

Welcome to the first public drop-in event, showing the early design development for new homes at Regent’s Court.

In 2023 the Council committed to build or support the construction of 1,000 new homes for social rent by 2026, to help tackle the housing shortage and provide high-quality, genuinely affordable homes to those who need it. Regent’s Court is one of 14 locations across Hackney that will make up a new programme to build around 400 new homes.

We’re inviting you to work with us to progress the plans for new Council homes to replace garages at Regent’s Court with improvements on the estate.



Residents at the heart of the project - Regent's Court RSG 16 April 2024



Regent's Court estate, view of car park from Regents Row



Regent's Court estate, view of green space and play equipment

What's happening now?

We've appointed a design team to develop proposals for Regent's Court garages including:

Architects: Haworth Tompkins
Landscape designers: LDA Design with Mark Lemanski
(See examples of their work below)

They are supported by technical experts including:
Cost consultant: Exigere
Planning consultant: HTA Planning
Multi-disciplinary engineering consultant: XCO2



Haworth Tompkins - Silchester Garages, for Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea



Mark Lemanski - Kings Crescent Play Street, Hackney



Haworth Tompkins - Gardner Close, 20 homes for Pocket Living in Redbridge



Haworth Tompkins - 137 homes for Barking and Dagenham Council within existing estate

Residents at the heart of the project

To ensure that residents are at the heart of this project, we've established a Resident Steering Group (RSG) of named residents to help shape the project, involve the wider community and inform the design development. To date, the design team have met with and worked with the Regent's Court Resident Steering Group 3 times. They have shared local knowledge, raised concerns, suggested ideas and encouraged other residents to get involved.



Site visits April 2024, Daubney Road scheme



April 2024, half term youth workshop

Design development stage

From what we've heard to date a set of Shared Design Principles have been drafted. This is your opportunity to check if anything has been missed and that local views have been properly considered to inform the next stage of design. The design team have completed RIBA Stage 1 (Preparation and Brief). Therefore, the proposals shown on these boards reflect the scale and simple massing required to accommodate the number of new homes on these two sites. These are not fixed nor are they detailed designs.

What do we mean by Shared Design Principles?

Shared Design Principles are things we agree to try and achieve when we start the design process for the new homes. They will reflect the issues, concerns and aspirations of residents, the design team's vision, technical constraints and guidance, and the Council's goals.

Youth engagement

A three day design workshop for young people to investigate issues affecting young people in the project area, and ensure young people's views help shape the urban design and architecture proposals being developed. Visit board 9 to find out more and how we will continue to involve young people.

Your views and feedback are important

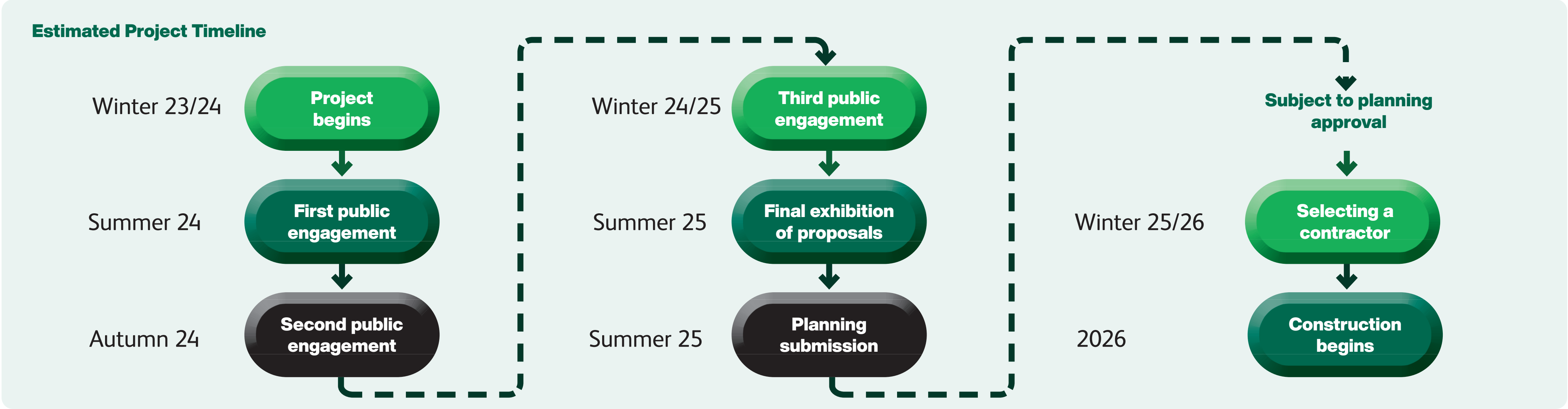
You can let us know what you think in a number of ways:

- Leave post-it notes on the physical boards
- Complete a printed feedback form
- Respond to the online questionnaire scan the QR code below or visit: <https://bit.ly/3y3Yd7a>



Next steps

Your feedback will be used to test and develop options for the location and design of the new homes and open spaces around them, as well as the re-location / re-provision of play equipment and any wider estate improvements.



The redevelopment of the land to the south of the Regents Court Estate is part of Hackney’s New Homes Programme, creating homes for social rent. The project aims to enhance the public realm, boost urban greening, and provide amenities. The objectives are to provide new social homes, engage the community & prioritise sustainability.

Site Description

The Regents Court Estate contains 133 homes, across 4-6 storey deck-access buildings and an 11-storey block. Homes vary from one to four-bedroom, with 70 % council rented and 30 % private leasehold.

Existing Estate
Key Data:



The brief targets 30-40 homes within an indicative development area which encompasses a 730m² hard landscaped forecourt containing 14 garages, 12 car parking spaces, and existing estate plant spaces.

Key commitments made to residents

- A medium height block no higher than the existing low-rise blocks of Regents Court Estate (6-storeys).
- There will be no demolition of existing homes, only garages.
- The Local Lettings Policy will apply. This will prioritise existing Council tenants on the estate whose home doesn’t meet their needs for a new Council home in the development.
- The ball court will be retained in its current location or reprovided at its current size.

Our Targets:




30-40
New homes



100 %
Social rent




1/3rd 1 bed homes
1/3rd 2 bed homes
1/3rd 3 bed homes
*This is a council compliant unit size mix



Retain/reprovide ball
court




Enhanced biodiversity
and maintain as much
green space as possible



Car free new homes



Improved access and
wayfinding



Efficient and sustainable
new buildings



Play provision



Cycle storage



Estate layout and design of Regents Court

The Regents Court Estate, built in the 1960s, is part of a council housing cluster north of Regents Canal, stretching from Queensbridge Road to Broadway Market. These developments connect to the canal towpath, featuring large shared spaces and long views across the canal.

The neighbouring Suffolk Estate features a well-defined boundary that clearly separates public and private spaces, with residential entrances that activate the estate’s amenity areas. Additionally, it achieves a higher residential density compared to the Regents Court Estate. In contrast, the Regents Court Estate suffers from poorly defined amenity spaces, dominated by long back gardens, and a lack of activity.

We’ve heard:

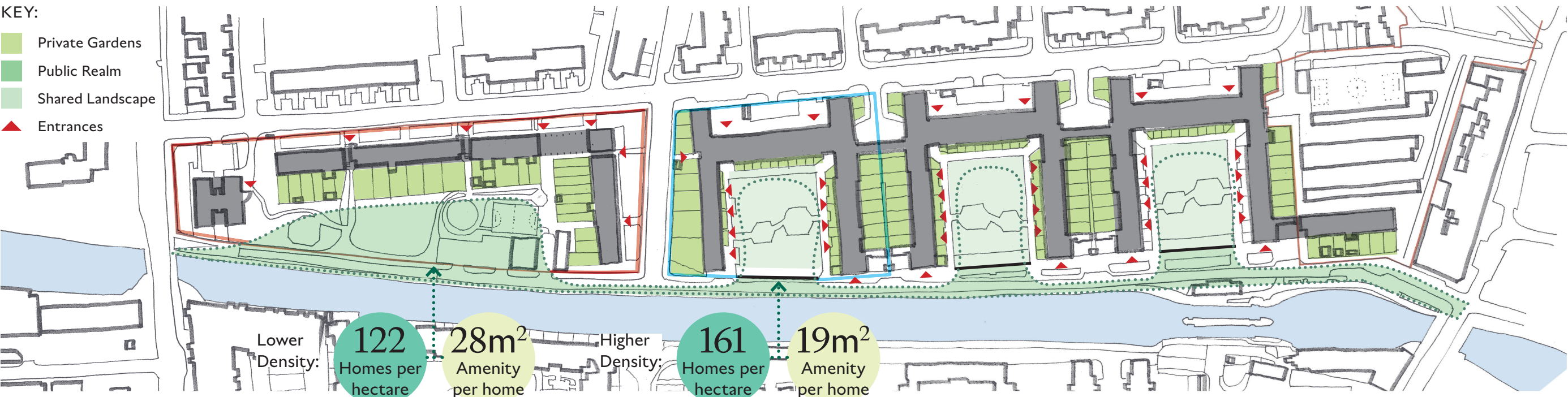
- “The view from Pownall Road towards the canal is spectacular and an asset.”
- “Will the historic cobbles along the tow path be damaged by construction vehicles?”
- “Play areas for younger and older children should be less segregated.”
- “Building perpendicular to the canal and away from the units along Marlborough Avenue would preserve views and reduce impact on day light and privacy.”

Character and Identity of Regents Court Estate:



The cobbled surface of Regents Row is an original feature from the 19th century
Gridded brick facade expresses duplexes with patchwork openings and horizontal bands
Play spaces are separated for different age groups and fenced off

Character of Regents Court Estate compared to Suffolk Estate:



Existing estate amenity space becomes extension of public realm along towpath
Hard landscaped space does not activate the route along Regents Row
Courtyards in the Suffolk Estate feature mature landscape and have a quieter feel

Shared design principles

1. Creating well proportioned green spaces of a similar scale to the Suffolk Estate
2. Increase density of the estate to create well-functioning spaces and provide new social homes
3. The new building will feel part of the existing estate
4. Use materials which tie into existing estate

What do you like about the existing estate, what would you keep / change / add / reflect in the new building - form, scale, colours, materials, details?

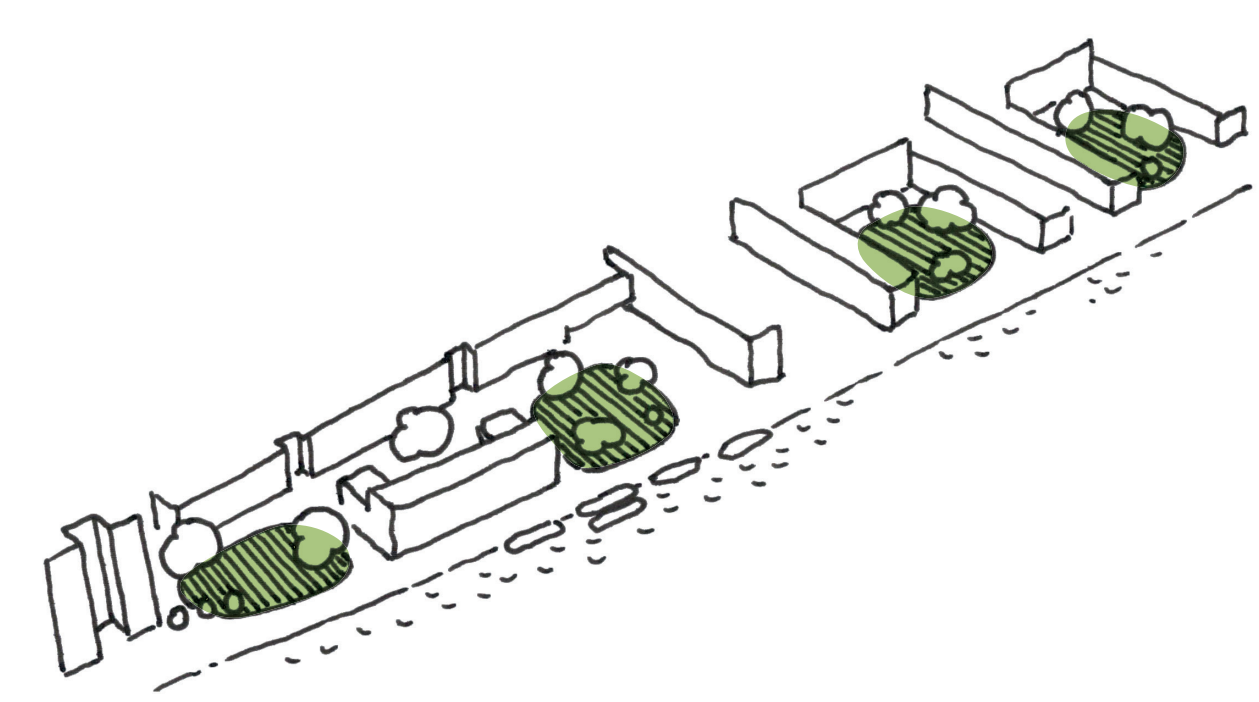


There is an opportunity to provide new / improved green spaces with increased biodiversity and integrated play spaces aiming to improve wellbeing and enhance the social life of the community.

Green spaces and play spaces
New homes will be provided with some private amenity space (balconies) and shared communal areas with door step play. The new building would allow for the creation of two clearly defined and well over-looked green spaces, aiming to maintain as much existing area of green space as possible, and the formation of a clearly legible boundary along Regents Row. These spaces would be more similar in scale and feel to the Suffolk Estate courtyards further along the canal.

Biodiversity and ecology
There is potential to improve biodiversity and ecological benefits within the project boundary of Regents Court, by increasing the variety of plants, adding trees or introducing green roofs to new buildings.

Play Strategy
Two clearly defined play areas, with play equipment for different ages, could be connected by a playable route. Re-arranging existing play equipment in these areas could create more attractive and joyful amenity spaces. Re-used or new swings located along the retained multi use games area for example would offer views of both the activity on the court, and the canal. Re-located and additional seating and additional low level planting and trees would create an attractive environment for users of all ages.



We've heard

The ball court is well used and also for roller blading

School children use the play areas on their way home after school

Important to keep some wildness - foxes live here

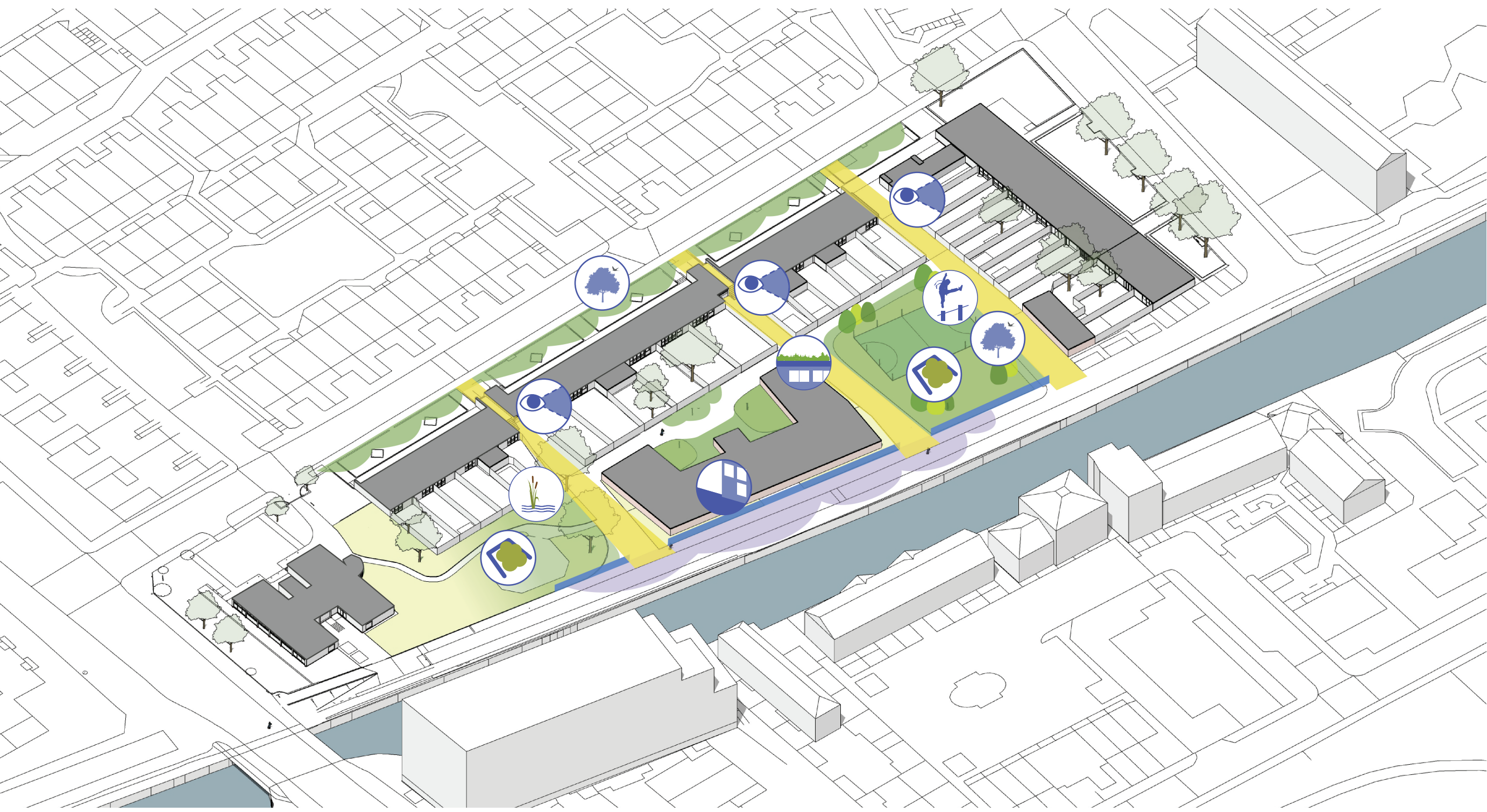
It is not clear that the green space is for Regents Court Estate, the space is often abused by others.

Suffolk Estate courtyards have a very nice quality and they are not gated

Regents Court Estate flats have no balconies, so the green space is a very important amenity

Proposed shared design principles:

- New trees and natural shade
- More Planting/biodiversity
- Green roofs to new buildings
- Retain/Re-provide all play provision including the multi-user games court.
- Activate Regents Row - introduce building elements and landscape elements along the tow path / Regents Row to provide 'eyes on the street'.
- Improve the Character and Enclosure of Green Spaces of a similar scale as Debenham Court and differentiate public spaces from estate spaces – as on the Suffolk Estate court yards.
- Create clear sight lines across the site



Site photo: School children are using the play areas on their way home



Site photo: Some residents say that it's not clear that the green spaces are associated with Regents Court

Tell us what you think of the proposed shared design principles in the space below

Do you broadly agree with the shared design principles described – is there anything you would add?

👍

👎

There is an opportunity to improve the movement and access around the Regents Court Estate. The proposed development provides opportunities to improve the existing issues with servicing to benefit the whole estate.



Poorly overlooked undercroft anti-social behaviour hotspot



Undercroft forms well used pedestrian route for residents



Narrow, poorly overlooked and inaccessible cut throughs



Western cut through is wider and works more successfully



Issues with width of Regents Row for servicing vehicles



Lock on access gate to Regents Row is often broken



Issues with flytipping in bin stores on Pownall Road



Issues with flytipping in bin stores on Regents Row

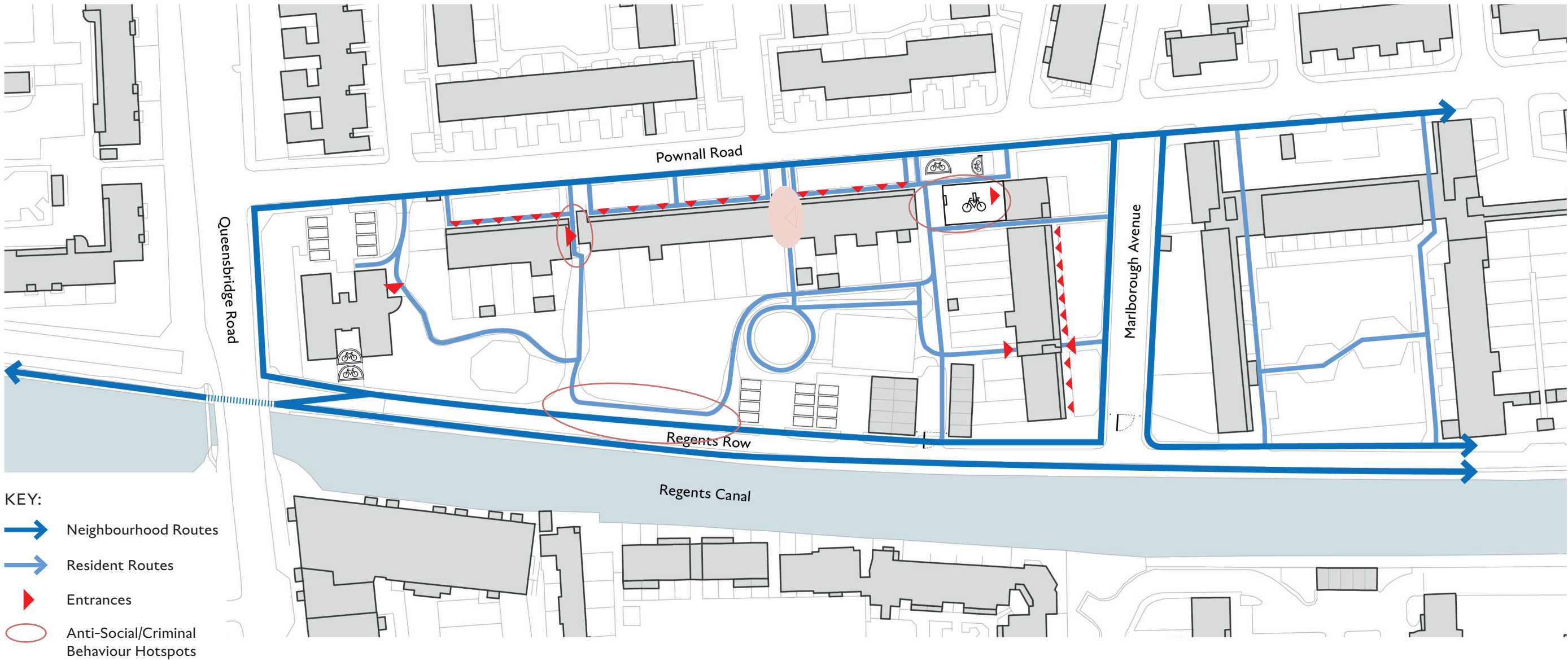
- Shared design principles**
1. Improve safety and lighting along key pedestrian routes on the estate.
 2. Improve servicing of entire estate to enhance the surrounding public realm.
 3. Ensure suitability of Regents Row to support servicing and construction of proposed development.
 4. Retain some car parking spaces and provide new blue badge spaces for the proposed development which will otherwise be car free.

Tell us what you think about these design principles? Are there any others you would suggest?

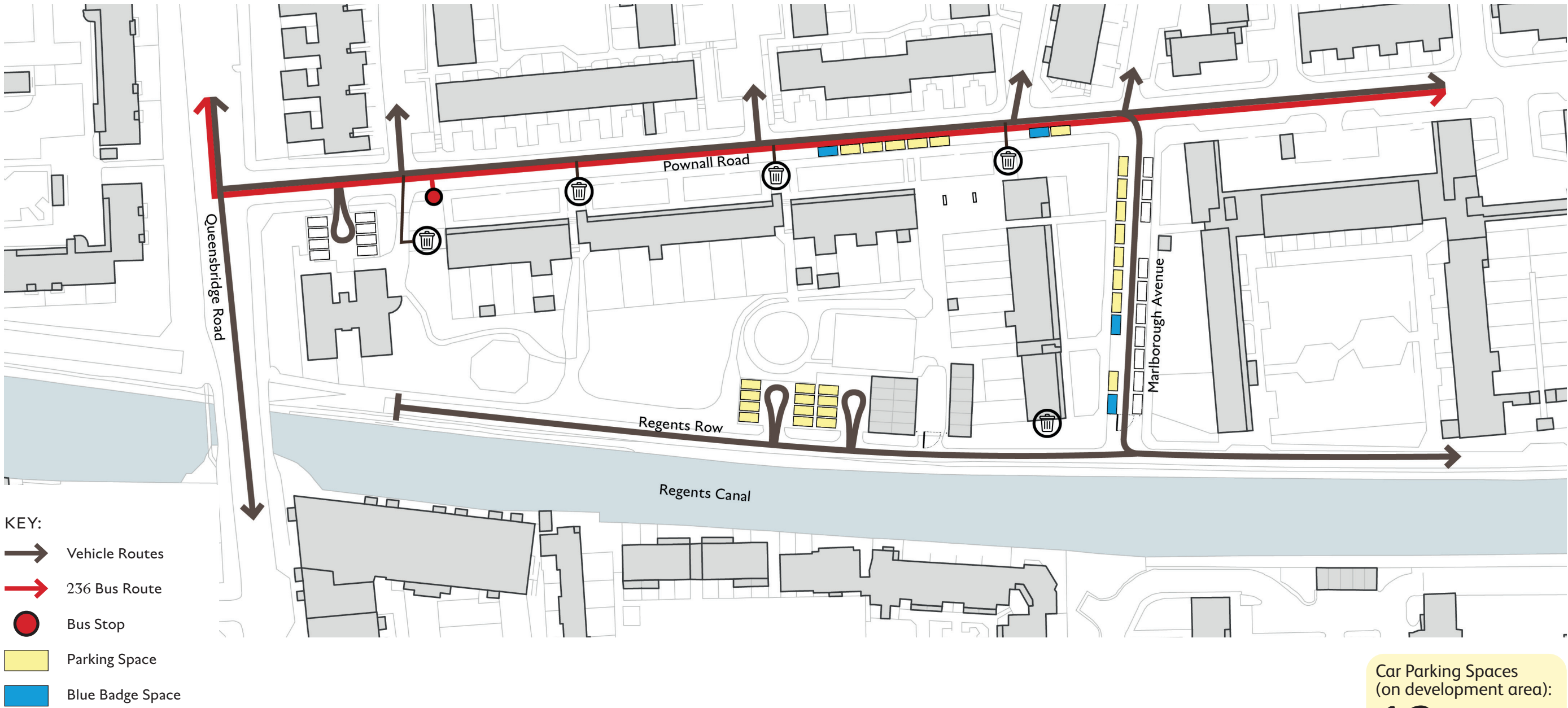
We've heard:

- "There is constant footfall along the tow path to Broadway Market at the weekends and from school children and dog walkers / runners."
- "People get attacked on canal tow path, it feels very unsafe especially at night."
- "Need to improve security and lighting. Lighting on the existing estate is very aggressive."
- "Not enough bike storage. Waiting list for hangars too long."
- "Not enough parking. The gate at bottom of Marlborough Avenue keeps getting vandalised to provide access to Regents Row and open up the rat run."

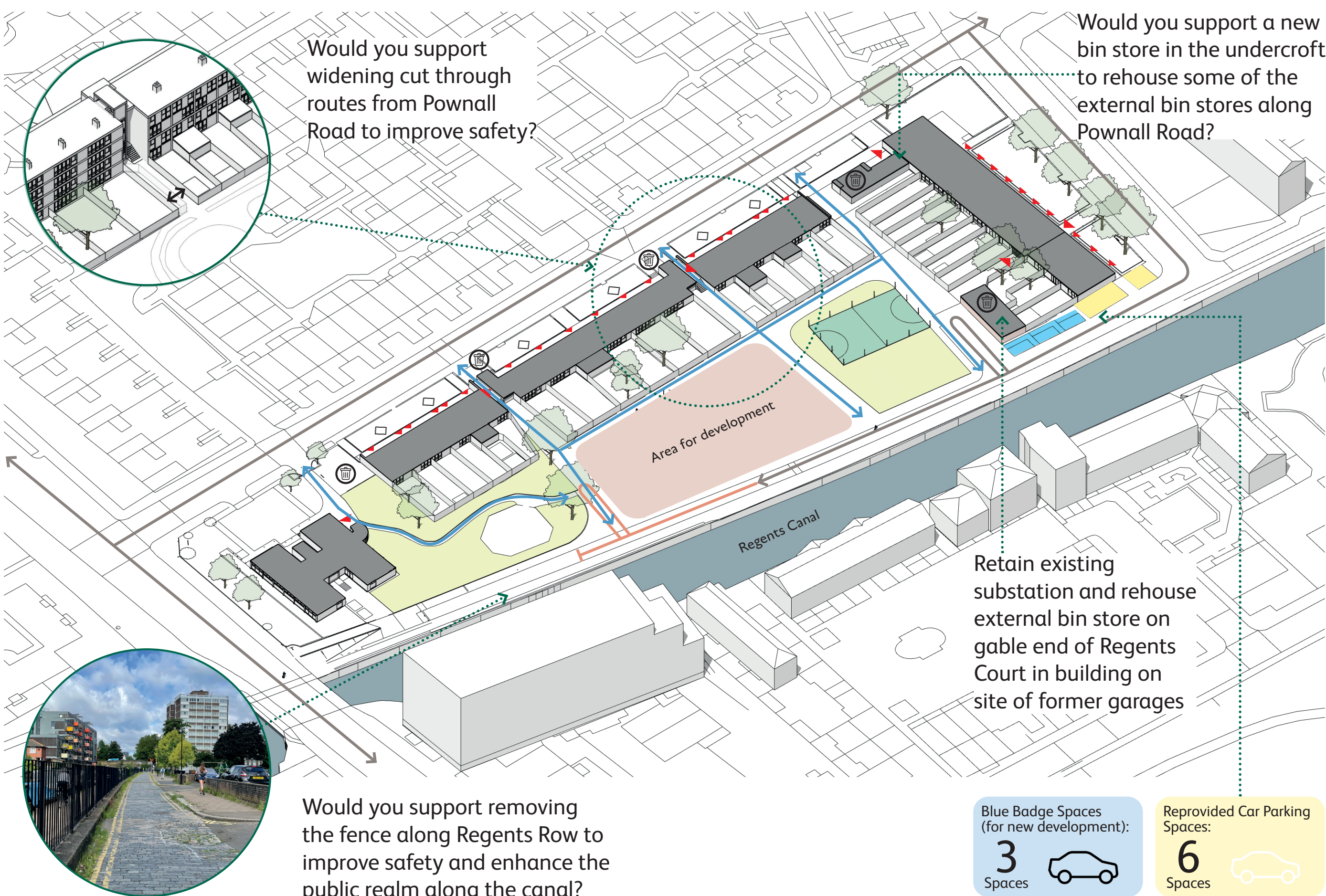
Existing Pedestrian and Cycle Routes:



Existing Vehicle and Servicing Routes:

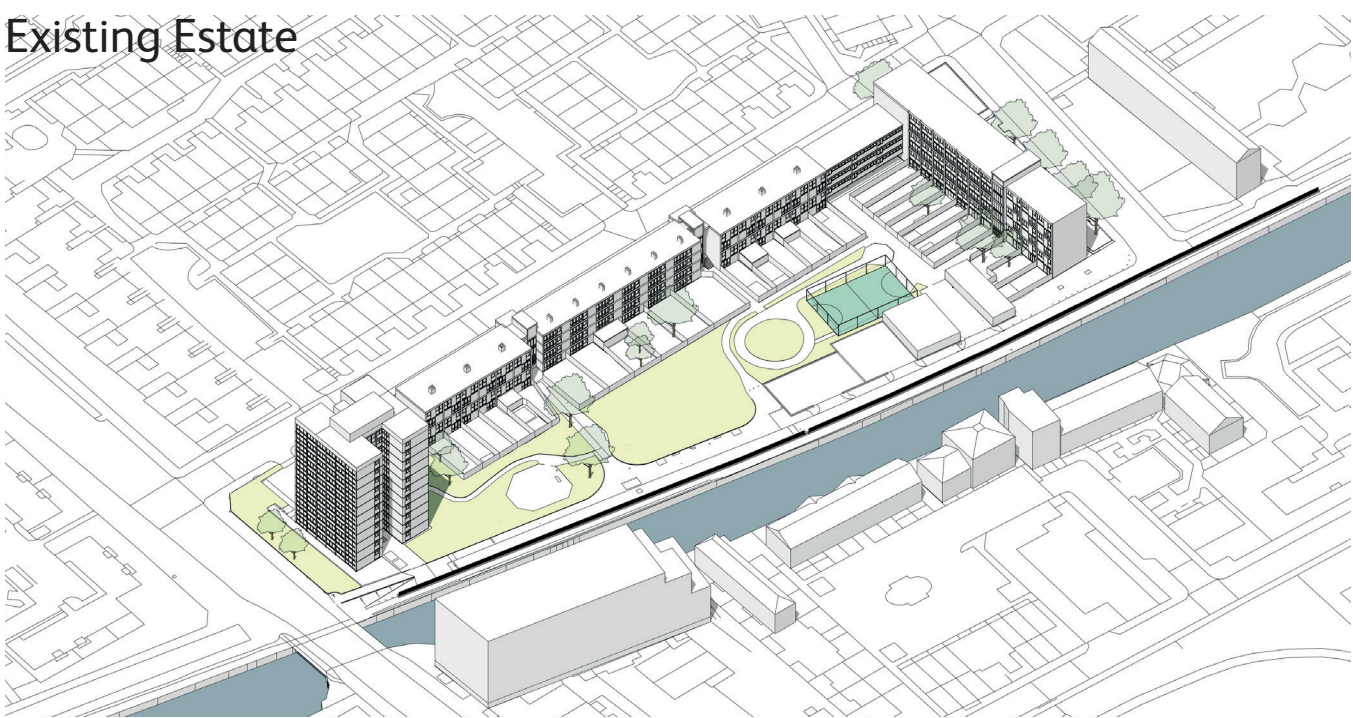


Proposed shared design principles diagram:



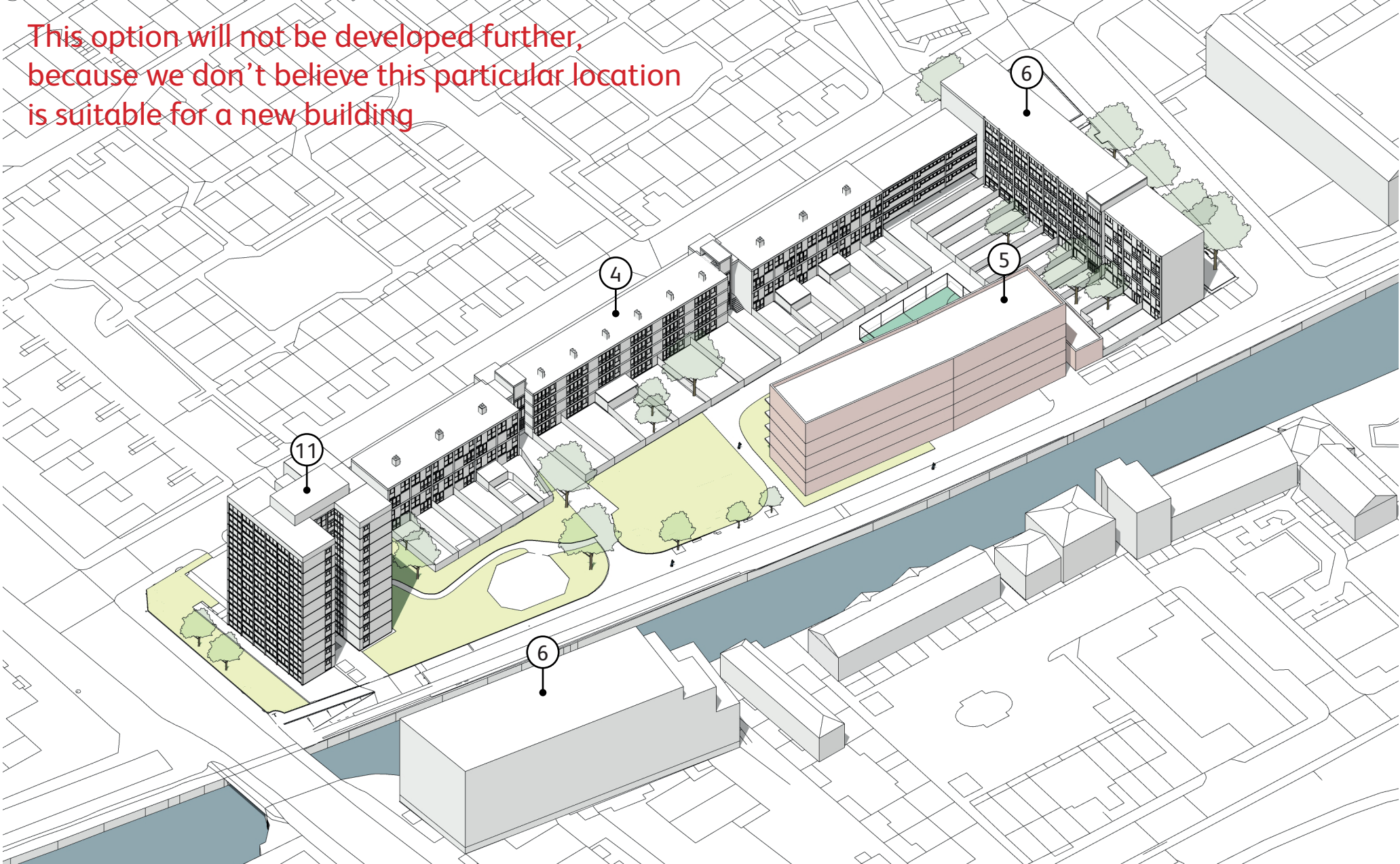
This project has the potential to create much needed homes and include improvements to the immediate surroundings and area within the red line boundary. The early designs for Regents Court Estate look to deliver approximately

30 homes for social rent; providing a mix of 1-3 bed homes. A wide range of different site strategies have been tested to consider their impact on the existing neighbours, landscape, views, and number of homes. The process is summarised on this board.



Building on the existing garages site

This option will not be developed further, because we don't believe this particular location is suitable for a new building



- 30 approx

New Homes
- +72 m²

Shared landscape
- 5

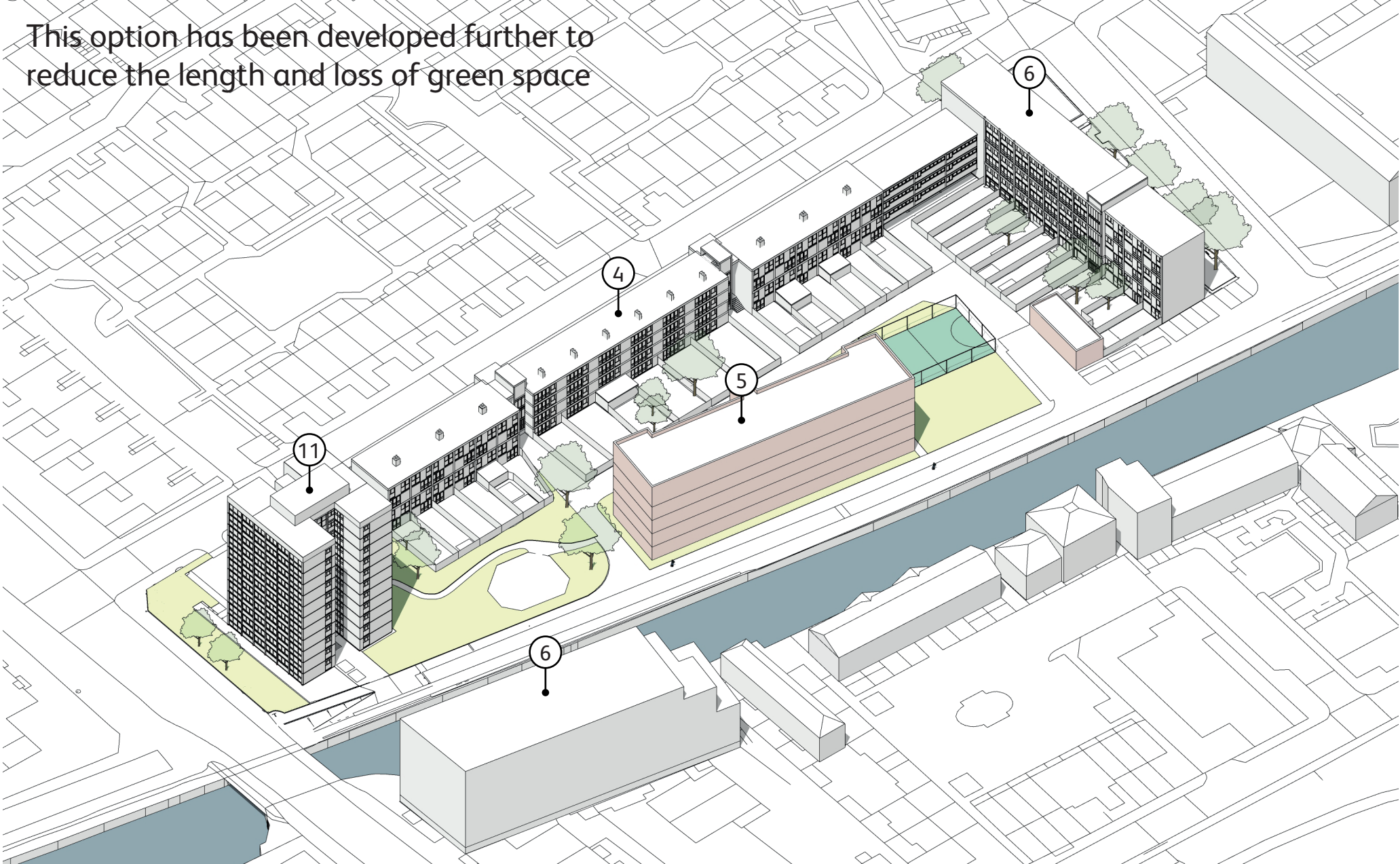
Storeys
- No Net Loss of Green Space
- ✓

 - Delivers 30 new socially rented homes for local people
 - No net loss of green space
- ✗

 - Location of block is a concern
 - Views to canal will be disproportionately affected to east of estate
 - Ball court will need relocation

Building in the middle of the estate

This option has been developed further to reduce the length and loss of green space



- 30 approx

New Homes
- 129 m²

Shared landscape
- 5

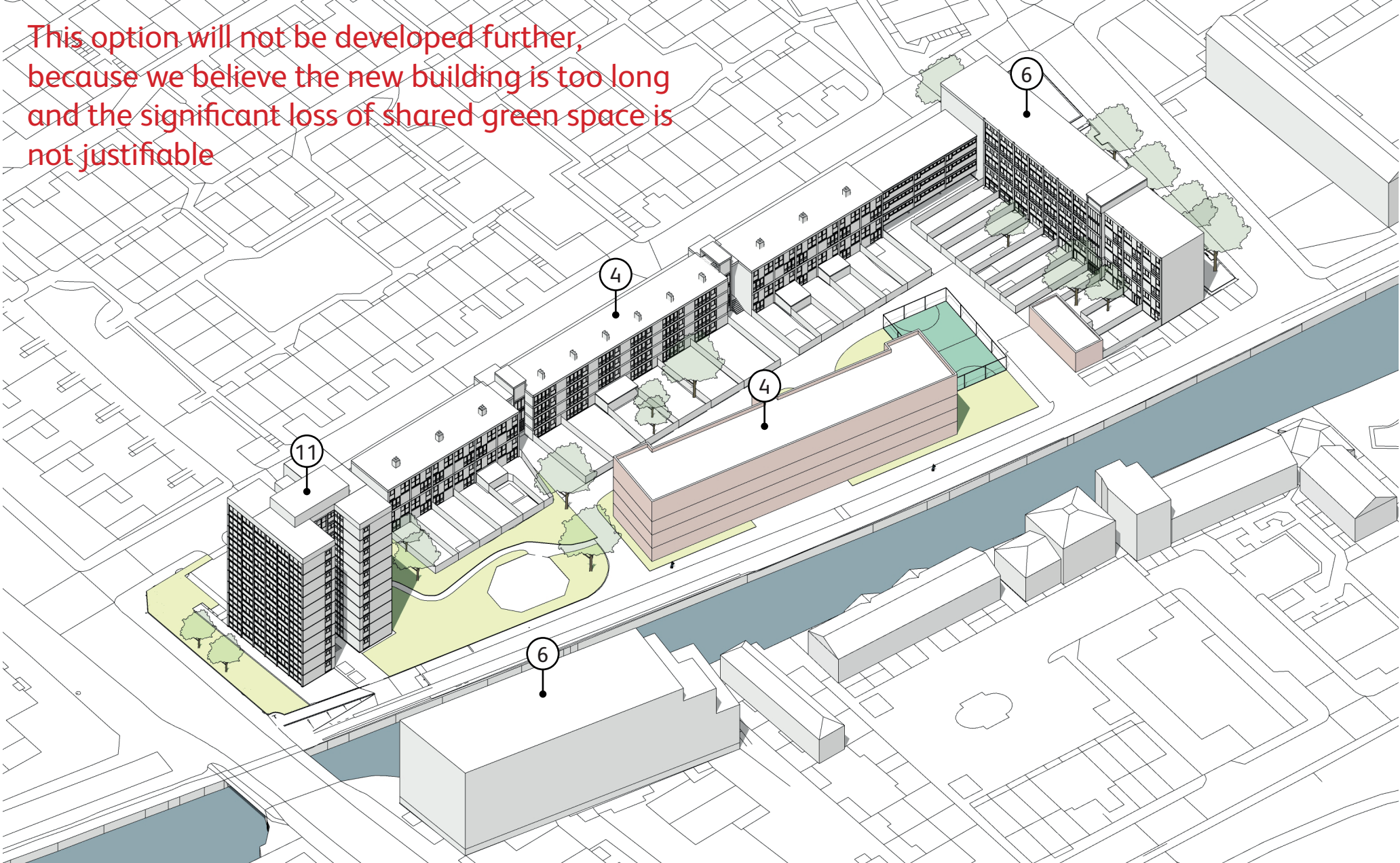
Storeys
- Loss equivalent to 1/2 a ball court
- ✓

 - Delivers 30 new socially rented homes
 - Small loss of green space
 - Creates two new well proportioned green spaces. Ball court remains in place
- ✗

 - Length of block is a concern
 - Blocks views and routes from Pownall Road to canal

Lower, but longer building

This option will not be developed further, because we believe the new building is too long and the significant loss of shared green space is not justifiable



- 30 approx

New Homes
- 287 m²

Shared landscape
- 4

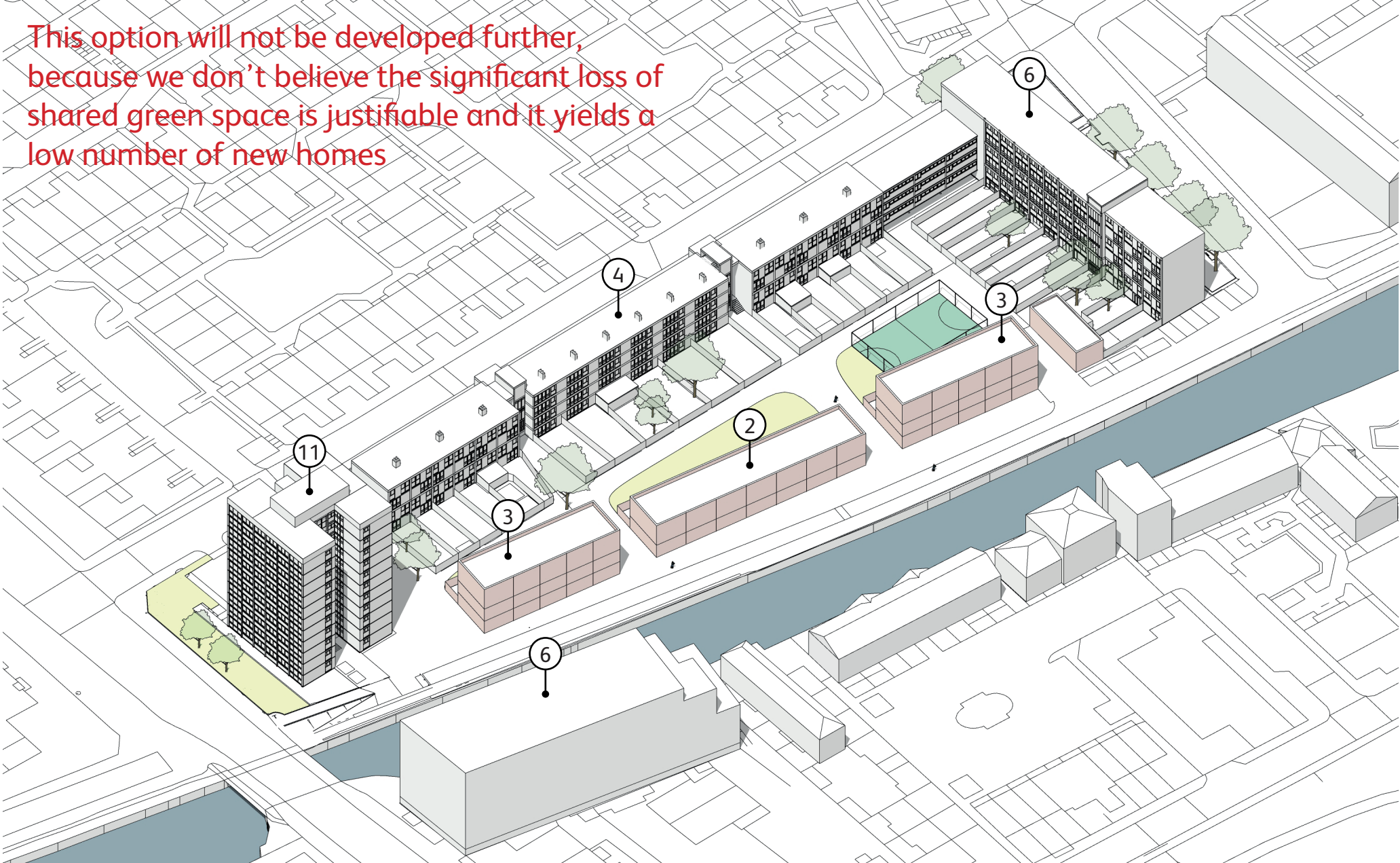
Storeys
- Loss equivalent to a ball court
- ✓

 - Delivers 30 new socially rented homes for local people
 - Addresses resident concerns regarding height of block
- ✗

 - Increased footprint substantially reduces green space
 - Position of block disrupts existing cut through routes to canal
 - Ball court will need relocating

Row of townhouses along the canal

This option will not be developed further, because we don't believe the significant loss of shared green space is justifiable and it yields a low number of new homes



- 17 approx

New Homes
- 708 m²

Shared landscape
- 2-3

Storeys
- Loss equivalent to 3 ball courts
- ✓

 - Active canal frontage
 - 2-3 storey low rise new buildings
- ✗

 - Very low number of homes
 - Increased footprint and private gardens takes away majority of estate shared landscape
 - Poor visibility of ball court

Proposed shared design principles:

1.

Respect the existing heights of buildings on the Regents Court Estate
2.

Designed in a way to maintain as much daylight and sunlight to the existing homes
3.

Consideration of window placement and balconies to avoid overlooking and protect privacy
4.

Entrances from Regents Row to provide activity and overlooking along this route

We've heard:

- "Can the building be perpendicular to the canal and away from the units along Marlborough Avenue this would preserve views and reduce impact on day light and privacy."
- "I'd like to see lower buildings along the canal to allow daylight into the existing buildings."
- "Concerned over the height of the new buildings, and the impact on light and views of the canal."
- "Noise echoes in unpredictable ways, people on the towpath can be heard from far away.."
- "Concerns over overlooking and privacy."

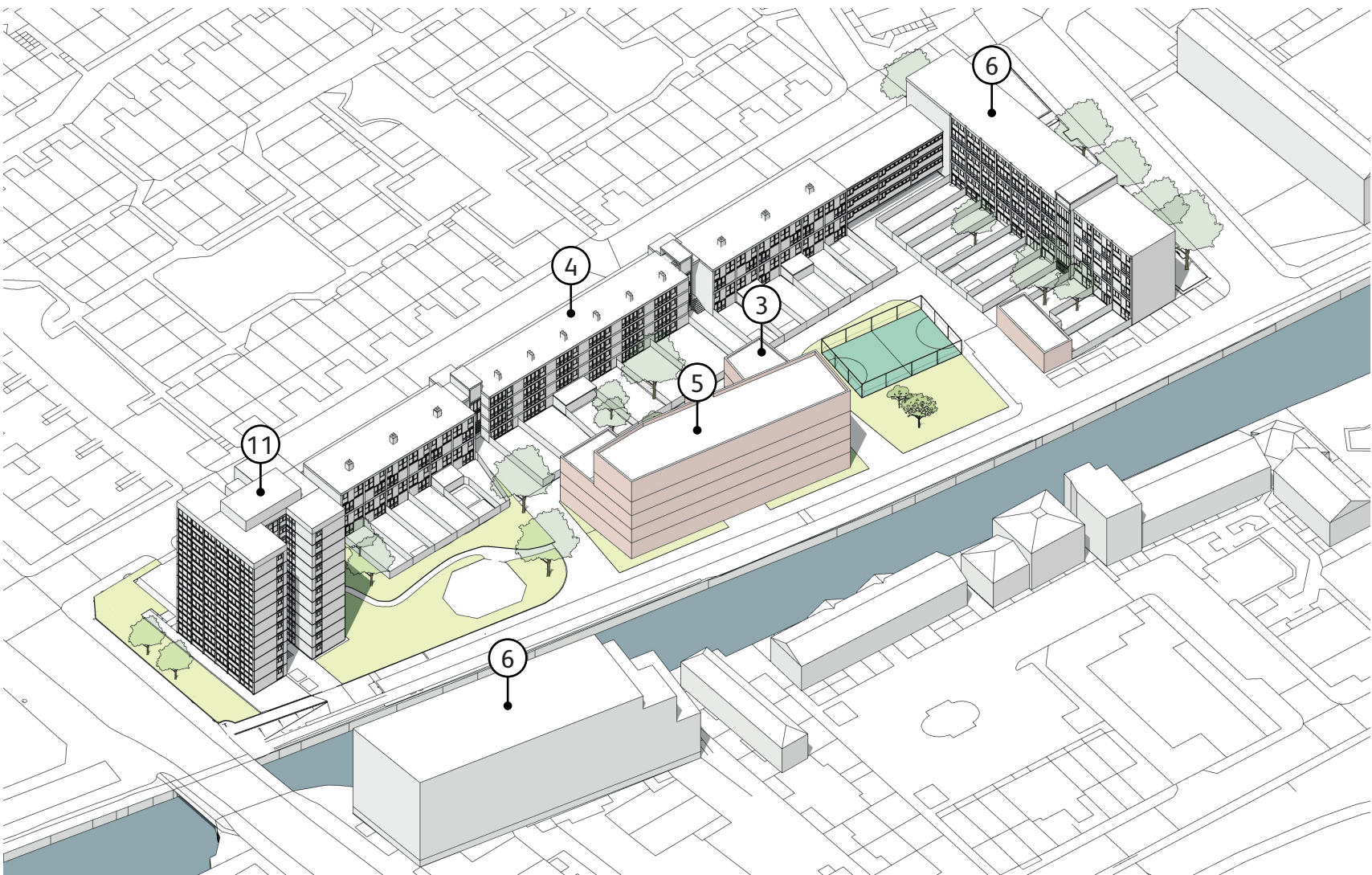
We would like your feedback on two site strategies that are currently being considered. These both deliver approximately 30 homes; either in a taller building with a smaller

footprint and larger green space, or a lower building with a larger footprint with less green space. Which do you think creates the best landscape?

Existing view along Regents Row looking west



1. ‘U’ shaped building parallel to canal



30 approx

New Homes

3-5

Storeys

-73 m²

Shared landscape

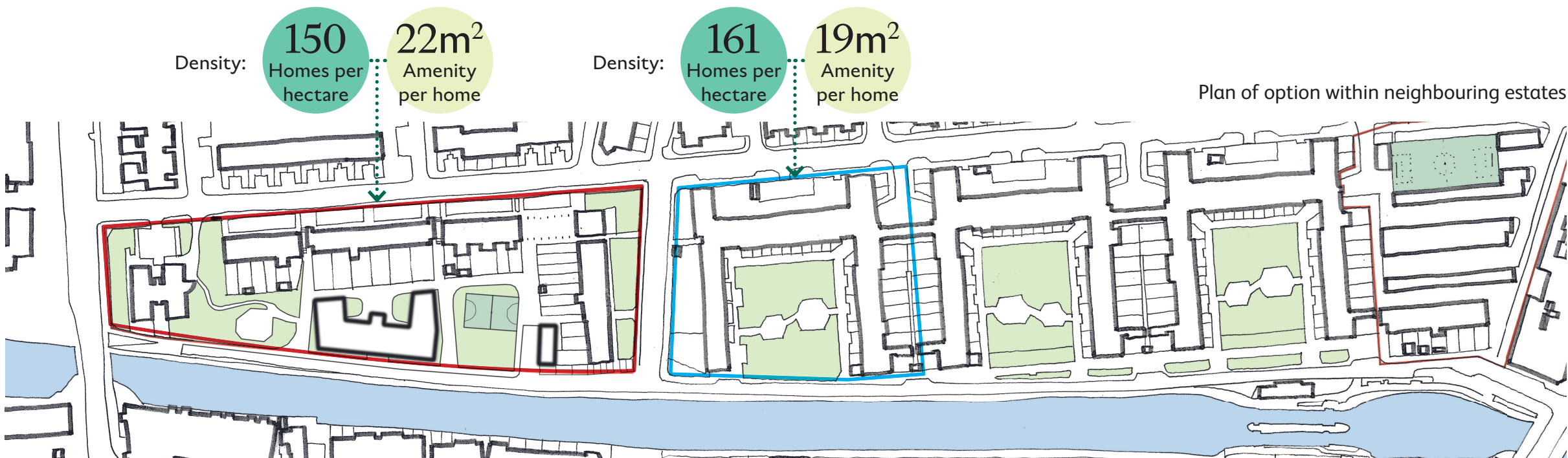
Loss equivalent to 1/3 of a ball court

✓

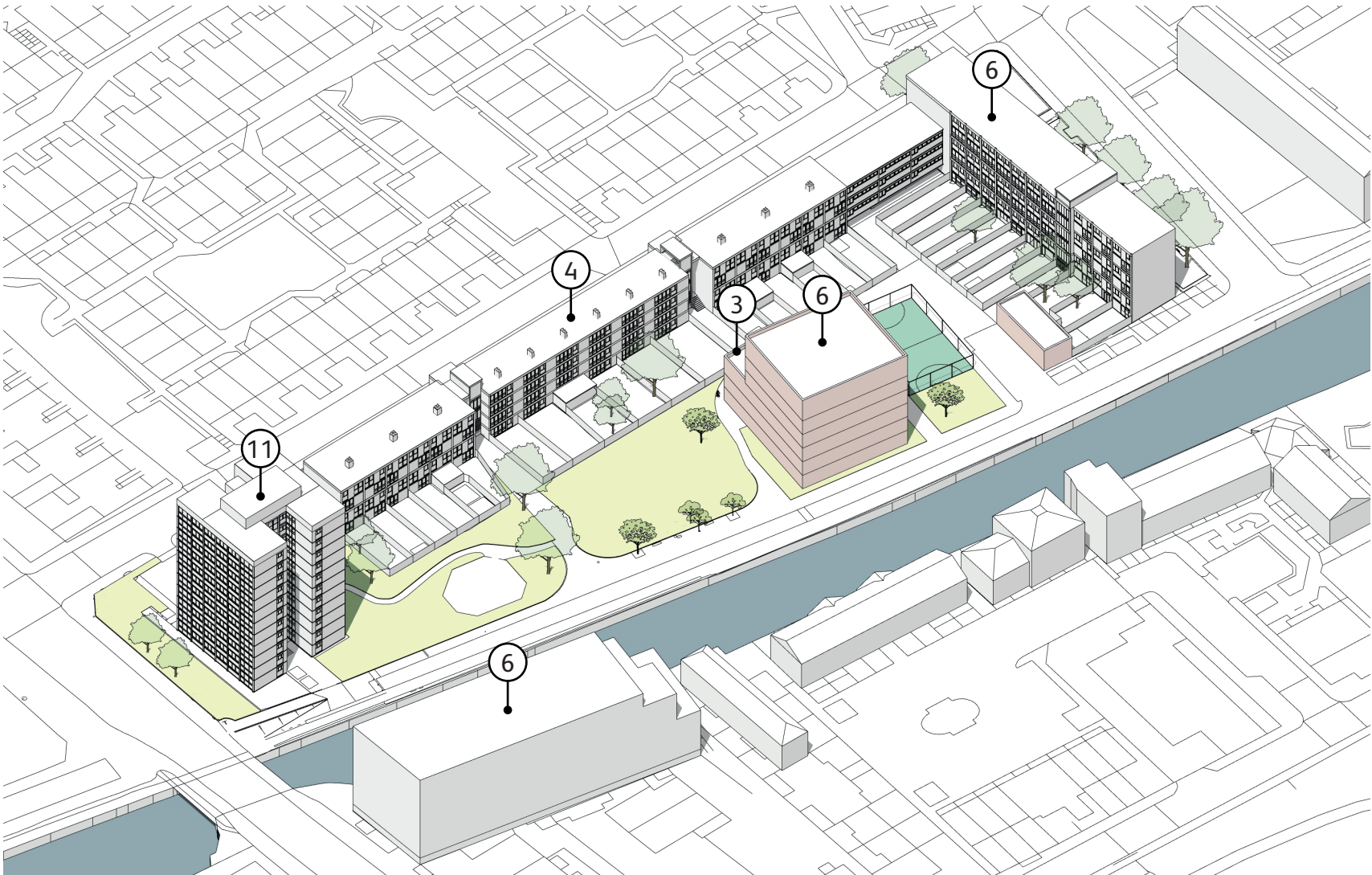
- Delivers 30 new socially rented homes for local people
- Creates two new courtyards of a similar scale to Suffolk Estate
- Keeps ball court in same location

✗

- Views to canal will be affected from central part of estate



2. Taller building perpendicular to canal



30 approx

New Homes

3-6

Storeys

+181 m²

Shared landscape

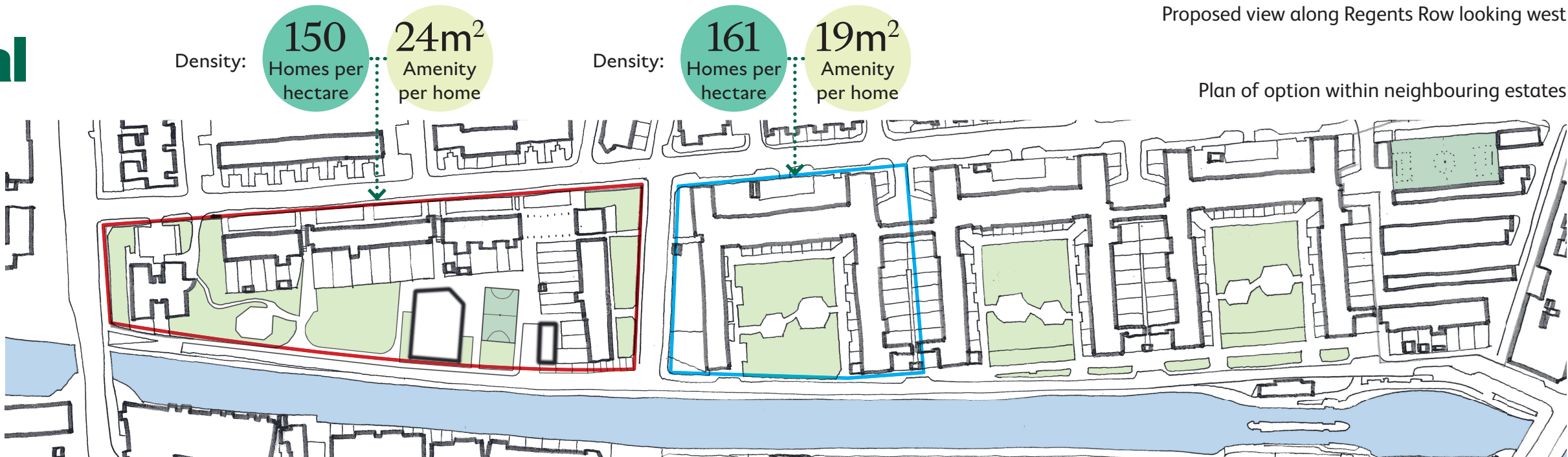
No Net Loss of Green Space

✓

- Delivers 30 new socially rented homes for local people
- Smaller footprint of building results in an increase in communal green space
- Keeps ball court in similar location
- Views to canal will be less affected

✗

- Building is not in keeping with existing surrounding building types which are long and thin



Please let us know what you think

Understanding the history of a place and how things are named can help think about what has already been referenced and commemorated, and can help us think about what other stories we want to tell about a place going forwards. This might be relevant when thinking about what names to give to new or existing buildings, gardens or spaces.

The Name
Regents Court is named after the canal that it looks onto. Work on the Regent’s Canal began in 1812 and was completed in 1820. It connects the Grand Union Canal in Paddington to the river Thames in Limehouse.

Regent (noun)
A person who governs a kingdom when a monarch is not able to.



Profile of the Prince Regent (later known as George IV) by Sir Thomas Lawrence, c. 1814

The Regent’s Canal takes its name from the Prince Regent, son of King George III. He had been acting as prince regent for his father, since 1811 due to his father’s mental illness, and it was in this capacity that he instructed the architect John Nash to design and build the canal.



Industrial Heritage
For over 140 years the canal brought coal, goods and building materials from the Midlands to London. Perhaps this iron entrance sign to Regents Court (top) can be seen as a nod to the canals industrial heritage. As can this iron arch (below) located where Regent’s Row meets Queensbridge Road.



The Towpath
The towpath – now used for pedestrians and cyclists – was originally built so that horses could tow barges along the canal. Here is an image of a man guiding a horse along the towpath as it pulls a barge behind it. After the Industrial Revolution, towing became obsolete when engines were fitted on boats and when railway transportation superseded the slow towing method.



Features
The original sky blue and grey tiles add character to the facade of Regents Court. Some of these have unfortunately been removed in order to add block naming signage and lighting.



Graffiti
This child in a life jacket – which could be seen as a reference to migrant crossings in the channel – is one of various forms of graffiti which can be seen in and around the estate.

Please share your fond memories and anecdotes about Regents Court

Who is your local hero?

Reshaping Our Neighbourhood was a three day design workshop for teenagers. Participants explored issues affecting young people in the area. The workshop culminated in a public exhibition and presentation.

The workshop was attended by 14 young people aged 11–18, with a balanced mix of ages and genders. The workshop was structured as follows

Day 1: Constructing the vehicle and mapping experiences

A second hand plasterboard trolley was lined with plywood peg boards, to serve as a mobile base to investigate the surrounding area, as a backdrop for interviews, and as an exhibition space.

Participants drew a map of the area from scratch, and added familiar routes and destinations, then made qualitative assessments of the child-friendliness of locations.



Day 2: Field research and interviews

Participants moved the vehicle to a number of locations in the area, and gathered information through conversations, measurements (incl. dimensions and sound levels) and 3d scanning. We recorded videos of participants interviewing each other as well as passers-by on topics such as:

- What do you value about the area, what could be improved?
- What do people think of you as you hang out here?
- In which locations are you more aware of problematic behaviour and why?



Day 3: Exhibition design and presentation

Videos and photos were edited and uploaded to an Instagram account. Further interviews with individual participants were transcribed and exhibited on the vehicle. Local qualities that are valued, need improving, or are missing were expressed in signposts and stickers. The presentation took place outdoors in a public space, and comprised a short introduction, following which each participant added a sticker with a proposed change to the vehicle. This was followed by a Q&A with members of the design team and client body and communal pizza feast.



Existing qualities of the area

Familiarity was often mentioned as a positive by the young people, the school uniform shop on Broadway Market for example serves as a reference point that teenagers have known for a long time, or the local Costcutter supermarket, the owner of which ‘knows my whole family’.

Teenagers recognised and valued spaces provided for them, such as the white and blue cage or the BMX track, and especially the graffiti within it, which they described as special, and as a signifier that the cage is ‘theirs’. They expressed reservations about nearby London Fields Park, describing how initially friendly encounters would occasionally end in arguments, or even violence. They described how theft is a common occurrence in the area, both drive-by phone snatching, as well as theft of belongings from the side of the football pitch. Some said that they prefer to socialise outside the borough. They also didn’t think there was much to do for teenagers. Broadway market was described as positive at weekends, but teenagers also recognize that it is part of the gentrification of the area and too expensive for them. The canal is described as positive, in the sense that its water and the planting along it has a calming effect.

Proposed improvements

The young people described the importance of Wifi access, as many do not have mobile data and depend on wifi to contact family or friends. They suggested that teenagers should have an hour’s worth of free rental bike time, as that would allow them to visit friends, who for example live in the Victoria Park area. Other proposed improvements included: a chill-out space just for teenagers, more bins, more lighting at night, a drinking water tap, no minimum spend in corner shops, a gaming space on the estate

Next Steps

This workshop formed part of a series of engagement events with teenagers, which aims to bring young people’s experiences and views into the design process. Activities being planned include a trip to some other ball games areas, and a co-design workshop potentially during autumn half term.

Write or draw your idea to improve the area for young people?