estate 1935  
94 Units



Purbrook Estate 1935  
86 Units



Doddington Grove Estate 1935  
246 Units



Adams Gardens Estate 1936  
74 Units



Southwark Park Estate 1937  
51 Units



Aylton Estate 1937  
51 Units



Meakin Estate 1937  
97 Units



Kirby Estate 1938  
90 Units



Arnold Estate 1938  
240 Units



Browning Estate 1940  
297 Units



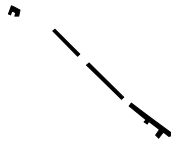
Tabard Gardens Estate 1941  
917 Units



Rockingham Estate 1943  
637 Units



Caroline Gardens 1858  
171 Units



Devon Mansions 1899  
169 Units



Webber Row Estate 1906  
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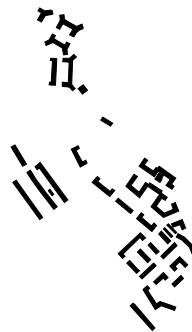
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Arnold Estate 1938  
240 Units



Browning Estate 1940  
297 Units



Tabard Gardens Estate 1941  
917 Units



Rockingham Estate 1943  
637 Units



Rodney Estate 1945  
134 Units



Longfield Estate 1945  
267 Units



Friary Estate 1946  
643 Units



Neckinger Estate 1946  
268 Units



Alvey Estate 1949  
137 Units



St Johns Estate 1949  
58 Units



Oliver Goldsmith Estate 1950  
342 Units



Dickens Estate 1951  
602 Units



Penrose House 1951  
97 Units



Rye Hill Estate 1952  
336 Units



Nunhead Estate 1952  
102 Units



Denmark Hill Estate 1953  
410 Units



Lordship Lane Estate 1954  
166 Units



Kingswood Estate 1954  
537 Units



Michael Faraday House 1954  
74 Units



Pynfolds Estate 1954  
66 Units



Champion Hill Estate 1954  
103 Units



Elizabeth Estate 1954  
177 Units



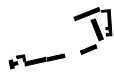
Crawford Estate 1955  
290 Units



Lancaster Estate 1956  
72 Units



Kinglake Estate 1956  
312 Units



Goschen Estate 1957  
115 Units



Nelson Square Gardens 1958  
182 Units



Sydenham Hill Estate 1958  
103 Units



Nelson Estate 1958  
134 Units



Sceaux Gardens Estate 1959  
258 Units



St Crispins Estate 1960  
81 Units



Croxted Road Estate 1960  
67 Units



Brayards Estate 1960  
54 Units



Elmington Estate 1960  
535 Units



Pelican Estate 1960  
202 Units



Plough Estate 1960  
88 Units



Lindley Estate 1961  
232 Units



Alberta Estate 1961  
187 Units



St Saviours Estate 1961  
360 Units



Haddonfield Estate 1962  
61 Units



Gateway Estate 1962  
98 Units



Kingston Estate 1962  
72 Units



Comber Estate 1962  
460 Units



Willowbrook Estate 1963  
140 Units



Southampton Way Estate 1963  
226 Units



Wyndham Estate 1963  
414 Units



Acorn Estate 1963  
171 Units



Lawson Estate 1963  
303 Units



Unwin Estate 1964  
100 Units



Congreve Estate 1964  
201 Units



Slippers Place Estate 1964  
196 Units



Canada Estate 1964  
197 Units



Silwood Estate 1964  
413 Units



Friern Estate 1964  
92 Units



Manor Estate 1965  
218 Units



Tappesfield Estate 1965  
89 Units



Kipling Estate 1965  
191 Units



Castlemead 1966  
155 Units



Barlow Estate 1966  
108 Units



Brandon Estate 1966  
1333 Units



Gaywood Estate 1967  
149 Units



Rennie Estate 1967  
232 Units



Dodson Estate 1967  
83 Units



East Dulwich Grove 1967  
70 Units



Redman House 1967  
73 Units



Portland Estate 1967  
218 Units



Draper Estate 1967  
177 Units



Osprey Estate 1968  
98 Units



Thorburn Square 1968  
55 Units



Delawyk Crescent Estate 1968  
51 Units



Tustin Estate 1969  
346 Units



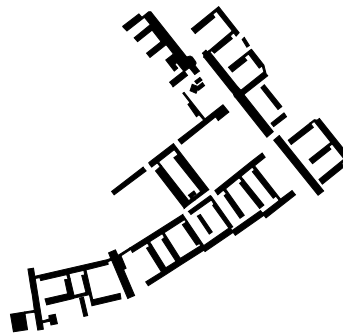
North Peckham Estate 1969  
407 Units



Clifton Estate 1969  
213 Units



Ledbury Estate 1969  
296 Units



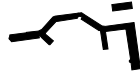
Aylesbury Estate 1971 (1977)  
2704 Units



Haddonhall Estate 1971  
138 Units



New Place Estate 1972  
481 Units



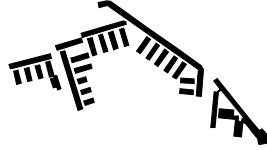
Gloucester Grove Estate 1973  
314 Units



Havil Street Estate 1974  
110 Units



Heygate Estate 1974  
1214 Units



Rouel Road Estate 1975  
564 Units



Lettsom Estate 1976  
310 Units



Newington Estate 1976  
282 Units



Setchell Estate 1977  
227 Units



Scovell Estate 1977  
89 Units



Deynsford Estate 1978  
254 Units



Queens Road Estate 1978  
57 Units



Cossall Estate 1978  
307 Units





Salisbury Estate 1978  
153 Units



Pelier Estate 1979  
227 Units



Consort Estate 1979  
364 Units



Brimmington Estate 1980  
351 Units



Pomeroy Estate 1980  
140 Units



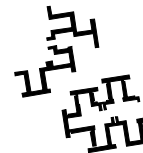
Bells Gardens Estate 1980  
322 Units



Pasley Estate 1981  
134 Units



Pedworth Estate 1981  
128 Units



Downtown Estate 1981  
187 Units



Keetons Estate 1982  
153 Units



Barset Estate 1982  
193 Units



Park Street Estate 1982  
128 Units



4.0

## DESIGN

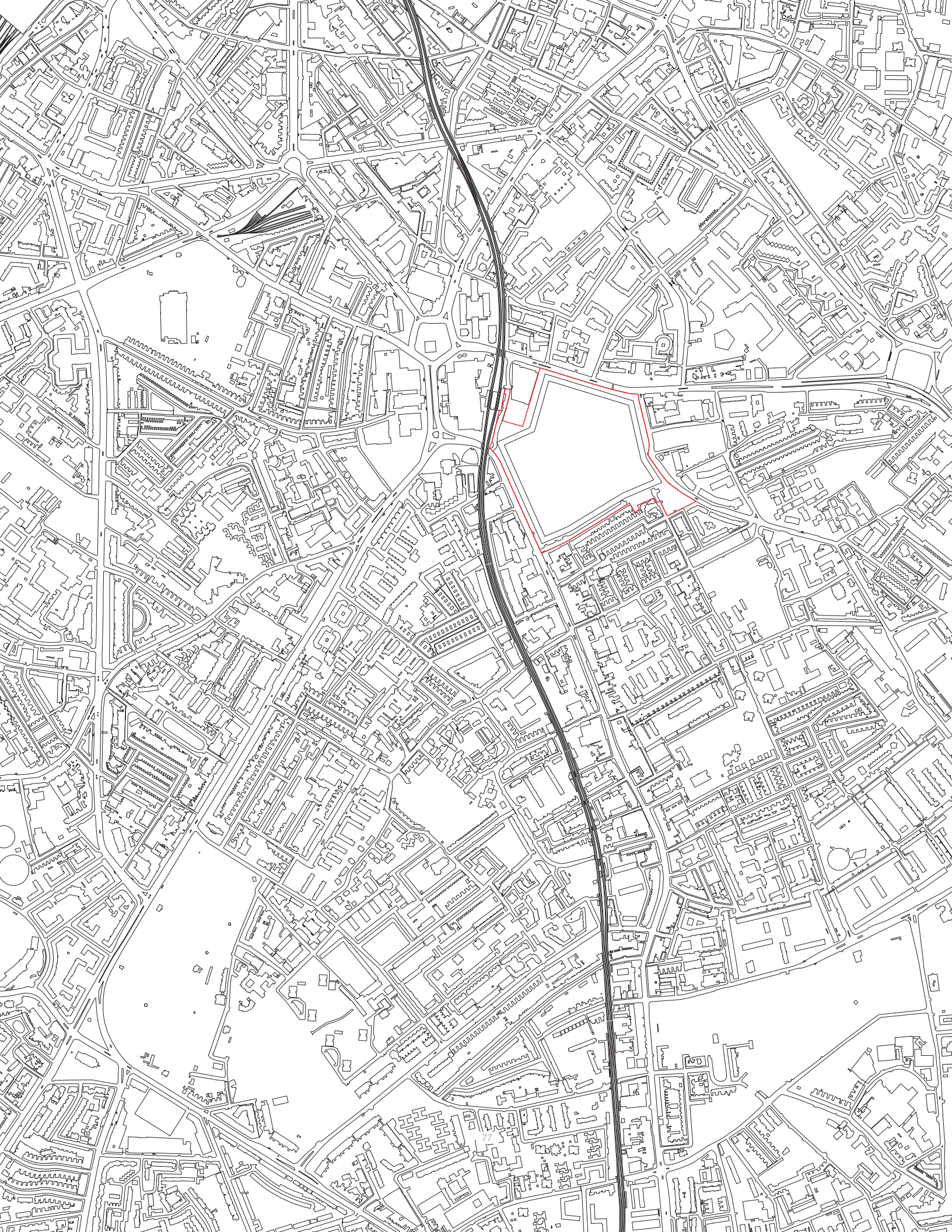
## PREFACE

The redistributive practices inherent to neoliberal economics employ diverse mechanisms – notably, real estate and property – to channel surplus-value from society as a whole to a class of economic and political elite. At an individual level this process is founded on a neoliberal logic of debt, and enabled through the financial arrangements surrounding real estate and property. The “debt economy” as Maurizio Lazzarato explains, is an economy of time and subjugation, exploiting finance to “[reduce] the future and its possibilities to current power relations.”<sup>1</sup> To address spatial and social inequality, the project must therefore separate housing from the financial implications inherent to its neoliberal conception as a commodity.

To propose an alternative to current development practices the project pursues a neoliberal conception of housing as a commodity to its most illogical extremes. It demands a critical engagement with the financial practices inherent to development, and positions the architect as the mediator between “end-user” and “investor” – actively excluding the role of “developer” to ensure the separation of financial form and social function.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, it proposes the development of high quality, permanently *affordable* housing realised through the exploitation of speculative property investment.

1. Lazzarato, Maurizio. *The Making of the Indebted Man*, (Los Angeles: Semiotexte, 2012), 46.

2. Self, “Derivative Architecture”. 89



## FINANCIAL FORM

Because the value of land in a speculative market resides primarily in its potential rather than its realisation, speculative investors will acquire and hold land until it can be sold at a profit. A site's potential can be secured through planning permissions, proposing its future development density, design, unit mix etc. and it's from these plans that developers secure financing.

"Developers operate on borrowed money raised against adequate financial guarantees."<sup>3</sup> The redevelopment of the Heygate Estate, like any large site presents a problem as no financial guarantee can match the projected expense of its development. Instead projects of such scale are phased, allowing each phase to operate as an independent project, autonomous in its planning, finance, and its construction. "Each phase is developed with borrowed money guaranteed against the pre-sales of the following phase."<sup>4</sup> This process is facilitated through "off-plan sales", a practice describing the investment in a property before its completion. Off-plan investment transfers risk of a future decline in property prices from the developer to the client, providing the adequate financial guarantee required for construction. For example a two bedroom unit listed at £790,000 might require a 10% (£79,000) deposit guaranteeing its price on completion at which point the remaining 90% (£711,000) is paid. Off plan sales thus create the possibility for investment in non-existent property.<sup>5</sup>

The same principals are applied in the trading of derivatives where off-plan investment is considered the derivative, and property the underlying commodity. The financial potential of a property derivative is the time between the purchase of property and its completion.<sup>6</sup> But what if the property is never completed, and time extends indefinitely to create a speculative urban void? This is not unheard of in London, since the closure of the Battersea Power station in 1983 the 17 hectare site has sat vacant and undeveloped, accumulating speculative capital value over period of 30 years. Exploiting this vacancy requires we push the neoliberal logic of property and investment in the built environment to an extreme. It demands the abstraction of property as a derivative, enabling it to function as tool of financial capital, and dissociating from the value of its built improvements.

3. Eyal Weizman, *Yellow Rhythms: A Roundabout for London* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2000), 79.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*, 82.

6. *Ibid.*, 84.



Fig 31 Elephant Park model, pictured in Lend Lease sales office.

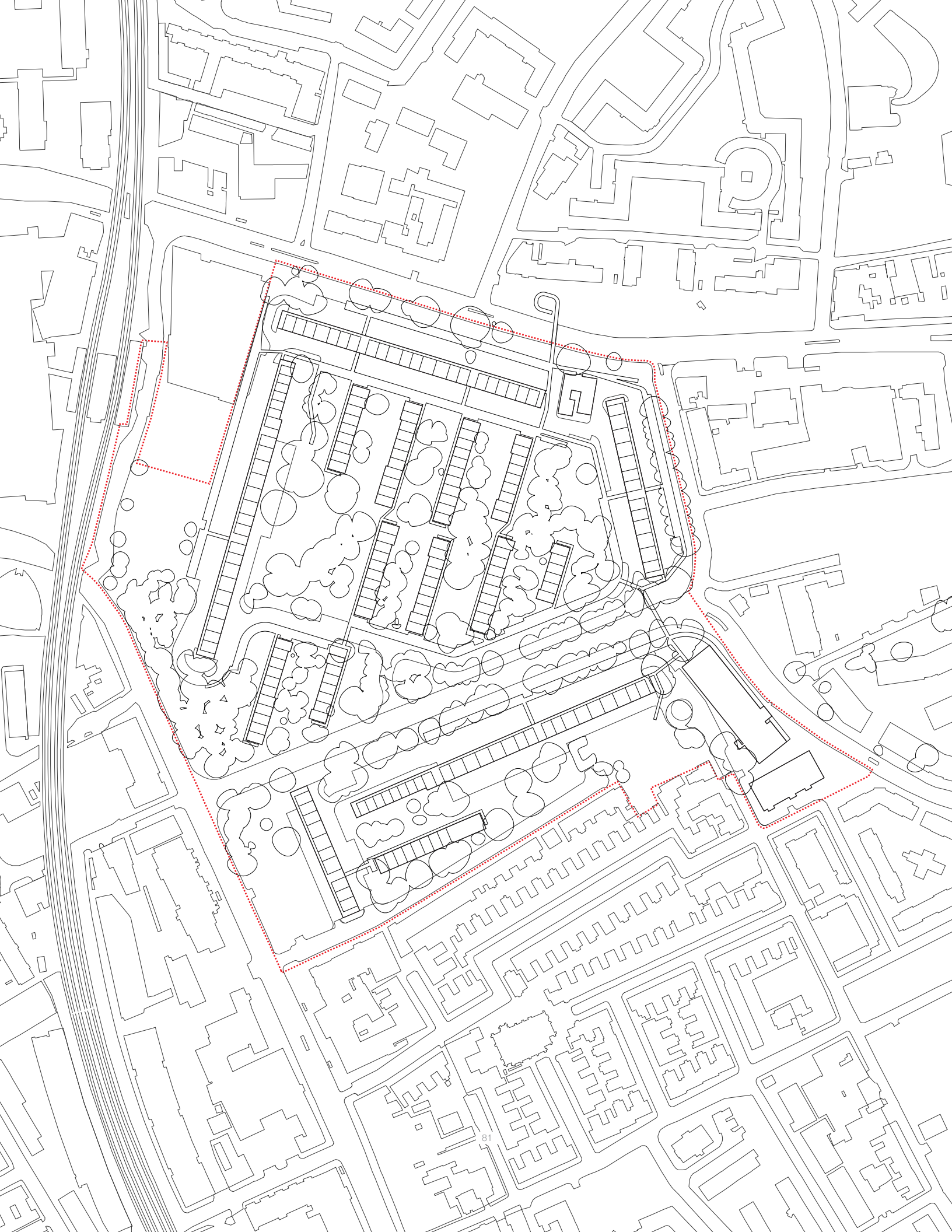
## ANOTHER REGENERATION

Only within a restricted commodity context does it become possible to directly mobilise the social potential of housing as a commodity, providing permanent, and genuinely affordable housing, while improving the living conditions for residents and the broader community. Beyond the anarchic subversion and individual occupation of regeneration sites the project attempts to organise the estate's inhabitants and community towards its own institutionalisation and autonomy. By mobilising the new ruins of the welfare state as sites of agonistic potential within the city it demands a theoretical re-foundation and critical recuperation of the social and ideological objectives of council housing.

The project is conceived as a retroactive manifesto for the development of the site – a projective architectural proposal pursuing regeneration and the improvement of social conditions, while critically mediating the demand for the profitable investment in the build environment. The project separates the building's financial form and its social function, in effect, disaggregating the value of the site's built improvements from its land value, or ground rent. In this sense it operates similarly to a community land trust and proposes the creation several institutions based on this model.

Fig 32 Site Plan, Heygate Estate  
1:2500.





## INSTITUTIONS

### **Walworth Land Trust (Community District Land Trust)**

Actors

Council Representatives, Residents & Tenant Associations, and  
Community Stake Holders

Actions

Responsible for the acquisition and designation of land for development, assuring adequate community benefit from the sale and development of council held lands.

### **Walworth Community Housing Association**

Actors

Specialists from the fields of;  
Architecture, Construction, Planning, Law, Finance, etc.

Actions

Responsible for the development of existing council estate in the interest of current and future residents. The Community Housing Association serves as a mediator between the user and investor in the design and delivery of housing. It provides and maintains housing at social rent levels to low income and precarious workers, and trains residents in construction, maintenance and management of the estate.

### **Walworth Community Housing Capital**

Subsidiary of Walworth Community Housing Association

Actions

Is the entity responsible for the maintaining the long-term financial viability of the project. The rent paid by tenants is collected by Community Housing Capital, and the majority of which is used towards the building's operation, utilities, maintenance and improvement. Any operating surplus is initial paid towards the purchase of the land, after which it deposited in a separate high interest account to be used towards anything from community events towards the future improvements to the estate. A fraction of this is diverted towards a pension fund maintaining affordable housing for residents into retirement.

### **Estate Trust (Community Housing Trust)**

Actors

Tenants and Residents Association(s)

Actions

Manage the building and it's resources according to their needs.



## PHASING

The project is realised through the strategic sale of the leaseholds on the vacancy created in the process of site's regeneration. The growth of building is both limited by, and dependent on the continued increase in the value of this vacancy, in this sense the progress of its construction is an index of this increasing value. If we assume the continuous increases of property prices throughout the length of the development, the area that can be constructed from the sale of each leasehold will increase with the value of the site's vacancy.

Whereas off-plan sales are generally used to secure investment for an entire phase of development, the proposed system of leaseholds enables this to process to carefully mediated, strategically offering individual leaseholds to secure the investment required to directly finance the building's incremental construction. In this way, changes in the market are directly reflected in the building's growth. For example, in increasing market numerous leaseholds might be sold in a year, consequently increasing the rate of construction. Conversely, in a decreasing market, fewer leaseholds would be sold and the rate of construction would therefore decrease. Throughout the duration of the development the sale of leaseholds must be carefully mediated to ensure the project can extract enough capital from the site to realise its target density. This not only ensures the continued longterm viability of the project, but also allows sale of leaseholds to secure capital for the benefit of building's tenants and the greater community; including the construction or improvement of shared amenities, equipment, or public realm.

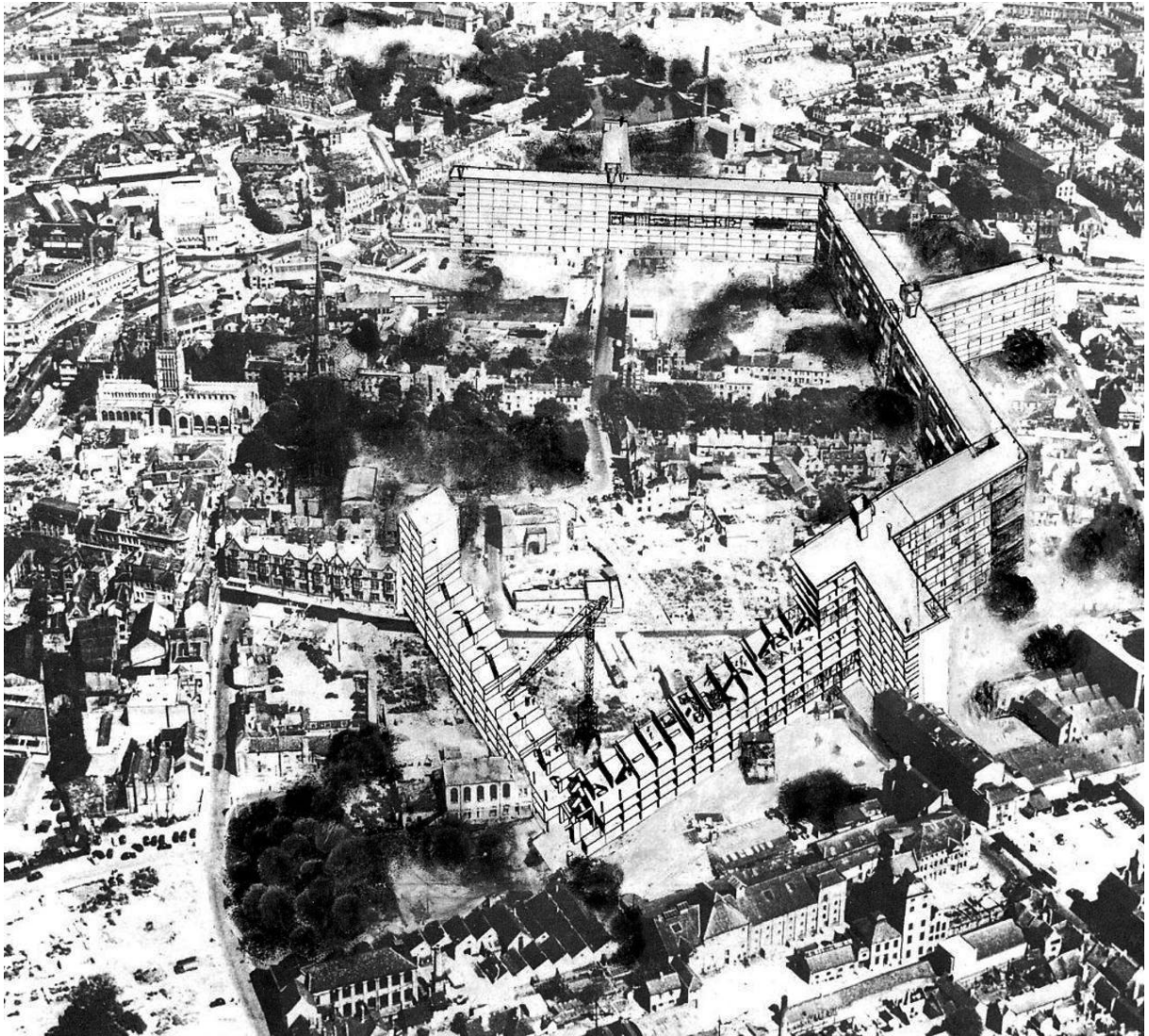


Fig 33 Proposal for Golden Lane projected on the destroyed Coventry 1952, Alison & Peter Smithson.

Fig 34 Phase 01

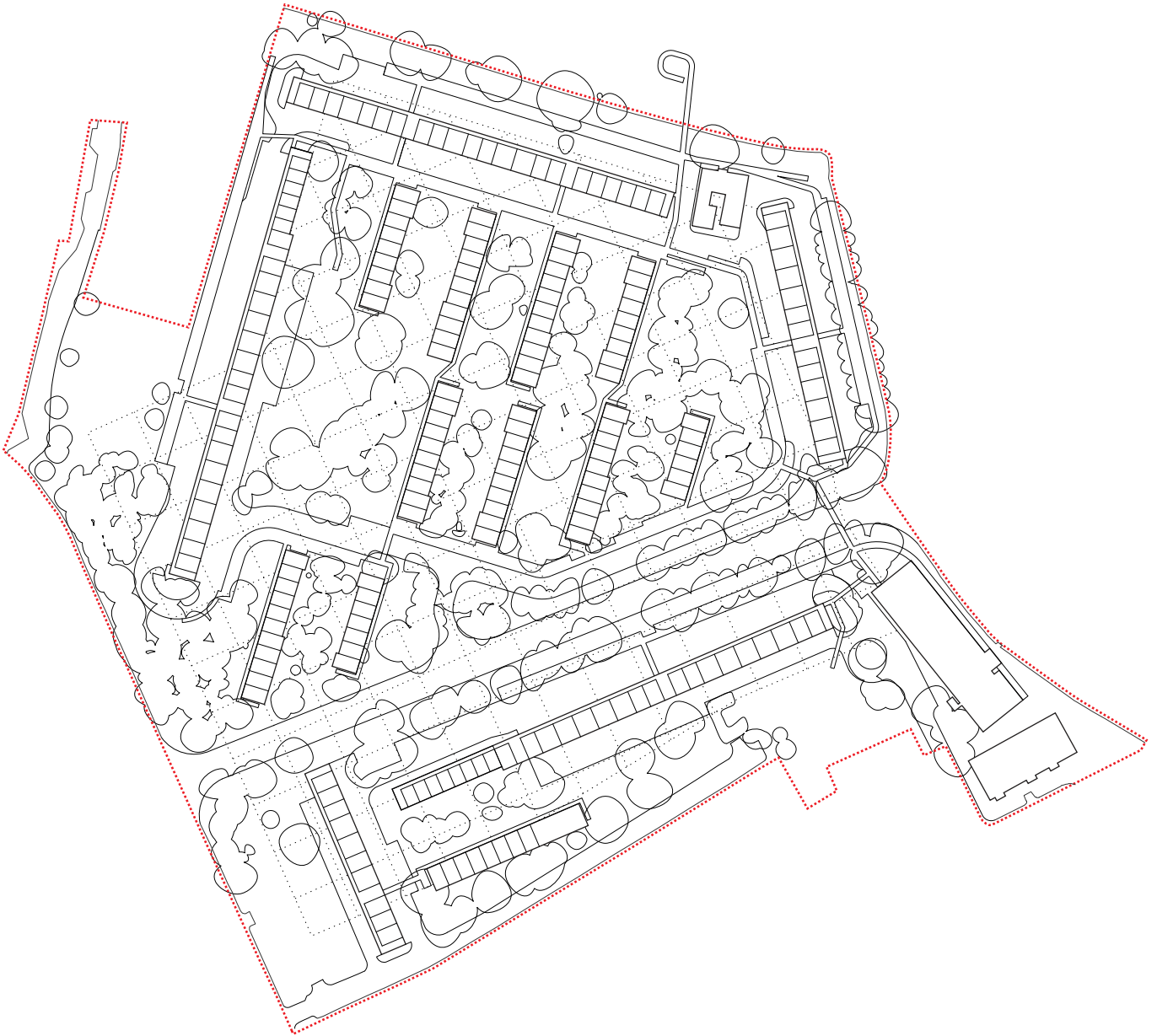


Fig 35 Phase 02

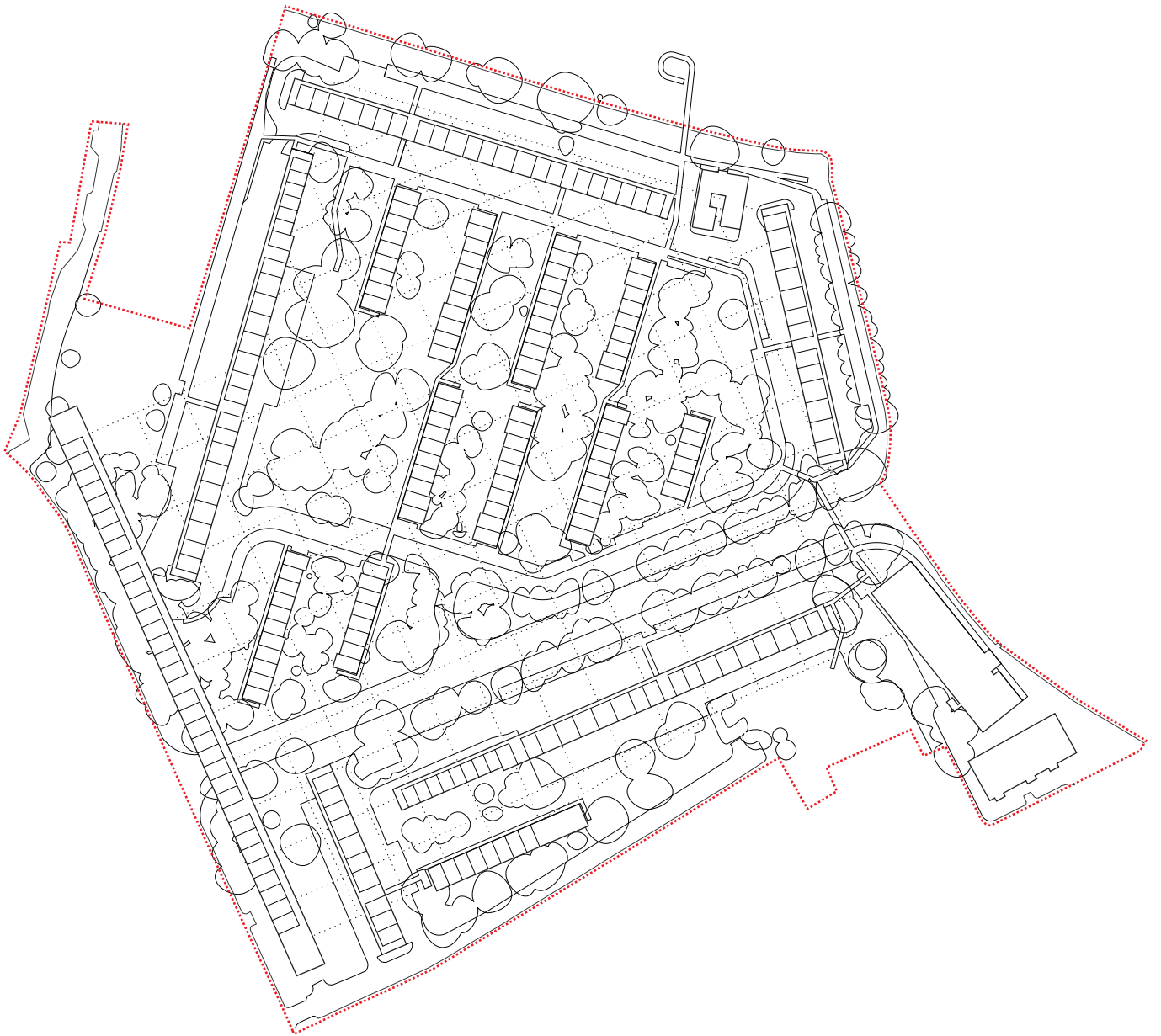


Fig 36 Phase 03

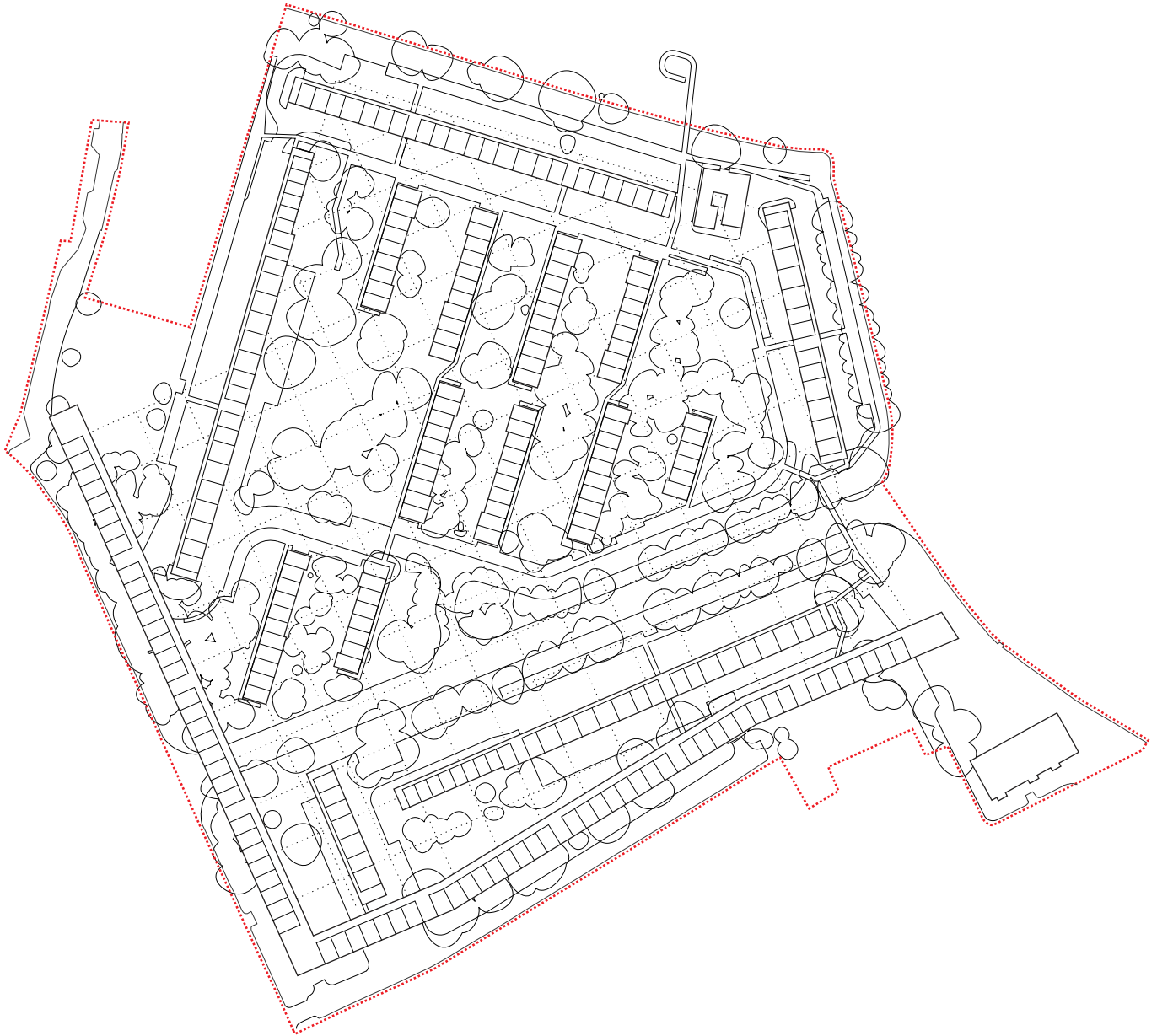




Fig 37 Phase 04

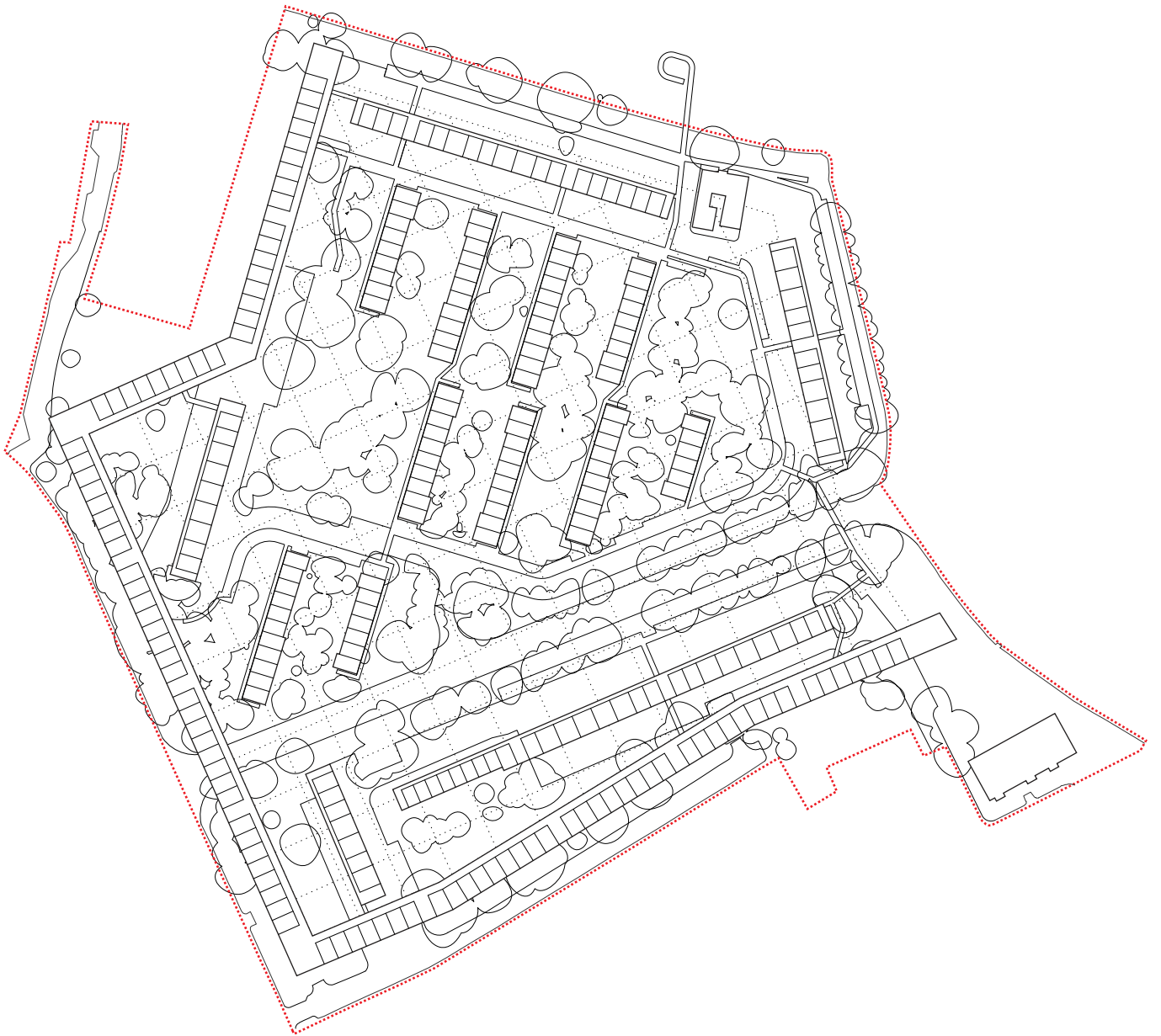


Fig 38 Phase 05

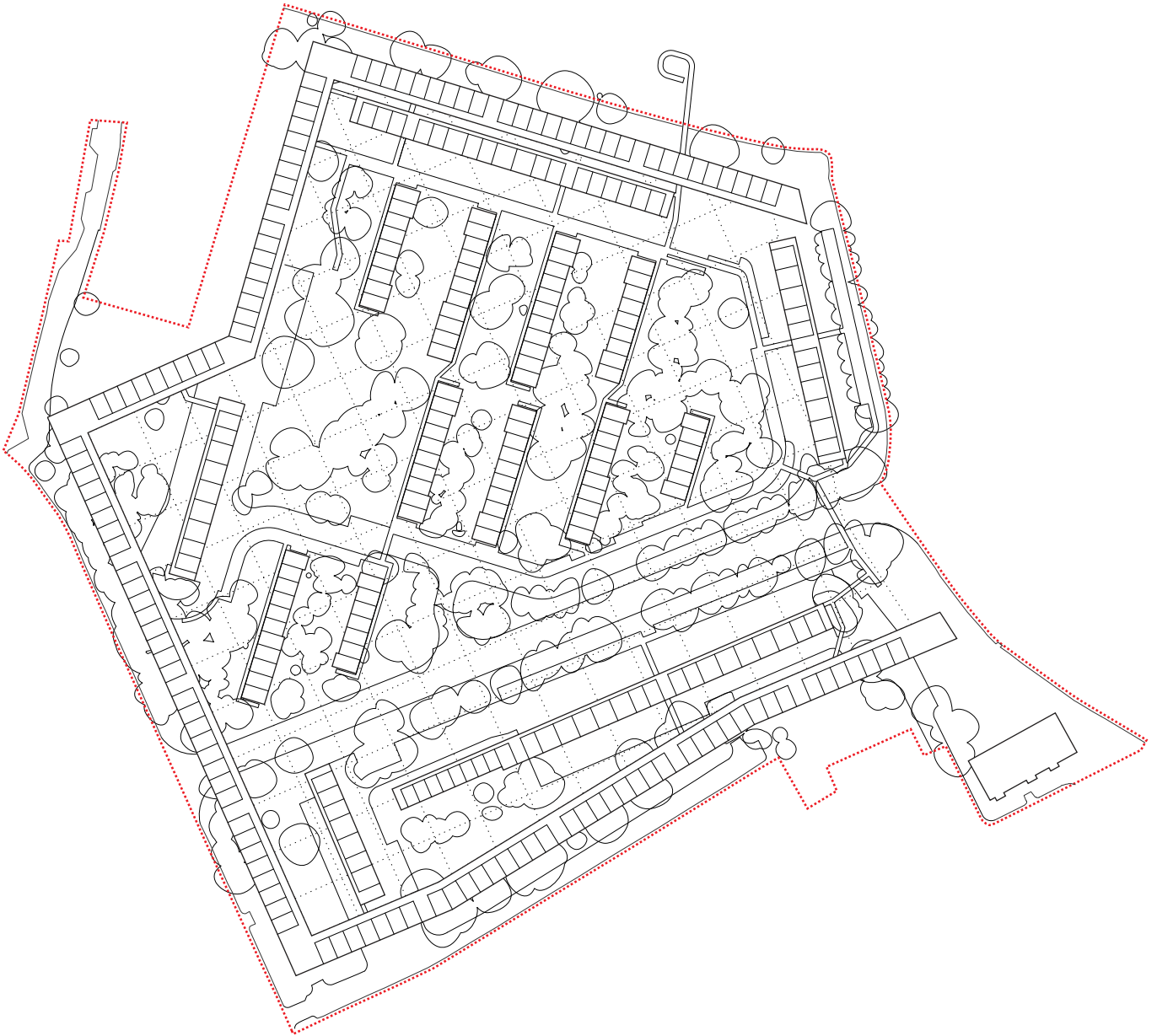


Fig 39 Phase 06

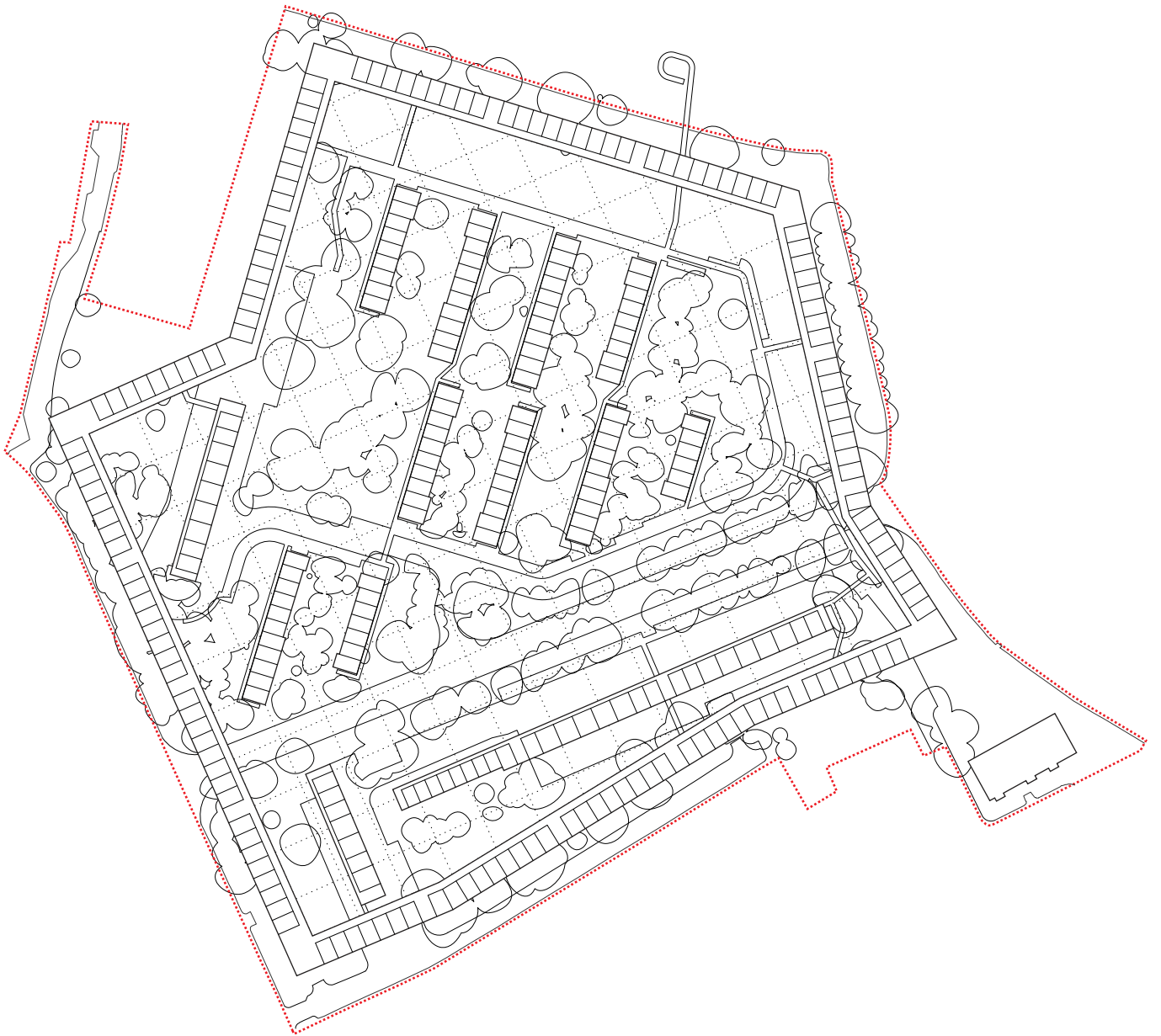


Fig 40 Phase 07

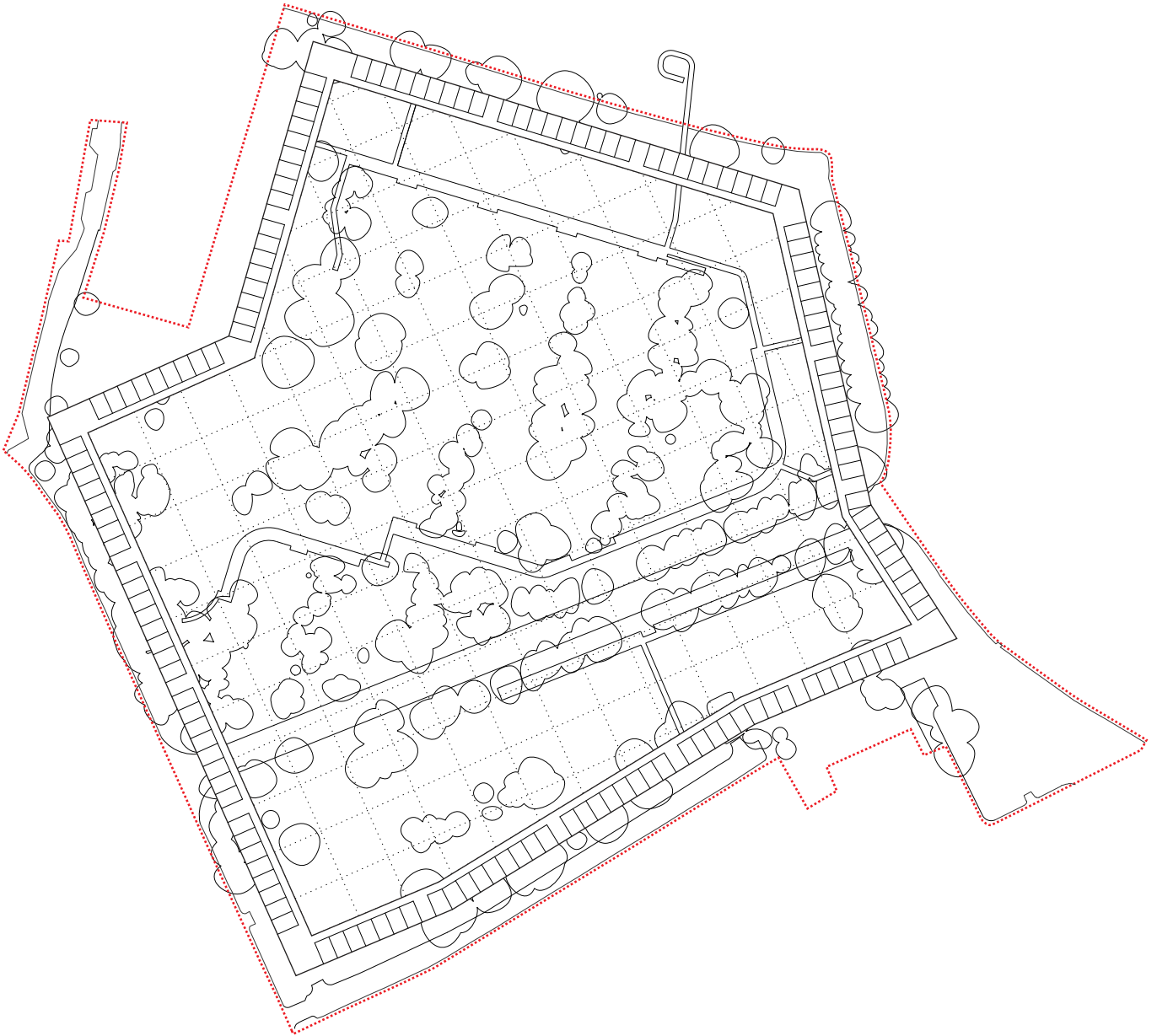


Fig 41 Phase 08



## INDICATIVE

### VIABILITY

Using figures from the development's viability assessment we'll assume a land value of £4.8 million as agreed between the developer, Lend Lease and Southwark Council. The agreement indicates the price is to be paid to the council in installments, contingent on the completion of the various stages of development. Assuming the negotiation of a similar arrangement, the proposal must maintain a constant operating surplus throughout the entirety of its development to be financially viable.

Any operating surplus from the rental of the existing estate can begin to be paid towards the purchase of the land. The project's construction must therefore be phased in such a way that it maintains a constant balance of rentable area, meaning the area of the existing estate being decanted and demolished can never exceed the amount of new building completed at any stage of the development.

It becomes apparent that provision of social housing alone is unable to generate enough surplus to purchase the land prior to the completion of the building. Rather than propose a mix of market-rate and socially rented housing, this difference is accommodated by the introduction of both affordable and market-rate retail and commercial space during the early stages of the development. While necessary to maintain the initial viability of the project these high yield programs can later be made available at affordable rents, or repurposed to better serve the community upon the completion of the building.

Month	Existing	Demolition Total	Construction Total	Balance	Additional Total	Additional Res	Additional Comm.	Area Res.	Income (Council)	Income (LLW)	Income Comm.	Combined Income	Cumulative Total
1	62,542		Lead In	62,542					£166,865			£166,865	£166,865
2	62,542	-1,250		61,292	62,542			62,542	£166,865			£166,865	£333,730
3	62,542	-2,500		58,792	62,542			62,542	£166,865			£166,865	£500,596
4	62,542	-3,750		55,042	62,542			62,542	£166,865			£166,865	£667,461
5	62,542	-5,000		50,042	62,542			62,542	£166,865			£166,865	£834,326
6	62,542	-6,250		43,792	62,542			62,542	£166,865			£166,865	£1,001,191
7	62,542	-7,500		36,292	62,542			62,542	£166,865			£166,865	£1,168,056
8	62,542	-8,750		27,542	62,542			62,542	£166,865			£166,865	£1,334,921
9	62,542	-10,000		17,542	62,542			62,542	£166,865			£166,865	£1,501,787
10	62,542	-11,250		6,292	62,542			62,542	£166,865			£166,865	£1,668,652
11	62,542	-12,500		-6,250	62,542			62,542	£166,865			£166,865	£1,835,517
12	62,542	-13,750		-15,000	62,542			62,542	£166,865			£166,865	£2,002,382
13	62,542	-15,000		-25,000	61,292	1,250	250	63,792	£166,865	£4,228	£4,228	£175,344	£2,177,726
14	62,542	-16,250		-35,000	60,042	2,500	500	62,542	£166,865	£8,457	£8,457	£183,822	£2,361,548
15	62,542	-17,500		-45,000	58,792	3,750	750	66,292	£166,865	£12,685	£12,685	£192,301	£2,553,848
16	62,542	-18,750		-55,000	57,542	5,000	1,000	67,542	£166,865	£16,914	£17,000	£209,277	£2,754,827
17	62,542	-20,000		-65,000	56,292	6,250	1,250	66,792	£166,865	£21,142	£21,250	£230,257	£2,966,085
18	62,542	-21,250		-75,000	55,042	7,500	1,500	70,042	£166,865	£25,371	£25,500	£257,736	£3,183,821
19	62,542	-22,500		-85,000	53,792	8,750	1,750	71,292	£166,865	£29,599	£29,750	£287,495	£3,401,316
20	62,542	-23,750		-95,000	52,542	10,000	2,000	72,542	£166,865	£33,828	£34,000	£321,503	£3,622,819
21	62,542	-25,000		-105,000	51,292	11,250	2,250	73,792	£166,865	£38,056	£38,250	£360,259	£3,853,078
22	62,542	-26,250		-115,000	50,042	12,500	2,500	75,042	£166,865	£42,285	£42,500	£399,014	£4,102,317
23	62,542	-27,500		-125,000	48,792	13,750	2,750	76,292	£166,865	£46,513	£46,750	£437,767	£4,349,084
24	62,542	-28,750		-135,000	47,542	15,000	3,000	77,542	£166,865	£50,741	£51,000	£476,518	£4,600,602
25	62,542	-30,000		-145,000	46,292	16,250	3,250	78,792	£166,865	£54,970	£55,250	£515,268	£4,857,870
26	62,542	-31,250		-155,000	45,042	17,500	3,500	80,042	£166,865	£59,198	£59,500	£554,016	£5,121,886
27	62,542	-32,500		-165,000	43,792	18,750	3,750	81,292	£166,865	£63,427	£63,750	£592,765	£5,394,651
28	62,542	-33,750		-175,000	42,542	20,000	4,000	82,542	£166,865	£67,655	£68,000	£631,514	£5,676,165
29	62,542	-35,000		-185,000	41,292	21,250	4,250	83,792	£166,865	£71,884	£72,250	£670,263	£5,967,428
30	62,542	-36,250		-195,000	40,042	22,500	4,500	85,042	£166,865	£76,112	£76,500	£709,012	£6,268,440
31	62,542	-37,500		-205,000	38,792	23,750	4,750	86,292	£166,865	£80,341	£80,750	£747,761	£6,579,201
32	62,542	-38,750		-215,000	37,542	25,000	5,000	87,542	£166,865	£84,569	£85,000	£786,510	£6,895,711
33	62,542	-40,000		-225,000	36,292	26,250	5,250	88,792	£166,865	£88,798	£89,250	£825,259	£7,218,970
34	62,542	-41,250		-235,000	35,042	27,500	5,500	90,042	£166,865	£93,026	£93,500	£864,008	£7,553,978
35	62,542	-42,500		-245,000	33,792	28,750	5,750	91,292	£166,865	£97,254	£97,750	£902,757	£7,906,735
36	62,542	-43,750		-255,000	32,542	30,000	6,000	92,542	£166,865	£101,483	£102,000	£941,506	£8,278,241
37	62,542	-45,000		-265,000	31,292	31,250	6,250	93,792	£166,865	£105,711	£106,250	£980,255	£8,668,496
38	62,542	-46,250		-275,000	30,042	32,500	6,500	95,042	£166,865	£109,940	£110,500	£1,019,004	£9,077,500
39	62,542	-47,500		-285,000	28,792	33,750	6,750	96,292	£166,865	£114,168	£114,750	£1,057,753	£9,505,253
40	62,542	-48,750		-295,000	27,542	35,000	7,000	97,542	£166,865	£118,397	£119,000	£1,096,502	£9,953,755
41	62,542	-50,000		-305,000	26,292	36,250	7,250	98,792	£166,865	£122,625	£123,250	£1,135,251	£10,423,006
42	62,542	-51,250		-315,000	25,042	37,500	7,500	100,042	£166,865	£126,853	£127,500	£1,174,000	£10,917,006
43	62,542	-52,500		-325,000	23,792	38,750	7,750	101,292	£166,865	£131,082	£131,750	£1,212,749	£11,439,755
44	62,542	-53,750		-335,000	22,542	40,000	8,000	102,542	£166,865	£135,311	£136,000	£1,251,498	£12,001,253
45	62,542	-55,000		-345,000	21,292	41,250	8,250	103,792	£166,865	£139,539	£140,250	£1,290,247	£12,621,500
46	62,542	-56,250		-355,000	20,042	42,500	8,500	105,042	£166,865	£143,767	£144,500	£1,328,996	£13,300,496
47	62,542	-57,500		-365,000	18,792	43,750	8,750	106,292	£166,865	£147,996	£148,750	£1,367,745	£14,048,241
48	62,542	-58,750		-375,000	17,542	45,000	9,000	107,542	£166,865	£152,224	£153,000	£1,406,494	£14,874,735
49	62,542	-60,000		-385,000	16,292	46,250	9,250	108,792	£166,865	£156,453	£157,250	£1,445,243	£15,799,978
50	62,542	-61,250		-395,000	15,042	47,500	9,500	110,042	£166,865	£160,681	£161,500	£1,484,002	£16,813,980
51	62,542	-62,500		-405,000	13,792	48,750	9,750	111,292	£166,865	£164,910	£165,750	£1,522,751	£17,936,731
52	62,542	-63,750		-415,000	12,542	50,000	10,000	112,542	£166,865	£169,138	£170,000	£1,561,500	£19,178,231
53	62,542	-65,000		-425,000	11,292	51,250	10,250	113,792	£166,865	£173,367	£174,250	£1,600,249	£20,538,480
54	62,542	-66,250		-435,000	10,042	52,500	10,500	115,042	£166,865	£177,595	£178,500	£1,639,008	£22,017,488
55	62,542	-67,500		-445,000	8,792	53,750	10,750	116,292	£166,865	£181,824	£182,750	£1,677,757	£23,615,245
56	62,542	-68,750		-455,000	7,542	55,000	11,000	117,542	£166,865	£186,052	£187,000	£1,716,506	£25,331,751
57	62,542	-70,000		-465,000	6,292	56,250	11,250	118,792	£166,865	£190,280	£191,250	£1,755,255	£27,187,006
58	62,542	-71,250		-475,000	5,042	57,500	11,500	120,042	£166,865	£194,508	£195,500	£1,794,004	£29,181,010
59	62,542	-72,500		-485,000	3,792	58,750	11,750	121,292	£166,865	£198,737	£199,750	£1,832,753	£31,313,763
60	62,542	-73,750		-495,000	2,542	60,000	12,000	122,542	£166,865	£202,966	£204,000	£1,871,502	£34,085,265
61	62,542	-75,000		-505,000	1,292	61,250	12,250	123,792	£166,865	£207,194	£208,250	£1,910,251	£37,095,516
62	62,542	-76,250		-515,000	1,042	62,500	12,500	125,042	£166,865	£211,423	£212,500	£1,949,000	£40,344,516
63	62,542	-77,500		-525,000	1,042	63,750	12,750	127,500	£166,865	£215,651	£216,750	£1,987,749	£44,332,265
64	62,542	-78,750		-535,000	1,042	65,000	13,000	130,000	£166,865	£222,194	£222,1,000	£2,026,498	£49,058,763
65	62,542	-80,000		-545,000	1,042	66,250	13,250	132,500	£166,865	£226,422	£226,250	£2,065,247	£54,124,010
66	62,542	-81,250		-555,000	1,042	67,500	13,500	135,000	£166,865	£230,651	£230,500	£2,104,006	£60,548,016
67	62,542	-82,500		-565,000	1,042	68,750	13,750	137,500	£166,865	£234,879	£234,750	£2,142,755	£68,690,771
68	62,542	-83,750		-575,000	1,042	70,000	14,000	140,000	£166,865	£239,108	£239,000	£2,181,504	£78,872,275
69	62,542	-85,000		-585,000	1,042	71,250	14,250	142,500	£166,865	£243,337	£243,250	£2,220,253	£91,092,528
70	62,542	-86,250		-595,000	1,042	72,500	14,500	145,000	£166,865	£247,565	£247,500	£2,259,002	£104,341,530
71	62,542	-87,500		-605,000	1,042	73,750	14,750	147,500	£166,865	£251,794	£251,750	£2,297,751	£118,639,281
72	62,542	-88,750		-615,000	1,042	75,000	15,000	150,000	£166,865	£256,022	£255,000	£2,336,500	£134,975,781
73	62,542	-90,000		-625,000	1,042	76,250	15,250	152,500	£166,865	£260,251	£260,250	£2,375,249	£163,351,030
74	62,542	-91,250		-635,000	1,042	77,500	15,500	155,000	£166,865	£264,479	£264,500	£2,414,008	£192,765,038
75	62,542	-92,500		-645,000	1,042	78,750	15,750	157,500	£166,865	£268,708	£268,750	£2,452,757	£223,217,795
76	62,542	-93,750		-655,000	1,042	80,000	16,000	160,000	£166,865	£272,937	£272,000	£2,491,506	£254,709,301
77	62,542	-95,000		-665,000	1,042	81,250	16,250	162,500	£166,865	£277,165	£276,250	£2,530,255	£287,239,556
78	62,542	-96,250		-675,000	1,042	82,500	16,500	165,000	£166,865	£281,394	£281,500	£2,569,004	£320,808,560
79	62,542	-97,500		-685,000	1,042	83,750							

Fig 43 Site aerial, proposed 1:2500.







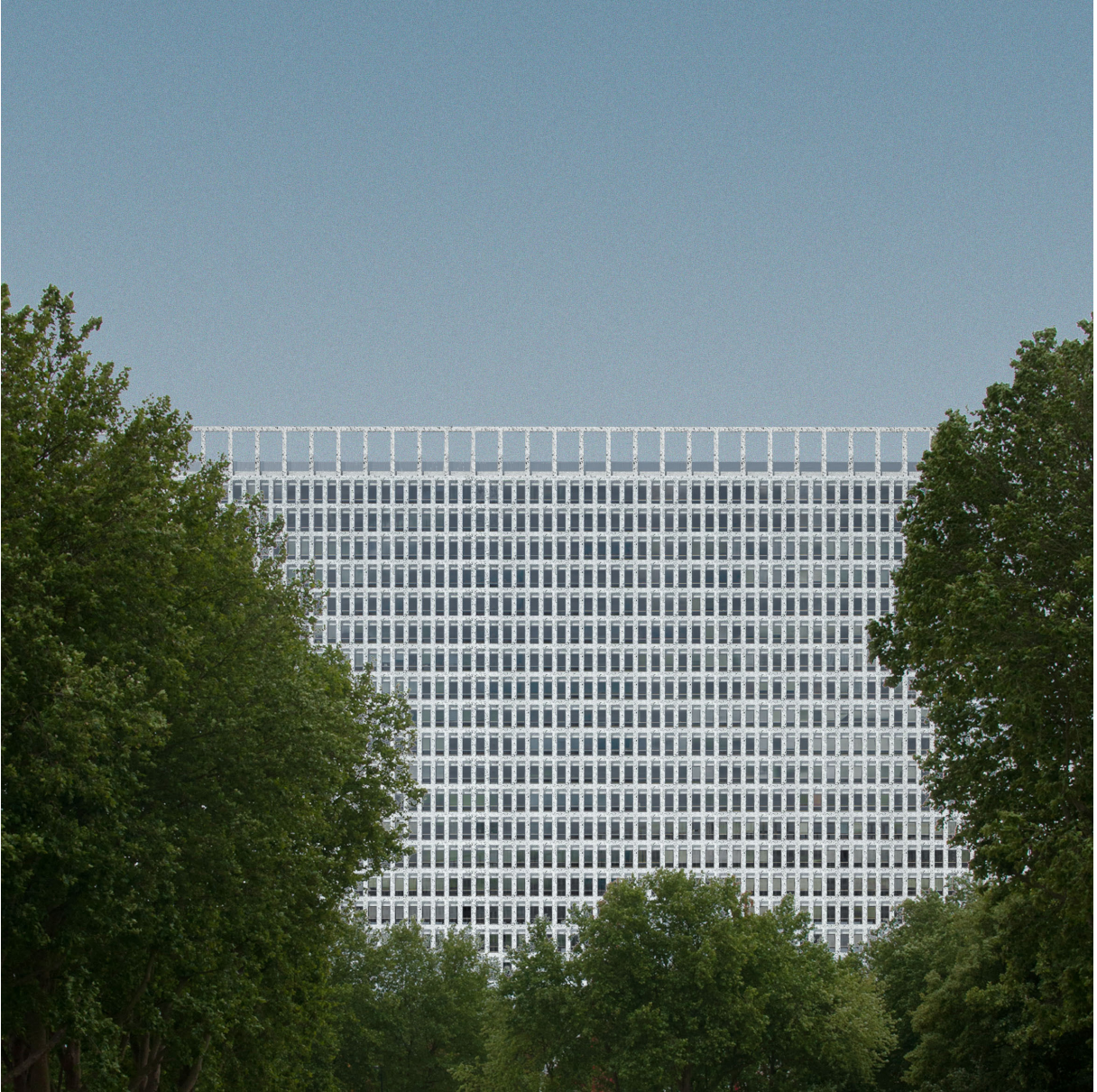


Fig 44 Image depicting view across interior commons.

Fig 45 Proposed ground floor plan, 1:2500.

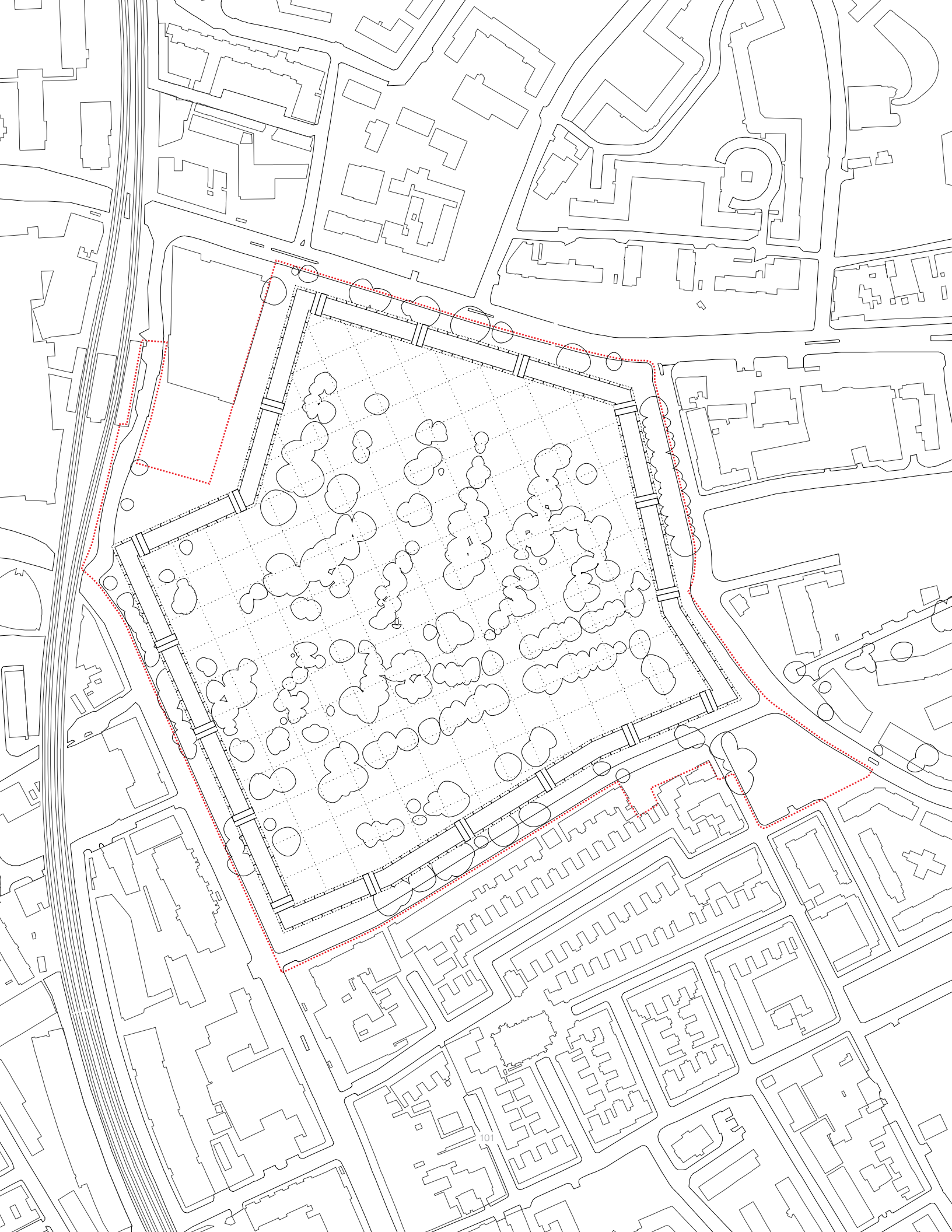


Fig 46 Proposed typical plan, 1:2500.

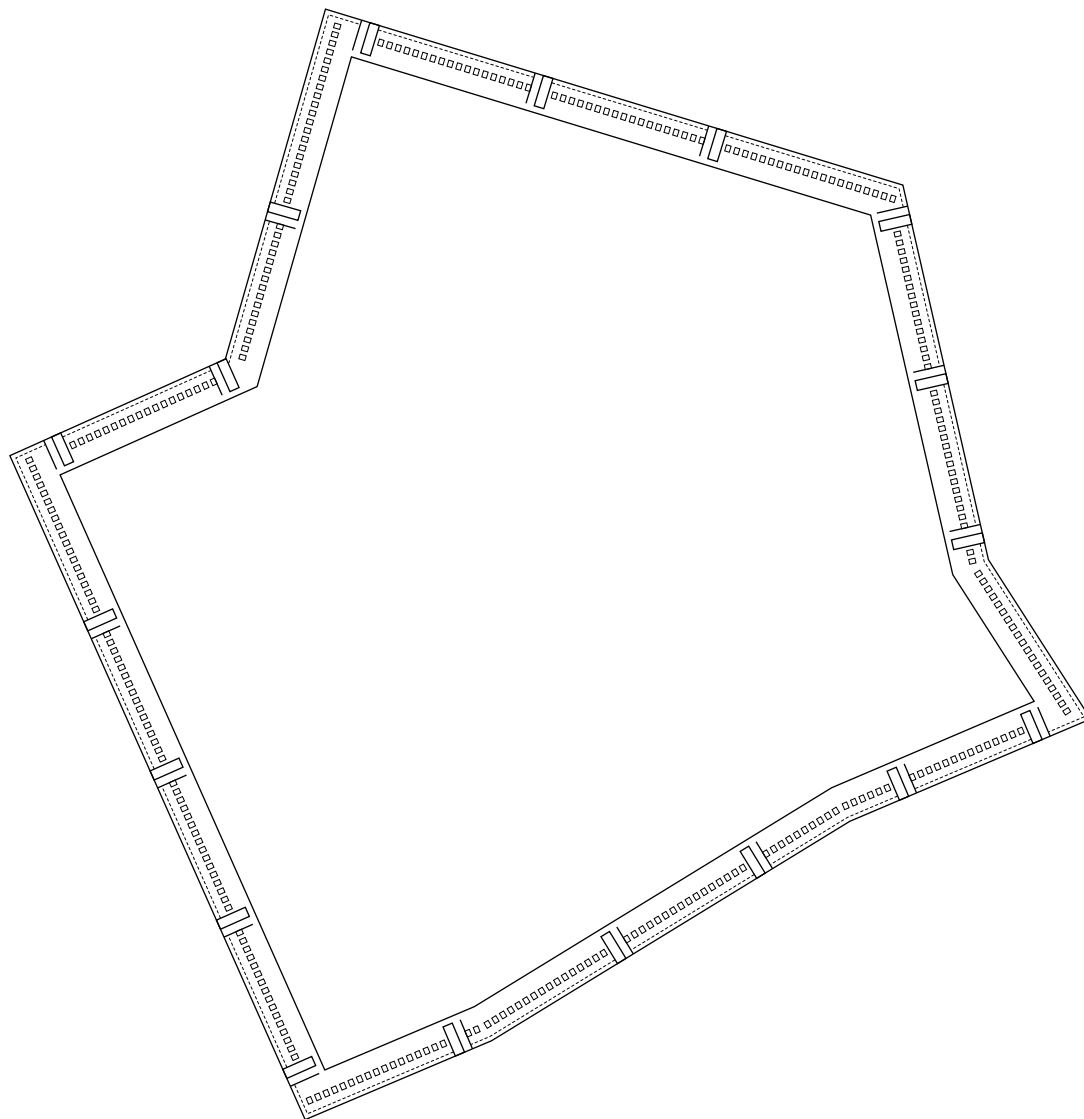


Fig 47 Proposed typical unit plan, 1:2500.



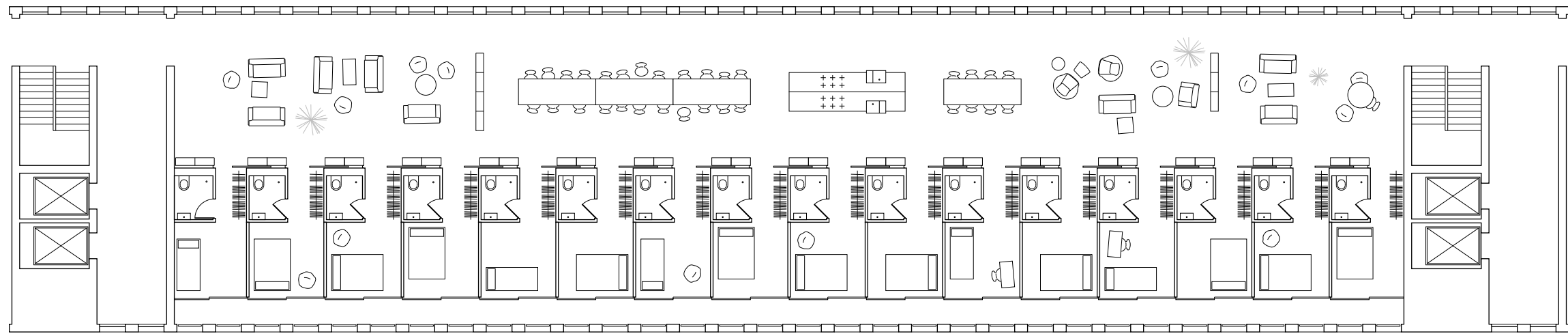


Fig 48 Proposed shared working space, 1:200.  
Fig 49 Proposed market hall, 1:200.

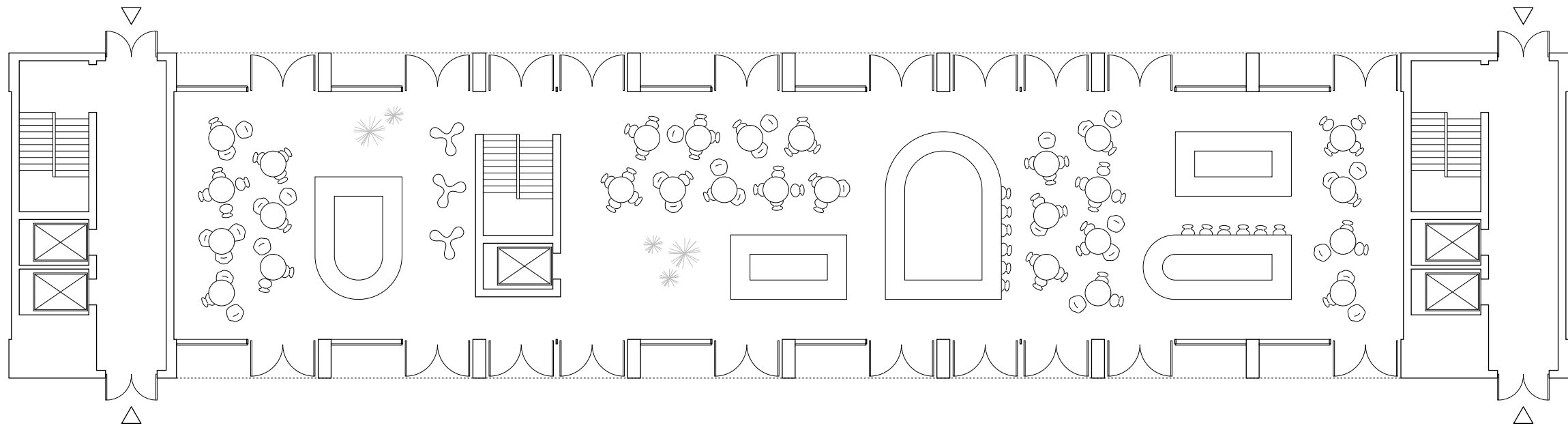
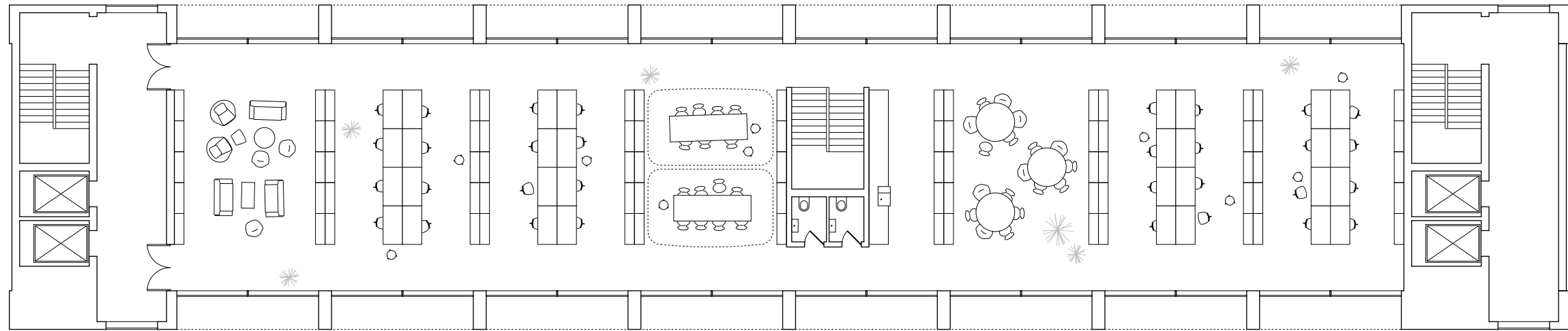
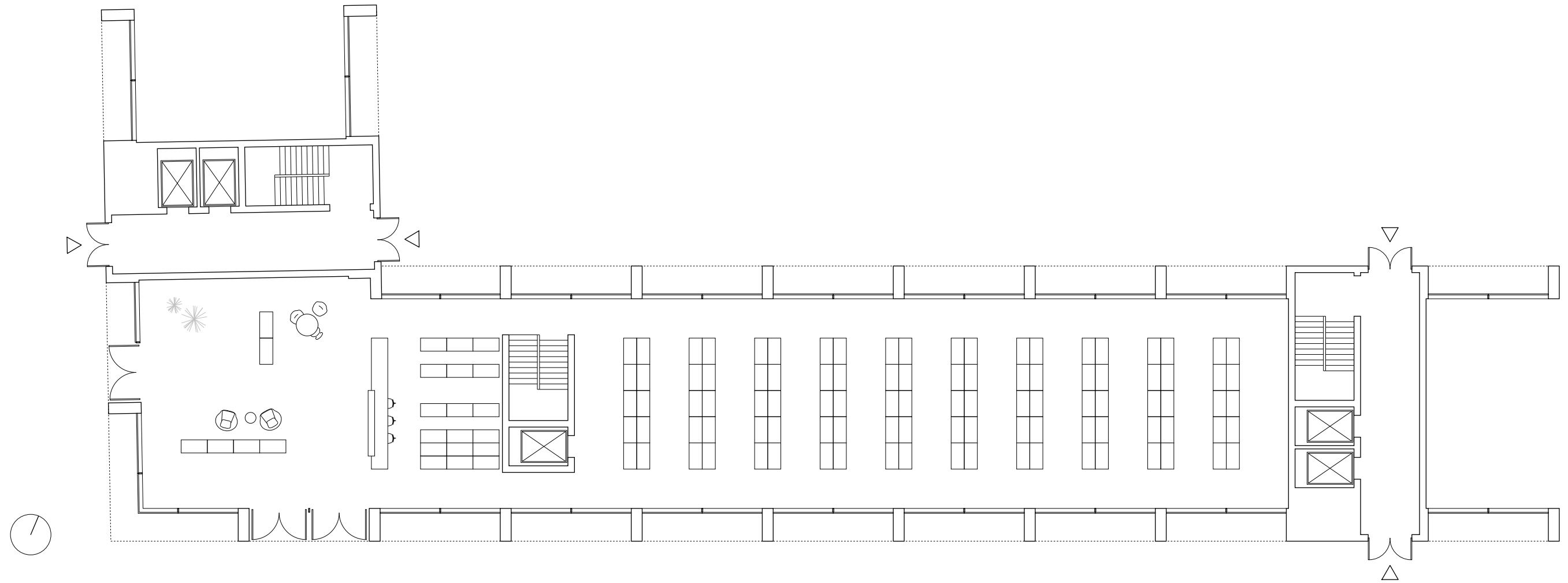


Fig 50 Proposed commons library.



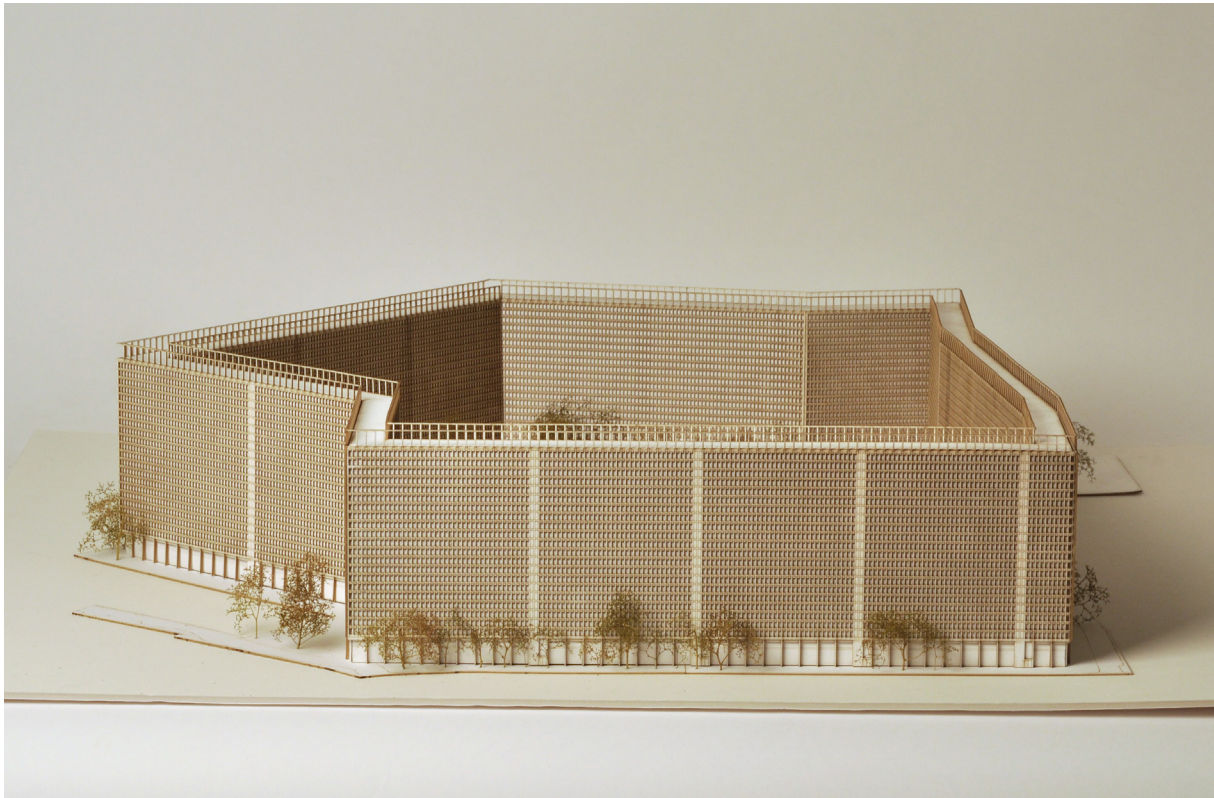


Fig 51 Model photo, showing the elevation along Walworth Road.



Fig 52 Model photo with hands.

Fig 53 Model photo showing retained trees within the commons.

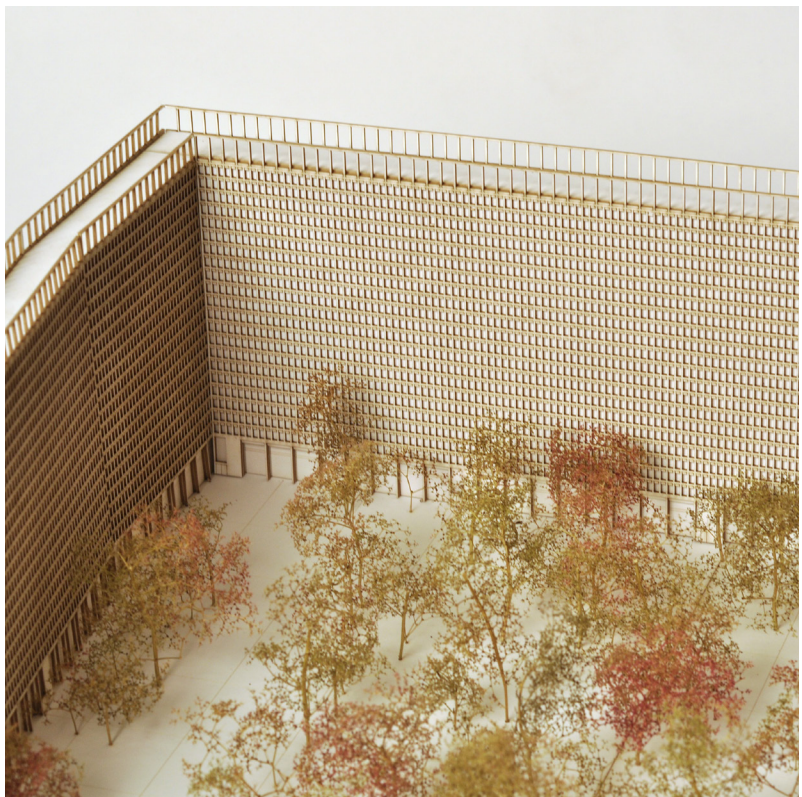
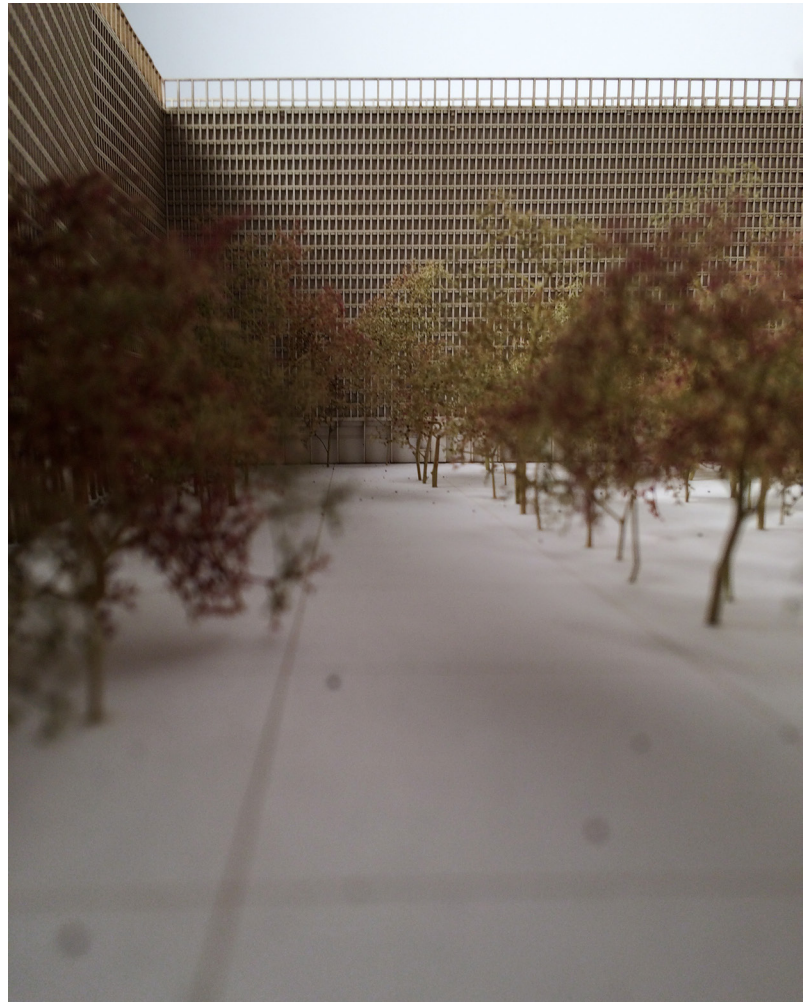




Fig 54 Model photo, from within the commons.

Fig 55 Model photo, looking across the commons.





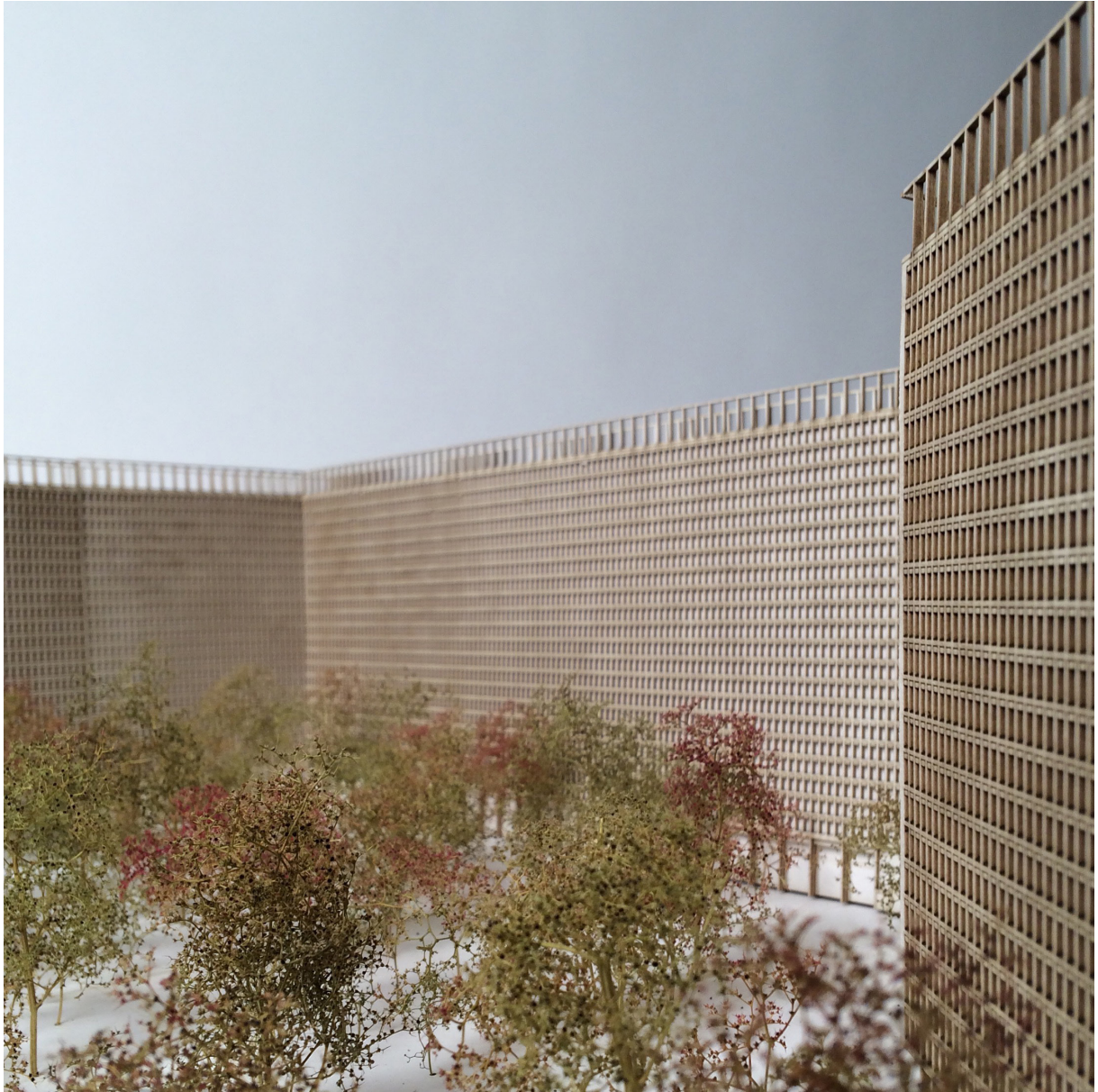


Fig 56 Model photo, from within the building across the commons.



5.0

## CONCLUSION

## AUTONOMY

The council housing estates of postwar London are immanent exceptions within the city. As places formed by politics, these are the fragmentary utopias of the welfare state. And by virtue of their image they maintain a critical, dialectic confrontation towards social integration within the neoliberal city.

The autonomous project proposes a city of parts assumed from the geography of this fragmentary utopia. It demands a theoretical re-foundation of social state and critical recuperation of the theoretical objectives of the modern project. It is not an act of nostalgia or pursuit of an idealized postwar utopia – instead it must consume the new ruins of the welfare state to construct the symbols of the new city. The “new social state” must establish its own tradition through the appropriation and reinvention of the legacy of its predecessor – the urban achievements of the modern project become the conceptual and ideological assets from which it is constructed.

The condition of social class within a greater neoliberal economy is the basis for the development of an emerging class struggle. From this, its crucial to construct a necessary antagonist culture that could also anticipate the possibly of its own institutionalization.<sup>1</sup> Beyond the anarchic subversion and individual occupation of expropriated sites the project seeks to organize a social class to mobilize the new ruins of the welfare state as sites of agonistic potential within the city. The possibility of freedom from the dominion of capital becomes the grounds for a project of autonomy – an agonistic model against the political, economic and social implications of the neoliberalism that define the built environment.

01. Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy : Politics and Architecture Within and Against Capitalism*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008), 48.

02. Ibid, 45.

Predicated on the appropriation and critical understanding of current practice – it demands a reconstruction of preexisting relationships to define a progressive model of development and construct an alternative to a current neoliberal hegemony. By negating the system of property and ownership inherent to neoliberalism’s creation of social inequality the project presents the basis for an alternative system of social relations. Opting for a long-term counter-plan to neoliberal development it cannot be conceived as uniquely political intervention, but also a cultural and theoretical critique of the system.<sup>2</sup>

02. Ibid, 38.

The project ultimately seeks to liberate housing from neoliberal concept of property. It does not call for the destruction of the system, but instead proposes “a real theoretical project of attaining emancipation and power through refusal and autonomy rather than adaption and reform.”<sup>3</sup>

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- Fig. 04 <https://boundarylaundrette.wordpress.com/boundary-estate-a-history/>
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