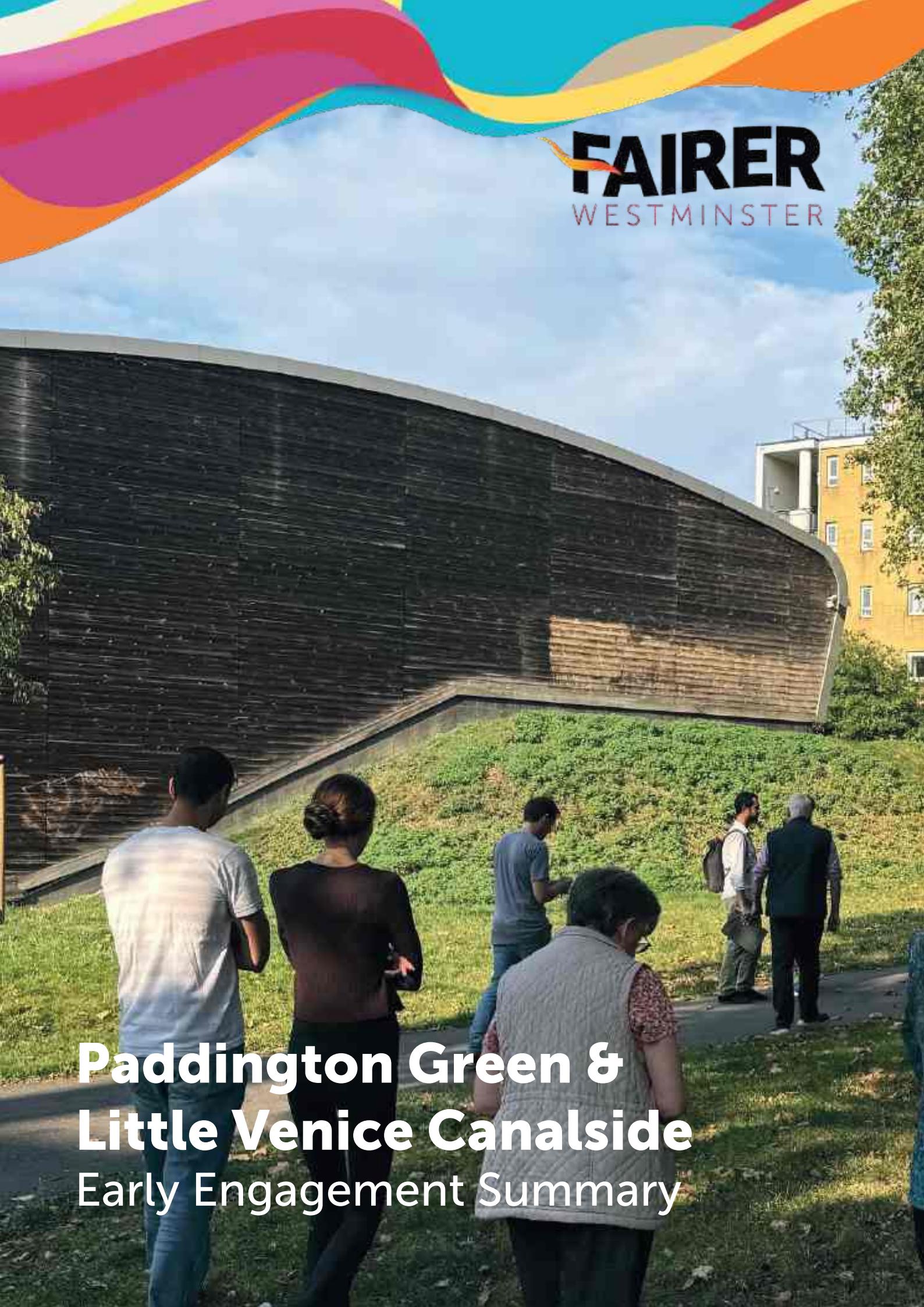
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Paddington Green & Little Venice Canalside

Early Engagement Summary

Executive summary

Over September and October 2024, Westminster City Council conducted an early engagement process to gather insights and ensure that the priorities of local people were considered from the outset of the project. Feedback focused on the existing conditions of Paddington Green and Little Venice Canalside, as well as people's views on what should be improved. Through three in-person events and an interactive digital platform, the engagement reached 74 contributors with just under 500 comments, most of whom were local residents or local representatives such as Ward Councillors and Business Improvement Districts.

Key Insights:

- Accessibility and Connectivity emerged as dominant themes across all sites, with strong calls for smoother, wider, and more continuous routes that are accessible to everyone. Many suggested enhancing the spaces under bridges at Stone Wharf and Rembrandt Gardens to improve visibility, usability, and connections.
- Wayfinding improvements were also highlighted, with a need for consistent and visible signage to help users navigate between these spaces and connect to nearby destinations like Church Street and Warwick Avenue.
- Use and Activation was a significant focus, particularly at Stone Wharf and St. Mary's Churchyard. Residents supported community-oriented features such as play spaces, seating areas, educational installations, and outdoor gym equipment to make the spaces more lively and engaging. However, there was also a desire to preserve quieter areas and protect the tranquil character of the green spaces.
- Lighting and Safety were recurring concerns, particularly in underpasses, along the towpath and Churchyard Walk. Limited or inconsistent lighting was frequently linked to feelings of insecurity, especially at night. Residents suggested brighter and more lighting that would enhance visibility while maintaining the natural and historical character of the spaces.
- Greening was highly valued by residents, who expressed strong support for protecting mature trees and greenery while enhancing biodiversity.
- Waste and Maintenance were highlighted as critical issues. Residents called for improved litter collection, regular maintenance of benches, railings, and pathways, and better management of waste and recycling facilities.
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) was frequently raised, with poorly lit and neglected areas being associated with feelings of insecurity and occasional misuse.

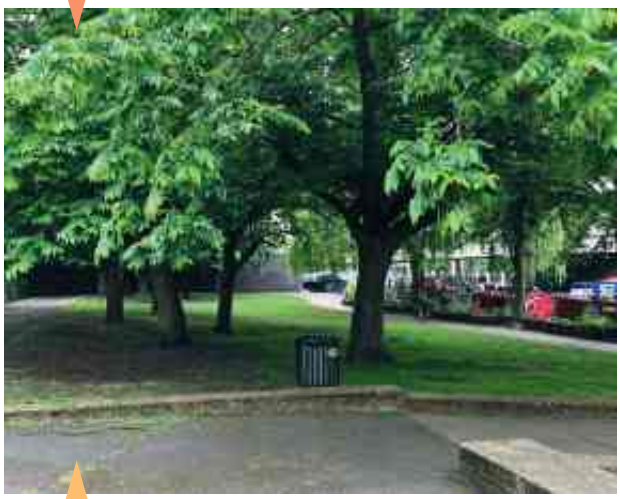
Through this process, residents emphasized the importance of **balancing improvements with preservation**, ensuring that the calm and tranquil character of Paddington Green and Little Venice is maintained. Protecting the natural and built heritage of these spaces while carefully introducing enhancements was a key priority for many contributors.

"This is one of the most beautiful spots in Little Venice, please preserve!"
(Rembrandt Gardens)



"Native hedgerows are great - could we have some foraging shrubs along the cycle routes or walking routes"
(Rembrandt Gardens)"

"No reason to come here at the moment- it needs an activity! Playground for example"
(Stone Wharf)



"Just make it safe if you want more people to come here. You don't need to do anything else"
(Stone Wharf)

"It doesn't feel safe during winter periods of the year when it is dark earlier."
(Churchyard Walk)



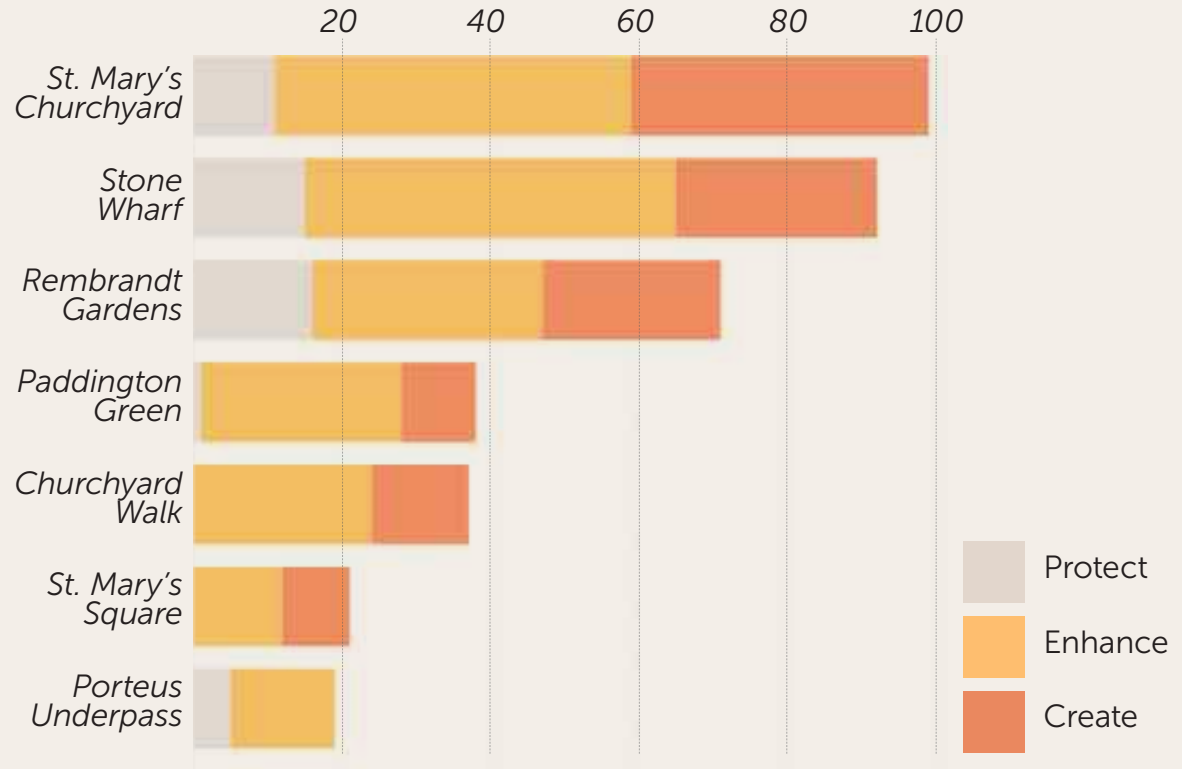
"Total lack of any facilities of any sort for adults - outside gym, bandstand, chest board etc. "
(St Mary's Churchyard)



Overall attitudes to change

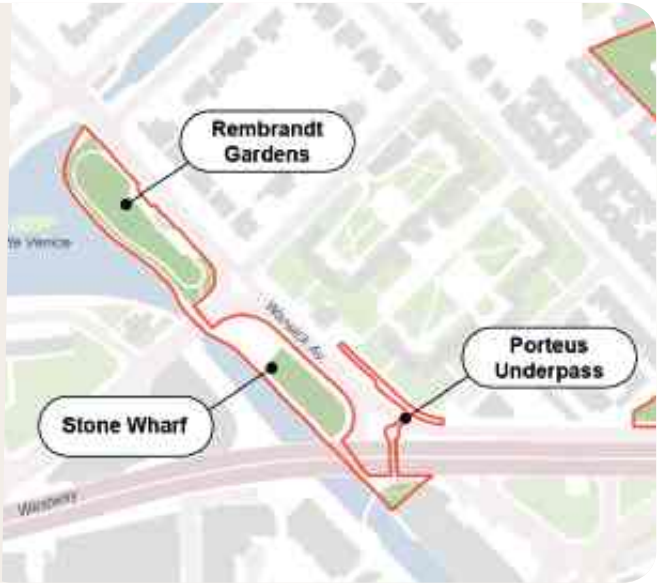
- A large number of residents have expressed a desire to see **minor improvements** across the sites. However, it has been flagged several times that the **character and heritage of the spaces should not be changed** and sit at the forefront of any works.
- Almost all residents have shared a view that **green space and mature trees are invaluable to the area's character and should be protected**. Enhanced biodiversity should be considered on some sites such as Stone Wharf and Paddington Green.
- Comments related to larger scale improvements have generally cantered around **accessibility, new uses and activities, as well as safety, especially after dark.**
- Residents with mobility constraints (wheelchair, pram, etc) have flagged **accessibility being the most considerable issue in the area**, across all sites.
- **Anti-social behaviour** has been signalled across all sites but especially around the Paddington Green sites (St. Mary's Churchyard, Churchyard Walk and Paddington Green).
- Some residents wish to see **improved cycling routes**, while others have highlighted the importance of **pedestrian priority** and existing conflicts in tight areas such as on the towpath and Churchyard Walk.

Attitude to change based on comment input



Little Venice Canalside

Across Little Venice Canalside *(Rembrandt Gardens, Stone Wharf, and Porteus Underpass)* we heard varied comments seeking both the protection of the area's beloved character, as well as suggestions on elements that can be improved or added.

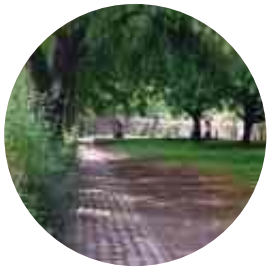


Rembrandt Gardens



Rembrandt Gardens is well enjoyed by local residents who praise it for its natural character and biodiversity. People do not wish to see changes to the green space itself but have identified areas of enhancement, predominantely relating to accessibility such as improving the Harrow Road underpass, the towpath and 'dead-end' by Warwick Bridge. There have also been suggestions to introduce a 24h connection to Warwick Avenue, alongside better lighting and wayfinding.

Stone Wharf



Stone Wharf has been highlighted as a locally important site due to its heritage and character. People do wish to see its history being preserved and promoted more, but also seek better accessibility through the site. The underpasses at either end could be improved further and promote access through and to Rembrandt Gardens. Currently used by the Cavalcade and occasionally by the Floating Classroom, residents consider this site prime for additional uses, including leisure & play, educational, cultural or community activities.

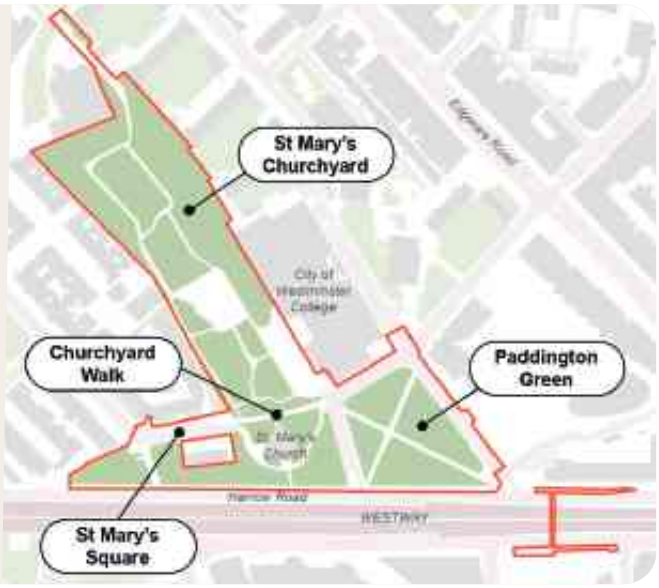
Porteus Underpass



Porteus Underpass has been described as utilitarian and well designed, with many residents using it regularly. Improved ligting and wayfinding were the main topics for improvements, while the approaches (Porteus Triangle & Venice Walk) have been highlighted as unpleasant and unsafe. Additional greening and lighting in these areas were suggestions that would enhance the user experience.

Paddington Green

Across the Paddington Green sites *(St Mary's Churchyard, Churchyard Walk, St Mary's Square and Paddington Green)* we heard varied comments seeking both the enhancement of the area's safety and creation of new uses and activities, as well as a desire for the heritage and natural character of the area to be protected.





St. Mary's Churchyard

St Mary's Churchyard is valued for its natural environment and historical character but has been described as not providing much in terms of activities. There were suggestions that the edges of the park and area surrounding the sports centre could be enhanced with better planting, while new uses such as an accessible playground, water features and outdoor gym equipment can maximise its potential.



Churchyard Walk

Churchyard Walk has been identified as a challenging space due to its enclosed feeling and disrepair with residents wishing to enhance its role as a key route while addressing issues such as narrow pathways, broken railings, and insufficient lighting. Suggestions include widening the path and incorporating playful treatments to create a more engaging and safer environment.



St. Mary's Square

St Mary's Square is a functional space that could be enhanced with better management of parking and clearer signage to signal it as a dead-end for vehicular traffic. Residents also propose creating opportunities for play, such as a "play street" during times of reduced vehicular activity, making the square more inviting for families.



Paddington Green

Paddington Green is appreciated for its green character, but some see the planting as "unimaginative" and describe the noise from Harrow Road as dominating. Comments seek biodiversity enhancements and additional activities such as chess tables, ping pong tables, and better seating arrangements. Some residents also suggested a better use of the World War II bunker and its promotion as a historical asset.

Next Steps

Building on the feedback gathered during the engagement process, we are now progressing with the development of design proposals. The insights and priorities shared by local residents and stakeholders have been instrumental in shaping our approach, ensuring that the proposals address community aspirations while balancing practical considerations.

Alongside this, we have undertaken a series of technical surveys and studies. These will help identify both additional opportunities for improvement and any limitations that need to be factored into the design process.

In March, we will enter the RIBA Stage 2 consultation phase. During this stage, residents will have the opportunity to review and respond to the proposed designs through a variety of channels. These will include a public exhibition, community events, and an online survey. This continued dialogue will be essential in refining the proposals and ensuring they align with local needs and expectations.