# EXPANDING LONDON'S PUBLIC REALM

# DESIGN GUIDE

# A BUILT ENVIRONMENT

## FOR ALL LONDONERS

LEAP

The Local Enterprise
Partnership for London

# CONTENTS

# FOREWORD

London's public realm is the city's living room – it is here where civic life plays out. The public realm not only shapes the way our city looks, it also has a profound impact on how and where we meet, walk, exercise, play, shop, eat and socialise. It has a key role to play in bringing people together, promoting social integration and creating a healthier, more liveable city.

London is one of the most diverse cities in the world, a place where everyone is welcome. 40 per cent of Londoners were born outside of the UK, and over 300 languages are spoken here. This diversity is essential to the success of London's communities.

The new London Plan is underpinned by the concept of Good Growth – growth that is socially and economically inclusive and environmentally sustainable. This aims to build on the city's tradition of openness, diversity and equality, and help ensure strong and inclusive communities. In order to achieve this, those involved in planning and development must strive to design London's public spaces in such a way that people from all backgrounds are able to move around and dwell in comfort and safety, both day and night. This will help to create places where everyone feels welcome and communities have the space to develop and thrive.

Policy D8 Public Realm in the new London Plan recognises that the public realm is made up of a wide range of spaces and places. In addition to our streets, squares and parks, some internal or elevated spaces can also be considered to be part of the public realm, such as shopping malls, museums or station concourses, as well as sky gardens or viewing platforms. Such forms of public realm can be particularly relevant in areas of higher density.

Yet they also need be designed to be as accessible and inclusive as our streets, squares and parks. With densification putting pressures on the provision of public realm, as well as the pandemic highlighting its importance for physical and mental health, we need to ensure that these spaces are free, accessible, open, safe and inclusive as the 'traditional' public realm. This research and design guidance sets out how we can achieve this.

Whilst this work focuses on design, creating an inclusive environment also requires consideration of how it is managed and the rules that govern its access by the public. Therefore, this work sits alongside the Public London Charter, which sets out to maximise public access and minimise rules governing public spaces in London.

The Mayor's Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm will also further the discussion on inclusion and representation. It will explore what legacies should be celebrated and establish best practice and standards for the commissioning of artworks, memorials and street naming.

Together, these initiatives provide a framework for the Mayor's vision for an inclusive public realm. We cannot achieve it on our own, but need our partners who commission, design and deliver public spaces to work with us. I therefore hope you will find this Good Growth by Design report useful.

Jules Pipe, CBE
Deputy Mayor, Planning Regeneration and Skills

# FOREWORD

Until recently it was difficult to think of anything but building new housing as the means by which the challenges faced by London's growing population could be met. The arrival of COVID-19 on the scene, however, has resulted in a shift of focus. The capacity of the public realm to support Londoners' mental and physical health is now rivalling the housing programme as an urban condition needing urgent review.

The situation presents a timely reminder that when we talk about making good housing we must also talk about making good places to live. That means taking the designed scope of the development beyond the front door, across the garden, into the street, out to the park, and beyond. We need to be more aware of the opportunities presented by our existing public realm – and to do more in order to live well together.

This guidance takes as its starting point the need to expand the public realm. It aims to give a fresh perspective on the potential to enrich London's shared spaces. Building upon The Public London Charter and the recognition in the new London Plan of these additional examples of public realm, this document illustrates a detailed compendium of space types that can support the city and shows how they can be used together.

The guidance usefully identifies what London already does well and amplifies it by presenting a diverse tableau of possibilities that not only inspires imagination and invention, but approaches their delivery and management with pragmatism.

Looking outwards, the guidance takes the public realm beyond the horizon of the streets, and roves up through buildings to their rooftops, reaches station forecourts, and seeks other relationships between public and privately managed spaces such as hospitals, churches, car parks, shopping centres and stations where the careful coordination of interfaces can be shaped to catalyse inclusive and accessible public benefit.

A successful public realm yields real economic benefits – but enhancing social value must take priority in such an open city as London. The public realm is an essential function of the city available for all inhabitants, and must not be just a luxury for some. Or to put it more simply, the public realm is where London lives. This document should therefore be seen as a resource rather than a rulebook. It is not just another hurdle to jump, or a box to tick in gaining approvals. Rather, it is guidance that can help inspire, shape and deliver a shareable landscape for all Londoners and bring the public realm back into the foreground of the city.
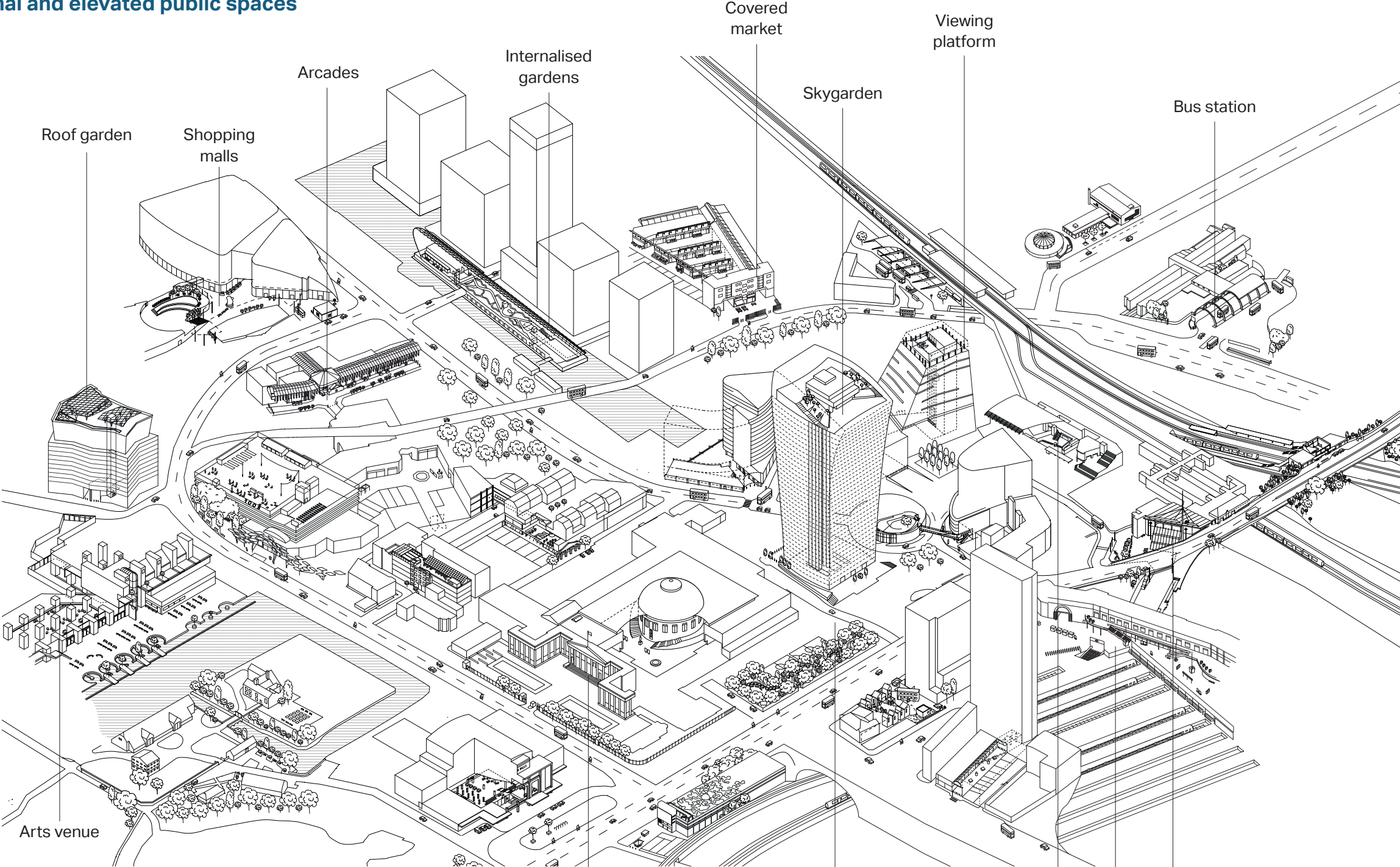
Julian Lewis, Mayor's Design Advocate

# INTRODUCTION

This design guide provides guidance for the design of internal, semi-internal and elevated public spaces in London in the context of their recognition as part of the city's public realm. Its aim is to ensure that these spaces provide the highest level of quality, inclusivity and accessibility for all Londoners.

This design guide is part of the Mayor's Good Growth by Design programme, commissioned under the theme of Public London.

# A snapshot of London's existing internal, semi-internal and elevated public spaces



Roof garden

Shopping malls

Arcades

Internalised gardens

Covered market

Viewing platform

Skygarden

Bus station

Arts venue

Museum

Privately owned community gardens

Station concourses

Refer to the accompanying Typology Study for further information.

## About this design guide

This guide addresses the design of internal, semi-internal and elevated public spaces in new development. It was commissioned in the context of the new London Plan[1] definitions of public realm and alongside the Public London Charter, which provides a basis for the delivery and management of public space. The guide is part of a project commissioned by the Greater London Authority (GLA) Regeneration and Economic Development team under the theme of Public London. It is accompanied by a supporting research document.

## Designing and delivering for the public good

Our understanding of what constitutes 'public realm' is broadening. Certain non-traditional types of public space, such as rooftop gardens and internal spaces, have historically been subject to less scrutiny than London's public squares, streets, parks and commons. There are distinctive qualities to these spaces that differ from traditional public spaces. Their elevated and internal nature means they are at particular risk of feeling detached from a connected public network of spaces. This design guide is about ensuring that, where they are understood as part of the public realm, these internal, semi-internal and elevated urban spaces are of real public value as part of the collective resource of our city.

London is growing and densifying, public spaces will have to work hard in order to create and sustain liveable neighbourhoods. New developments are increasingly offering some form of space that is open for use by the public. These spaces must be designed well to accommodate a wide-range of activity and to use, articulate and support the needs of local communities. These spaces should have no barriers to access, whether cultural or physical.

[1] Intend to Publish London Plan December 2019

## Who is this design guide for?

This guide is for the use of developers, land-owners and designers bringing forward proposals that include internal, semi-internal or elevated public realm, whether privately, semi-privately, or publicly owned, and for the use of planners and local authority bodies assessing applications. It is intended that the design guide will equip both developers and designers with knowledge that can inform their own design processes, and those assessing applications with the expertise to critically assess whether the public realm proposals brought forward are of a high enough quality.

## Learning from the research

The design guide is based upon a thorough understanding of existing examples of internal, semi-internal and elevated spaces. This research can be found in an accompanying publication: *Expanding London's Public Realm: Research*.

# DESIGN GUIDE

The design guide is structured around eight principles. Each principle addresses a broad subject matter, providing the thematic basis for detailed points of the guide that follow. An overview is provided outlining general considerations followed by the design guide broken down into specific points. Case studies are referred to where relevant to display best practices and illustrate important ideas.

The following principles can be used to evaluate the quality of the space and its public offer.
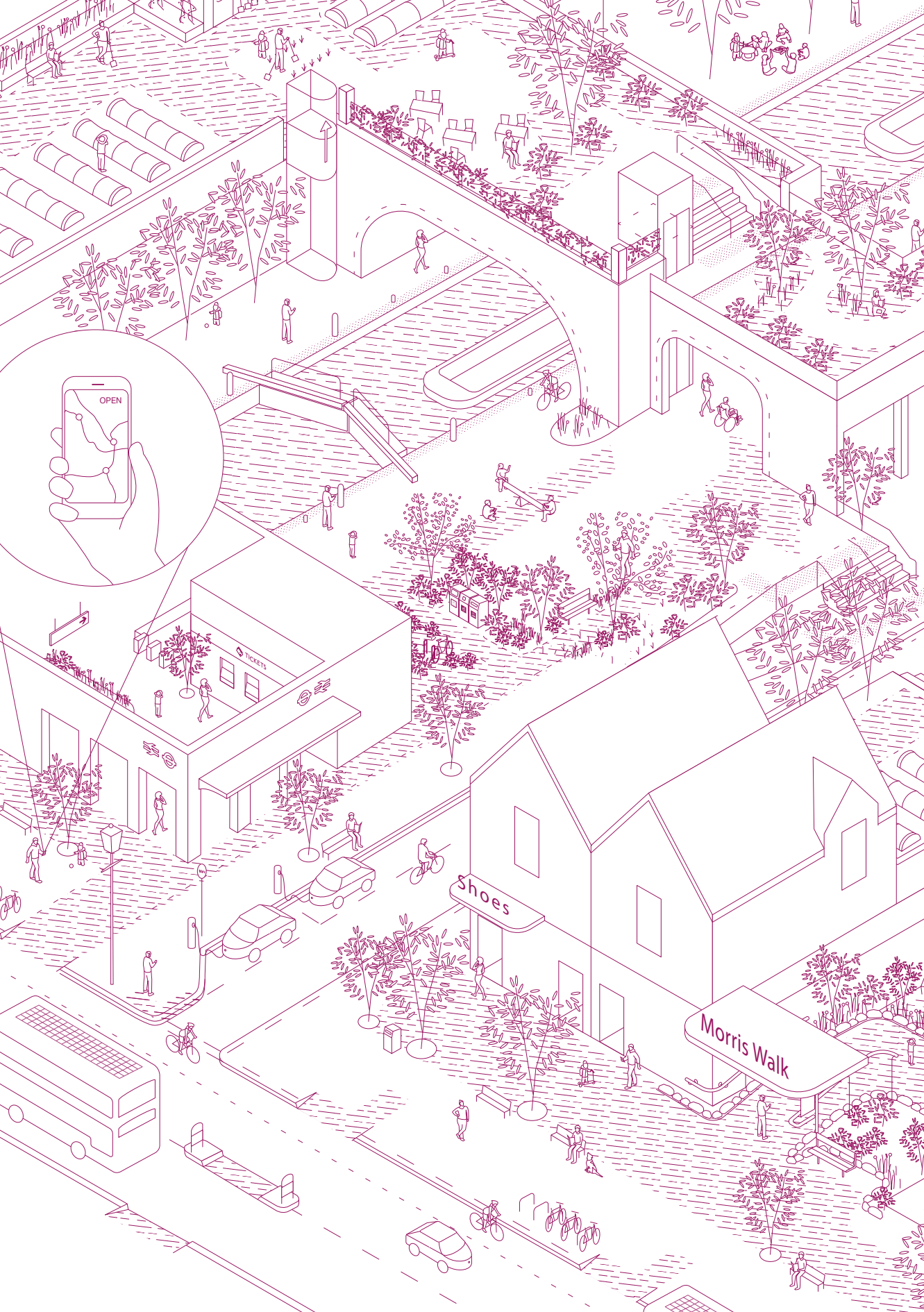
# 1

# ACCESS AND CONNECTEDNESS

London's public realm should be as accessible as possible and aim to be welcoming for all. Most of our city's existing public realm is open 24 hours and throughout the year, with only particular destinations restricting access. Public realm is typically at its best when it also functions as routes and connections between the spaces of the city.

How welcoming a space is depends on how accessible it is perceived to be by all potential users, as well as how interconnected it is with the public realm network. Users of different abilities and needs must be taken into account. Physical barriers to access should be avoided and where necessary subject to careful design.

In most cases spaces should follow the principle of providing the best possible access for everyone in the community. However in exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate to provide particular space for particular demographics – for example children – in which case the general needs of access will need to be balanced against providing space that particularly responds to the needs of that group.

This chapter is concerned with both physical access and also access in terms of inclusion.

Lift continuously visible

Level changes that also make space for inhabitation and play

Any level changes framed and signalled by greenery
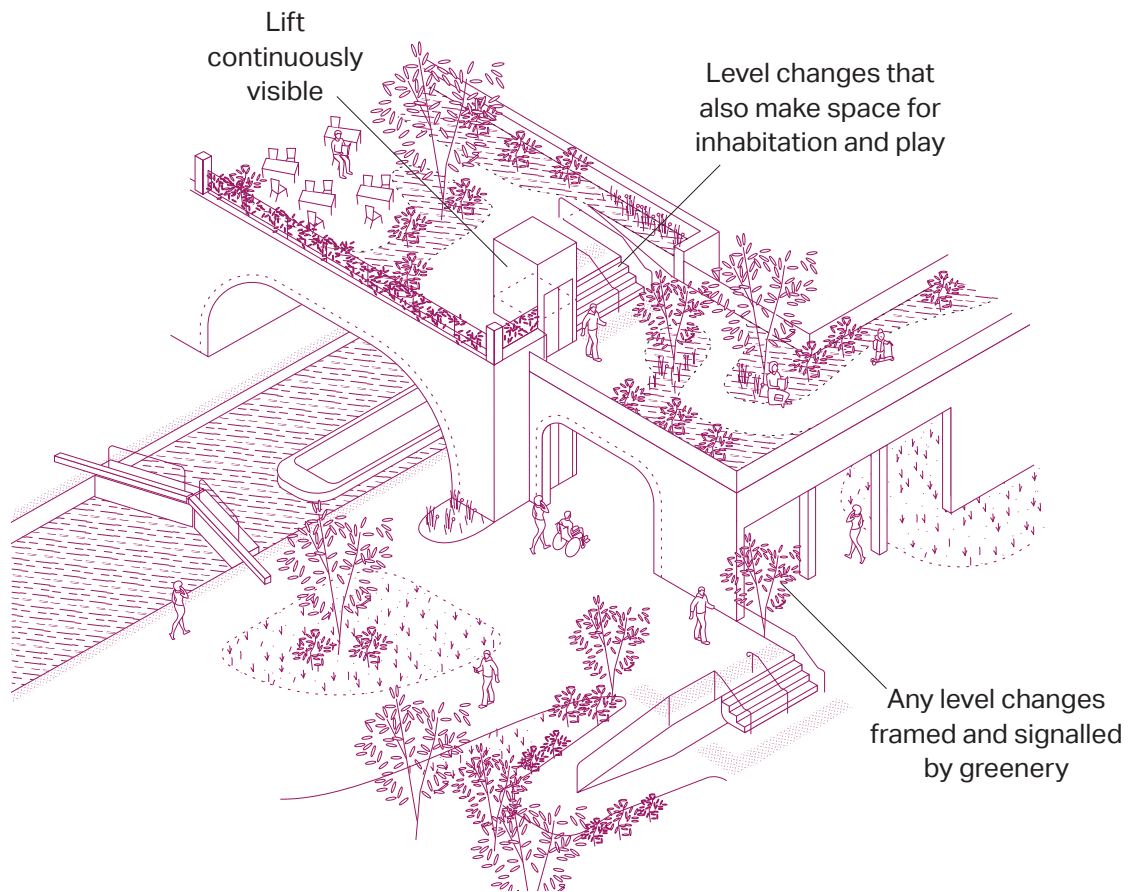
**1.2** – The route from the street to the elevated space should be carefully considered in its entirety at the design stage, with attention paid to how well the space invites people in from the wider public realm network. Entrances should be as close to the wider public realm as possible and involve navigating the minimum amount of interior space.

Refer to: Inclusive mobility – A guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure, 2005

**1.1** – There should be level access to every area of a space intended for use by people. Any necessary changes of level should be considered in terms of how they promote or restrict access and be clearly communicated.

Refer to: Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors (I'DGO); Design Guide 003
Note: Tactile Paving

## CAN THE SPACE BE ACCESSED WITHOUT UNDUE EFFORT, OR BE STUMBLED UPON?

**1.4** – Street furniture should be placed such that clear access routes are maintained. The number and size of vertical elements supporting for instance signage, CCTV and lighting should be reduced wherever possible. This can also be achieved by locating such elements on buildings or consolidating them.

Refer to: TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part E, Section 13.4; and Pedestrian Comfort Guidance for London, 2010

**1.3** – Bollards and other physical barriers, including temporary ones, should be avoided wherever possible. Where their use is necessary for security or similar reasons, their design should be an integrated part of the overall design rather than imposed upon it. Often, elements serving other functions, such as a planter or seating, can be used instead of bollards to reduce their visual impact.



Patients Main Entrance

Lighting can be integrated within handrail

Lighting hanging from above

OPEN

Signage can be painted on wall

Lighting strategy considered as part of cohesive design

Vertical element supports lighting, signage and CCTV

**1.5** – Entrances, features and facilities should be clearly visible and sightlines created or maintained wherever possible, internally and externally.



Present and visible routes to elevated spaces

Planting and material continuity helps guide users

Greater degree of wayfinding measures at ground level

Large entrance with signage celebrating historic context

Art can help to provide memorable places for orientation and gathering
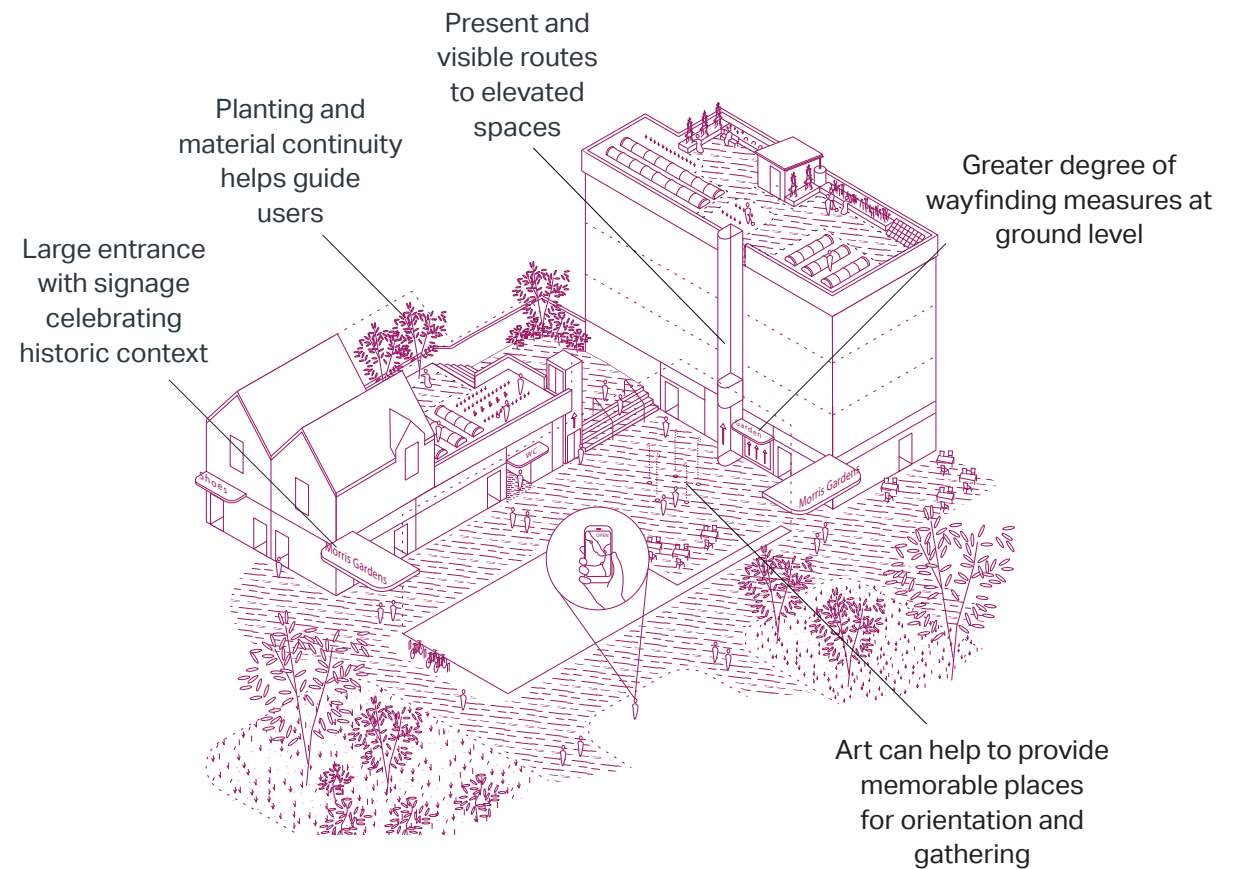
**CAN THE ELEVATED OR INTERNALISED SPACE HAVE A VISUAL PRESENCE AT STREET LEVEL?**

**1.6** – Where sightlines or visual connections aren't possible, especially when the distance from the wider public realm network is great, for example in elevated roof gardens, the spatial design should provide legibility to enable visitors to locate entrances, features and facilities.

Refer to: TFL Legible London

**1.7** – Where further assistance is still required, good wayfinding should be in place to provide orientation or additional information and to ensure that the accessibility of the space is clear to the public.

Good wayfinding in this context either maintains continuity with wider public realm signage, including Legible London, or celebrates the particular character, meaning or other specifics of the space, with a view to communicating those things to users.

Refer to: TfL Legible London
and TfL; Streetscape Guidance – Part E, Section 11.1

Image credit – DK-CM

**CASE STUDY**
Ye Olde Mitre, Camden:

The presence of a public house within this city block is signalled by a bespoke, highly distinctive piece of signage.

**1.8** – Continuity of materials and design should be used to communicate the relationship between different spaces and connect out to the wider public realm.

For stations: TfL Station public realm design guidance, 2015
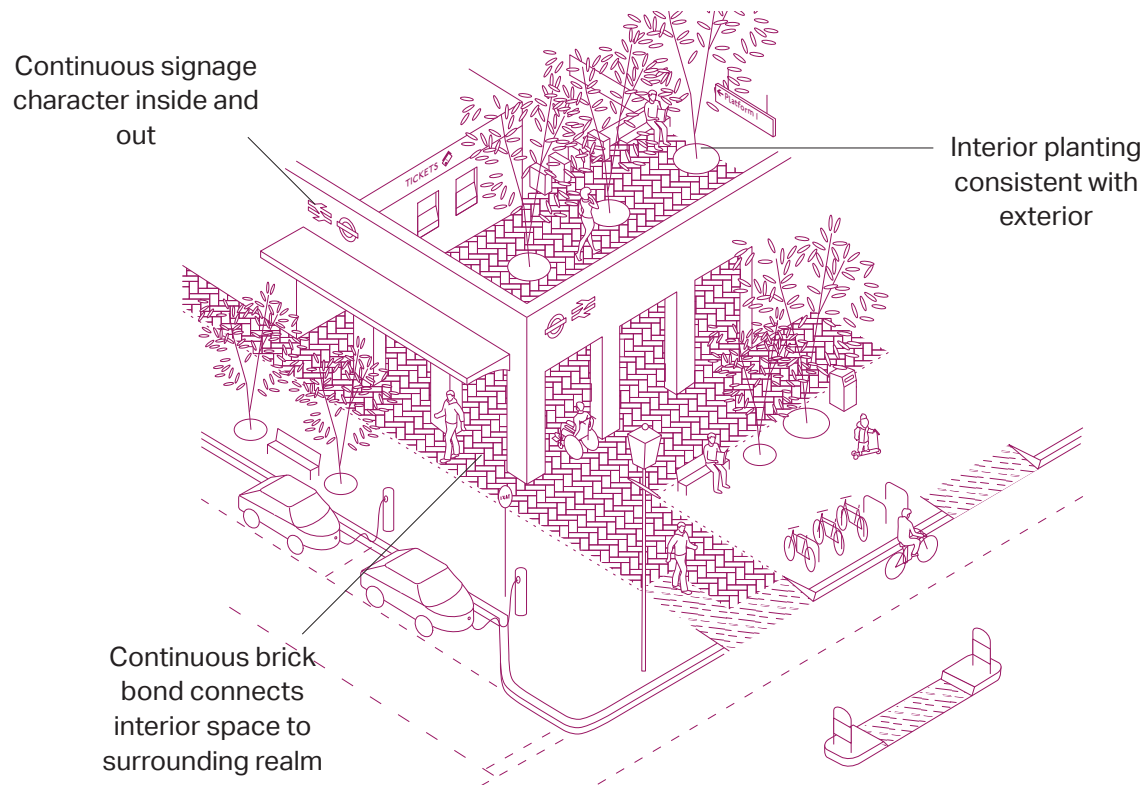


Continuous signage character inside and out

Interior planting consistent with exterior

Continuous brick bond connects interior space to surrounding realm

**1.9** – Material choice and specification for elevated spaces, lift lobbies and platforms should aim to achieve the same material continuity.

**1.10** – The character of vertical circulation should avoid feeling overtly corporate or associated with the character of private parts of host or adjacent buildings. It should also avoid feeling like ancillary or service space. A particular palette that relates to the wider public realm should be developed.

**1.11** – New developments should consider neighbouring properties, spaces, emerging developments and design guidance, to provide further continuity.

**CASE STUDY**
Horniman Museum and Gardens, Lewisham:

The grounds of the Horniman Museum remain open for public use when the Museum is closed. There are ambitions to learn from this openness in the design and programming of the Museum.

Image credit – Courtesy of Horniman Museum and Gardens

**1.12** – The space should be physically open and accessible as much as possible. The opening times and seasonal openings of a space should be clearly communicated at the entrance and around the space. If the space has a digital presence, this information should be clearly communicated such as through inclusion on landing pages.

Refer to: GLA Public London Charter principle 2 – Openness

**1.13** – The threshold between the wider public realm network and the space can be marked in subtle, celebratory ways without damaging continuity.

**CASE STUDY**
Station Road, Harrow:

This intervention by Europa and Mark Projects creates a threshold between two public spaces that encourages play, also re-interpreting the language of the highway.

Image credit – Mark Smith and Europa



## DOES THE THRESHOLD ENCOURAGE CURIOSITY?

**1.14** – Thresholds between inside and outside, or between the wider public realm network and a particular space, should consider any measures by which they can provide shelter, comfort, and shade for the public. This might take the form of a public shelter, public seating, canopies, street trees and other elements.

Refer to: GLA Public London Charter principle 1 – Public Welcome

**CASE STUDY**
Barking Town Centre, Barking and Dagenham:

The loggia in Barking town centre designed by muf architecture/art provides flexible sheltered space to its users, and softens the transition between the external public square, and the interior space.

The loggia has ample bike parking, and is frequently used as a space for play and socialising when the weather inhibits the use of the main square.

**1.15** – Where possible, security systems should be designed out. Where required (museums and spaces with timed entry are particularly prone to overbearing security) they should be carefully considered so that they are usable, time-efficient, and don't overly dominate the space or the visitor's experience of it.



Spacious route allows for changes in future use.

Artwork can make security measures less intimidating

Temporary barriers minimised and replaced with planting and seating

Cinema Screens 1 & 2

New releases

Places of rest and pause within the security procedure

Differentiation of spaces using floor surface finish
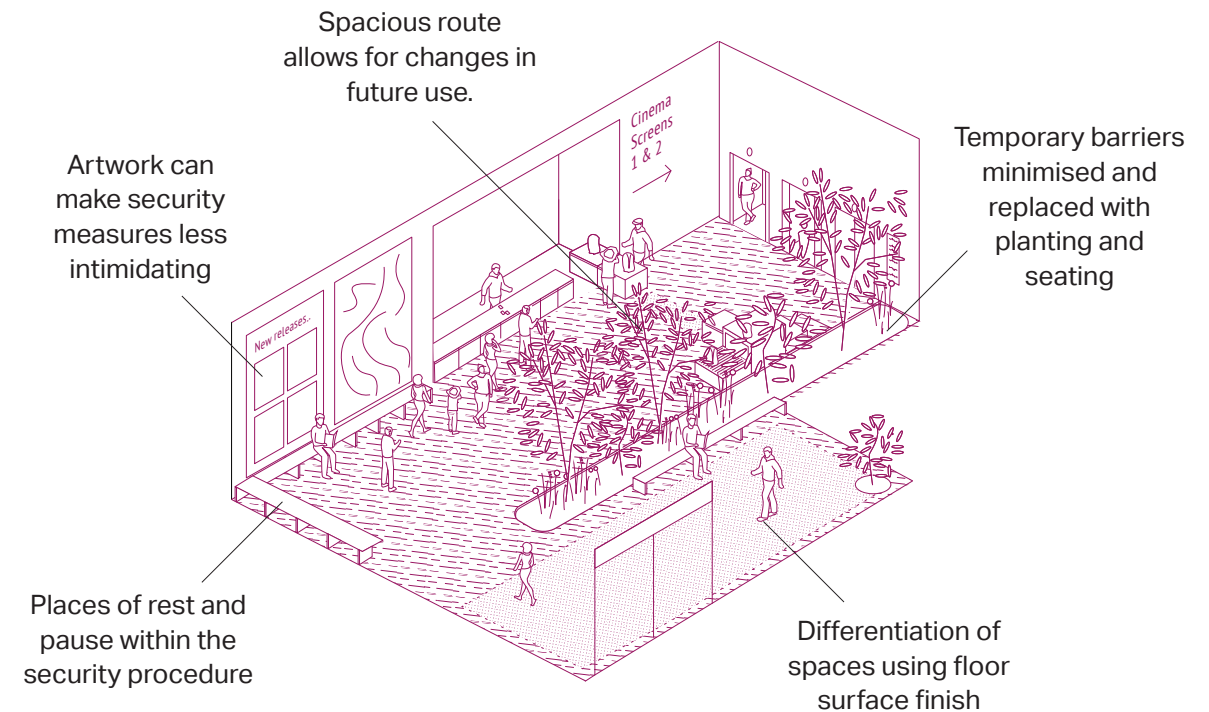
**1.16** – Where security procedures are deemed necessary, space should be allowed for at the threshold where people can orientate and settle themselves before needing to pass through security.

**1.17** – When security measures are deemed necessary and appropriate, their design should be considered in relation to the wider space, such that they are integrated and not dominating. This is also the case when measures are retrofitted.

Image credit – SOW Architects

**1.18** – Whilst not dominating a space, the presence and nature of security measures including digital surveillance should be clearly communicated to users of the space.

Refer to: TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part E, Section 12.10; and GLA Public London Charter principle 6 – Privacy

**CASE STUDY**
Schipol Airport, Amsterdam, Netherlands:

Schipol Airport has been redesigned 'as if it were a city', therefore trying to provide for a diversity of uses and experiences rather than just providing service space. This includes particular lighting and greening to enhance user's experience during security processes.
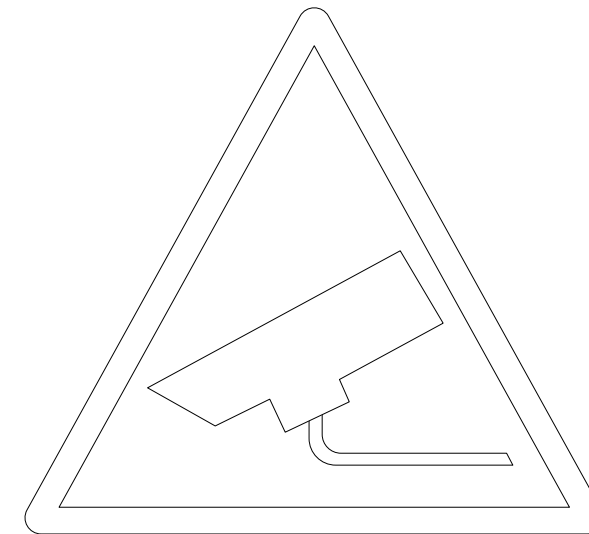
**1.19** – Access to free public wireless internet can be an important amenity. This should be provided wherever possible and the design of the space should:

**1.19.1** – Communicate the presence of wifi and how to access it. If any data is harvested via the free wifi, this should also be clearly communicated so that an informed choice can be made about whether or not to connect.

**1.19.2** – Provide space and appropriate seating to use the connection without feeling pressure to move on or purchase.

Refer to: GLA Public London Charter

Access to nature and biodiversity

Spaces that allow for social and role play

Natural sensory play

Growing and gardening

Use of natural materials

Play that promotes making and collaboration
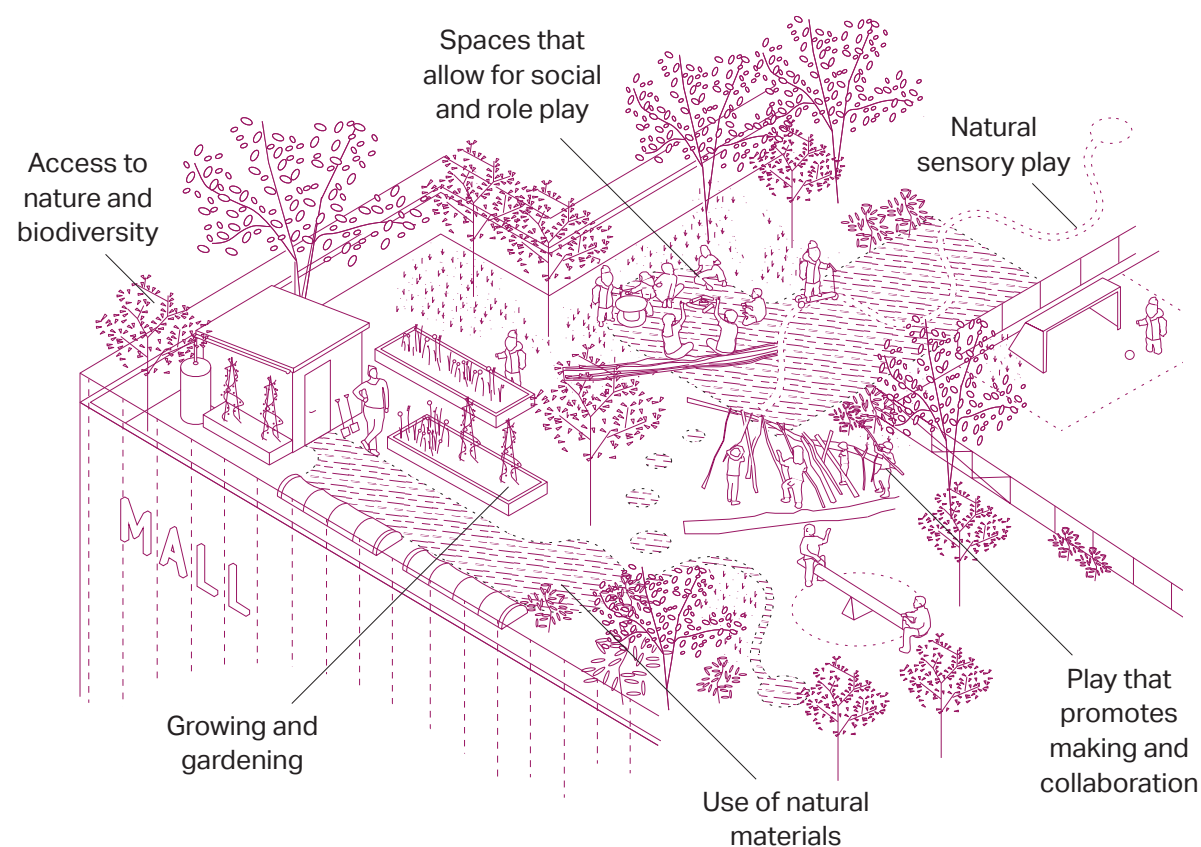
**1.21** – Schemes should consider existing spaces for play in the local and wider area – and the age groups they provide for – and fill the gap in existing provision.

Refer to: GLA Making London Child Friendly, 2020

**1.20** - In general, play elements should be designed as an integrated part of the space and appropriate for multiple types of play and interaction. In some circumstances, such as where there is particular need to provide equipment to a particular age range, a demarcated area for play may be appropriate.

Refer to: GLA Making London Child Friendly, 2020

# WHAT IS THE EXPERIENCE OF THE SPACE FROM A CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE?

**1.23** – Wherever possible, children and young people should be involved in the design of elements of play in a proposed space.

Refer to: GLA Public London Charter principle 4 – Community Focus

**1.22** – Spaces should aim to incorporate play into mobility as well as mobility into play as these create natural situations that encourage independent and self-directed play.

Refer to: GLA Making London Child Friendly, 2020

**1.24 –** New spaces should aim to diversify and enrich the types of space accessible in a given place or borough.

**CASE STUDY**
Attlee Terrace, Walthamstow:

This sunken community garden orchard offers a year round community, cultural and arts space for local residents. The 'garden shed' acts as both a storage space for shared gardening tools and as a place for performance, rest, and play.

**CASE STUDY**
The White House, Dagenham:

The White House provides a public programme and artist residencies in an area which historically has had a lack of cultural provision.

## CHECKLIST

- Is the space as open and accessible to the public as possible?

- Are opening hours, where appropriate, clearly communicated?

- Are level changes carefully considered, and barriers minimised?

- Does the design minimise clutter and has a clear strategy been developed to ensure services and equipment are as integrated and clustered as possible?

- Is the entrance or route to the space clear, direct, or otherwise clearly communicated?

- Do the materials help to create continuity with the wider public realm?

- Does wayfinding within the space maintain continuity with the wider public realm?

- Has the threshold that connects the space to the wider public realm been carefully considered to be as generous as possible, by providing a space for pause, shelter or comfort?

- Have security measures been designed such that they do not visually dominate and limit movement?

- In the case of elevated spaces, is the route to the elevated space designed to be as connected to the wider public realm as possible, and to feel public?

- Does the space promote digital inclusion?

- Has any play provision been carefully integrated with the overall design and provided in a way that responds well to local need?

- Have the particular needs of those with dementia been considered?
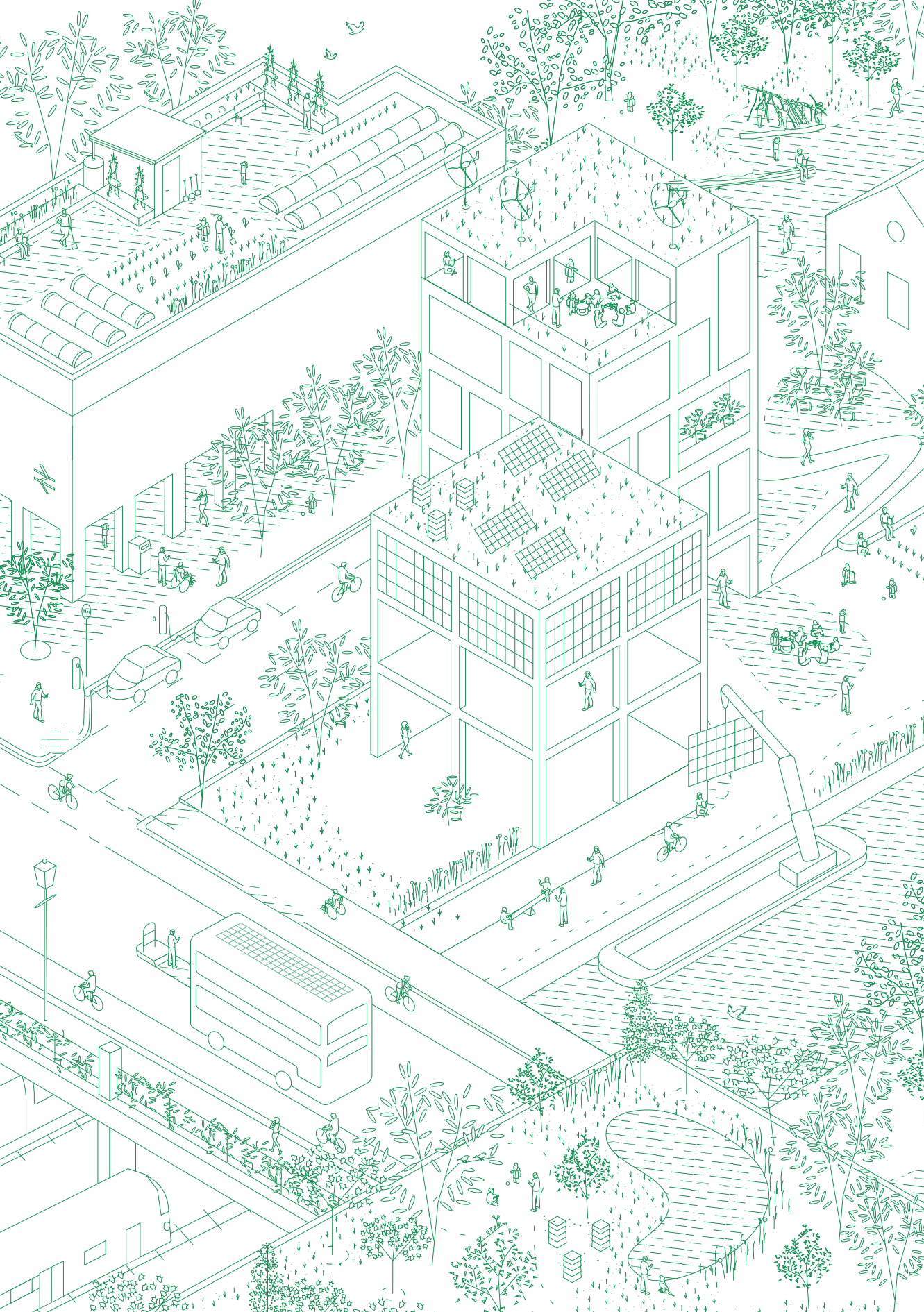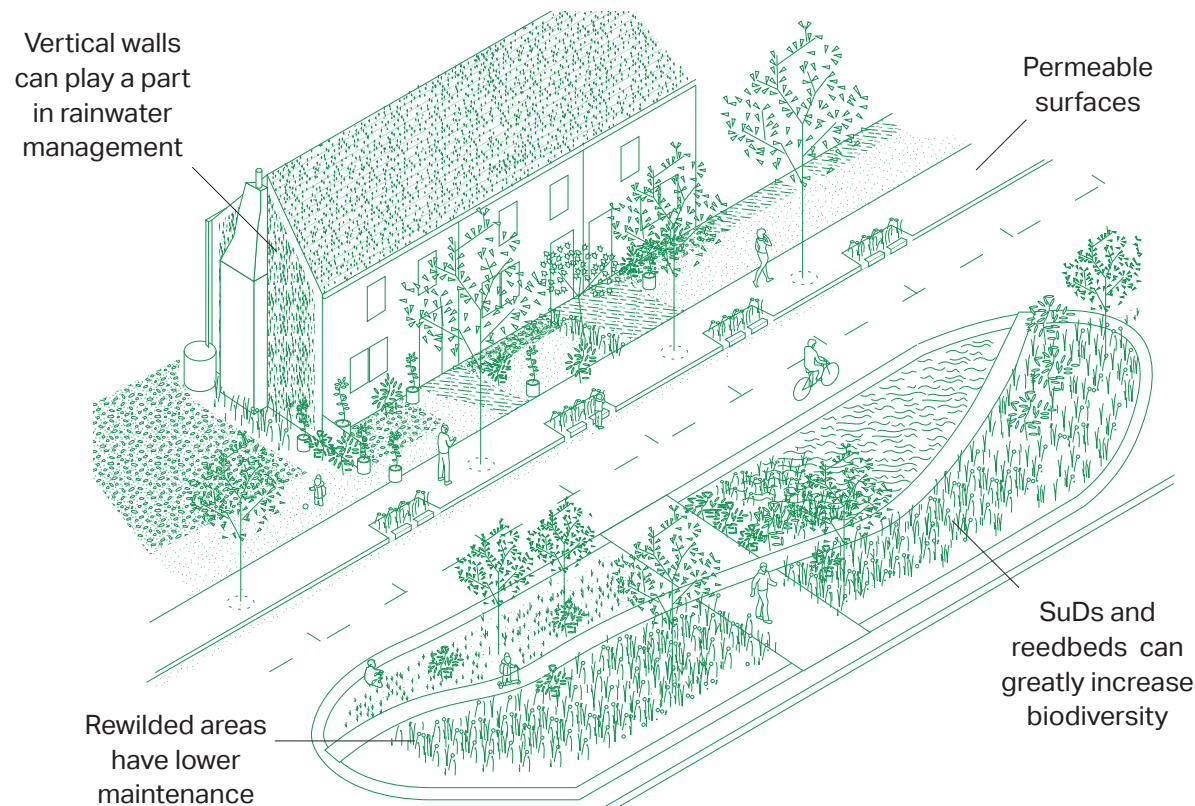
# 2

# ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

London's public realm includes street trees, parks and gardens which have a significant positive impact on the environmental quality of the city and improve its impact upon the planet.

Internal, semi-internal and elevated public spaces should be designed to have a positive environmental impact, in recognition that the environmental quality of a place can also enhance its publicness by making it more pleasant for people and by shifting perceptions among its users and visitors.

In every type of space there is the potential to foster complex and sensitive forms of biodiversity, promote low-impact behaviours and lifestyles, increase access to nature, use sustainable materials or light-touch construction methods and to contribute to enhancing air quality both locally and across the city. Solutions are likely to be distinct from those in the wider public realm network, and are likely to form part of positive environmental strategies for developments as a whole, as well as the wider public realm.

**2.1** – Spaces should play a positive role in rainwater and flood attenuation where possible. Green or blue roofs, and bodies of water, could be used. Spaces should consider the wider sustainable urban drainage networks. The mix of hard and soft landscaping should be carefully selected, maximising soft landscaping and porosity wherever possible.

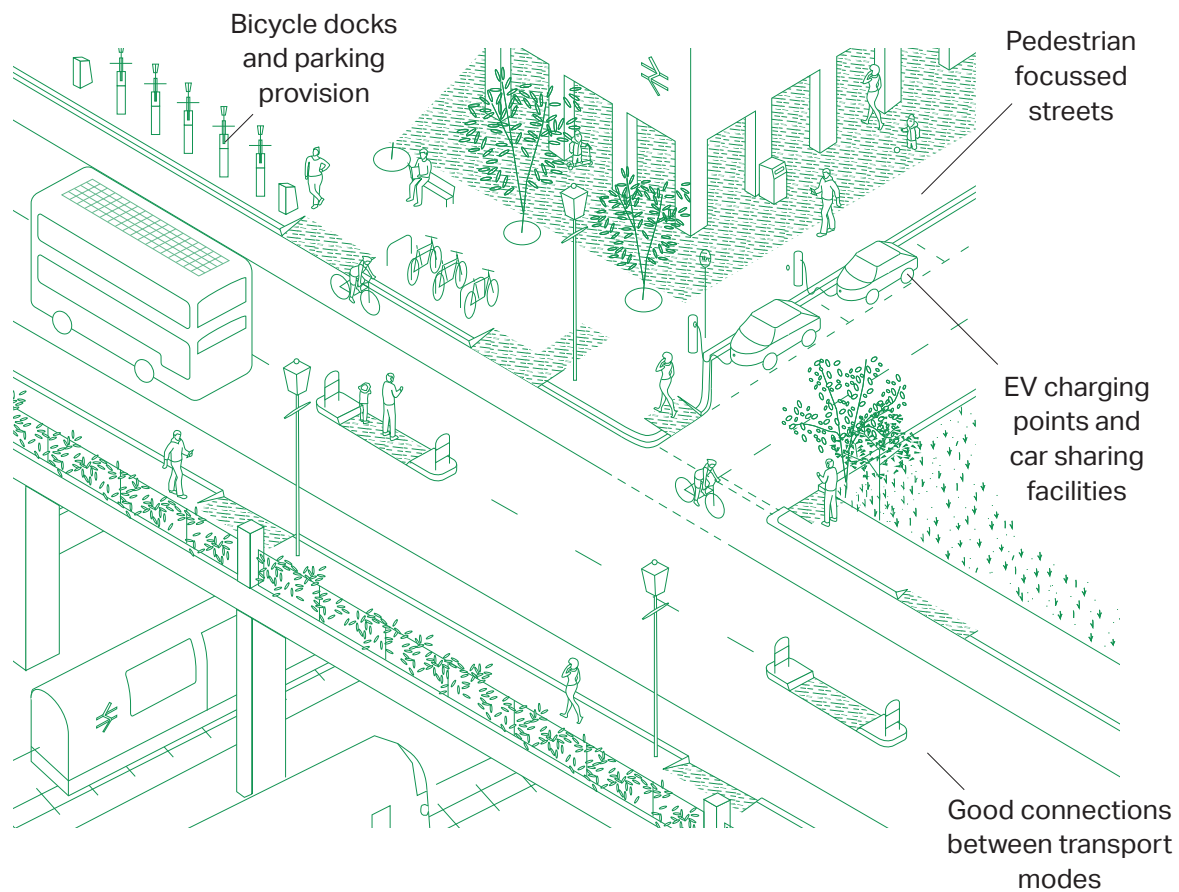Refer to: GLA London Sustainable Drainage Action Plan, 2016 and TfL, Suds in London – A guide, 2016

Vertical walls can play a part in rainwater management

Permeable surfaces

SuDs and reedbeds can greatly increase biodiversity

Rewilded areas have lower maintenance

**2.2** – In general, external surfaces including accessible roof spaces should be porous to minimise stormwater runoff and any external hard surfaces should be considered in relation to wider sustainable urban drainage networks.

Refer to: TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part E, Section 13.3

Bicycle docks and parking provision

Pedestrian focussed streets

EV charging points and car sharing facilities

Good connections between transport modes

**2.4** – Where appropriate, layout design should consider the benefits of providing additional pedestrian-only or untrafficked routes and connections to the wider public realm network, including pedestrianising existing routes or spaces and by playing a role in wider recalibration of transport networks.

Refer to: TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part E, Sections 7 & 13

**2.3** – Designs should promote sustainable and low-impact transport solutions. This might include bicycle parking & docking stations, easy access to public transport networks and electric-car charging points, as appropriate.

Refer to: GLA London Environment Strategy, 2018; and London Cycling Design Standards, 2014
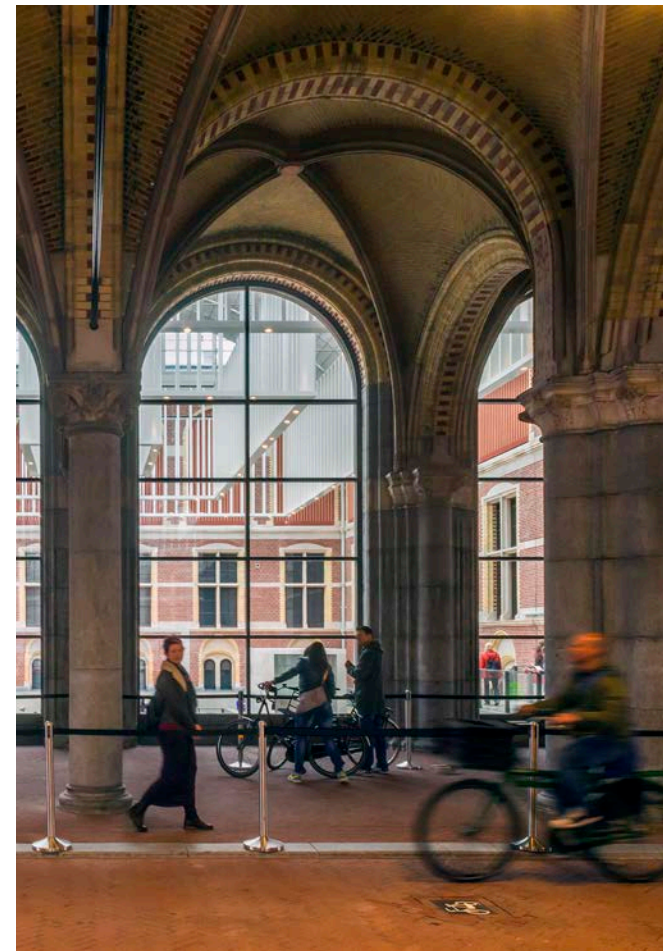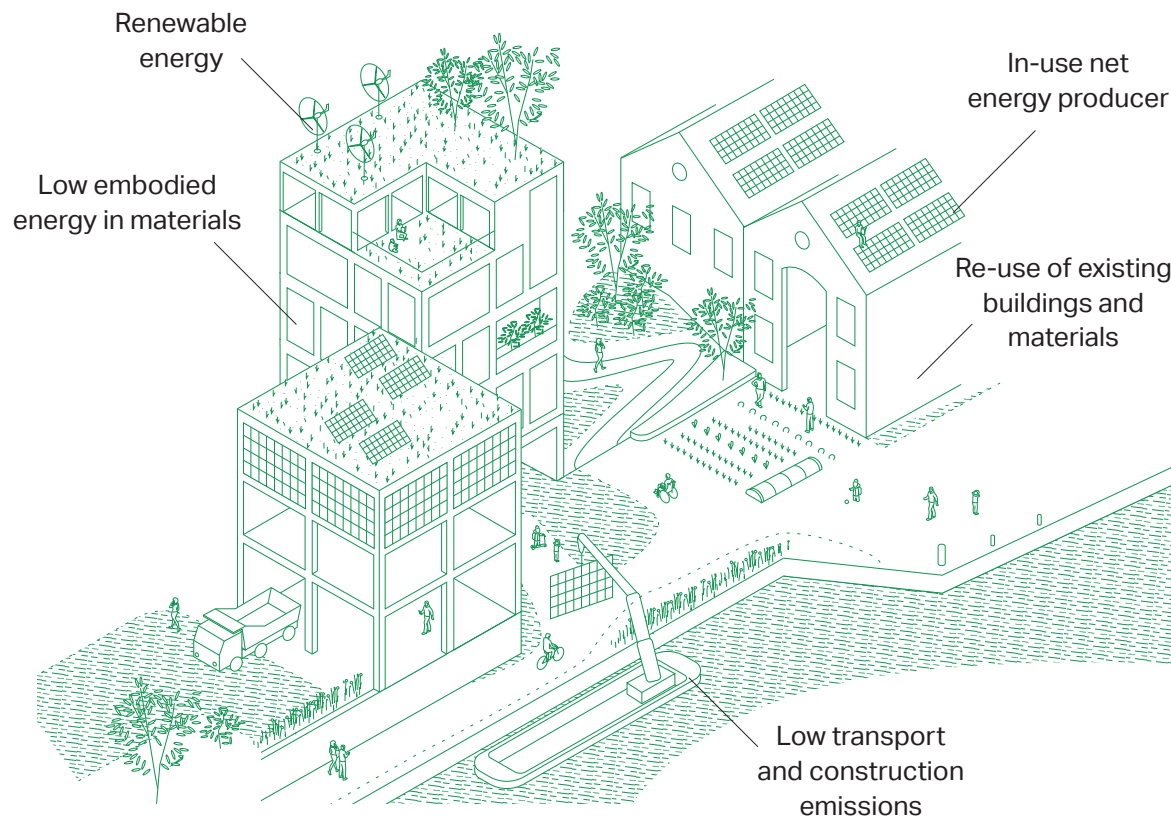


**CASE STUDY**
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam:

The reimagined Rijksmuseum provides pedestrian and cycleways through the museum plan that are visible to the interior of the museum and vice versa, reinforcing off-road routes and connecting up commutes and leisure routes to culture.

Image credit – © John Lewis Marshall

**2.5** – Material selection should minimise environmental impact. Carbon sequestration, supply chain sustainability and sustainability in use should all be considered.

Refer to: TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part E, Section 7



Renewable energy

Low embodied energy in materials

In-use net energy producer

Re-use of existing buildings and materials

Low transport and construction emissions

**2.6** – Specification of materials and elements should pay close attention to their embodied energy, whole-life sustainability and their contribution to a circular economy.

Refer to: GLA Delivering London's Energy Future, 2011

**2.7** – Below ground design is also essential to the creation of complex habitats. Due consideration should be paid to how plants and trees will grow and expand below ground, how they will be sustainably watered and drained, such that they stand the best possible chance to thrive in their context.

Refer to: Sustainable Water Management: Trees are part of the solution, London Tree Officers Association, 2013

**CASE STUDY**
Winter Gardens, Sheffield:

These botanical gardens feature a very varied mix of plant species native to temperate climate zones. Care was taken in choosing the plants to ensure their natural ecosystems were replicated as both an ecological and educational tool. Large mature palms and exotic plants such as banana were specified from the outset.
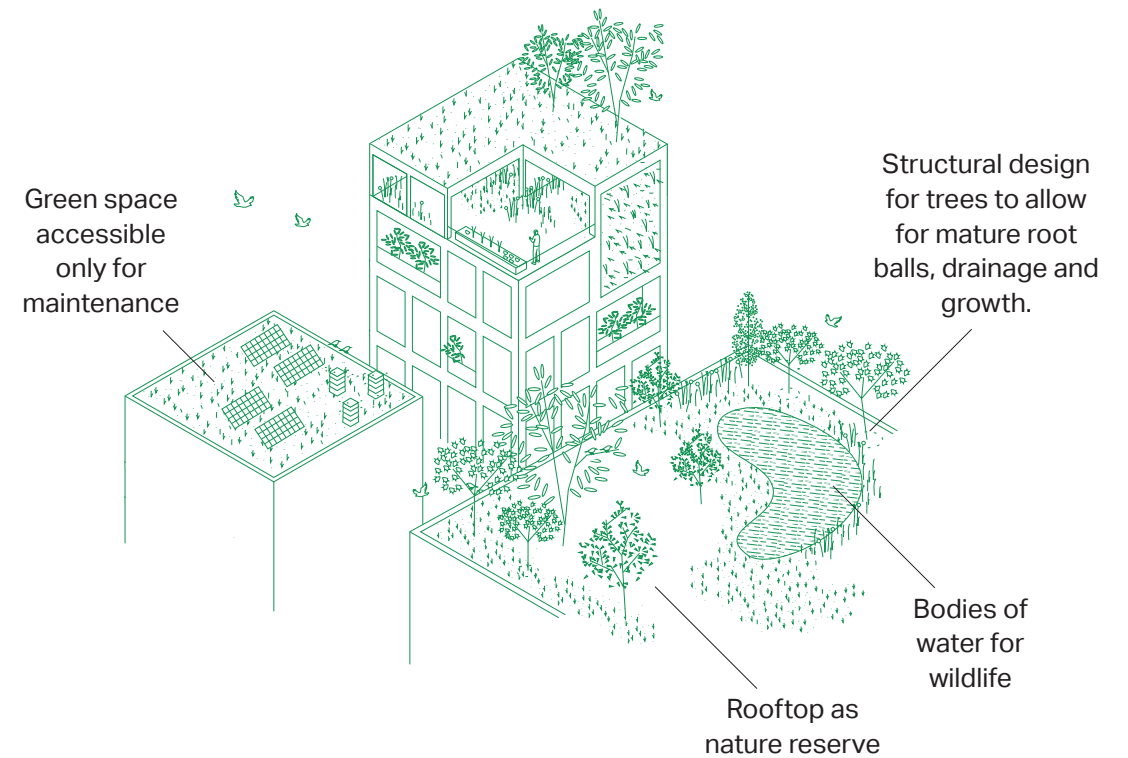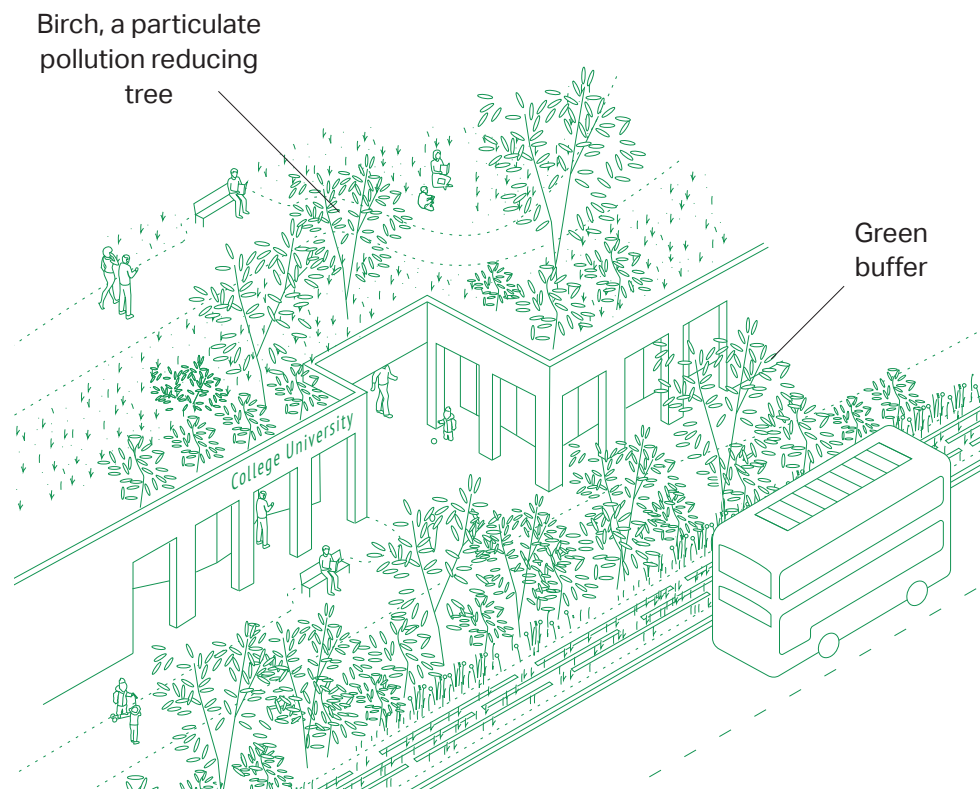
Image credit – In public domain

**2.8** – Clear planting strategies should be established which set out clearly what the planting scheme aims to achieve, for instance providing particular habitats or access to edible planting. Specimens, maturity, mix and below-ground design should then clearly respond to these aims.

Designs should give the best chance for plants to thrive and form an ecosystem, for example through careful selection of species, the specifying of mature specimens and consideration of the changing climate. The design and selection of planting should respond to the context (physical and cultural) in which the planting is situated.

Refer to: Right Trees for a Changing Climate, Forestry Commission and TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part E, Section 13.2

**2.9** – Spaces should play a positive role in contributing to the city's air quality, and the number & type of plants should be selected at least partly on this basis. At a local level, the location, character and type of planting should have a positive impact on local air and environmental quality, such as by providing a buffer between a place to dwell and a road.

Refer to: DEFRA Local Air Quality Management 2009; and TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part E, Section 13



Green space accessible only for maintenance

Structural design for trees to allow for mature root balls, drainage and growth.

Bodies of water for wildlife

Rooftop as nature reserve



Birch, a particulate pollution reducing tree

Green buffer

College University

**2.10** – Planting strategies should consider whether to prioritise human access to complex, biodiverse areas of greenery (including edible planting and food growing) or whether to prioritise inaccessible wildlife habitats which may benefit from being secluded from people, or an appropriate combination.

Refer to: Green Infrastructure Focus Map

**2.11** – Planting schemes which rely on close or intense maintenance should be avoided in favour or looser and more informal greenery, which typically more closely relates to the character of greenery in the wider public realm.

Refer to: TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part E, Section 13; and Trees in Hard Landscapes: A Guide for Delivery, Trees and Design Action Group, 2014

Image credit – Adrià Goula

**CASE STUDY**
Passeig De St Joan Boulevard, Barcelona, Spain:

Permeable paving slabs are used on this roadside public space designed by Lola Domènech, to allow for informal planting to grow freely.

The space was designed with longevity in mind, increasing in interest and biodiversity as it matures.

Access to nature and biodiversity

Natural sensory play

A natural space for knowledge sharing

Growing and gardening



**2.12** – Opportunities should be taken to provide spaces and features which enrich the public's knowledge and skills in relation to environmental issues.

Refer to: GLA London Environment Strategy, 2018

Circular and regenerative growing

Strong community involvement

Communal growing and gardening

Edible and productive landscapes
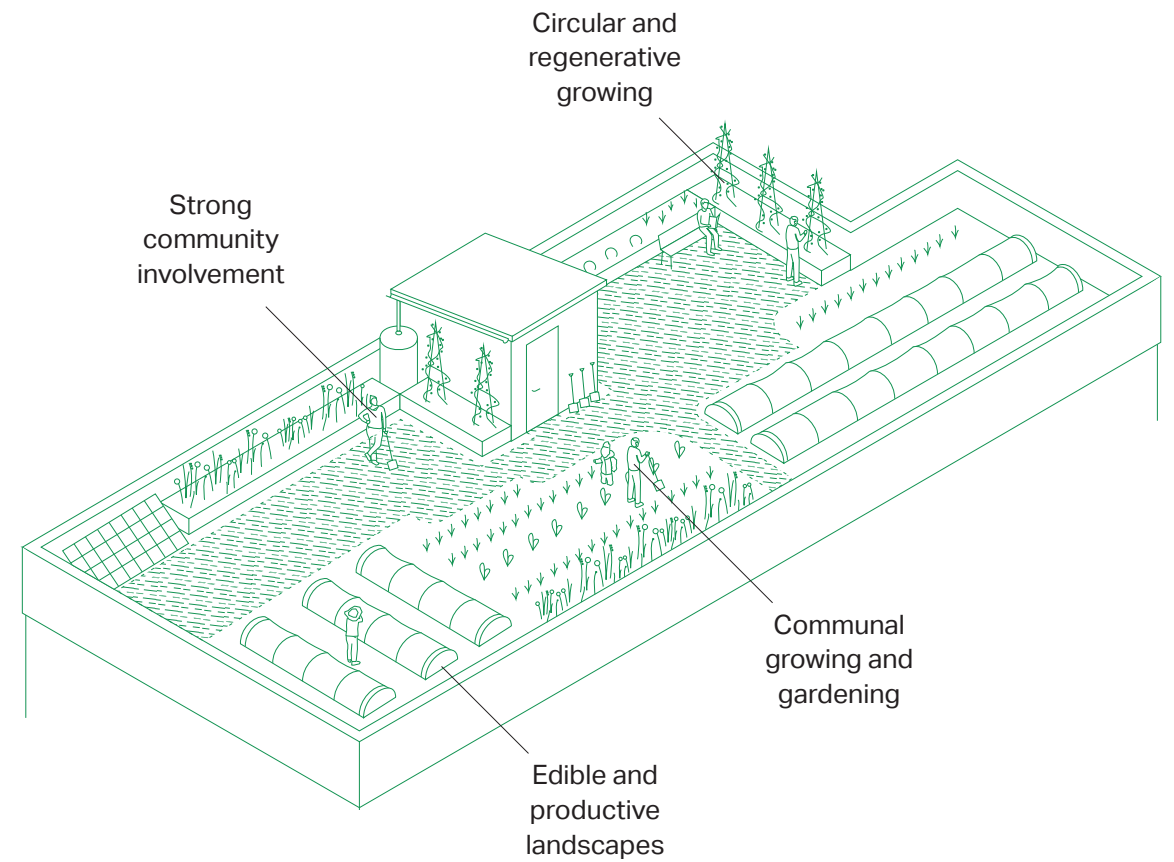
**CASE STUDY**
Brooklyn Grange, New York, USA:

This project brings urban farms to inner city rooftops, enriching local biodiversity whilst also, through weekly markets, bringing people into contact with traditionally rural practices and locally-grown food.

Image credit – © Brooklyn Grange Rooftop Farm
www.BrooklynGrangeFarm.com

**2.13 –** Where appropriate, for example where the right skills, infrastructure, communities and operators are present, planting could be in the form of urban agriculture, learning from precedent set by city farms and urban agricultural programmes worldwide.

Refer to: TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part E, Section 13

**2.14** – Trees should be planted wherever possible, including in internal spaces, in a way that maximises their potential to improve air quality, reduce the urban heat island effect and other tangible benefits such as providing shade. Internal spaces can use planting to improve air quality and act as solar shading in warmer months.

Refer to: TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part E, Section 13; and Right Trees for a Changing Climate, Forestry Commission
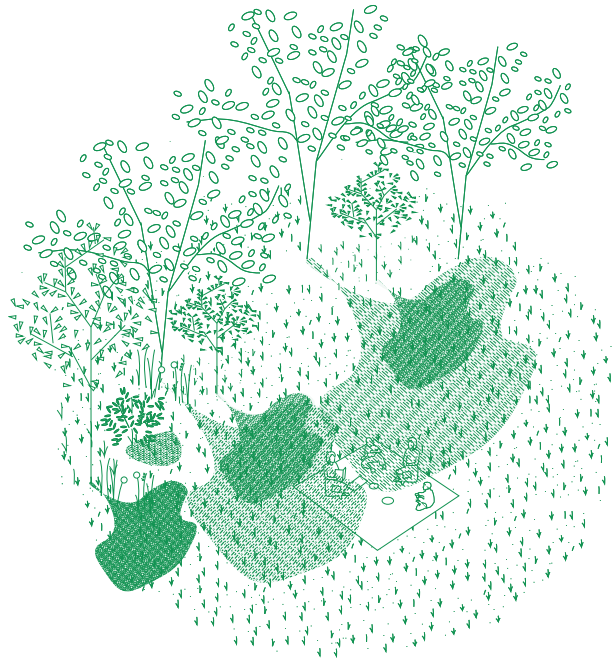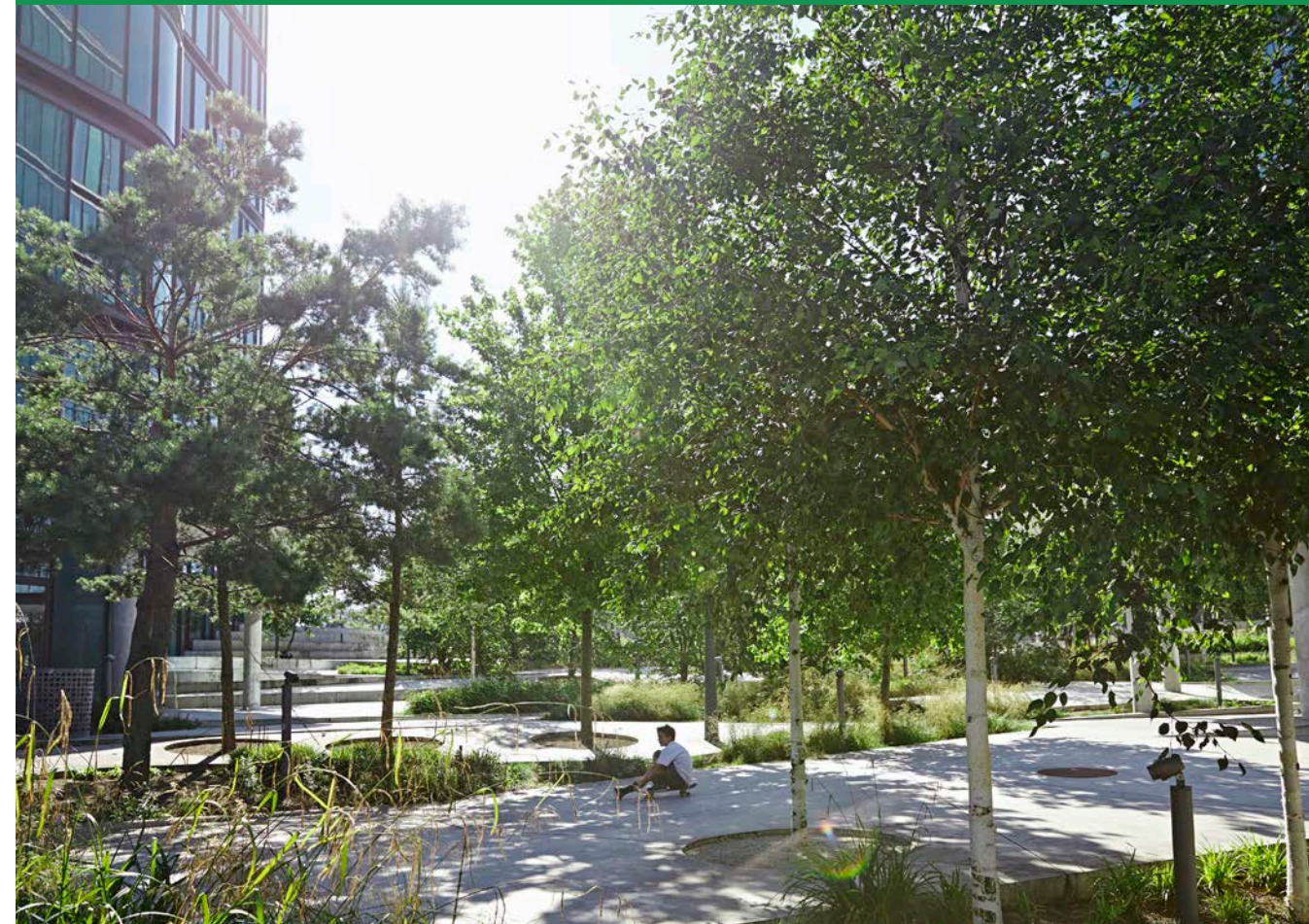


**CASE STUDY**
City Dune, Copenhagen, Denmark:

This raised public space is accessed from the pavement and forms a roof to an underground car park. Despite the challenges of planting street trees on a 'roof', mature specimens were planted from the outset.

The space uses a variety of large carbon sequestering species, and benefits from a more comfortable environment for its users as a result of the shade they provide.

Image Credit – © SLA / The City Dune

ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

**CASE STUDY**

Seoullo, Seoul, South Korea:

This urban park transformed routes for cars into pedestrian connections. Interventions are limited to those which would enable people and plants to occupy the spaces.

Image Credit – Christian Bolz, licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Image Credit – TFL

**CASE STUDY**

Bonnington Square, Lambeth:

At Bonnington Square, trees have been planted and allowed to become mature at corners that would otherwise have been dominated by tarmac.

**CHECKLIST**

- Does the space make a substantial positive environmental impact, both in general and in its immediate context?

- Does the space take into account projected changes in climate?

- Does the space play a positive role in water attenuation and in improving air quality?

- Does the space promote sustainable and low-impact transport solutions, either through the provision of equipment or by its wider design?

- Have its materials and specification be chosen on the basis of their environmental impact?

- Has the planting scheme been developed to provide an appropriate habitat and ecosystem, both for the site and for their wider environmental and ecology benefits?

- Are mature trees included in the planting strategy? When in an elevated position, has sufficient structure, space for root growth and irrigation been provided?
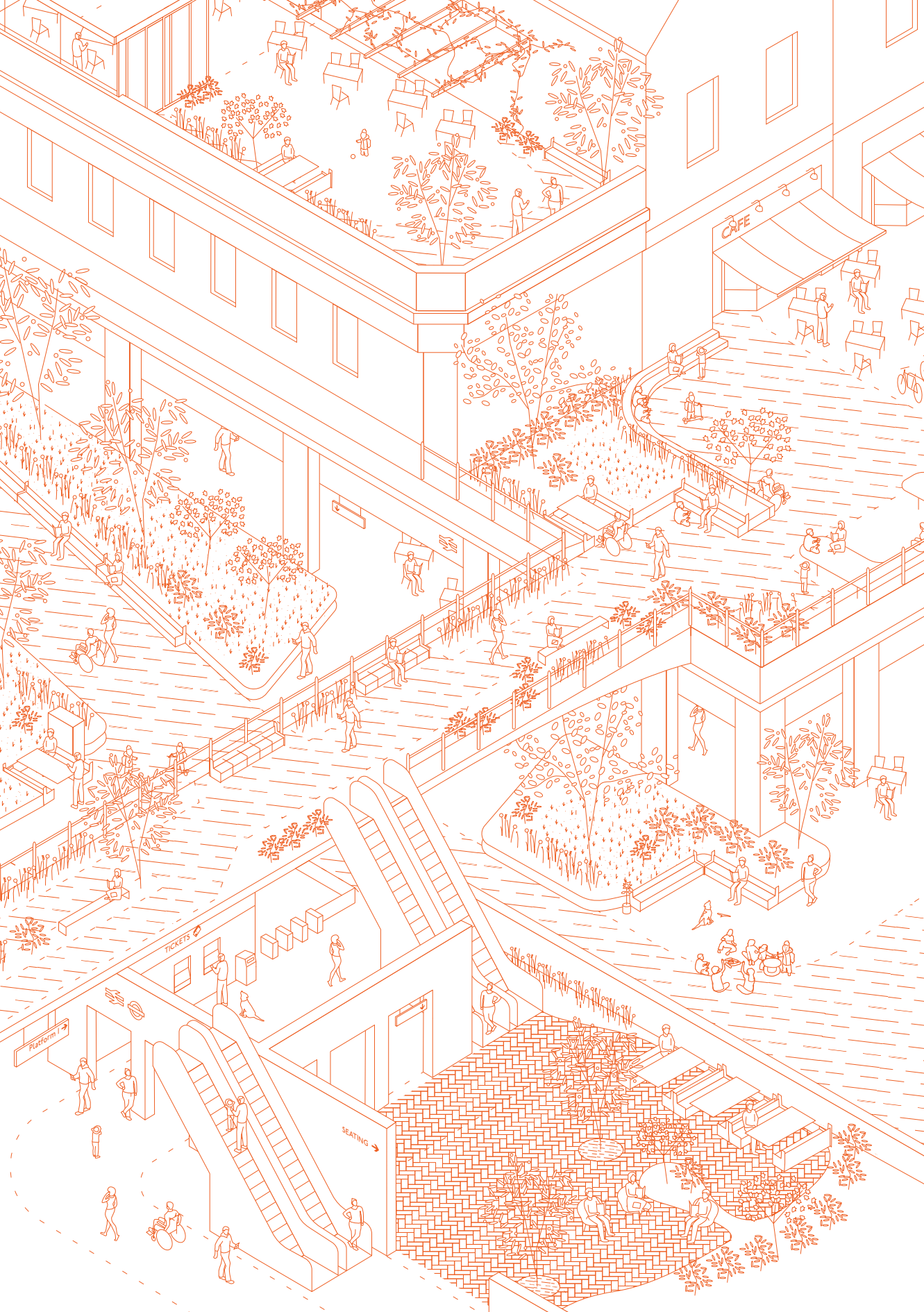
# 3

# MOVEMENT AND DWELLING

London's public realm allows for movement and 'passing through' and for dwelling and passing some time. Most spaces provide some kind of mix between these two forms of use, but the need to provide comfortable dwelling space can often be overwhelmed by movement considerations.

Space for dwelling is not in opposition to space for movement, as resting and pausing are essential parts of movement for many people. This balance should be carefully considered and designed such that a significant and appropriate amount of space prioritising dwelling is allowed for even in places, such as stations, where movement might otherwise predominate. It should be easy to find a clear point at which to meet a friend in a busy station, or to find somewhere to sit and wait outside a roof garden without feeling uncomfortable or unwelcome.

Seating along key routes

Integrated seating

Platforms 3 & 4

A variety of seating provision
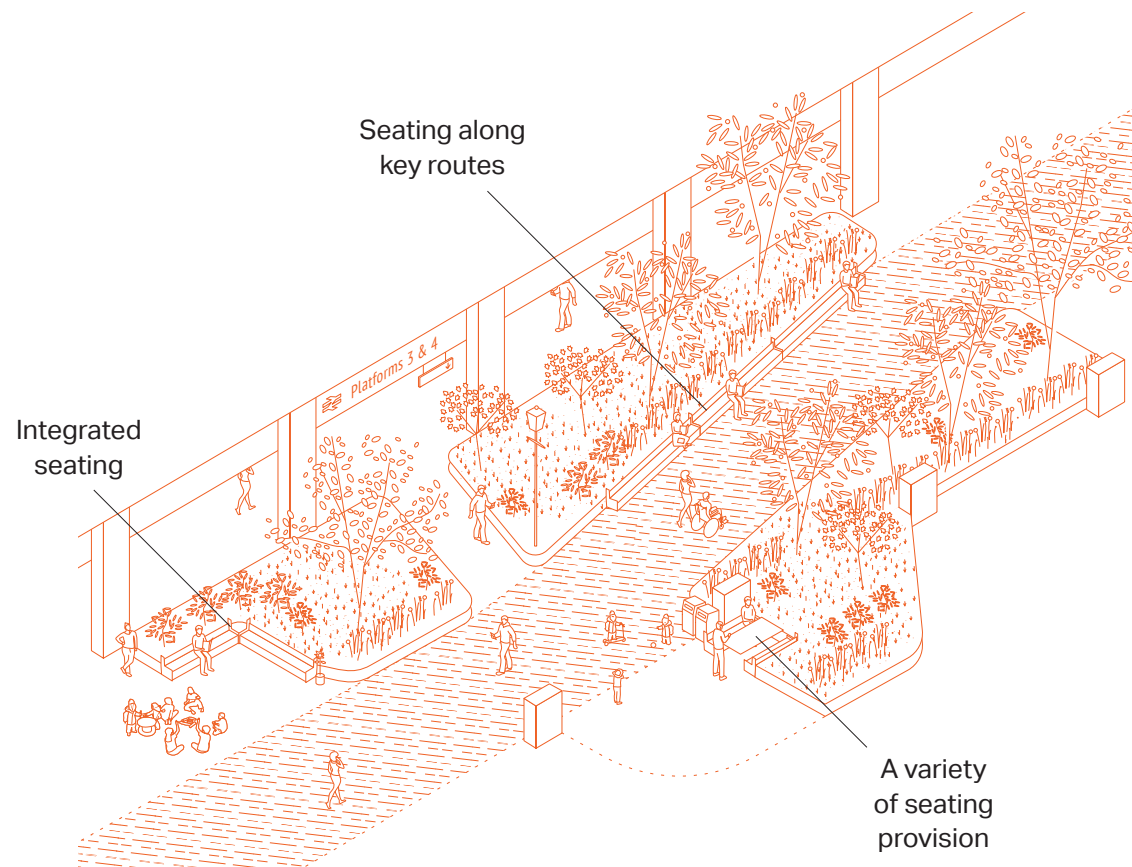
**3.1** – In spaces where the priority is considered to be movement, such as bus stations and railway concourses, good seating provision should be provided that enables pedestrian movement and provides places to sit, rest and dwell.

Refer to: TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part E, Section 11.7

**CASE STUDY**
West Croydon Bus Station, Croydon:

The station building provides both exterior and interior places to sit and rest. Exterior seating is sheltered and in places combined with other features such as planters and information boards. The interior has a variety of seating options, including tables for eating and working, to cater for an extended period of rest.

**3.2** – The relationship between moving and dwelling in a space should be carefully studied and described in proposals with the justification for the proposed balance clearly set out. The ability to dwell, rest and play in a space should be understood as a necessity.

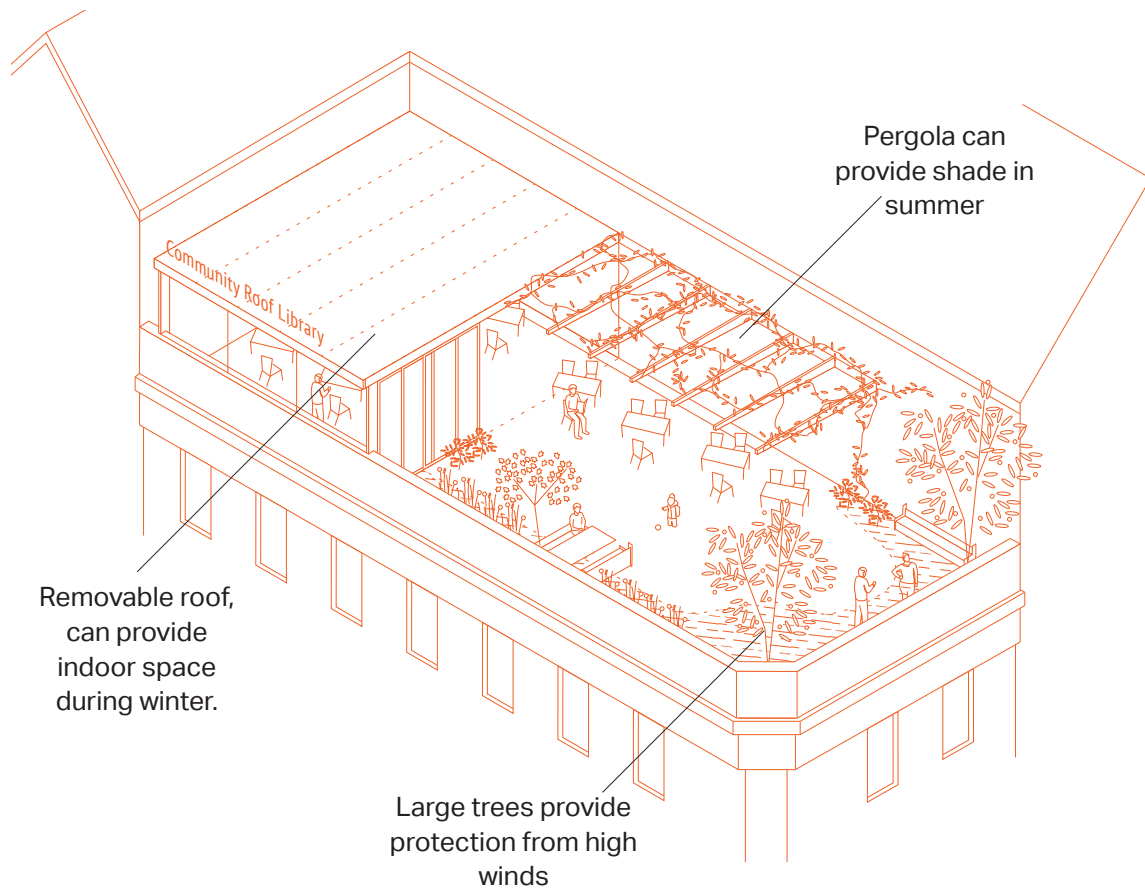Refer to: GLA Making London Child Friendly, 2020



**CASE STUDY**
V&A Museum of Childhood, Tower Hamlets:

AOC's design for the museum will see the existing main space transformed into an internal 'town square' incorporating a range of different types of seating, many of which can be freely transformed and rearranged.

Image credit – AOC

Pergola can provide shade in summer

Community Roof Library

Removable roof, can provide indoor space during winter.

Large trees provide protection from high winds

**3.3** – Designs should take into account seasonal change, projected changes in climate and other demands of a space that are dependent upon weather. They should evidence a considered and appropriate response to provide shelter and shade and protection from weather.



Image credit – Eric Parry Architects, Photographer: Dirk Lindner

**CASE STUDY**
Garden at 120, London:

The centre piece of the rooftop garden above office at Fen Court is an extensive wisteria grove.

It provides scented flowers in May and shelter for visitors during the summer.

**3.4** – Seating should provide for a variety of different types of inhabitation. Designs should set out a site-appropriate mix of types that considers the following:

Refer to: GLA Making London Child Friendly, 2020
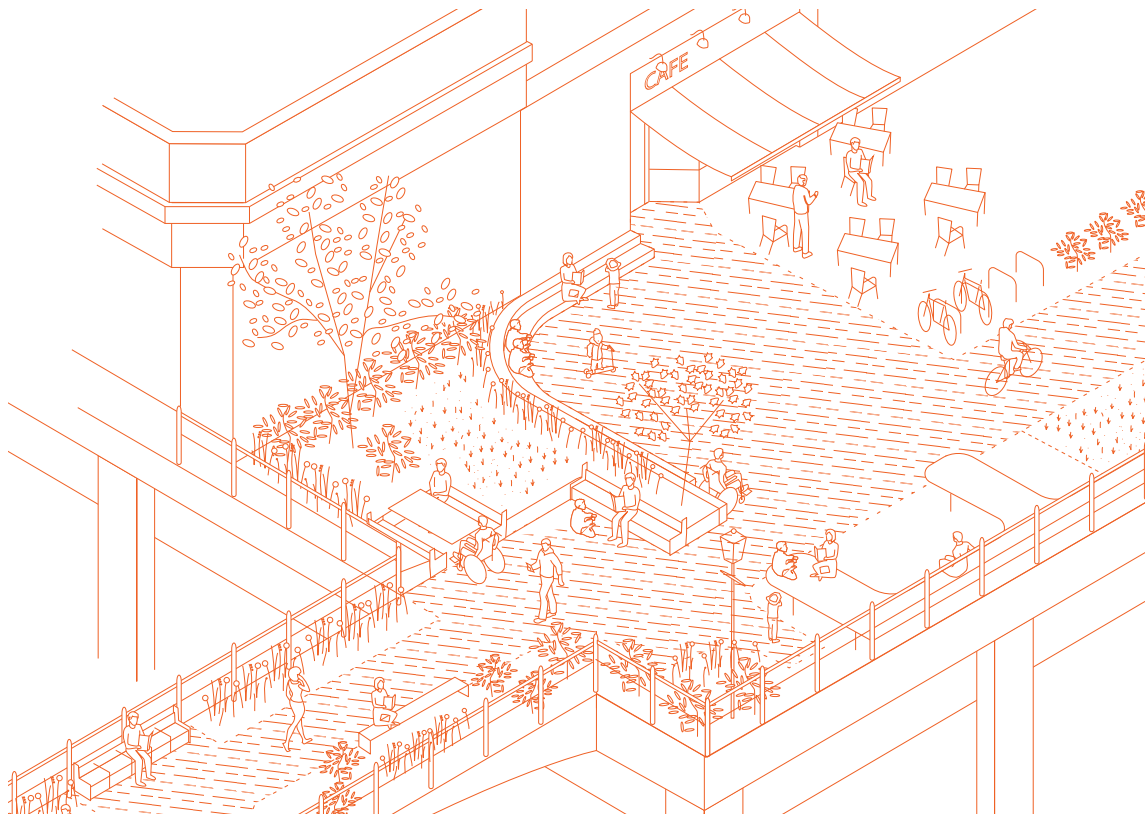
**CASE STUDY**
Hayes Gold Disc, Hillingdon:

The 'Gold Disc' in Hayes designed by The Decorators provides both shelter from the elements and a mix of seating types. The seating encourages a variety of uses including play.

Image credit – Dosfotos

**CASE STUDY**
Princeton Transit Hall, New Jersey, USA:

The station integrates many high quality sitting places into the design of the building's facade. In doing so the seating balances a feeling of privacy when in use, with the requirement of the corridor for movement. In this example seating enhances the character and sense of activity in circulation spaces and a similar approach could be used to encourage use of particular routes and spaces.

- Seating that allows people in wheelchairs etc. to join with others.
- Seating that allows and encourages food consumption not associated with purchasing, including with tables or other level surfaces.
- Seating that does not prescribe particular forms of behaviour.
- A variety of seating in any one place.
- Seating designed for old people, such as incorporating armrests and backrests.
- Seating and 'street furniture' that allows a degree of user control and customisation.
- Corner seating to allow for those who are hard of hearing or visually impaired to converse easily.
- Seating sited at the edge or periphery of a space typically allows for more comfortable long-term dwelling.

Refer to: Field Guide to Urban Plazas: A Study in New York City, SWA, 2019

**3.5** – Commercialisation of spaces like railway concourses has led to a reduction in the number of dedicated waiting rooms. Comfortable, peaceful spaces should be introduced or reintroduced that allow comfortable dwelling without the need to purchase anything. Depending on the scale and type of space, these may be dedicated rooms or spaces, or integrated with their context.

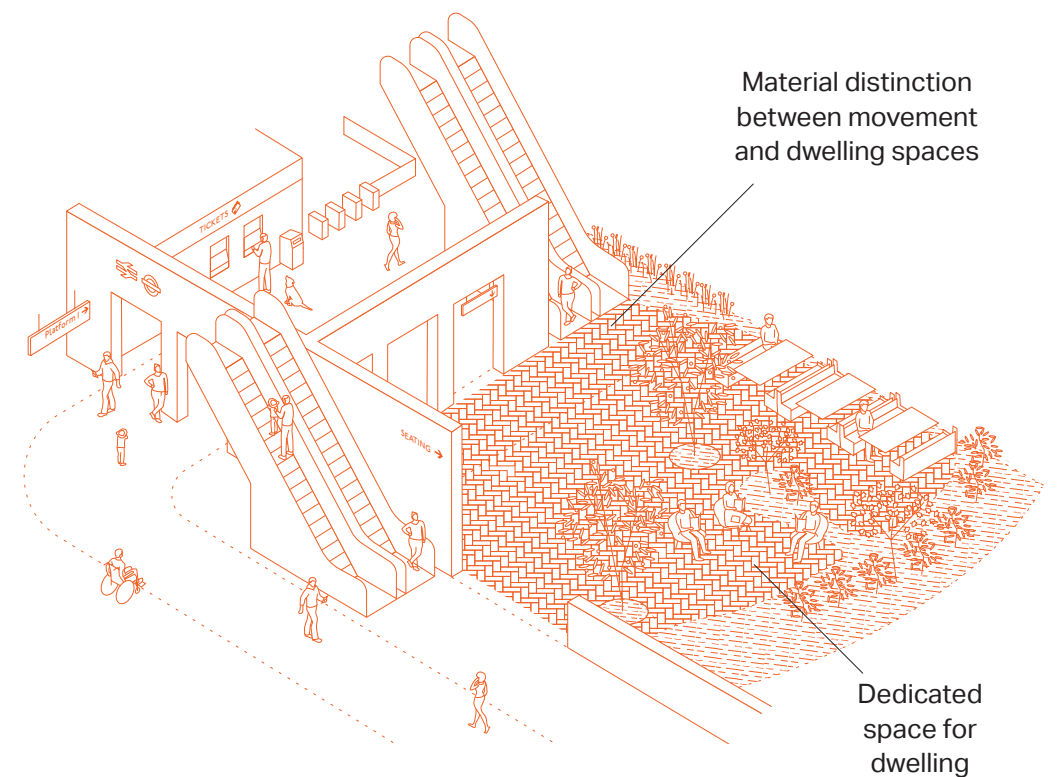Refer to: TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part E, Section 14



Material distinction between movement and dwelling spaces

Dedicated space for dwelling

# IS THERE A UNIQUE CULTURAL AND CIVIC HISTORY THAT CAN USE ART TO TELL THE STORY?

**CASE STUDY**

'I want my time with you,' Camden:

This art by Tracey Emin in Kings Cross St Pancras station highlights the forecourt of the station as a place of significance within the public realm. Its presence acts as an attractor to encourage the population of the space.

**3.6 –** Design features that are meaningful and beautiful should be provided as part of strategies to encourage dwelling. Dependent on context, this might take the form of distinctive and high-investment features such as fountains or public art, or be more subtle interventions set into walls, floors or furniture, or a distinctive tree.

Refer to: TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part E, Section 11.8

**3.7** – Interventions should properly reflect London's diversity and take opportunities to draw attention to under-celebrated individuals, demographics and communities.

Refer to: GLA Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm

**3.8** – The site should be carefully researched for existing features, social histories or design elements that could be retained or have relevance in newly-designed spaces.

Refer to: Streets for All – Advice for Highway and Public Realm Works in Historic Places, Historic England, 2018;
and TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part B, Section 3.12



Image credit – DK-CM

**CASE STUDY**
Postman's Park, City of London:

The memorial at Postman's Park celebrates the lives of heroic Londoners and provides powerfully meaningful space that is also a comfortable space to dwell, and sheltered from the weather.

**CHECKLIST**

- Does the space achieve an appropriate balance between dwelling and movement, recognising that provision for resting should also be present in spaces dominated by movement?

- Is there an appropriate mix of seating, which is responsive to different accessibility needs and is it sited appropriately, especially to allow people to dwell and play without buying?

- In spaces dominated by retail, cafés or restaurants, has an appropriate amount of seating unassociated with those businesses been provided?

- In the case of rail or bus interchanges, has sheltered, comfortable space for waiting been provided, not within commercial premises?

# 4

# OPERATORS

Commercial operators, whether a shop on a high street, a street corner coffee stall or a pub addressing a park, can enrich public spaces. Yet commercial activity should not be the only thing in a space, and there should be a diversity of activities on offer and should only be the predominant use in high street conditions or exceptional circumstances. The presence and mix of commercial operators in a space should promote independent businesses, start-ups and local businesses, thereby reducing the predominance of chain operators. Operators should have a role to play in the maintenance, care and stewardship of the space.

It is also important to recognise the contribution that community businesses and social enterprise models can make to the quality and activation of a space.

**4.1** – Unless a space is primarily a commercial / retail environment, the size and visual presence of commercial operators should be subordinate to its wider public use.

Refer to: TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part B, Section 3.9



Subtly integrated commercial structure

Plants and materiality can help distinguish commercial activity from the wider space



Image credit – Peter Cook
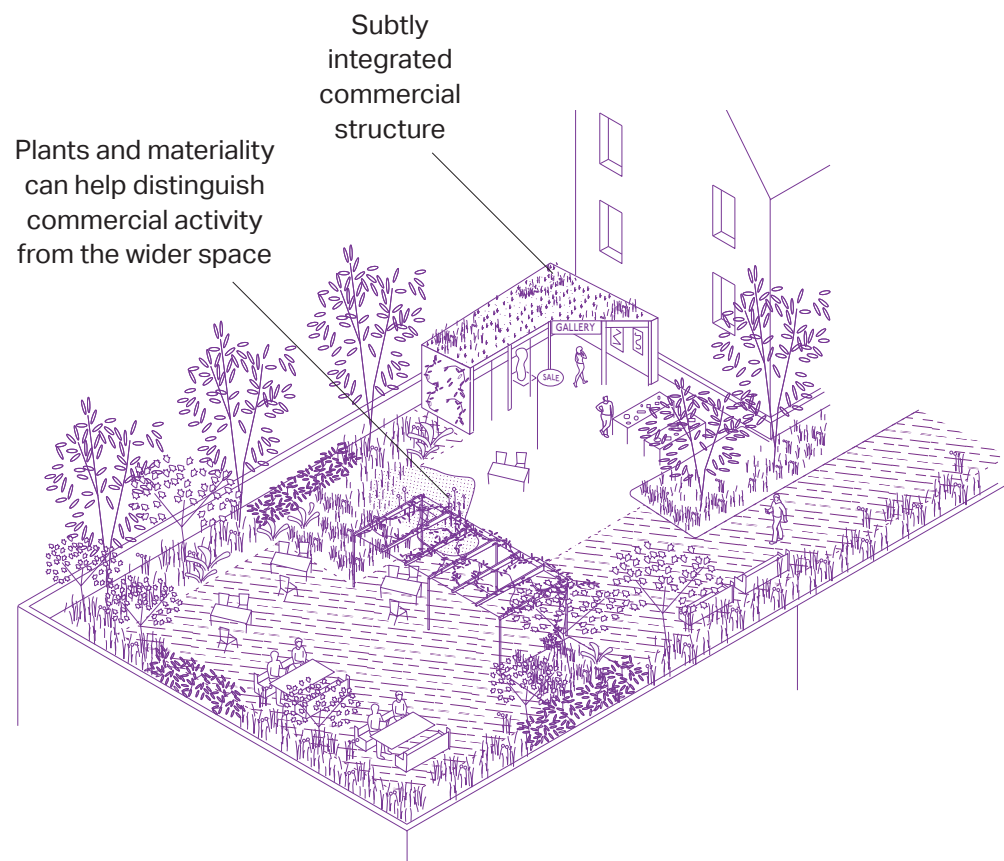
**CASE STUDY**
Waterloo City Farm, Lambeth:

This meanwhile project by Feilden Fowles provides a learning space for local schools and communities. The programming and operation of the site is such that the public teaching spaces are most visible from the wider public realm, allowing commercial activity to operate in a subservient manner to the rear of the site.

**4.2** – Whilst the presence of chain or corporate retailers will be inevitable in some environments, priority should be given to local businesses and other operators when identifying businesses and the design and size of units should be in response to this. This is particularly important for businesses that will have a stewardship or space-occupying role in the space itself.



# WHAT LOCAL BUSINESSES, COMMUNITY GROUPS OR ORGANISATIONS COULD BENEFIT FROM THE SPACE?

**4.3** – In spaces where commercial and retail uses are predominant, the design should make room for other uses – such as cultural or civic uses – to co-exist and enrich the experience of retail. This increases the experiential value of the space and diversifies uses.



Space for knowledge sharing

Cultural and civic uses on shopping mall concourse
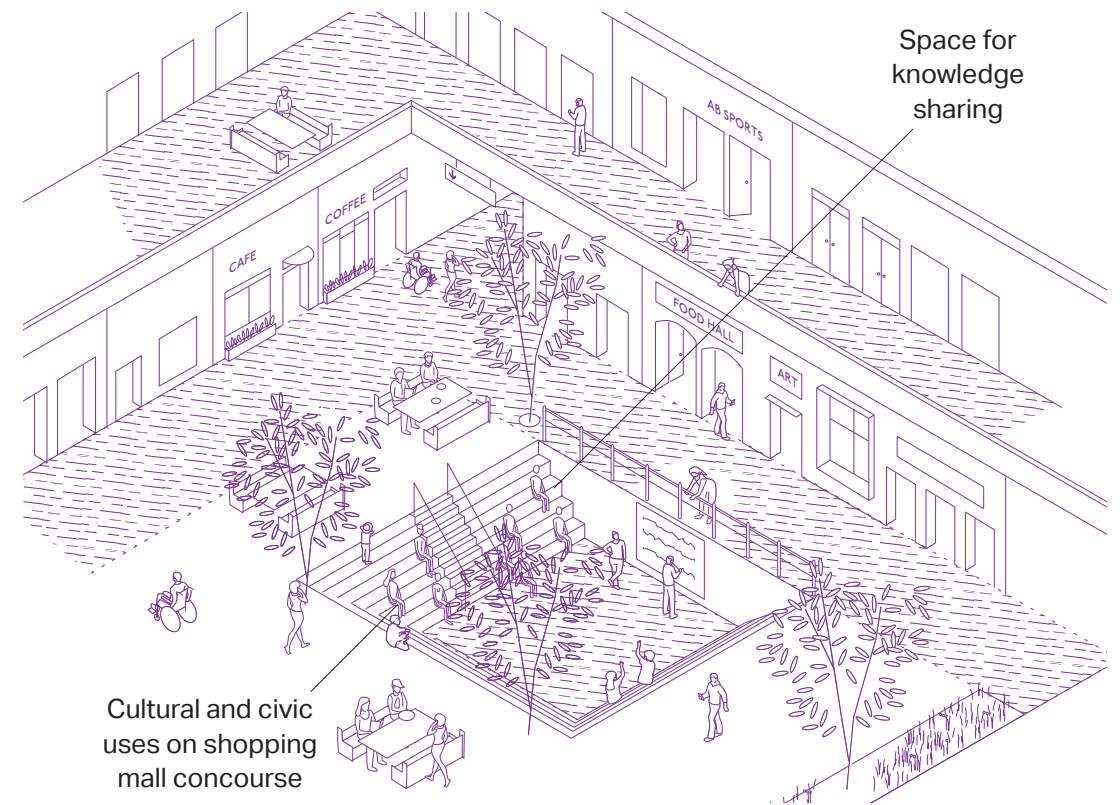
**4.3.1** – This principle should also be applied when retrofitting existing spaces.

**4.4** – Wherever possible a role for operators in the care, maintenance and stewardship of the space should be encouraged or provided. This might include taking responsibility for unassociated seating, caring for planting, providing sports accessories such as bats for table tennis etc.

Refer to: GLA Public London Charter principle 8 – Good Stewardship
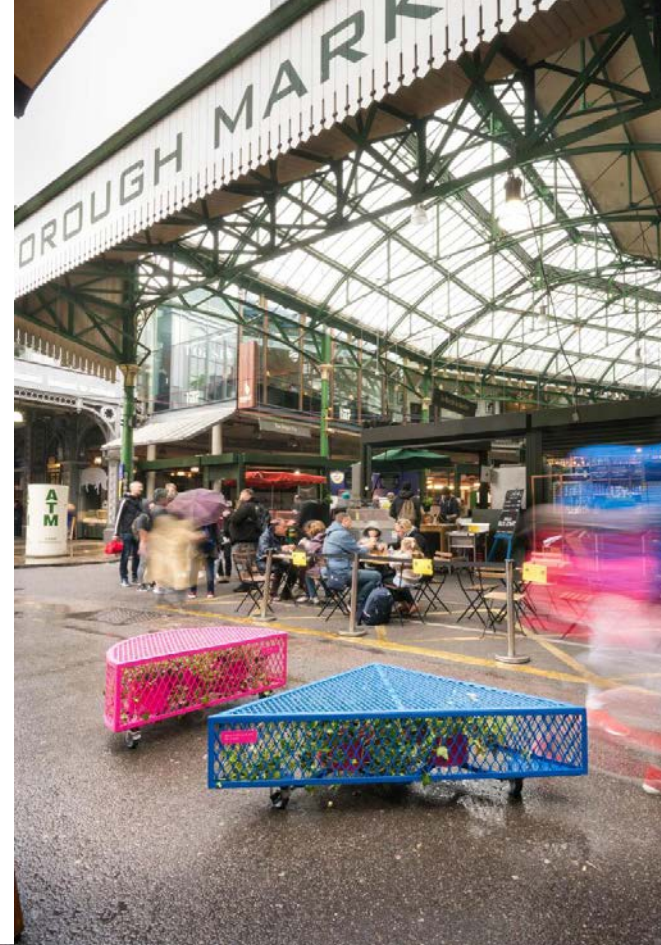
**4.5** – 'Unassociated' seating – which is not attached to any cafe, restaurant or operator – should be provided and should not be inferior in location or design to 'associated' seating controlled by an operator.

Refer to: principle 3.4 for guidance on seating provision; and TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part E, Section 11.7; and GLA Public London Charter principle 5 – Free of Charge

Permanent established operator

Demand for public offering tested with temporary structures
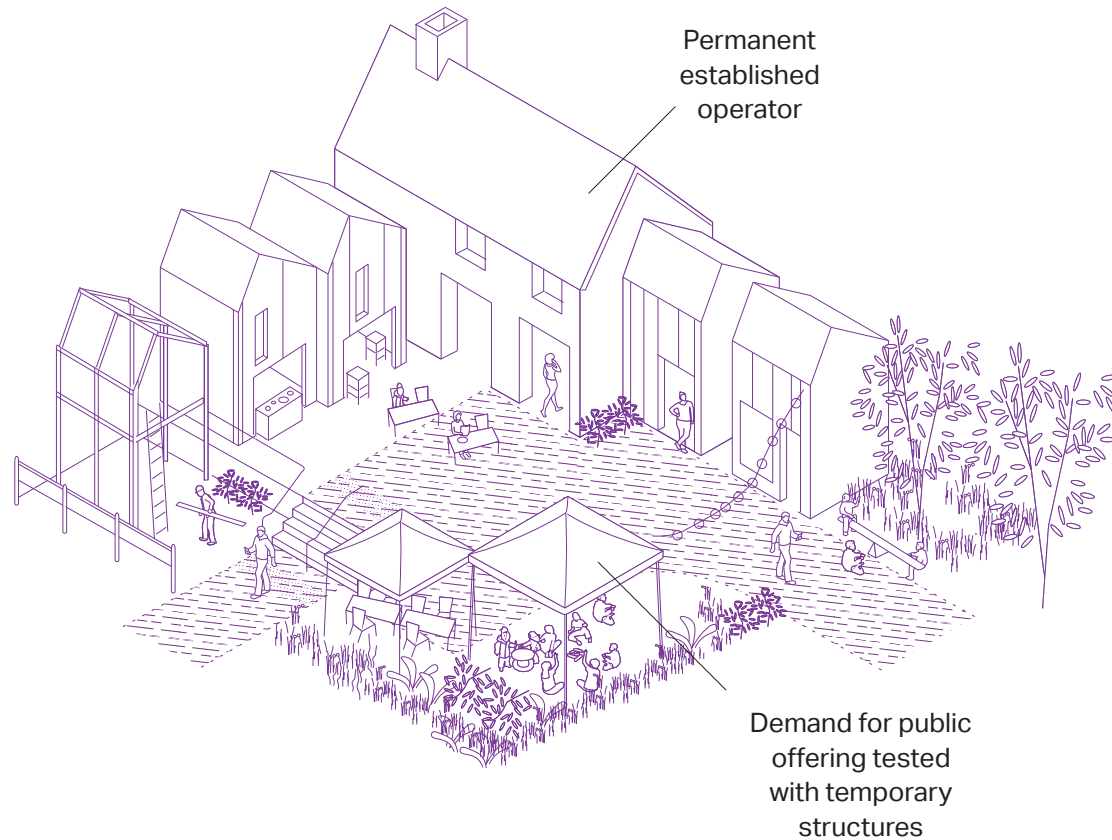
**4.6** – Designs should consider the value of temporary and mobile structures to provide space for operators in spaces. This approach can allow for easy 'testing' of offers in a space and also for change over time having a less significant impact.

Refer to: principle 5.8 for guidance on prototyping; and TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part B, Section 3.9

**CASE STUDY**
Xiringuito, Margate:

This temporary restaurant was constructed on a rooftop in Margate. The structure was designed to be dismountable and for relocation to a new seaside location each season.

**CHECKLIST**

- Has the need for commercial presence been carefully considered to ensure it benefits and supports the space?

- Is the presence and mix of commercial operators in a space appropriate? Have charitable and third sector organisations been considered, and does selection of operators reflect the locality? Does the design of units reflect this?

- Where commercial uses predominate, has room for other uses and activities been included within the mix?

- Has a good amount of unassociated seating been provided?

- Do the operators play a role in the maintenance, care and stewardship of the space beyond their own trading unit?

- Are there long-term measures in place to ensure that the mix of uses remains diverse and allows for charitable, third-sector or cultural offers to continue or emerge in time?
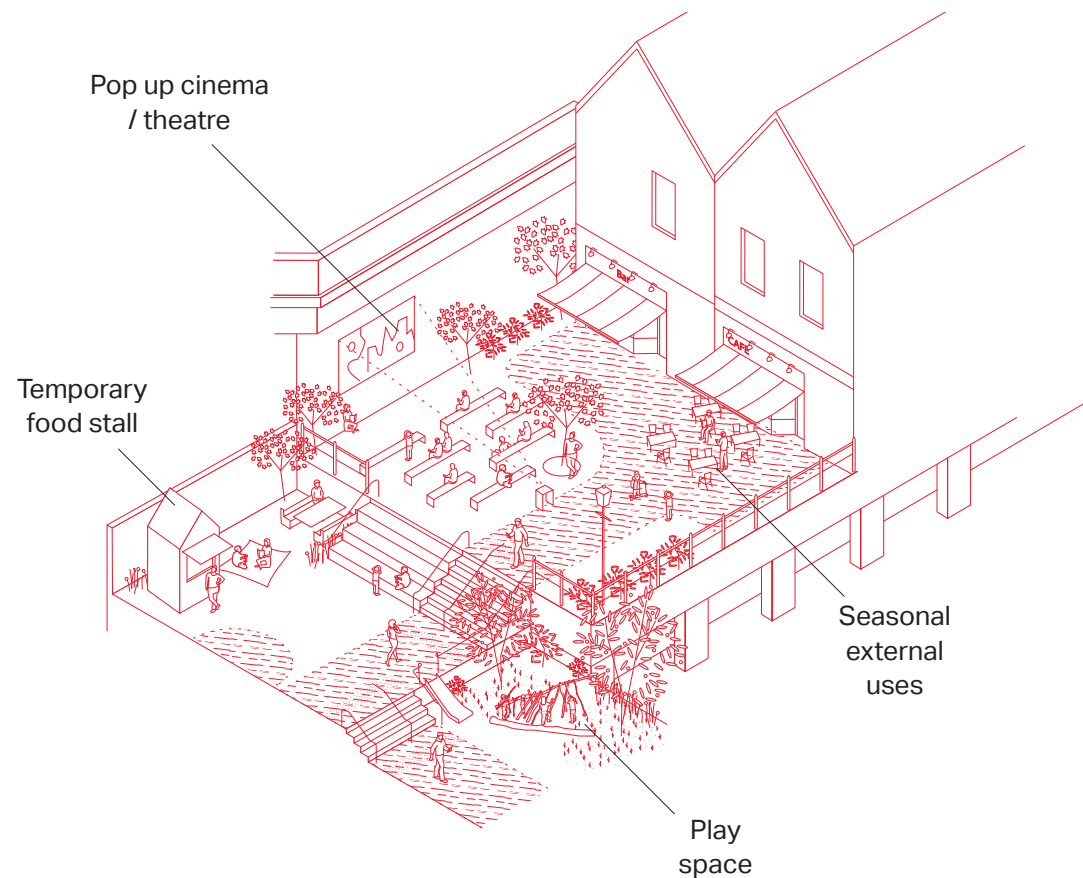
# 5

# CHANGE

London's public spaces are ever changing and typically get better with age, as layers of use and occupation appear. Uses are added and removed as priorities change, and a successful, well-loved public space is one where its age and layers of use are tangible and which allows and promotes meaning and identity.

Due to the nature of their access, internal, semi-internal spaces and elevated spaces often do not change and transform in the same way as a shared public square might do. With careful consideration at the design stage provision for change can be worked into these types of spaces. The right spatial qualities and materials can help to make a space that ages well and which promotes different uses over time.

Pop up cinema / theatre

Temporary food stall

Seasonal external uses

Play space

**5.2** – Some elements of a space will need to be flexible enough to support diverse forms of activity, such as an area of paving or grass. This might include simply making a space such as a landing or first stair larger than it would otherwise be. Others, considered as part of an overall design, may serve a specific function and be designed accordingly, such as a stage, picnic area, or route.

**5.1** – Thought should be given to the potential of the space to suit different types of activity, with designs demonstrating their capacity to support and host an appropriate variety of activities, including temporary or temporal ones.

Refer to: TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part D, Section 5.5



**CASE STUDY**
PC Caritas, Melle, Belgium:

This building renovation by de Vylder Vinck Taillieu in Belgium features a staircase at its centre which can be used as an informal theatre performance space.

Image credit –

architecten de vylder vinck taillieu,

Photograph © Filip Dujardin.

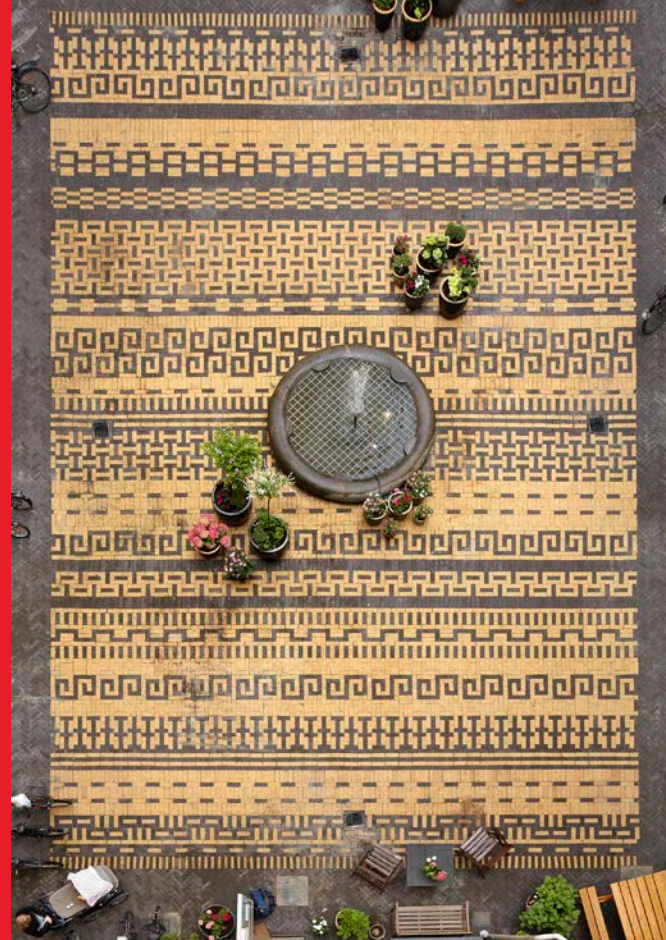CHANGE

**5.4** – Infrastructure including servicing should be provided to support the range of activities proposed for the space. This might include, for example, 'pop-up' power equipment to support an occasional market.

Refer to: National Design Guide, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2019, L2, P47

**5.3** – Material treatments and patterns can help to define, coordinate or support different adjacent uses, reserving space for particular uses or encouraging them. The character of these treatments can suggest particular kinds of occupation.
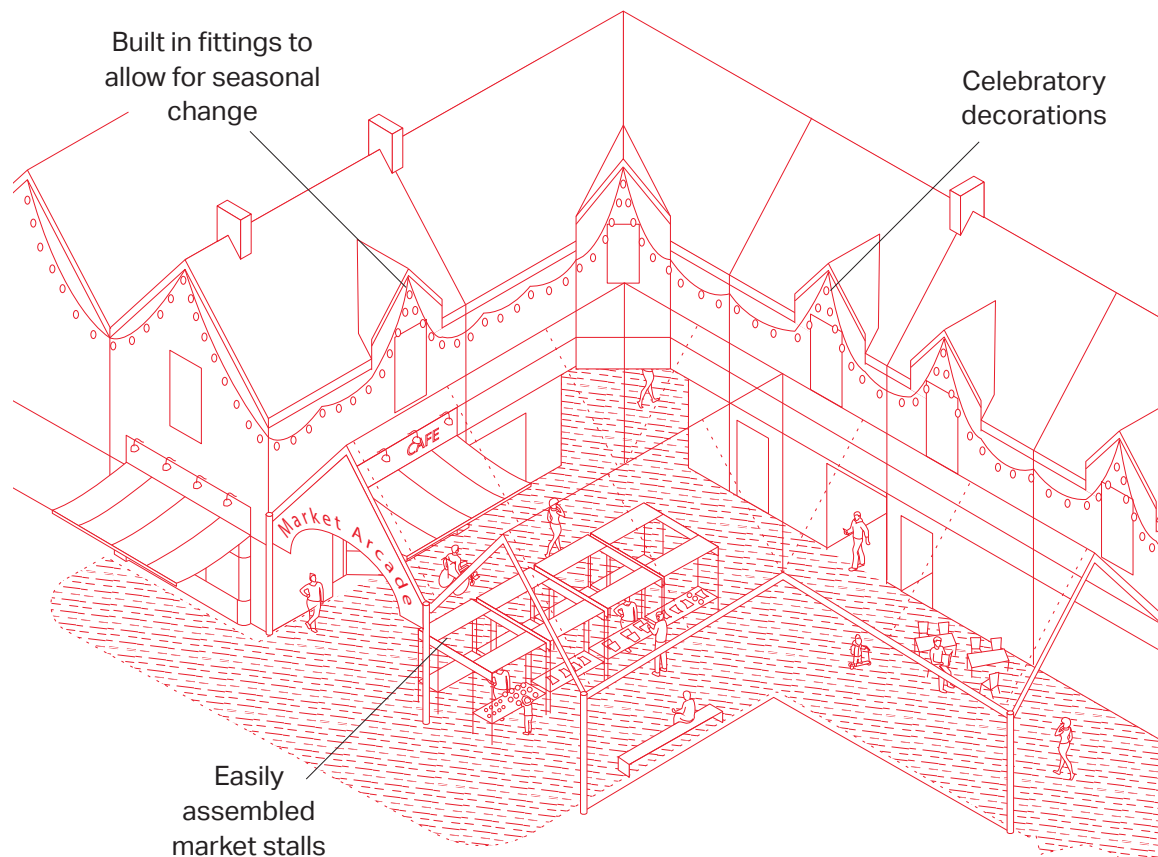
Built in fittings to
allow for seasonal
change

Celebratory
decorations

Market Arcade

CAFE

Easily
assembled
market stalls

**5.6** – Any necessary elements that claim part of a space for a particular business should be easily demountable to allow for seasonal change and also for unexpected uses to 'claim' the space where necessary.
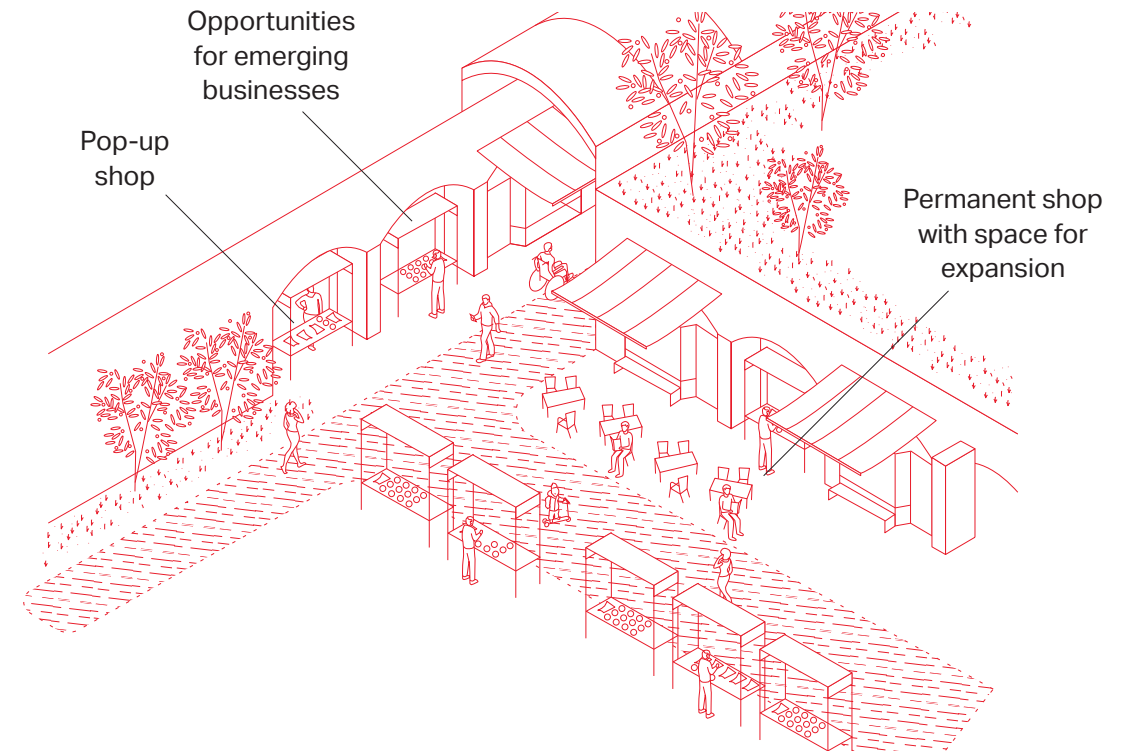
Refer to: National Design Guide, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2019, L2, P47

**5.5** – Designs should bear in mind the capacity of designed elements to support seasonal dressings such as festive decorations.

**5.7** – If there is any potential for a space to host temporal or temporary activities, such as pop up events, markets or meanwhile uses, the design should wherever possible consider these uses from the outset, for instance by ensuring that space to move comfortably is preserved.

**5.8** – Where possible, prototyping of uses should be considered as an effective tool for testing more long-term interventions. A mobile food kiosk on site for a few weeks might be a good way of testing a more permanent intervention.

The process of prototyping should ensure that those involved in the prototypical or meanwhile use have a stake in the longer-term activities of the space. Frameworks and programmes for the prototyping or meanwhile use should be clearly set out and shared at the outset.

Refer to: principle 4.6 for operators;
and National Design Guide, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2019, L3, P48

CHANGE



Pop-up shop

Opportunities for emerging businesses

Permanent shop with space for expansion



**CASE STUDY**
Bold Tendencies, Peckham:

Bold tendencies hosts Frank's Cafe, a flexible structure providing sheltered seating on the rooftop, as well as exhibitions and more permanent structures such as the raised Peckham Observatory viewing platform designed by Cooke Fawcett Architects.

Image credit – Peter Landers

**5.9** – Materials should be selected that will age well and indeed improve with age, including in relation to cleaning and maintenance. This might involve referencing, echoing or reproducing materials that are more conventionally used externally.

Refer to: GLA Public London Charter principle 8 – Good Stewardship

**5.10** – Materials should be chosen in relation to the expected uses(s) of the space, for example easily cleanable surfaces for spaces that are likely to see food serving or market use.

This temporary structure provided shade and shelter during a series of curated events focusing on the relationship between culture and nature. The space allows for flexibility in its use and hosts a small cafe within the tower.

Project in collaboration with Piovenefabi.

Image Credit – The Decorators.



**5.11** – Wherever possible, designs should allow for, and support, later adaptation, including for seasonal change. Daily cycles should also be considered, alongside means by which spaces might be made available to particular groups at particular times, where this increases access.



Temporary ice-rink in winter

Temporary paddling pool in summer
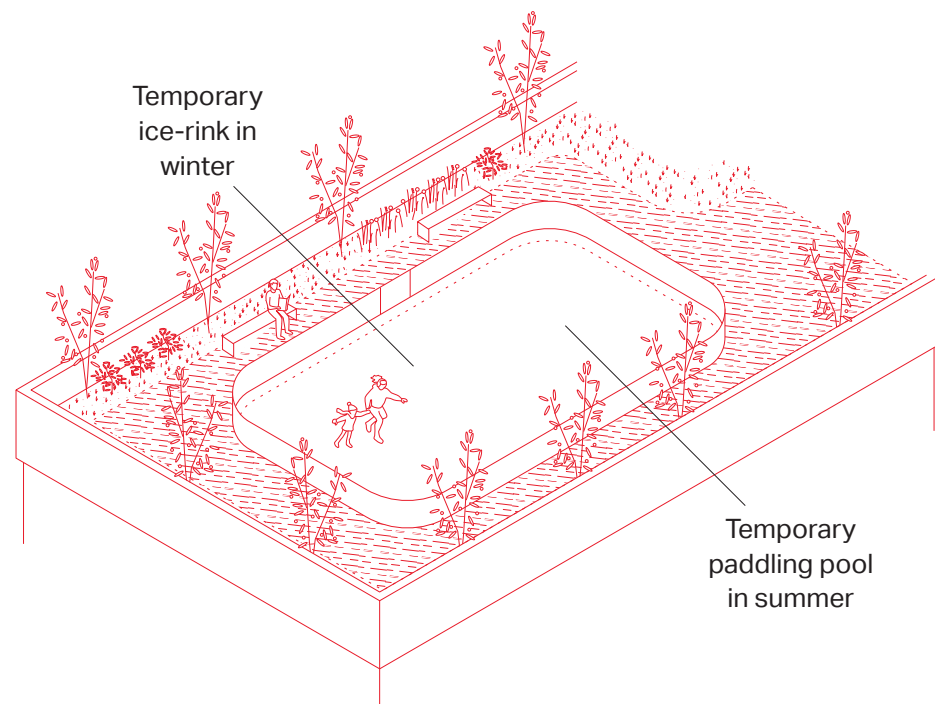
## HAS THE DESIGN CONSIDERED WHAT TEMPORARY USES MIGHT TAKE PLACE?

**CHECKLIST**

- Does the design of the space demonstrate how it will host (and promote) an appropriate variety and diversity of uses?

- Does the design of the space demarcate or otherwise celebrate the uses the space is expected to host? Is the right infrastructure being provided, for example power sources or shelter, and is the material palette appropriate to these expected uses?

- Has the design considered how temporary uses or inhabitations might take place and how the design can support them, with the process of this clearly set out and shared?

- Has the idea of prototyping been taking into account when developing the space or uses within it, and in a way that is equitable to those invested in the process?

- Will the space get better with age, by ageing well and by allowing for change and modification over time? Do the materials chosen support this idea?
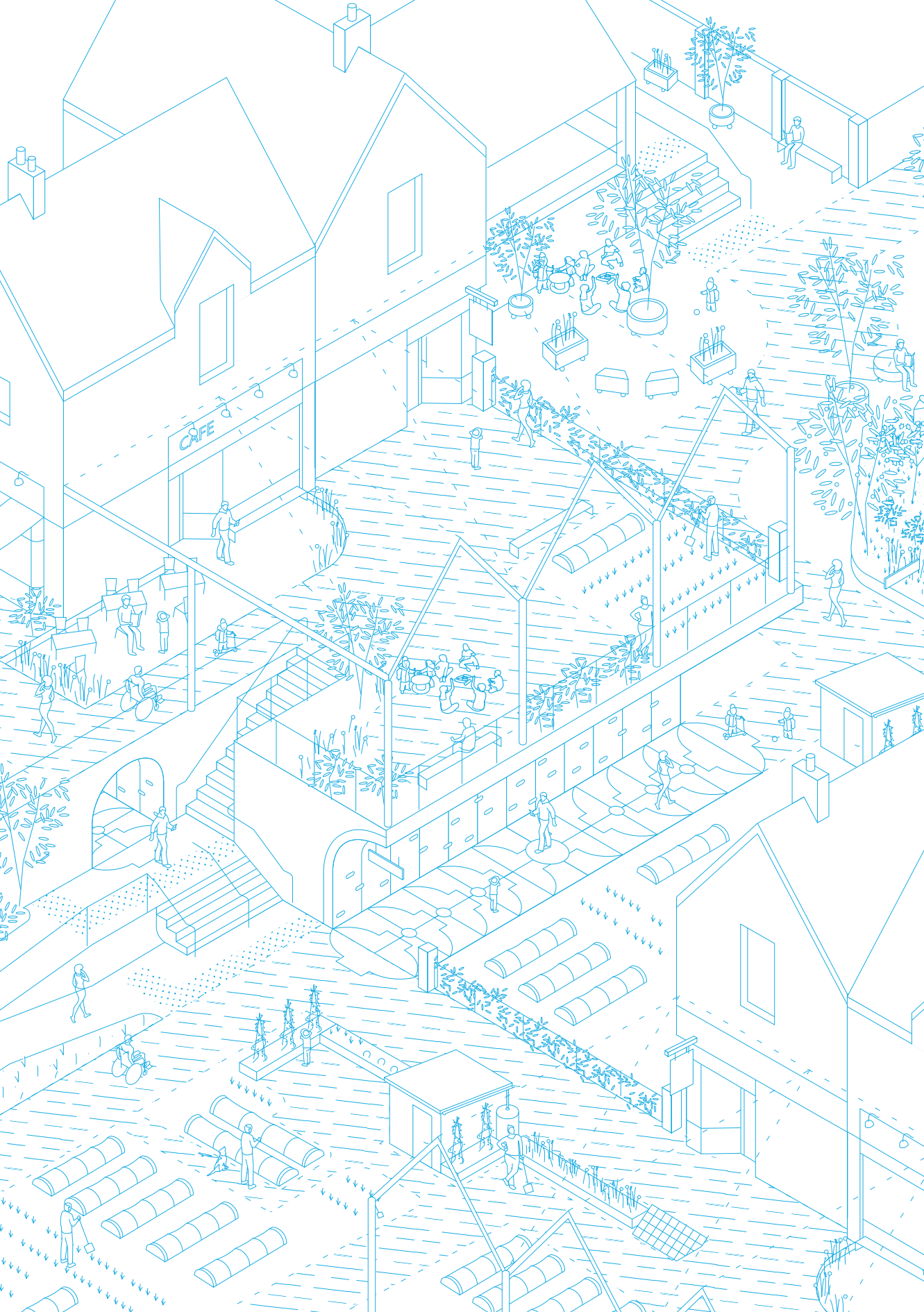
# 6

# SENSE OF OWNERSHIP

A space can be 'owned' by multiple people and groups at any one time, and in different ways. Multiple ownerships bring complexity and vitality to a space.

We can assess the publicness of a space – or perhaps the sense that we as a member of the public feel a sense of ownership over that space – by whether it places restrictions on who can be there undisturbed, and whether one can exist comfortably in a space without engaging in commercial activity.

The design of a space can also promote a sense of ownership amongst the people that use or might use it, which is particularly important for internal, semi-internal and elevated urban spaces. Overdesign should be avoided to prevent spaces feeling too defined. Spaces can be modified and to an extent 'owned' by its users through various means, and management and maintenance requirements could be designed for ongoing care by users themselves.

# DOES THE DESIGN OF THE SPACE PROMOTE ACCESS FOR ALL?

**6.1** – The design of the space should aim to achieve a feeling of 'publicness' and promote social integration. There is no one way of achieving this and it is fundamentally a matter of maintenance and regulation, but design can play a crucial role as can be seen in the following examples:

Refer to: GLA Public London Charter principle 1 – Public Welcome and GLA Social Integration in London, 2020, P7

**CASE STUDY**
Southbank Skatepark,
Lambeth:

Whilst the space is only used by a select group, the adjacency of the space to the main public thoroughfare of the southbank make it feel very public. The skatepark is the world's longest continually used skate spot and has been a feature in this Thames-side location since 1967.

**CASE STUDY**
Market Hall, Ghent,
Belgium:

This large roof canopy by covers a public square in the city centre. It provides shelter to the users, but maintains a connection to the wider public realm by allowing users of the square to pass through unobstructed.

Image credit: Robbrecht en Daem architecten | Marie-José Van Hee architecten © Marc De Blieck



Image credit – Fielden Clegg Bradley Studios / ©Hufton+Crow

**CASE STUDY**
Queen Elizabeth Hall foyer, Lambeth:

The Queen Elizabeth Hall foyer at the Southbank Centre is freely accessible to all. The open space, and large quantities of unassociated seating add to the feeling of publicness and welcome. The space was designed by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios.
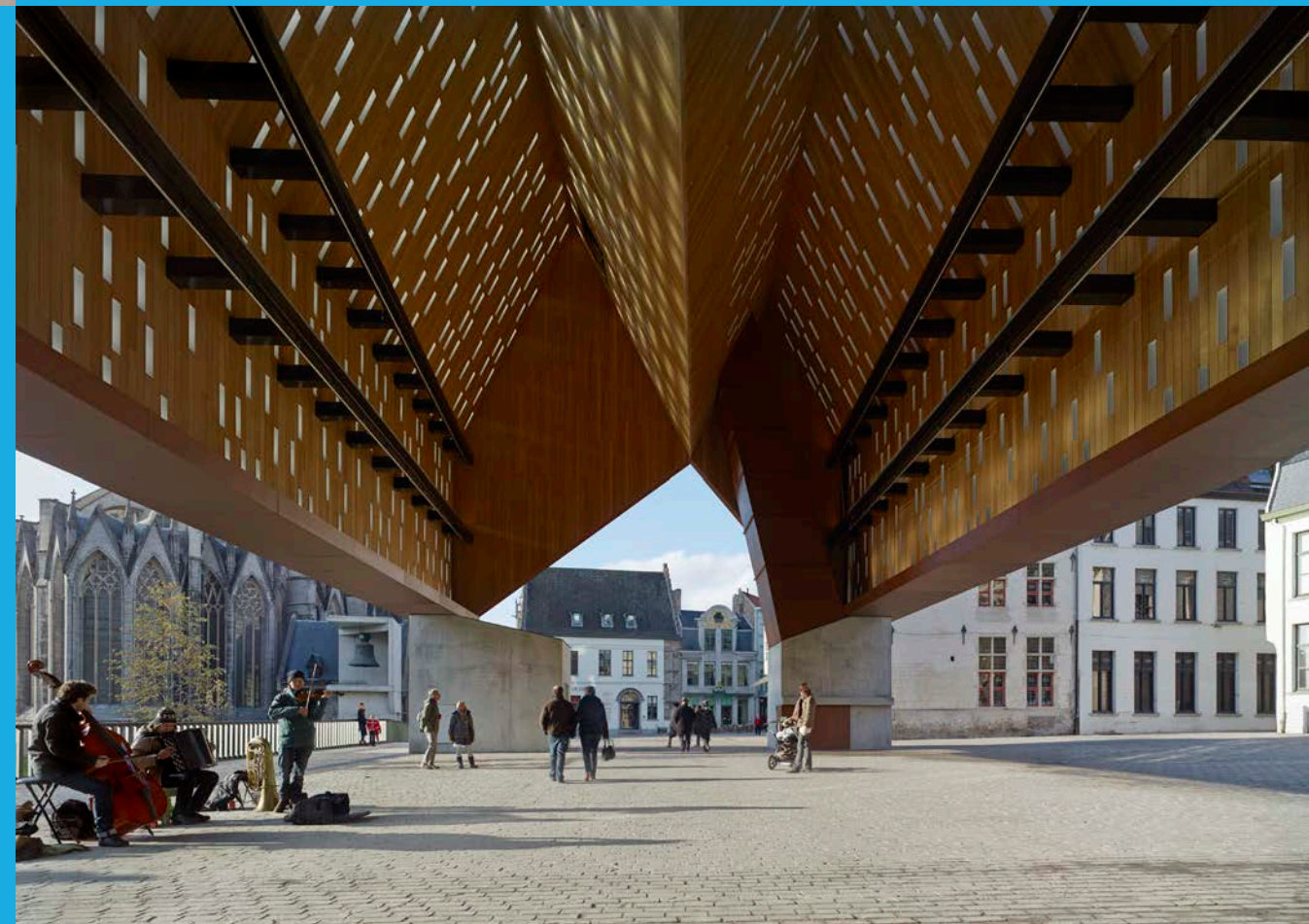
**6.2** – The design of spaces should promote inhabitation and user control over their use. This might be through providing facilities for a wide array of demographics, or it might be reflected in how the space is programmed and maintained.

Refer to: National Design Guide, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2019, L3, P48

**6.3** – The design of spaces should aim to not exclude any individual or demographic. In certain circumstances it may be appropriate – for reasons of local context or societal need – to create spaces that particularly support a particular demographic, but attention should be paid to ensuring that the spaces are not exclusive.

Refer to: GLA Public London Charter principle 1 – Public Welcome

**6.4** – Socially-orientated art practice can play a strong role in helping the public – in general or particular – have ownership over urban spaces, especially when connected to a long-term commissioning process.

Refer to: Urban Design Compendium, 2000, Section 5.5.
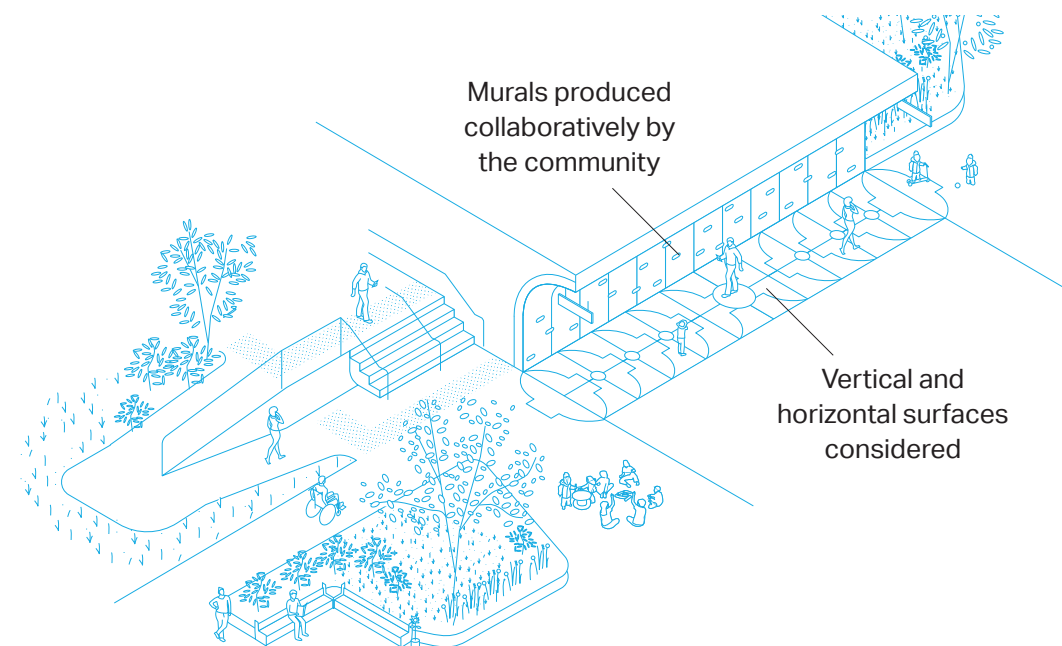
**CASE STUDY**
Pineapple Island at Papers, City of London:

As part of a festival about the art and architecture of the refugee crisis, a group of asylum seeking children supported by JA Projects in collaboration with the Kent Refugee Action Network set up a temporary restaurant in the Barbican Conservatory and hosted a series of meals, inverting the established logic of 'hosting'.



Murals produced collaboratively by the community

Vertical and horizontal surfaces considered

Refer to: Neighbourhood and community engagement, LGA, 2016; and GLA Public London Charter principle 4 – Community Focus

**6.5** – The process of delivering a new or transformed space should involve collaborative design practices, community engagement and/or co-design. These processes should aim for the involvement of as wide a demographic as possible, in recognition that internal, semi-internal and elevated spaces have a particular risk of exclusivity and detachment. This might involve multiple strands to reach particular demographics rather than adopting a wider 'catch-all' approach.



**WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE DESIGN, CURATION AND USE OF THE SPACE?**

**6.6** – The future users of a space should wherever possible be directly involved in the brief, design and development of that space. Groups involved in making a space should reflect the diversity, identity and character of expected future users.

Refer to: Neighbourhood and community engagement, LGA, 2016; and GLA Public London Charter principle 4 – Community Focus



Signage should be sensitive to existing building

Seating design responds to context
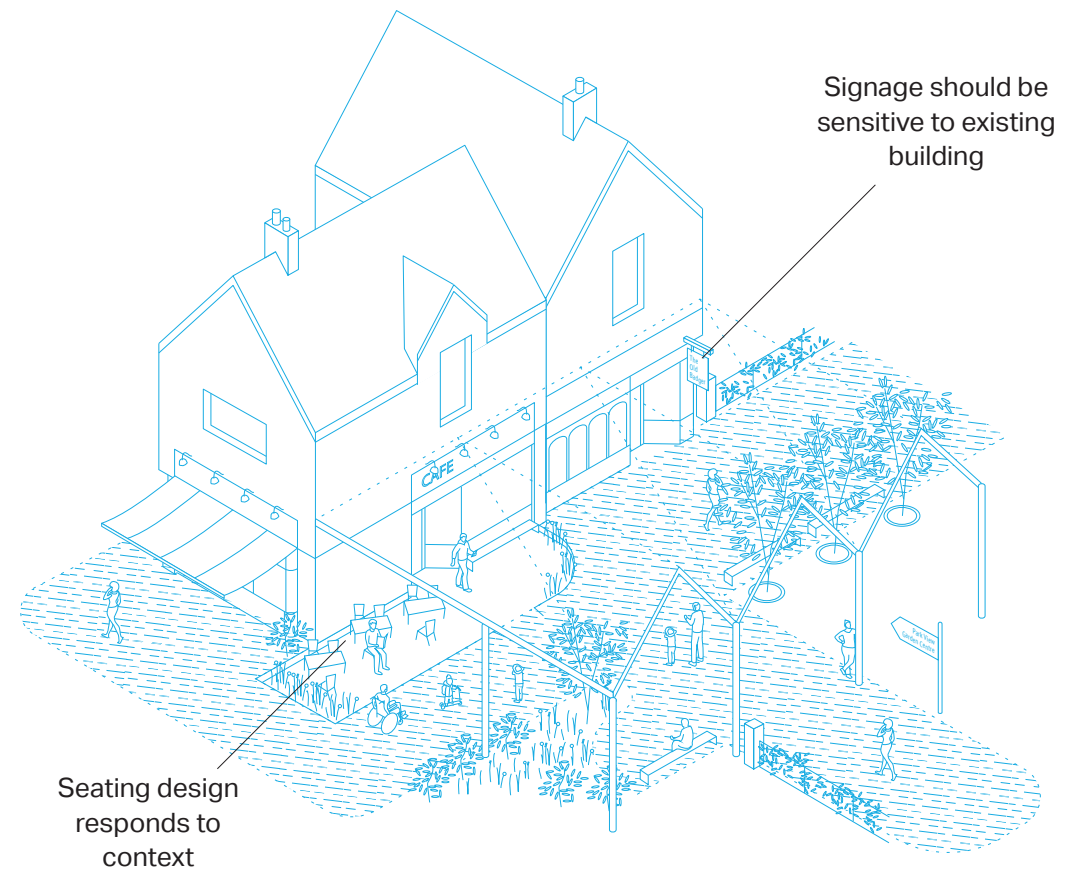
**CASE STUDY**
Culpeper Community Garden, Islington:

This garden was initiated on a derelict site by members of the local community keen to provide green open space for local schools. The garden has survived cuts to its funding in part by providing a bookable resource centre on the site for community use.

Image credit – Culpeper Garden

**6.7** – Corporate or brand-associated design approaches should be avoided, and where absolutely necessary (for example to accommodate a particular operator) should be subordinate to the wider design.

**CHECKLIST**

- Does the design of the space promote access for all, for example by including seating appropriate to diverse members of society?

- Has the space, and the uses it encourages or contains, been developed with the communit(ies) that it is for?

- Does the space do anything that might promote one demographic to the exclusion of others?

- Has art practice been used to build a sense of community or public ownership of the space, or its use?

- Does the space 'feel' public? Is it a space where people can behave in this sort of way:
    - Consume food not bought at the space here.
    - Play.
    - Sit undisturbed or 'do nothing.'
    - Lay on the ground or floor.

- Who has the capacity to change or have stewardship of the space? How is this communicated to users?
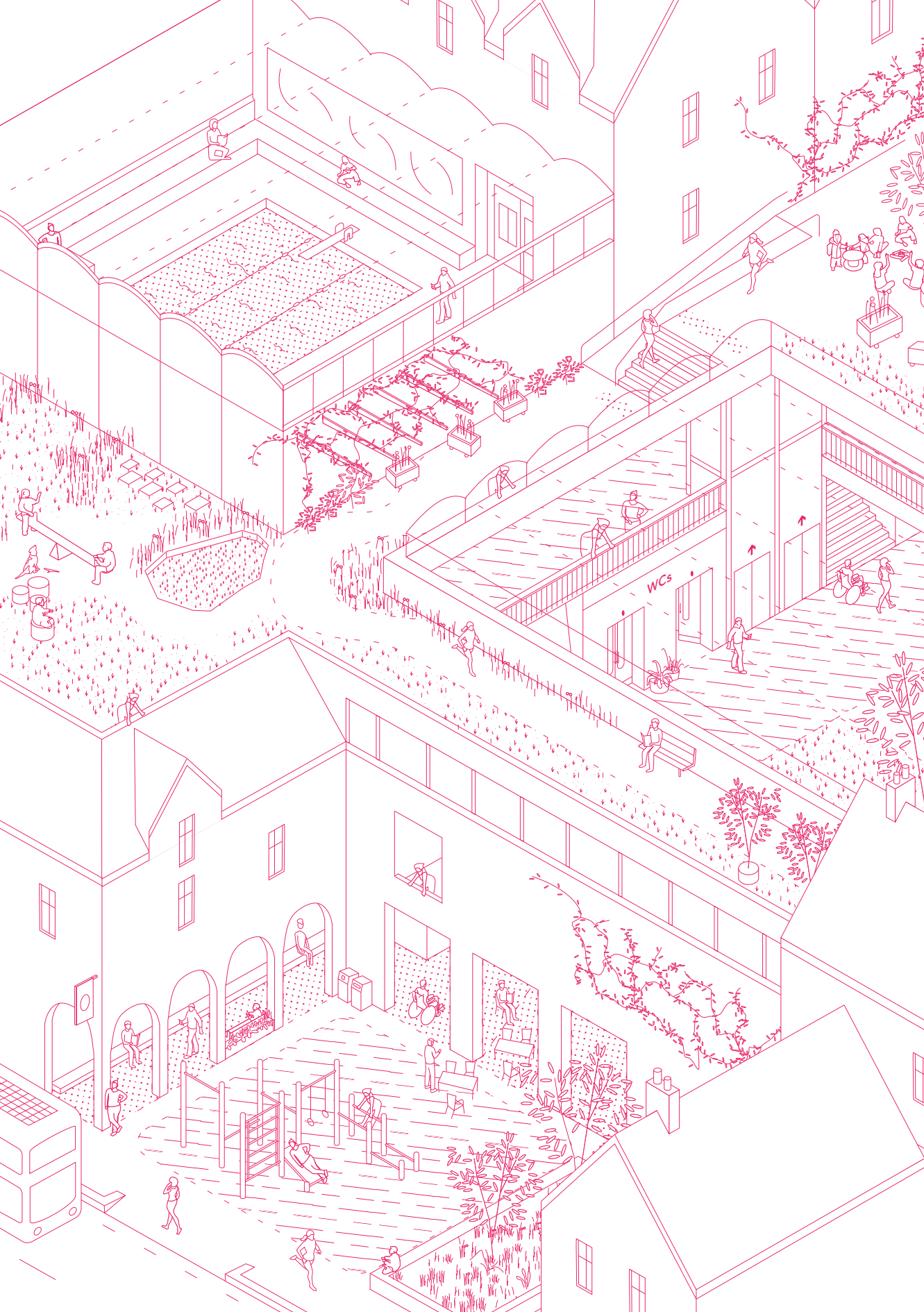
# 7

# WELLBEING

London's public realm plays a crucial role in supporting the wellbeing of Londoners, from offering respite and calm from busy lives to supporting or promoting physical exercise and interaction and ensuring that its design offers a climatically-appropriate environment to be in. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the value of our public realm network as a place for health and wellbeing, with provision for sanitation, hygiene and access to clean drinking water becoming increasingly important.

The design of spaces should consider the same issues or orientation, daylighting, daily and seasonal cycles, shade, shelter and protection that a well-designed traditional public space would consider. In coming years it will be vital to consider these issues in relation to mitigating the impacts of the climate and ecological emergency.

**7.1** – Opportunities should be taken to provide 'free' spaces of shelter from wind, rain and sun, in external spaces and those adjacent to the wider public realm. These spaces should provide an appropriate amount of cover but do not need to be completely internal.

Refer to: GLA Public London Charter principle 3 – Unrestricted Use

**7.2** – Spaces of shelter might form circulation routes or line existing ones, and include a thickening of existing public spaces such as pavements to increase their size and generosity. For example at the entrances to stations or museums, or to allow new uses in malls.

Refer to: GLA Public London Charter principle 2 – Openness



**CASE STUDY**
Pavilion, Stratford:

This pavilion by You and Me Architecture with Cooke Fawcett Architects offers unassociated seating which is integrated within the wider landscaping of the public realm. A timber canopy provides shelter to the users from the weather.

Image credit – Peter Landers

**7.3** – Spaces of shelter should coincide with places of 'free' unassociated seating and may be particularly appropriate in providing places for dwelling or reflection in the context of larger spaces dominated by movement or other activities.

Refer to: principle 3.4

**7.4** – Water fountains providing potable water should be provided and designed such that they can be easily maintained and cleaned. They should be located in visually and physically accessible places and as convenient as possible from the wider public realm network. The new spaces covered by this guide are in an ideal position to provide clean, accessible access to drinking water.

Fountain located in popular accessible location

**7.5** – Spaces should provide easy, hygienic and clear access to facilities for sanitation and hand-cleaning.
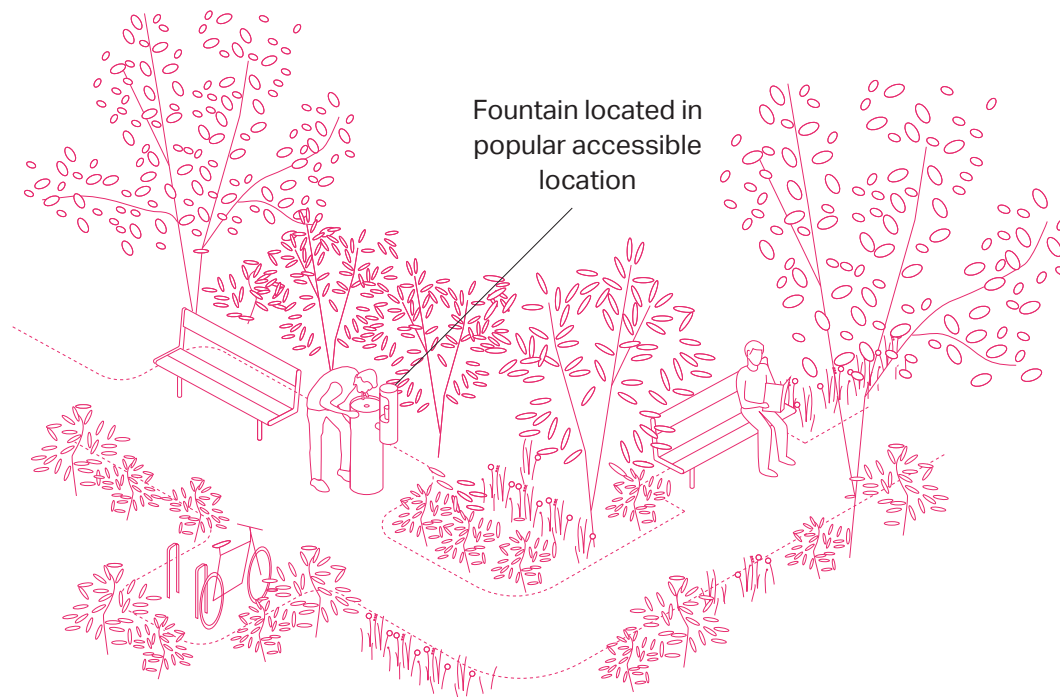
**7.6** – The number of public toilets is declining in London and their absence is a threat to health, mobility and equality. The new spaces covered by this guide are in an ideal position to provide clean, accessible access to such facilities. Accessible toilets, located in visually and physically accessible places and as convenient as possible from the wider public realm network, should be provided wherever possible and appropriate.

**7.7** – Toilets should be designed such that they provide facilities for changing.

Refer to: Taking the P***, Royal Society for Public Health, 2019; and Changing Places Website; and GLA Public London Charter principle 5 – Free of Charge

**7.8** – Access to natural light, green space and fresh air should be maximised, even in spaces which are somewhat internal such as some malls. Spaces should only be totally internal/closed in exceptional circumstances, and in these circumstances a good amount of external space should be provided elsewhere in schemes wherever possible. Due attention should be paid to achieving a space with good access to natural light, direct sunlight and fresh air, though also considering the need for shade.

Refer to: principle 2.14;
and Green Infrastructure Focus Map;
and Access to Greenspace review, Public Health England, 2020



Structures provide shelter without overshadowing

Integrated sheltered spaces

Bright, open and welcoming spaces
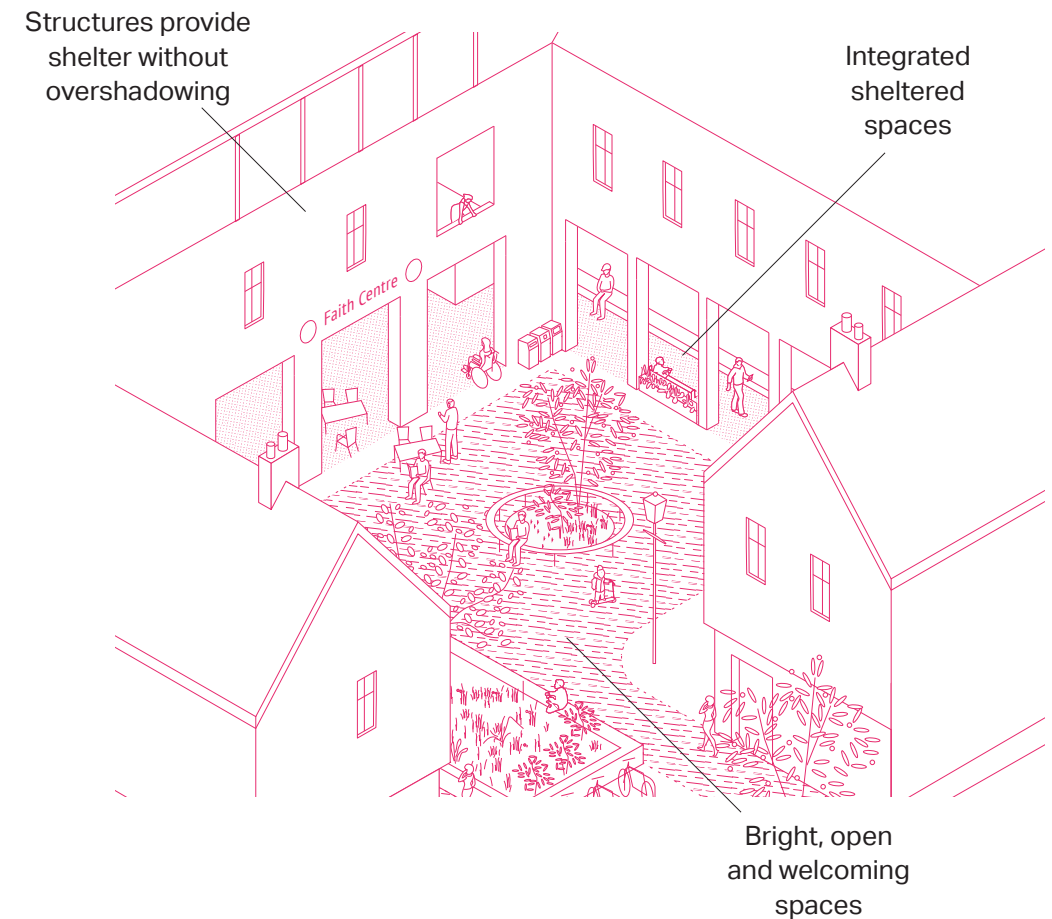
**7.9** – Solar orientation, and relation to other buildings and spaces with regard to shading and wind movement, should all be key considerations in the location and design of new space. A space in perpetual shade is unacceptable, whilst a space with good access to sunlight and fresh air, provided with good areas of cover, is desirable.

Refer to: Urban Design Compendium, 2000

Transparent structure maintains connection with wider space

Public swimming pool

Accessible public paddling pool

**7.11** – An approach to play should be demonstrated in all designs, whether taking the form of specific play equipment for an appropriately identified demographic or age group, or simply by providing landscaping or other design features that supports playful and explorative behaviour.

Refer to: principles 1.20 – 1.24;
and GLA Making London Child Friendly, 2020

**7.10** – Where appropriate, opportunities should be taken to provide design elements that support and promote healthy lifestyles. This might include particular equipment – for example outdoor gym equipment that has proven highly successful in urban parks.

Refer to: TfL Streetscape Guidance – Part A, Section 2.5

**7.12** – Quiet places for reflection and prayer should be considered when providing amenity space.

**CHECKLIST**

- Does the space provide comfortable places of shelter from wind, rain and sun, especially in places where existing shelter is limited or where shelter depends on buying something?

- Does the space provide access to natural light including direct sunlight where possible, fresh air, shade, shelter and direct access to external space, even if partially enclosed or internalised?

- Has solar orientation and relations to neighbouring buildings been adequately considered?

- Does the space promote healthy lifestyles, including through the provision of elements or equipment expressly for this purpose?

- Does the space demonstrate a strong approach to play, providing spaces for play that are appropriate to the space's use as well as to local need and demand?
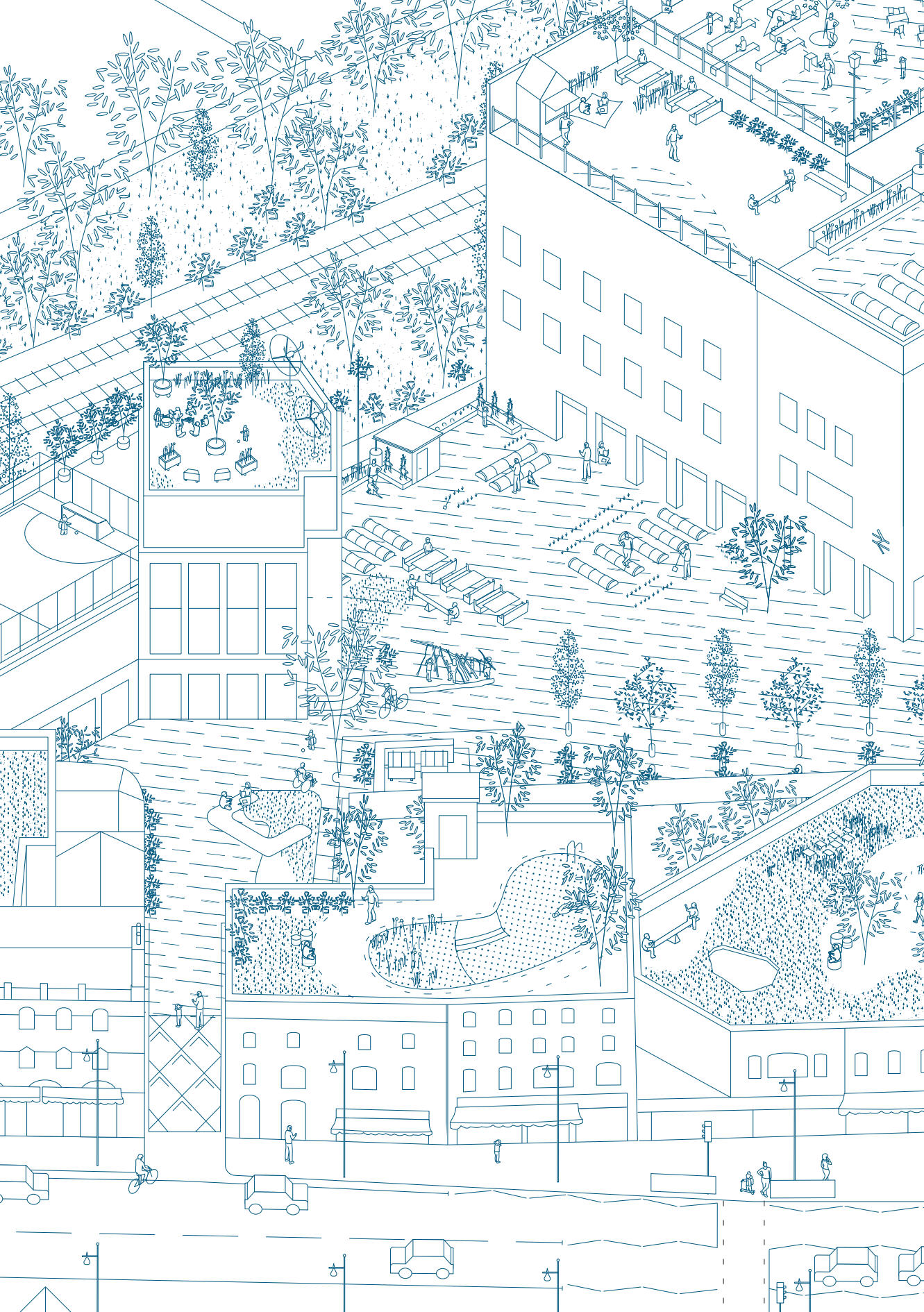
# 8

# DELIVERY

London's public realm is a collective endeavour, made by a multitude of different people and organisations over time. The delivery of a space – including the process of developing and assessing the design – should also be carefully considered.

When proposing and delivering internal, semi-internal and elevated urban spaces, additional care must be taken to ensure an inclusive process and that the values of the public realm as a collective endeavour are fully embedded in proposals and in its long-term use.

**8.1** – Proposals for new public space should clearly indicate on drawings the extent of new public space provided by the proposal, including circulation space and internal and elevated spaces. This guide will be applicable to all spaces included within this indication. Those evaluating or assessing proposals will need to asses the public value of the proposed spaces and whether they fit into the New London's Plan's expanded definition – or not.

Plan drawings of an example of good access to an elevated rooftop space



Second floor

Roof

Clear that lifts and rooftop garden are part of public space offer

Ground floor

First floor

Public access

Private access

Refer to: GLA Public London Charter principle 7 – Transparency
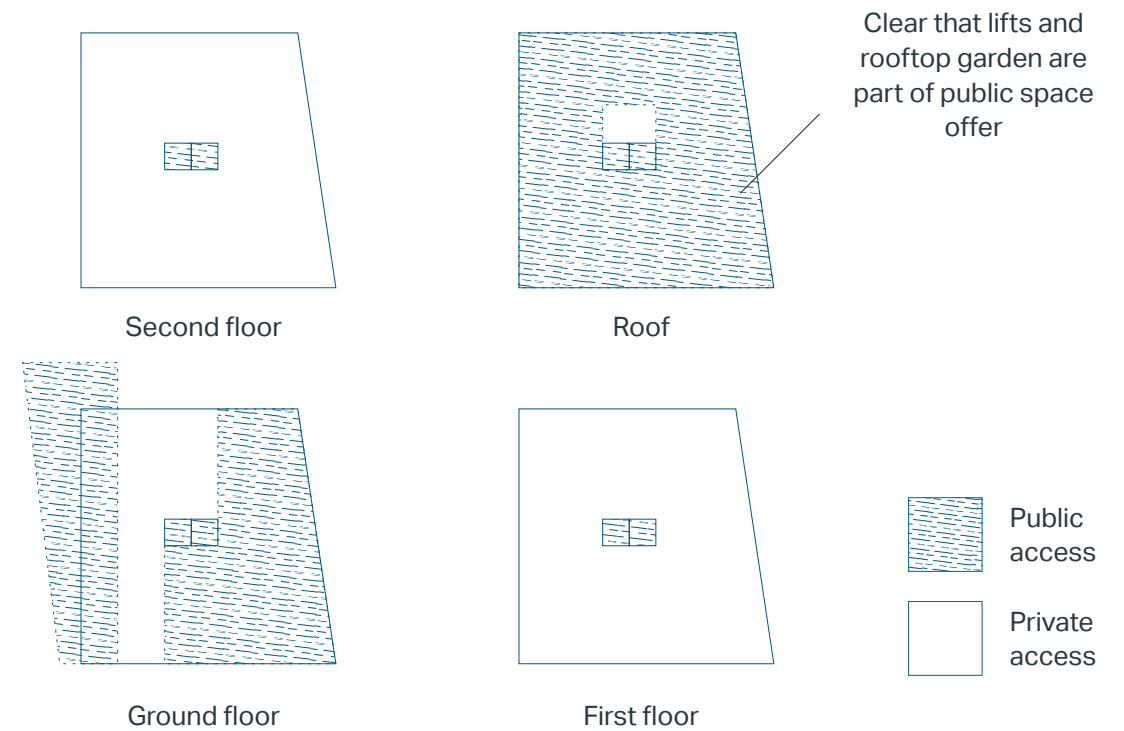
# WHICH PARTS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ARE PUBLIC?

**8.2** – If an internal and/or elevated public space is being delivered as part of a scheme, consultant teams should include architects, public realm designers, and/or landscape architects with a remit to design the proposed public spaces. This might be the same team as are working on the wider scheme but should bring specific expertise in designing public spaces to bear on this part of the design.

## HAS THE SCHEME BEEN DEVELOPED WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY?

**8.3** – Sites in areas with a deficiency in public open space are likely to be particularly heavily used by local people. In this context proposals should respond directly to local need, seek collaborations and relationships with local organisations, and clearly state how the design responds to existing deficiencies.

Refer to: Areas of Deficiency in Access to Public Open Space, GIGL

**8.4** – Opportunities to work with the local community in the development of proposals should be sought and budgeted for, and any local groups with particular need or expertise (for example a local social club, family centre, faith group or neighbourhood forum) should be involved wherever possible in both the development of proposals and their long-term use, including through delivering prototyping and testing uses.

Refer to: Neighbourhood and community engagement, LGA, 2016

**8.5** – The nature of internal, semi-internal and elevated public spaces is such that they are ideal places to trial new uses or possibilities that might be too 'risky' or challenging for other public spaces. Proposals will be encouraged that consider innovative or explorative ideas for new public uses, accompanied by evaluation for their wider long-term adoption if proven successful.

**CASE STUDY**
Of Soil and Water: The King's Cross Pond Club, Camden:

A project commissioned by the King's Cross Central Partnership as part of the 'Relay Art Program.' This temporary swimming pool is purified by natural process as opposed to the conventional use of chemicals, and was surrounded at the time by construction sites in King's Cross.

Image credit – OOZE (Eva Pfannes & Sylvain Hartenberg) and Marjetica Potrč. Photographer: John Sturrock

**CHECKLIST**

- Does the proposal clearly identify areas/extents of proposed public space?

- Is the maintenance scheme appropriate to the wider public realm in which it sits?

- Has the proposal been developed by consultants with public space expertise?

- Particularly if situated within an area of deficiency in access to public open space, does the scheme respond to local need and deficiency and has this been clearly stated?

- Has the scheme been developed closely with representatives of the local community?

- Does the space take risks and prototype exciting new uses, technologies or ideas?

- Has the scheme delivered on the promises made at approval stage?

# AFTERWORD

The COVID-19 pandemic struck London just as work on this guidance began. As a result, though this document has a purpose and reach beyond the pandemic, it has inevitably been developed with an eye on the impacts – both immediate and long-term – of the virus on London's public spaces. This guidance advocates for an expanded, more accessible and inclusive public realm, and is therefore even more timely as we explore how our city should recover and learn from this period.

London's public realm is a vital shared resource for all Londoners, a point made very clearly during the early days and weeks of lockdown when pressure on the public spaces of the city brought on by social distancing and other measures revealed it to be a limited and contested resource. This has brought into sharp focus how much Londoners in general rely on public space and, in particular, the disproportionate reliance on public space by disadvantaged groups lacking access to private amenity space. It is vital, clearly, for our city's public realm to be as accessible and inclusive as possible.

During lockdown, the spaces and rooms that ordinarily feel like a natural part of London's public life were suddenly contested, subject to new rules, or inaccessible. New ways of dividing and organising space appeared in the form of interventions both 'official' and ad-hoc: road closures and pavement widenings, street furniture, chalk, stencils, sticky tape and planters. Meanwhile, buildings and environments old and new across the city revealed a lack of public and communal open space that quickly became a serious issue for Londoners in terms of their wellbeing, quality of life, and mental & physical health, reflecting the disproportionate impact of Coronavirus restrictions and lockdown measures on Londoners and those in other urban centres, and reasserting the link between public space and public health.

But the pandemic's impact should also be understood as an opportunity to do things better, especially in the urgent context of the climate emergency. It is an opportunity to innovate in how we conceive and design public space, to enrich and expand the public offer and generosity of existing spaces, and to recover some established forms of public value that have been lost. Pandemic or no pandemic, Londoners should be able to access free, sheltered places to sit and rest without financial outlay, find a space to work, rest or play, breathe fresh air and access biodiverse, ecologically-rich places, all as a natural part of our daily lives and within the public realm of the city. The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically revealed underlying issues with our public realm that need to be tackled for the benefit of all, and we hope that this guidance forms part of a wider effort to accelerate the expansion and enrichment of the public realm to tackle these issues and contribute to making a city for all Londoners.

DK-CM

# A GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Accessible**
Referring to both physical accessibility, ensuring that each user has equal opportunity to make use of the space, and assuring equality in the psychological accessibility of the space.

**Corporate design language**
Design which prioritises a coherent 'brand image,' over a design language which is sensitive to its context of place and culture.

**Ecology**
The specific aspects of environmental issues which relate to biodiversity and the relationship between plants, organisms and their surroundings.

**Environmental Impact**
The degree to which the design, construction and day to day use of a public space negatively impacts upon the environment. This could be either directly through construction emissions and energy usage, but also indirectly, through material embodied energy, transport, loss of green space and ongoing maintenance and repair.

**Experiential value**
Refers to the extent to which the use of the space is enjoyable for the users. Spaces which are solely designed for one purpose or user group often have less experiential value than those which cater for a varied and diverse range of uses and users.

**Inclusion**
The ability for all those who wish to engage with the space to have equal opportunities to do so. This applies to all stages of the process, from the inception and design of the space, during construction and throughout its lifetime. In some cases spaces will be user specific.

**Overdesign**
Spaces which are overly complex or resolved in their design in a way that might lead to exclusion or a feeling of exclusivity.

**People Watching**
Participating in public life simply by being in a space 'watching the world go by' is a legitimate activity and a vital part of public life.

**Publicness**
The degree to which a space or resource makes a contribution to London's public realm and feels part of this shared resource. This is not the same as being in public ownership.

**Public Realm**
Public realm is the space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible.

**Public Space**
A public space – in the context of this document – is a discrete space within the wider public realm.

**Public Welcome**

Ensuring that the public feel that they are allowed to use the space, and are not put off from doing so either actively or indirectly through the way in which it is designed. Features such as security measures, CCTV, and disconnection from the wider public realm can limit the extent to which the space feels welcoming.

**Unassociated seating**

For restaurants, cafés and pubs, the relationship between the business and the public space is often defined by seating. In this design guide, 'associated' seating is for the use of customers of a particular business only and 'unassociated' seating is for general use.

**Urban memory**

The quality of celebrating, and being sensitive to the social, civic and historic context of place.

# NEXT STEPS

This design guide is both a proactive step to improving the public realm of the city and also a response to changes which are already transforming London. As such it is hoped that this guide is used by those designing and delivering development across the city. We believe that this is the first design guide for best practice produced for this kind of space. Therefore now begins a process of evaluation and testing along the way, to enrich the public realm of the city.

# RESOURCES

**Good Growth by Design**
GLA Public London Charter, draft 2020
GLA Making London Child Friendly, 2020
GLA Design for the Circular Economy Primer, 2019
GLA Connective Social Infrastructure, 2021

**Transport for London**
Streetscape Guidance, 2019
International Cycle Infrastructure Best Practice Study, 2014
Legible London Design Standards, 2010
London Cycling Design Standards, 2014
London Underground Station Design Idiom, 2015
Pedestrian Comfort Guidance for London, 2010
Station public realm design guidance, 2015

**Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs**
Local Air Quality Management: Technical Guidance, 2009
National Standards for sustainable drainage systems, 2011

**Department for Transport**
Inclusive mobility – A guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and
    transport infrastructure, 2005
Guidance on the use of Tactile Paving Surfaces, 2007

**Forestry Commission**
Right Trees for a Changing Climate: (www.righttrees4cc.org.uk)

**Greater London Authority**
The London Plan, 2016
Intend to Publish London Plan, 2019
Shaping Neighbourhoods – Accessible London:
    Achieving an inclusive environment SPG, 2014
All London Green Grid SPG, 2012
Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL) (www.gigl.gov.uk)
Pocket Parks Prospectus: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/
    pocket_parks_prospectus_1.pdf
The Mayor's Climate Change Mitigation and Energy Strategy, 2011

**London Tree Officers Association**
Surface materials around trees in hard landscapes
Sustainable Water Management: Trees are part of the solution

**Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA)**
The SuDS Manual (C697)

**Trees and Design Action Group**
Trees in Hard Landscapes: A Guide for Delivery, 2014

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# A BUILT ENVIRONMENT

# FOR ALL LONDONERS

LONDONERS

ALL

FOR

A

BUILT

ENVIRONMENT

# EXPANDING LONDON'S PUBLIC REALM

# RESEARCH

# A
# BUILT
# ENVIRONMENT

# FOR
# ALL
# LONDONERS

LEAP
The Local Enterprise
Partnership for London

# CONTENTS

# 1

# INTRODUCTION

This research document is part of the Mayor's Good Growth by Design programme, commissioned under the theme of Public London.

This research explores a variety of internal, semi-internal and elevated urban spaces in London in the context of their recognition as part of the city's public realm. It accompanies and supports a separate Design Guide publication.

## About this research

The purpose of this research is to provide evidence and context to inform a design guide for internal, semi-internal and elevated public spaces in new development. This design guide is available as a separate document.

Both pieces of work were commissioned in the context of the new London Plan[1] definitions of public realm and alongside the Public London Charter, which provides a basis for the delivery and management of public space.

## Designing and delivering for the public good

Our understanding of what constitutes 'public realm' is broadening. Certain non-traditional types of public space, such as rooftop gardens and internal spaces, have historically been subject to less scrutiny than London's public squares, streets, parks and commons. There are distinctive qualities to these spaces that differ from traditional public spaces. Their elevated and internal nature means they are at particular risk of feeling detached from a connected public network of spaces. This design guide is about ensuring that, where they are understood as part of the public realm, these internal, semi-internal and elevated urban spaces are of real public value as part of the collective resource of our city.

London is growing and densifying, and public spaces are working hard in order to create and sustain liveable neighbourhoods. New developments are increasingly offering some form of space that is open for use by the public. These spaces must be designed to accommodate a wide-range of activity and to use, articulate and support the needs of local communities. These spaces should have no barriers to access, whether cultural or physical.

## Who is the design guide for?

The design guide informed by this research is intended for the use of developers, land-owners and designers bringing forward proposals that include internal, semi-internal or elevated public realm, whether privately, semi-privately, or publicly owned, and for the use of planners and local authority bodies assessing applications. It is intended that the guide will equip both developers and designers with knowledge that can inform their own design processes, and those assessing applications with the expertise to critically assess whether the public realm proposals brought forward are of a high enough quality.
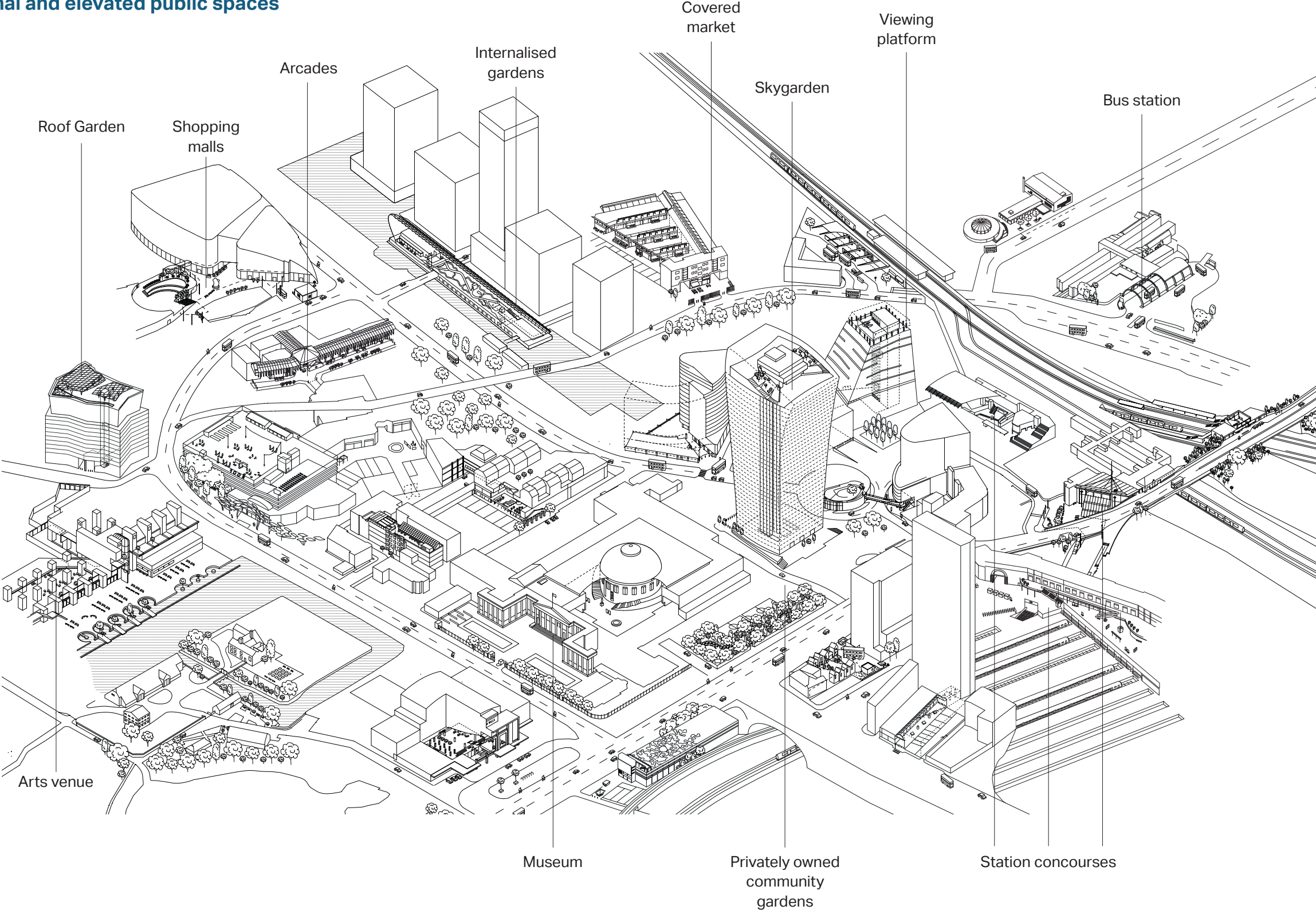
## The role of the research document

This body of research is to be read alongside and supplement the information contained within the design guide document, intended to equip planning authorities, commissioners, designers, developers and owners with an understanding of the qualities and ingredients that these spaces should have in order to maximise their role in the public life of London. In particular, this document highlights the qualities of these spaces which distinguish them from established forms of public spaces, allowing the design guide to be more targeted with its advice.

## A collage of emerging types of space

By stitching together examples of these emerging types of public space from all over London, roof gardens, station concourses, museums and more, we have crated an imagined London built of a more three-dimensional public realm. The resulting collage is used throughout this document to explore the existing character of these spaces of the city.

[1] Intend to Publish London Plan December 2019

# A snapshot of London's existing internal, semi-internal and elevated public spaces



Roof Garden

Shopping malls

Arcades

Internalised gardens

Covered market

Viewing platform

Skygarden

Bus station

Arts venue

Museum

Privately owned community gardens

Station concourses

# 2

# TYPOLOGY

Where does this type of space exist in London already? How might new types of spaces relate to the rest of the city? Understanding the limitations and successes of the existing condition will ensure that the public value of new spaces can be maximised.
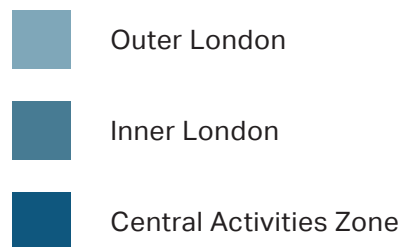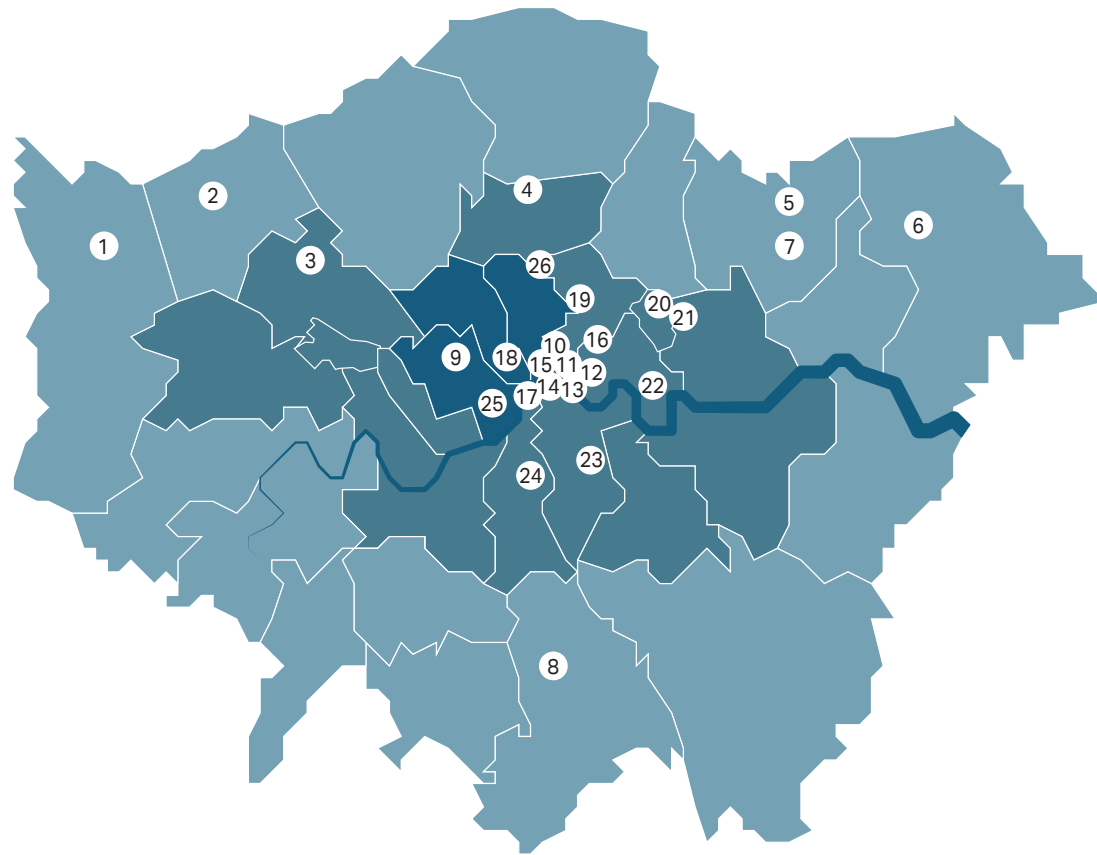
The types of space that are the subject of the design guide already exist across London. A selection of examples (opposite) was made with the intention of capturing a wide range and variation in type and location. The selection is not intended to be a study of the exemplary, but a broad view of the existing types of spaces that would fall into this definition.
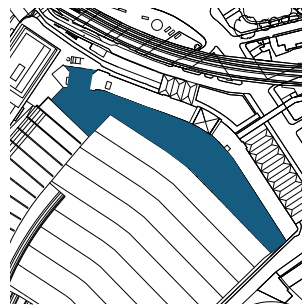
The typology study is broken down into 26 individual studies of existing internal, semi-internal and elevated urban spaces. Each space is represented through a brief description and a drawing that points out certain features which have an impact on the quality of its public offer. This study concludes with two diagrams collating the common limitations and successes found.

Outer London

Inner London

Central Activities Zone

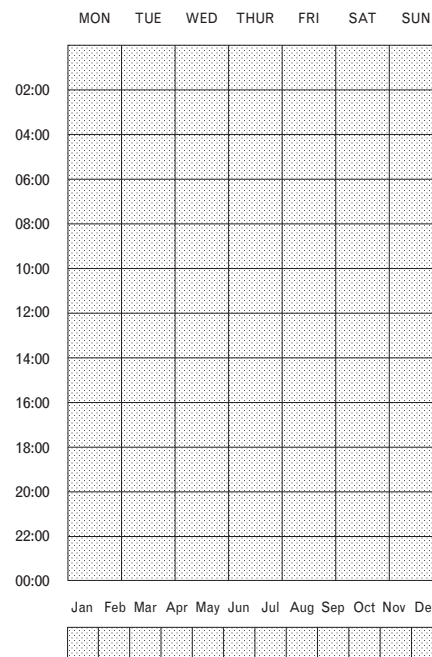| 1 | West Ruislip Station, station concourse |
| 2 | Headstone Manor and Museum, museum |
| 3 | Wembley Park Station, station concourse |
| 4 | Blue House Yard, venue |
| 5 | Barkingside Town Square |
| 6 | Romford Shopping Hall, covered market |
| 7 | Newbury Park, bus station |
| 8 | Fairfield Halls, venue |
| 9 | Basin Avenue, route |
| 10 | Barbican, venue |
| 11 | Leadenhall Market, arcade |
| 12 | Garden at 120, roof garden |
| 13 | Sky Garden, roof garden |
| 14 | Tate Modern, viewing platform |
| 15 | One London Wall, route |
| 16 | Phytology, garden |
| 17 | Waterloo Station, station concourse |
| 18 | The British Museum, museum |
| 19 | Dalston Roof Garden, roof garden |
| 20 | Stratford Station, station concourse |
| 21 | Stratford Shopping Centre, shopping mall |
| 22 | Crossrail Place, roof garden |
| 23 | Bold Tendencies, viewing platform |
| 24 | Granville Arcade, arcade |
| 25 | Cardinal Place, shopping mall |
| 26 | Finsbury Park Station, bus station |

# WATERLOO STATION
## LB Lambeth, Central Activity Zone

The concourse, the centre and main circulation space of a national rail terminus, is predominantly a large single 'room' with a strong focal point in the form of the departure boards. Shopping and food are situated between the concourse and the street and on a recent 'balcony' added to these structures in an attempt to provide more space at ground level. There is a small amount of highly competitive unassociated seating and the concourse is dominated by those hurrying or waiting for a train.
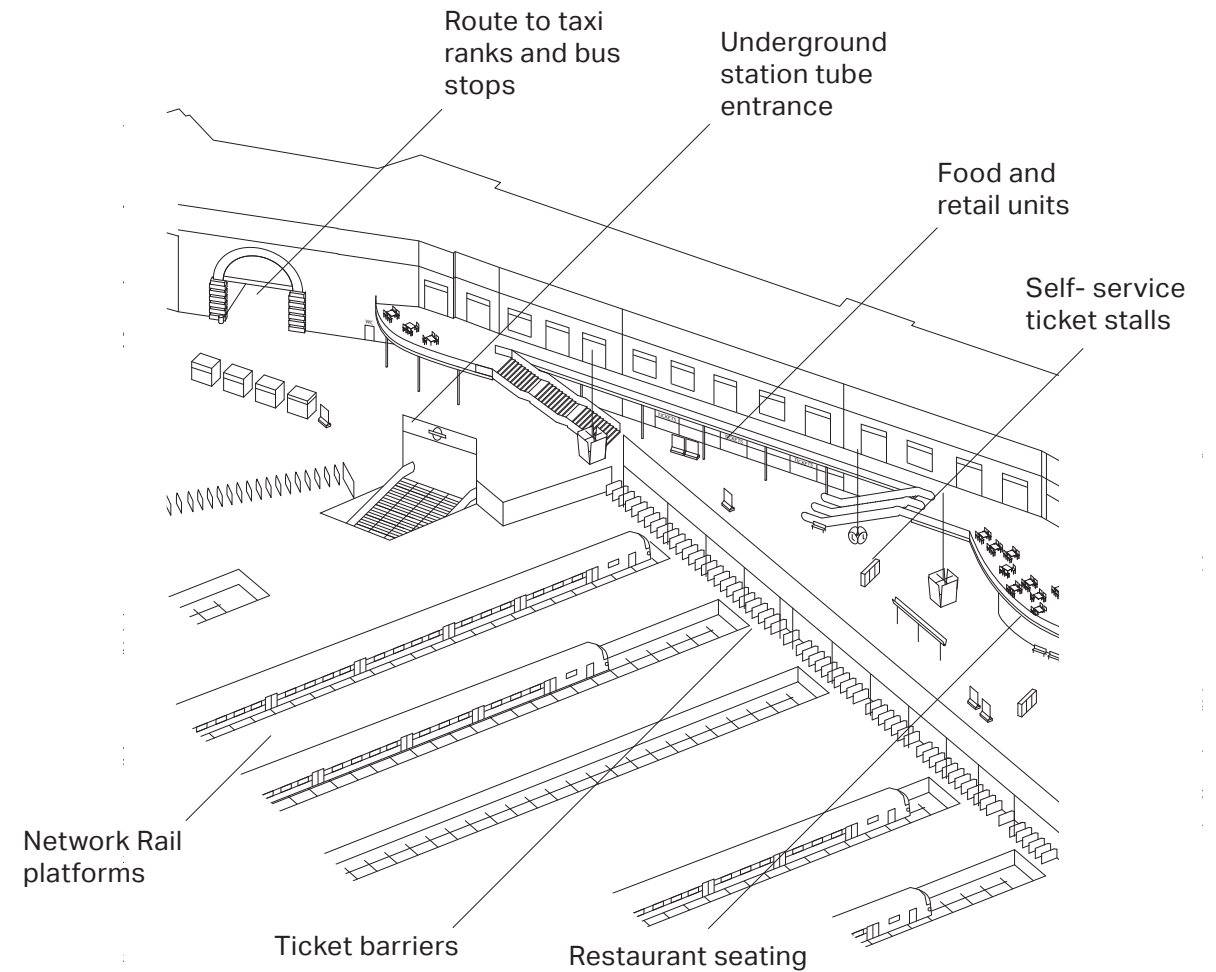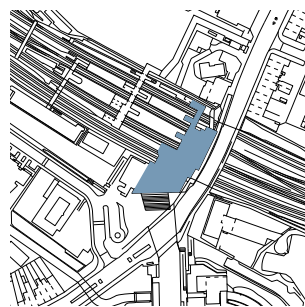
Waterloo station concourse

Location

### When is it open?

| | MON | TUE | WED | THUR | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 02:00 | | | | | | | |
| 04:00 | | | | | | | |
| 06:00 | | | | | | | |
| 08:00 | | | | | | | |
| 10:00 | | | | | | | |
| 12:00 | | | | | | | |
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| 16:00 | | | | | | | |
| 18:00 | | | | | | | |
| 20:00 | | | | | | | |
| 22:00 | | | | | | | |
| 00:00 | | | | | | | |

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec



Route to taxi ranks and bus stops

Underground station tube entrance

Food and retail units

Self- service ticket stalls

Network Rail platforms

Ticket barriers
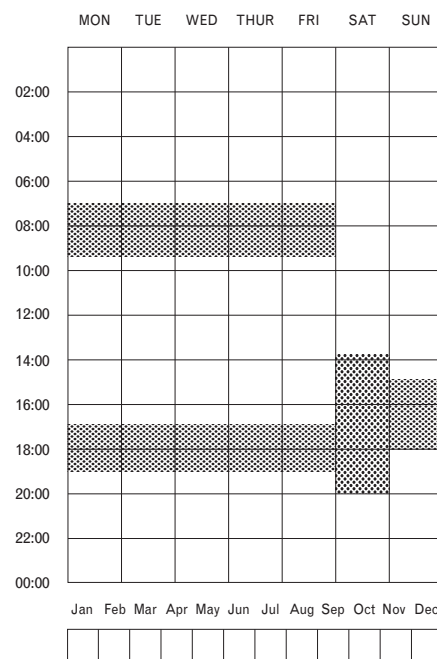
Restaurant seating

# WEMBLEY PARK STATION
## LB Brent, Outer London

The station opened in 1893 and has always served the crowds attending events, sports matches and exhibitions at Wembley. Its original entrance was augmented in the 2000s by a new one facing south, which features an out-sized staircase designed to cope with the large crowd volumes that use the station. From the station, this staircase leads to a pedestrianised square and then an axial route to Wembley Stadium.
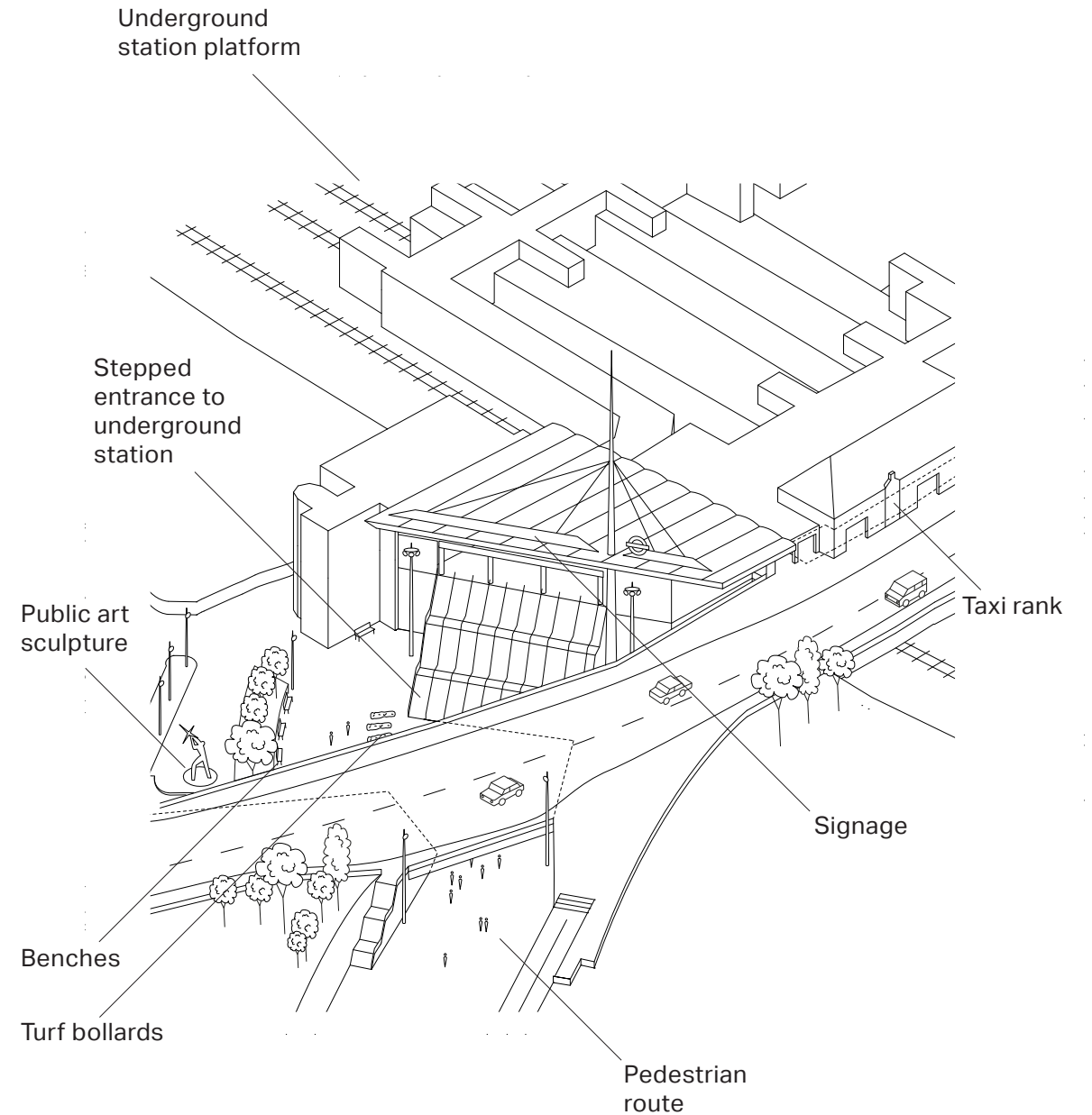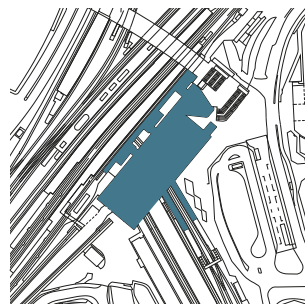
Wembley station approach



Underground station platform

Stepped entrance to underground station

Public art sculpture

Taxi rank

Signage

Benches

Turf bollards

Pedestrian route



Location

### When is it open?



|  | MON | TUE | WED | THUR | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 02:00 | | | | | | | |
| 04:00 | | | | | | | |
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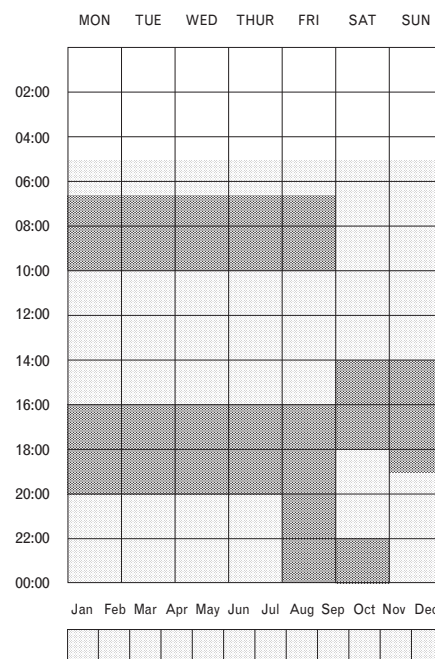Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

# STRATFORD STATION
LB Newham, Inner London

There has been a station here since the 1830s but it was substantially remodelled several times, most recently, to provide a transport hub for the 2012 Olympics and adjacent Westfield shopping centre. The station has multiple platforms and levels and its architecture dates from several eras. Its more recent spaces are lofty and spacious, designed to cope with crowds, and two direct links with Westfield are provided.
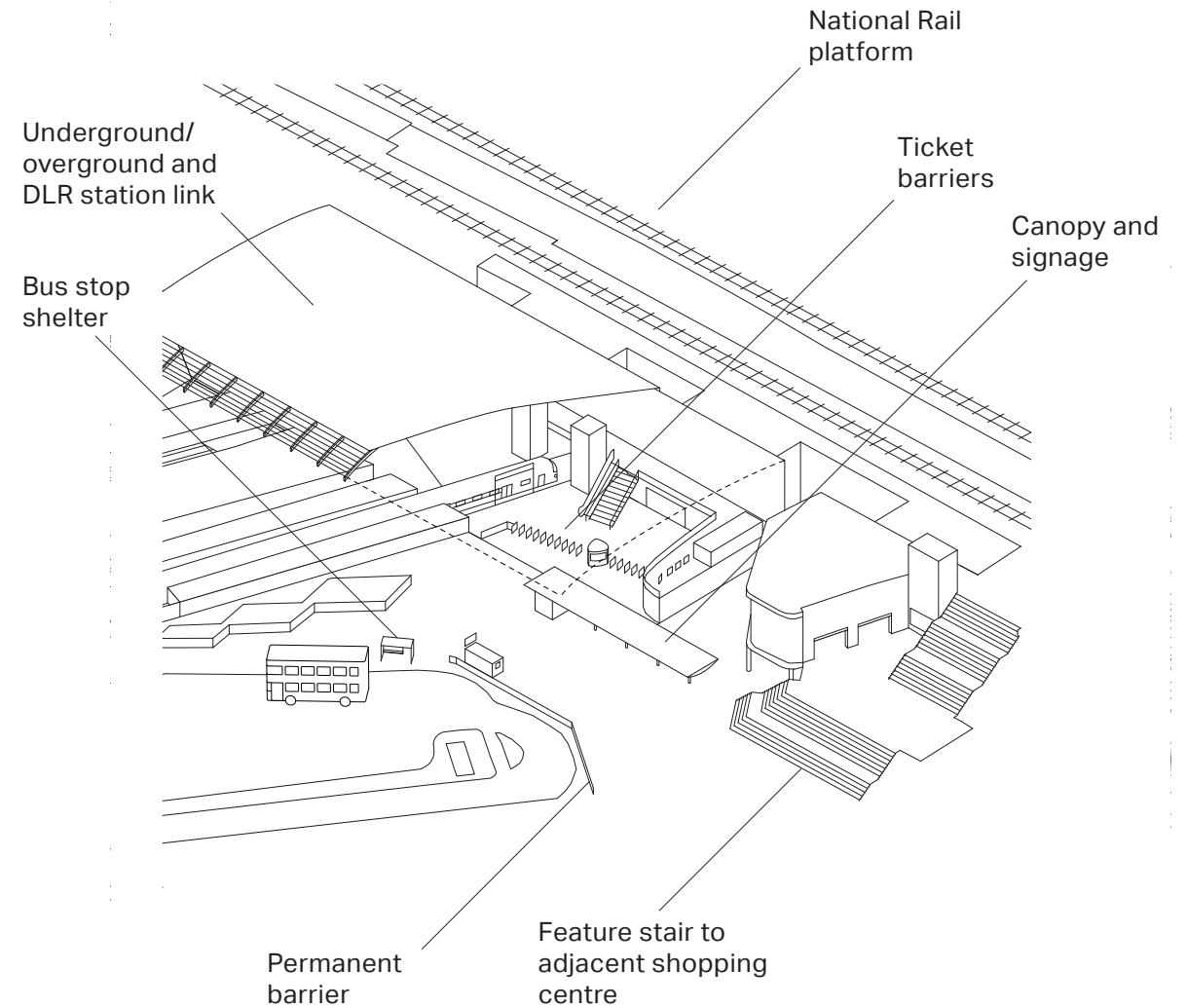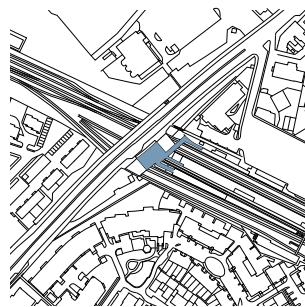
Stratford station concourse

Location

When is it open?

|  | MON | TUE | WED | THUR | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 02:00 | | | | | | | |
| 04:00 | | | | | | | |
| 06:00 | | | | | | | |
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| 20:00 | | | | | | | |
| 22:00 | | | | | | | |
| 00:00 | | | | | | | |

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

National Rail platform

Underground/ overground and DLR station link

Ticket barriers

Canopy and signage

Bus stop shelter

Permanent barrier

Feature stair to adjacent shopping centre

# WEST RUISLIP STATION
## LB Hillingdon, Outer London

A local station served by London Underground and National Rail. The building dates from the 1960s, and its design includes four retail units as 'wings', a covered canopy addressing the pavement and providing noticeboards and seating, and a generous clerestory-glazed ticket hall leading to the platforms. Ticket barriers are set quite far back from the entrance.
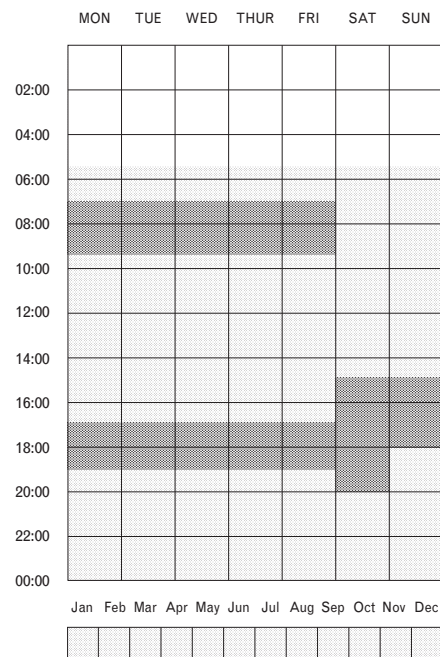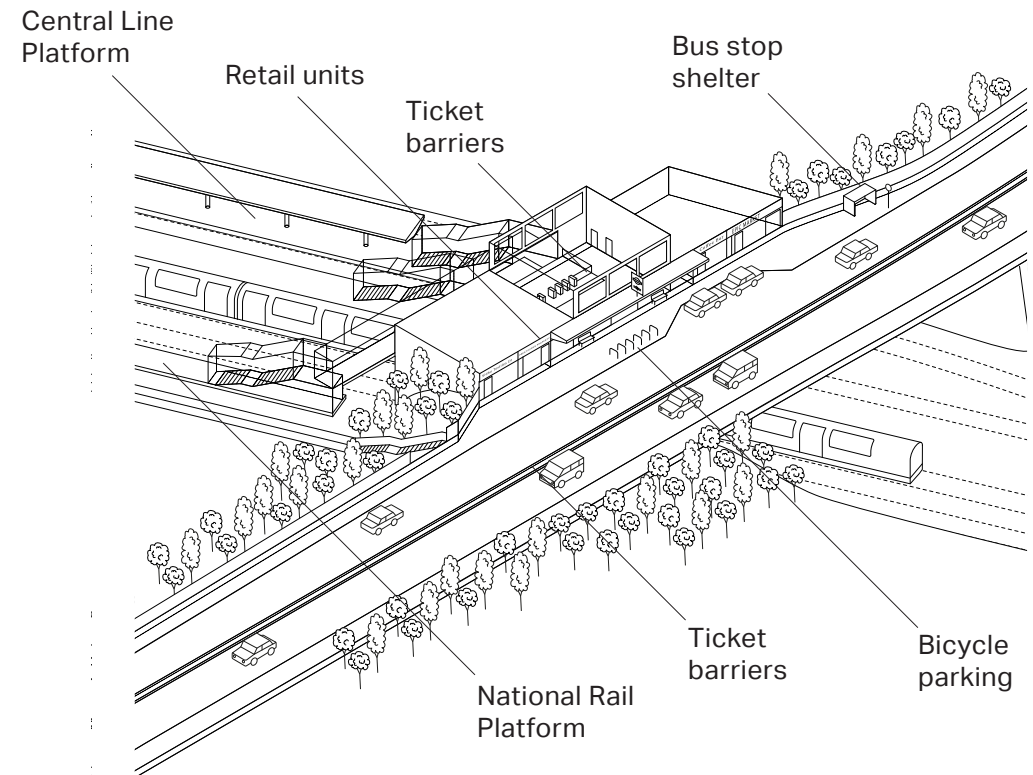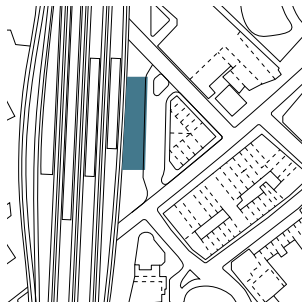
West Ruislip station concourse

Location

## When is it open?





Central Line Platform

Retail units

Ticket barriers

Bus stop shelter

Ticket barriers

Bicycle parking

National Rail Platform

# FINSBURY PARK BUS STATION
## LB Islington, Inner London

The bus station occupies a large canopy which also serves as an entrance canopy to the adjacent National Rail and Underground station. The canopy extends over some of the bus stands but does not provide cover. Large panels divide the entrance space of the station from the buses. One arch addressing the canopied space hosts a convenience shop and another hosts a merchandise store for Arsenal Football Club, whose home ground is a few minutes walk to the south.
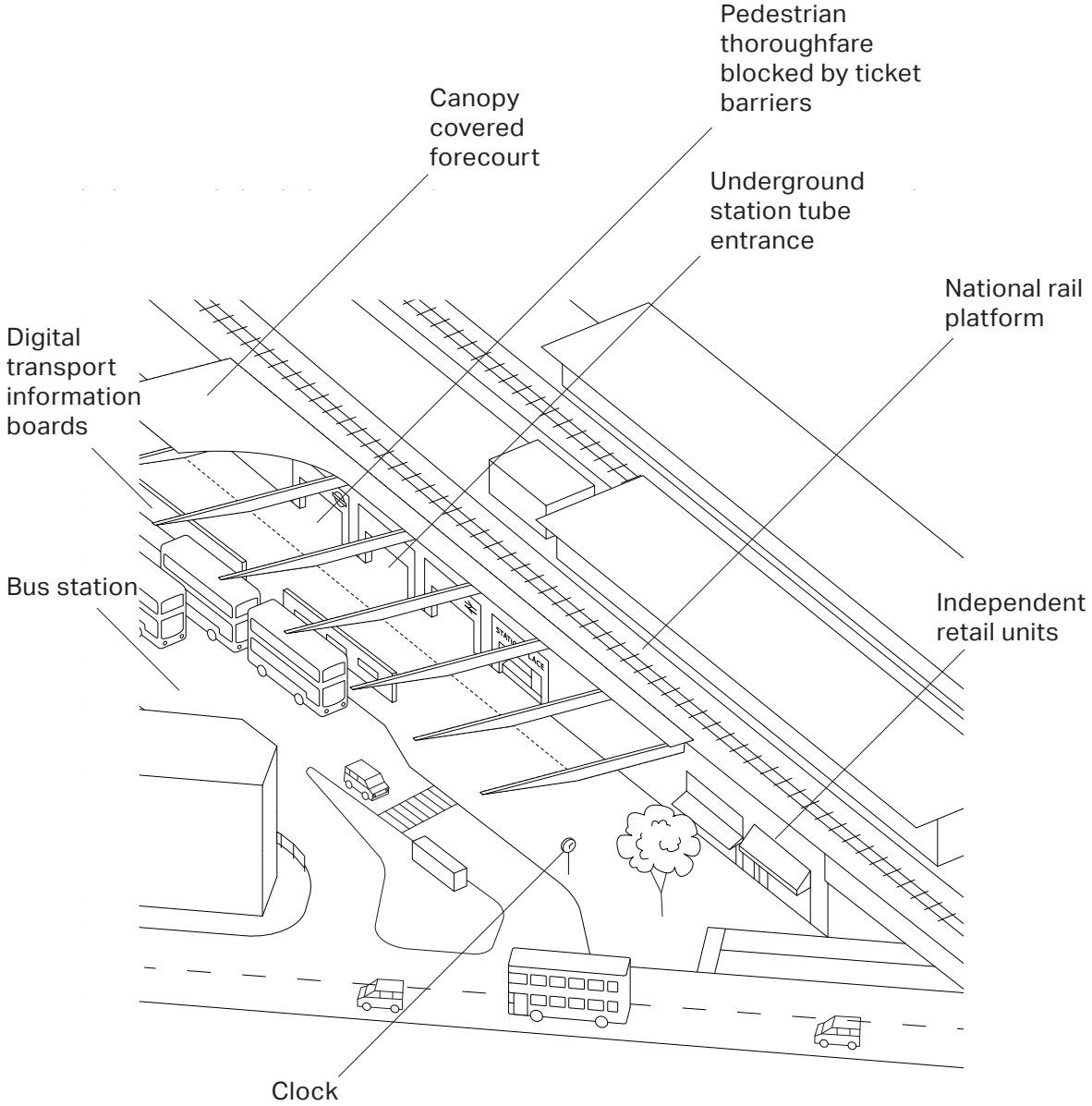
Finsbury Park bus station concourse

Location

When is it open?



Pedestrian thoroughfare blocked by ticket barriers

Canopy covered forecourt

Underground station tube entrance

National rail platform

Digital transport information boards

Bus station

Independent retail units
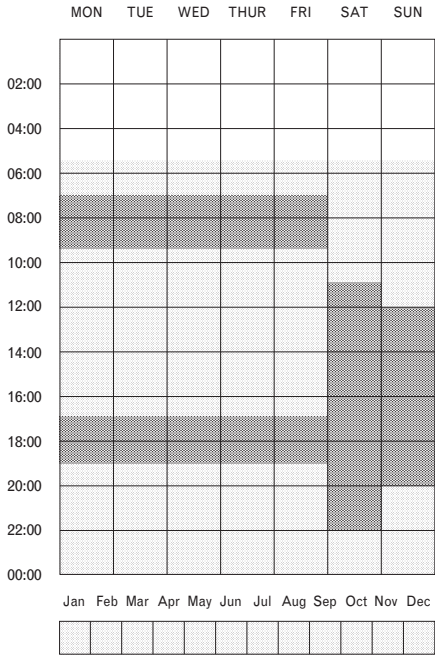
Clock
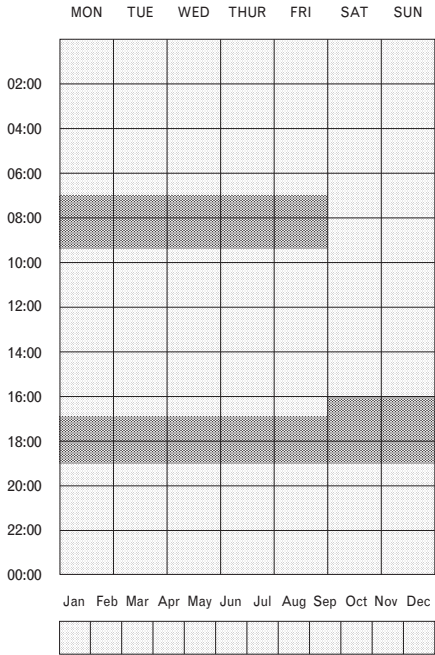
# NEWBURY PARK BUS STATION
## LB Redbridge, Outer London

The large, sculptural bus canopy was added to the existing railway station in 1949 to designs by Oliver Hill and won a Festival of Britain award. The canopy provides a substantial, uncluttered covered space to the station forecourt and bus interchange, plus a degree of shelter from wind thanks to its curved concrete and copper roof. The form of the canopy is also a distinctive landmark.
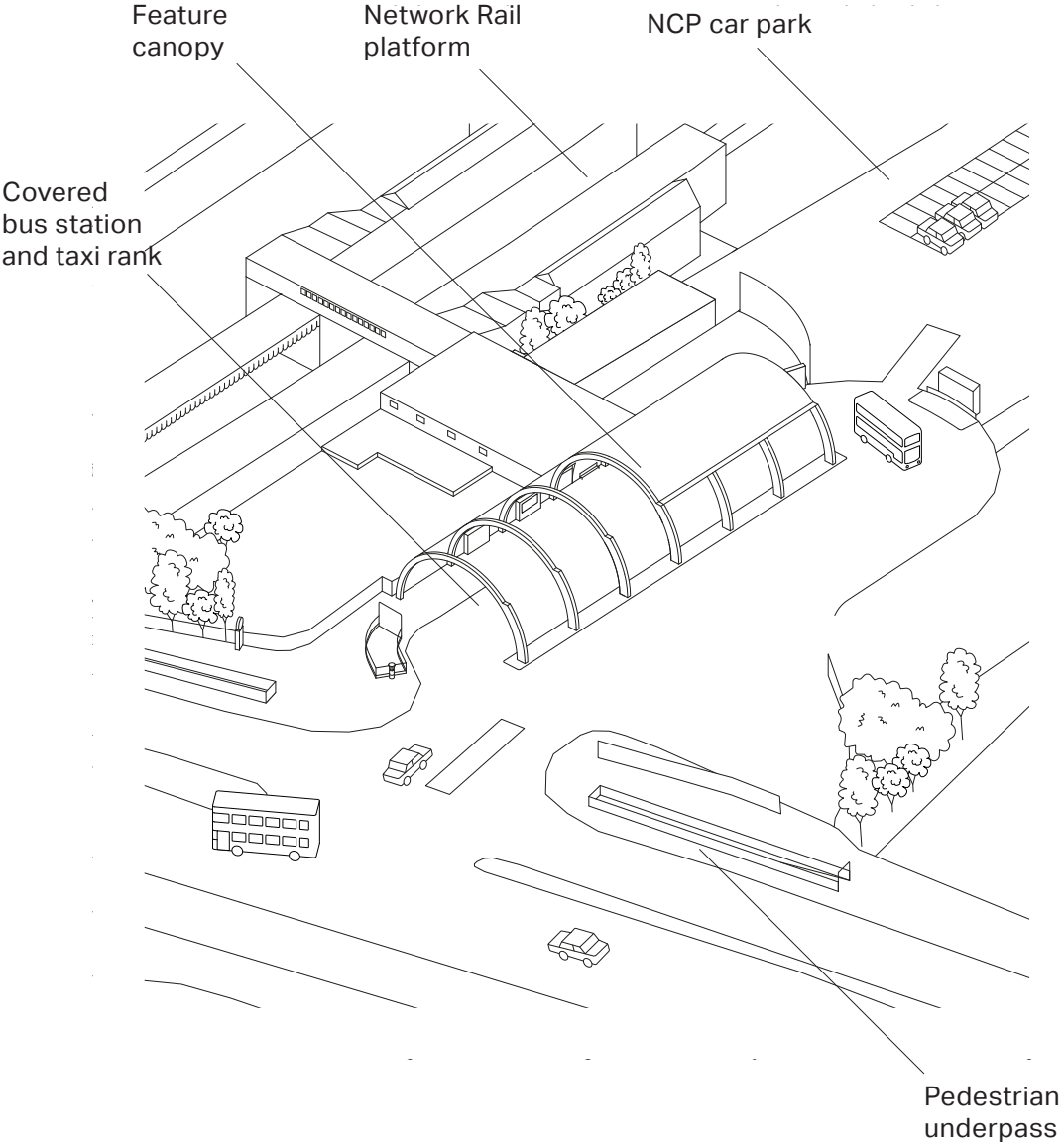
Newbury Park bus station concourse



Feature canopy

Network Rail platform

NCP car park

Covered bus station and taxi rank

Pedestrian underpass
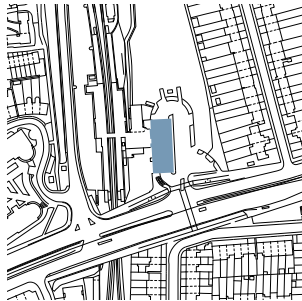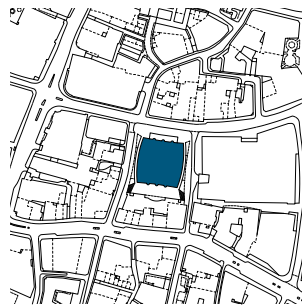


Location

### When is it open?

# SKY GARDEN
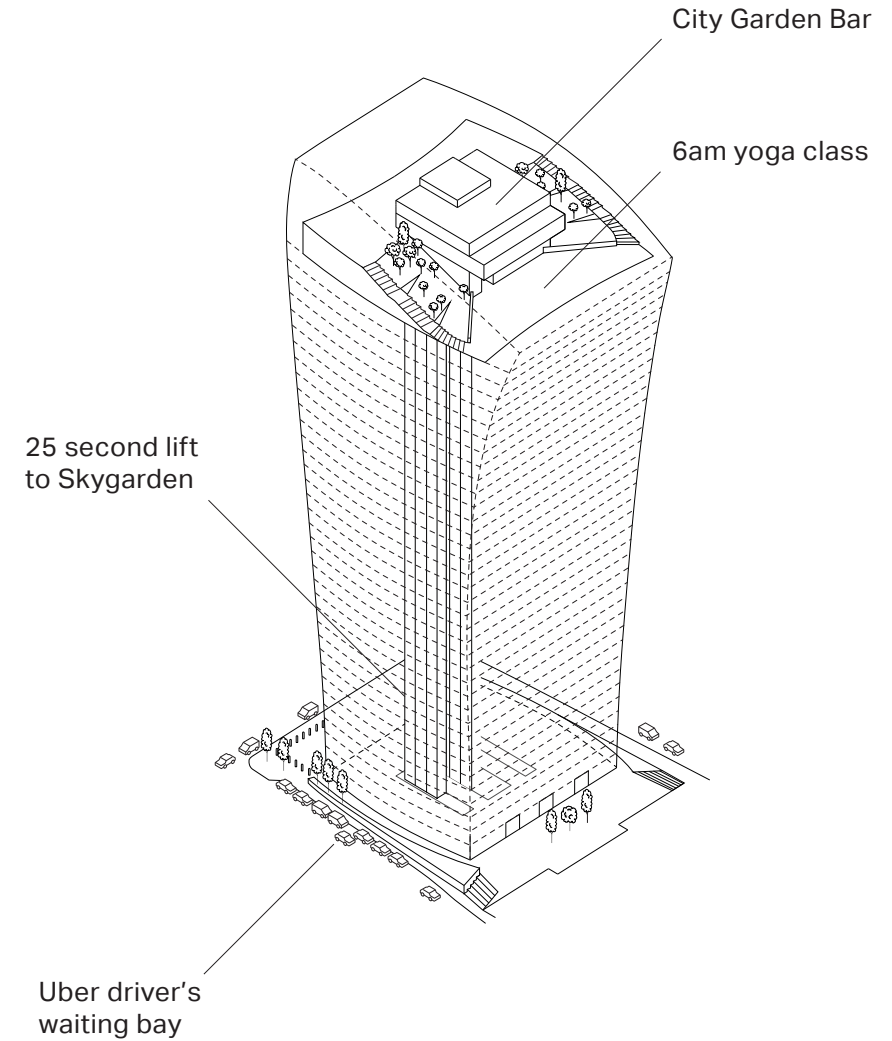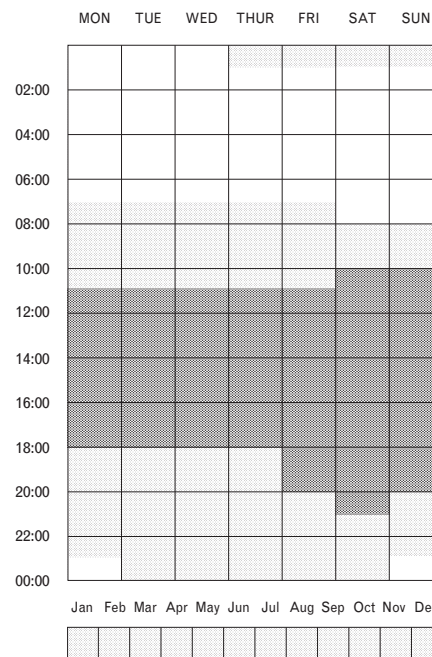## City of London, Central Activities Zone

A largely internal space occupying the top three storeys of 20 Fenchurch Street, a high-spec 32-storey office tower. It can be accessed by the public for 1.5 hour slots, subject to advance booking. The space is largely glazed, with an open terrace to the south, and is regularly closed for private events. The ground-level entrance is via a lobby to the rear of the building which is separate from the office entrance. Security measures can often cause queues.

The Skygarden within the Walkie Talkie



City Garden Bar

6am yoga class

25 second lift to Skygarden
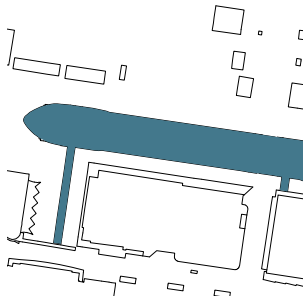
Uber driver's waiting bay

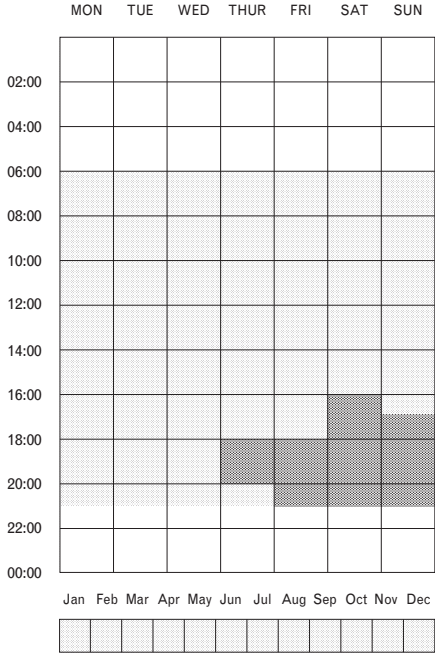Location



### When is it open?

# CROSSRAIL PLACE

LB Tower Hamlets, Inner London

An expansive enclosed garden situated on the roof of Canary Wharf Crossrail station as part of a larger building containing facilities and restaurants. Under a lofty gridshell, the garden contains a 'curated' planting scheme of mature plants and an 80-seater performance space available for hire by local community and school groups. At time of writing, the station below is not yet open but the garden is already accessible.
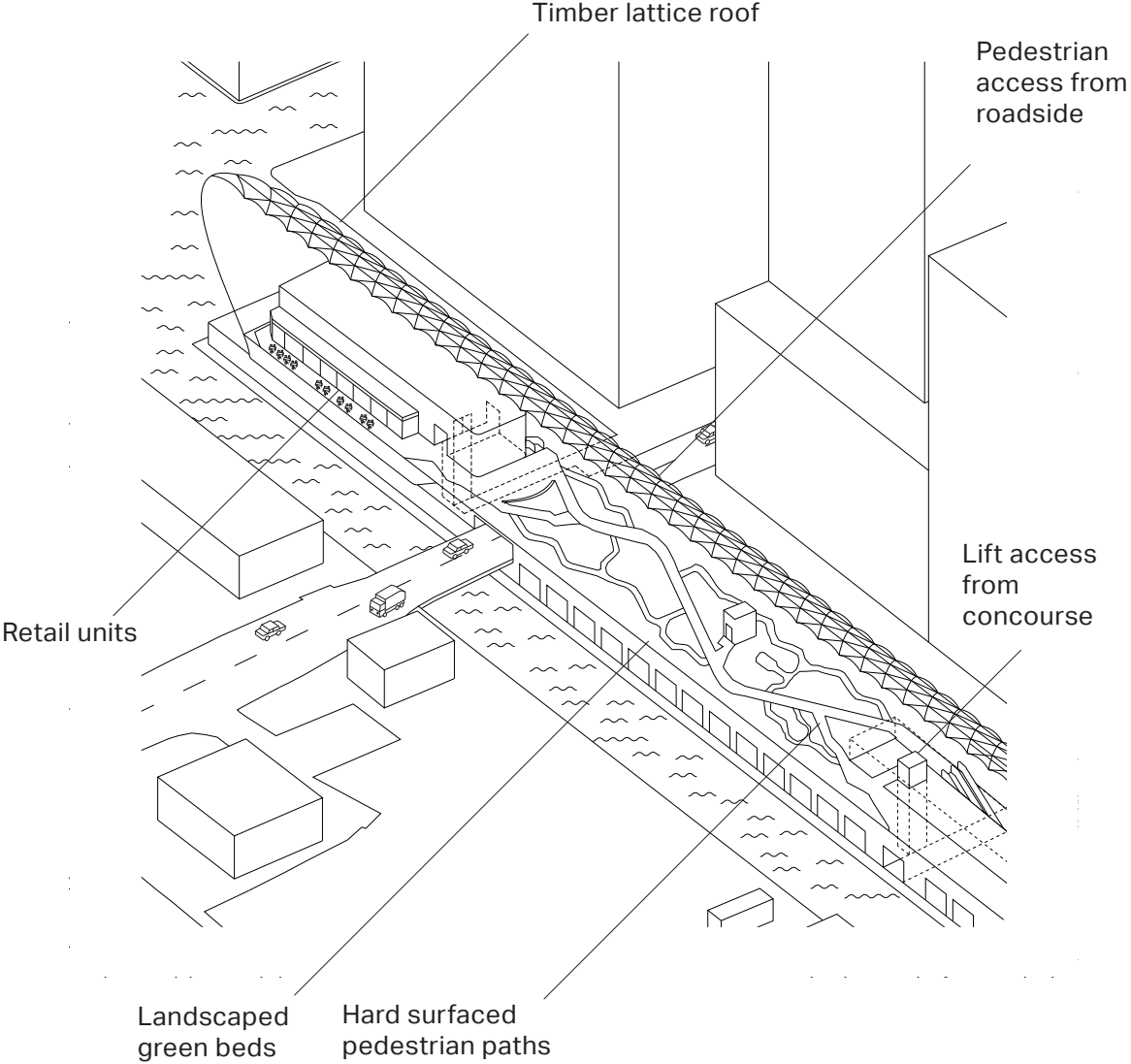
The roof garden on top of Crossrail station
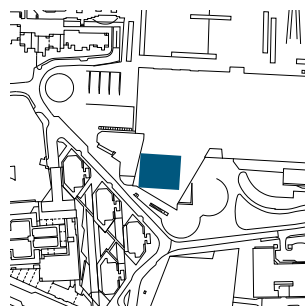
Location

### When is it open?



Timber lattice roof

Pedestrian access from roadside

Retail units

Lift access from concourse

Landscaped green beds

Hard surfaced pedestrian paths
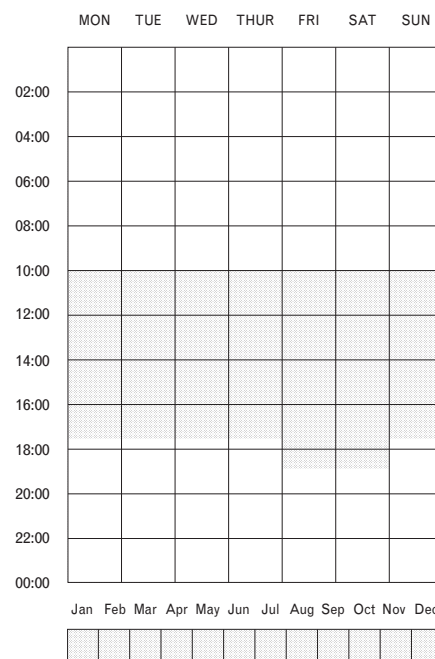
# TATE MODERN VIEWING PLATFORM
## LB Southwark, Central Activities Zone

The top floor of Tate Modern's 2016 extension is a covered viewing terrace with 360-degree views of the city. It is accessed via the gallery's multiple entrance points at ground level, including a direct route from the Turbine Hall, a substantial circulation space, gallery and gathering place within the original refurbished power station. As with all spaces in the Tate other than paid exhibitions, access is free. The terrace is served by a dedicated bar.
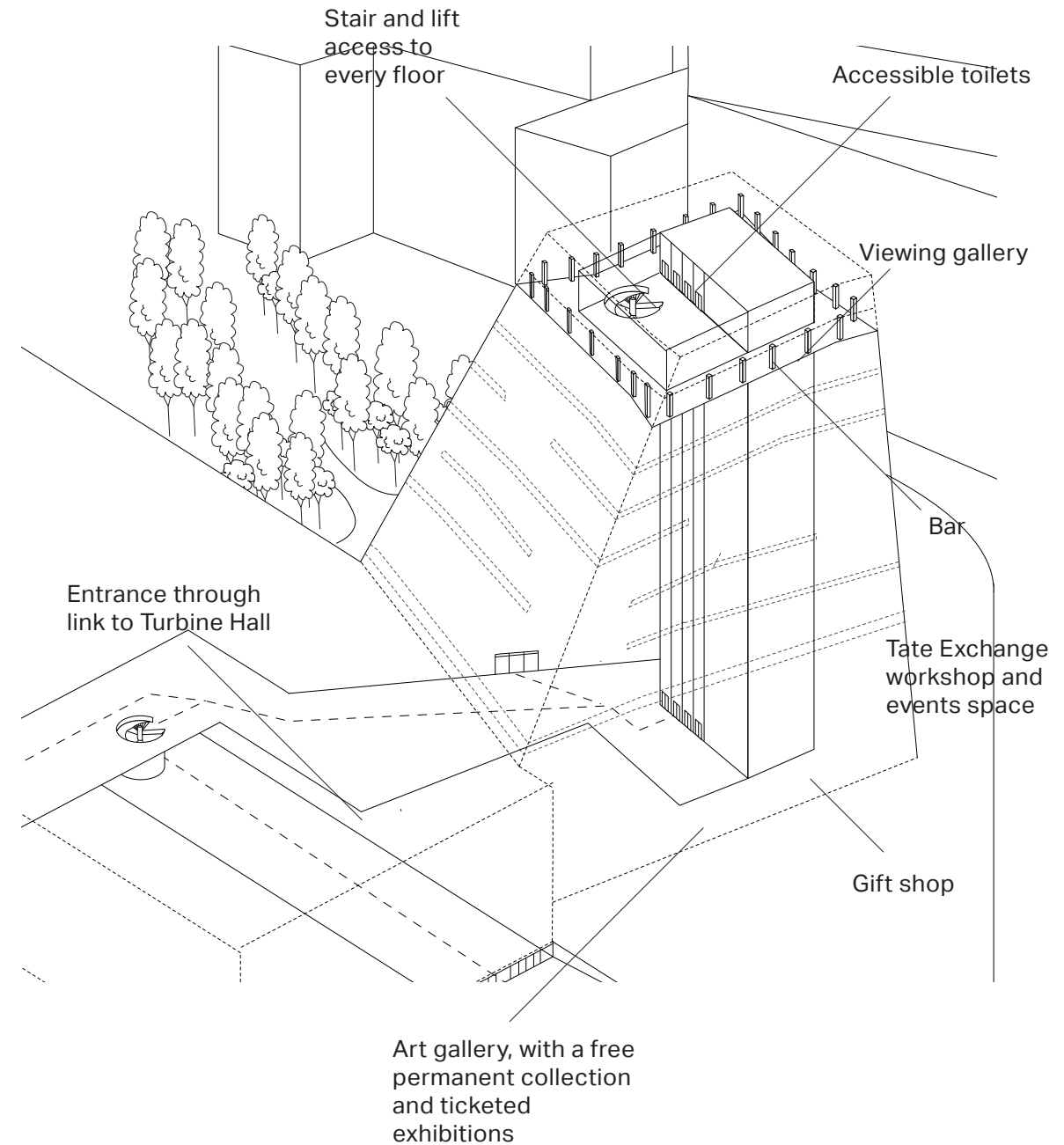
The viewing platform on top of the Blavatnik building

Location

When is it open?

Stair and lift access to every floor

Accessible toilets

Viewing gallery

Bar

Entrance through link to Turbine Hall

Tate Exchange workshop and events space

Gift shop

Art gallery, with a free permanent collection and ticketed exhibitions
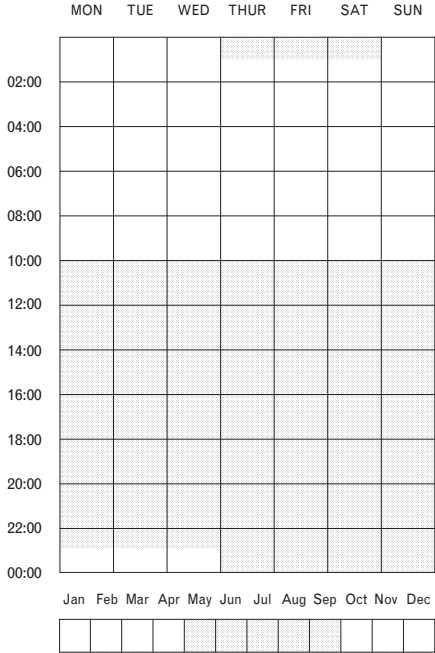
# PECKHAM OBSERVATORY, BOLD TENDENCIES

## LB Southwark, Inner London

Bold Tendencies has occupied a multi-storey car park in Peckham since 2007, hosting fine art commissions, architectural commissions, live events and a rooftop bar, Franks Cafe, during the Summer months. Peckham Observatory is a rooftop steel and timber viewing platform, and provides a terrace and tiered seating from which both the city and rooftop artworks can be viewed. The Bold Tendencies website states 'Bold Tendencies is a public space and welcomes everyone through its doors.'
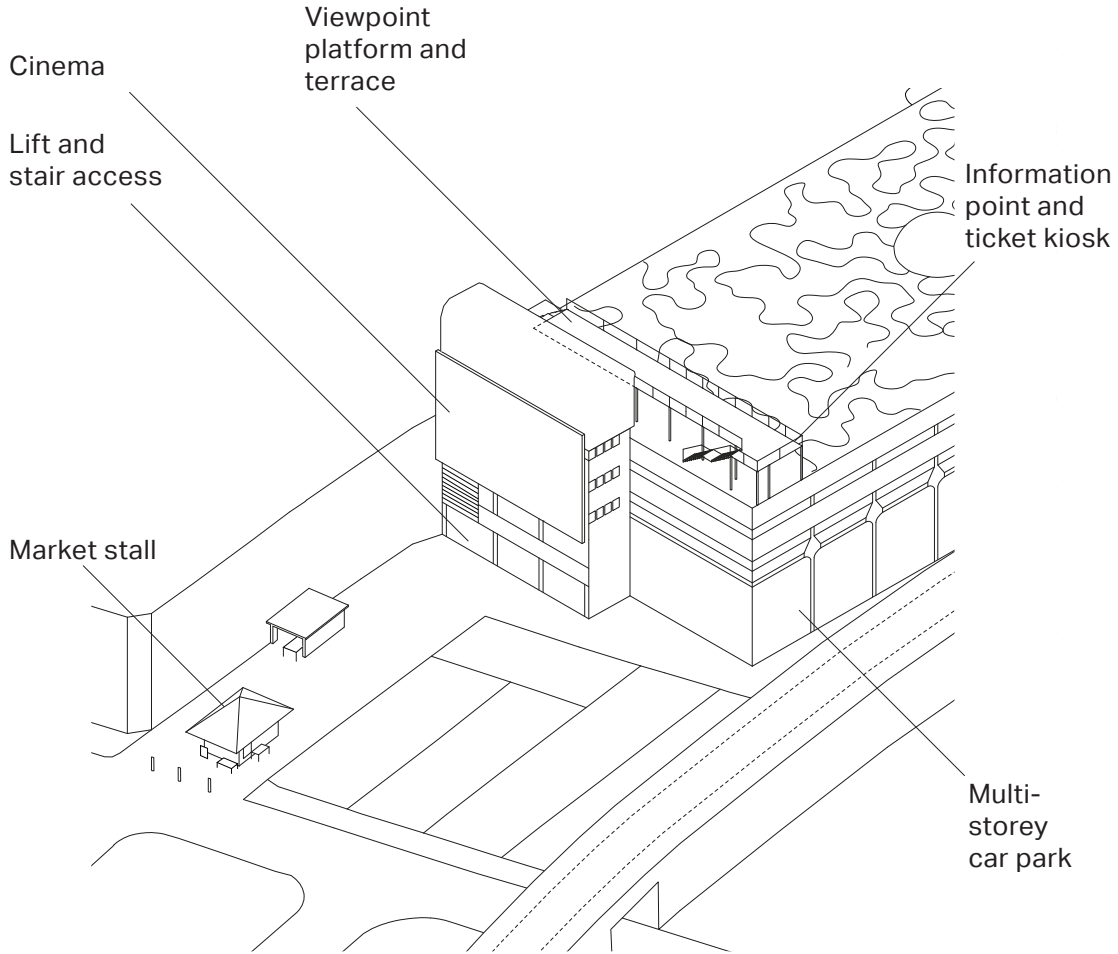
The Peckham Observatory on top of the multi-storey car park

Location

When is it open?

Cinema

Lift and stair access

Viewpoint platform and terrace

Information point and ticket kiosk

Market stall

Multi-storey car park
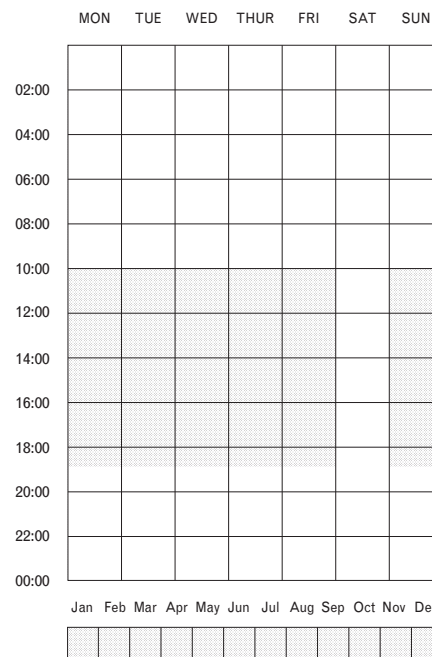
# THE GARDEN AT 120
## City of London, Central Activities Zone

Situated on the roof of a 15-storey office building, 'Garden at 120' is a hard-landscaped roof garden which is free for public use and for which no booking is required. At ground level, a paved alleyway cuts through the middle of the building and provides direct access to a lift allowing public access to the roof. Wisteria is beginning to climb the terrace's open canopies.
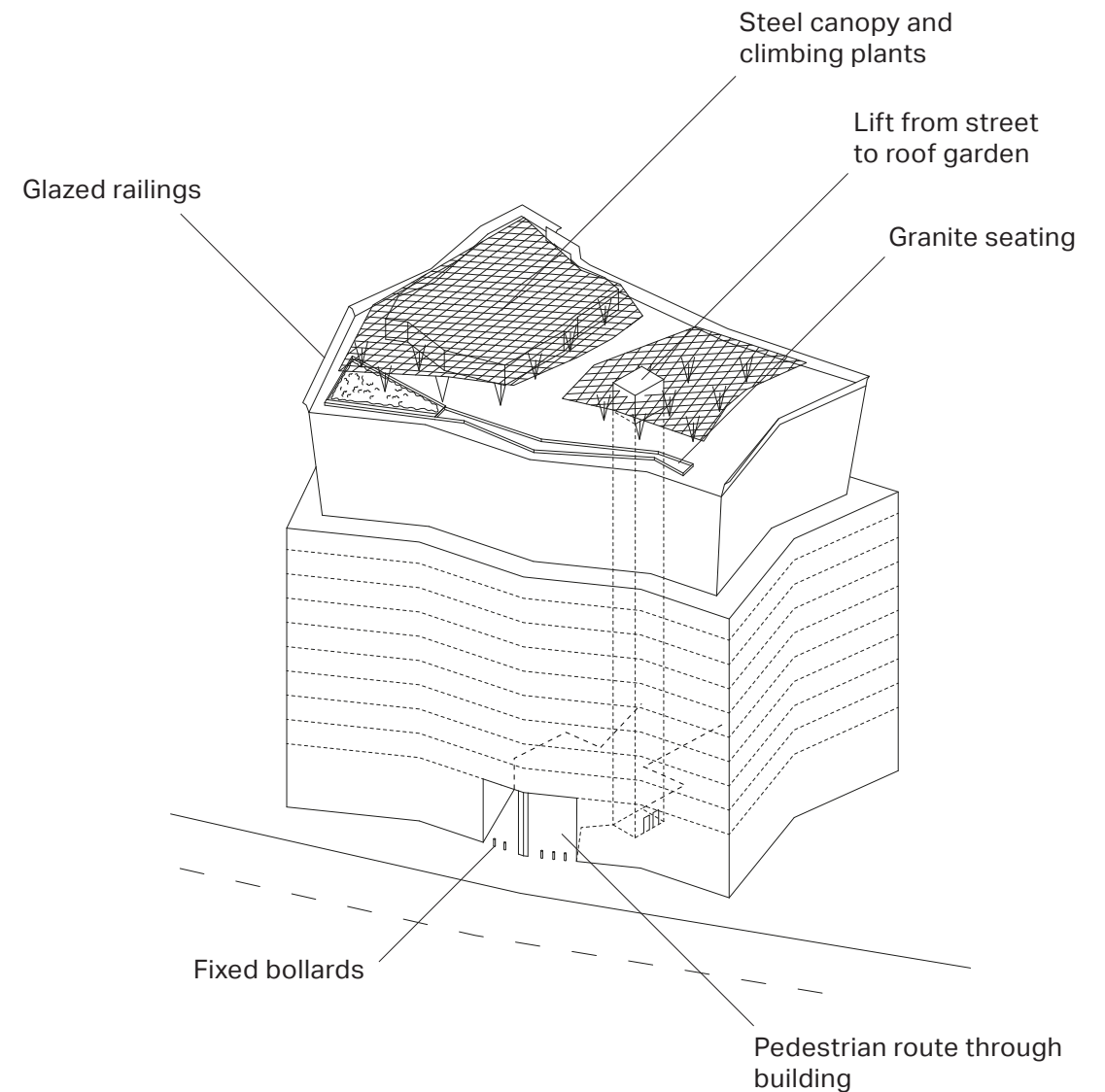
The Garden at 120 on top of 120 Fenchurch Street
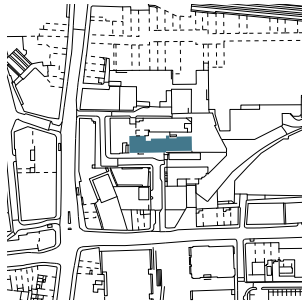


Steel canopy and climbing plants

Lift from street to roof garden

Glazed railings

Granite seating

Fixed bollards

Pedestrian route through building

### When is it open?



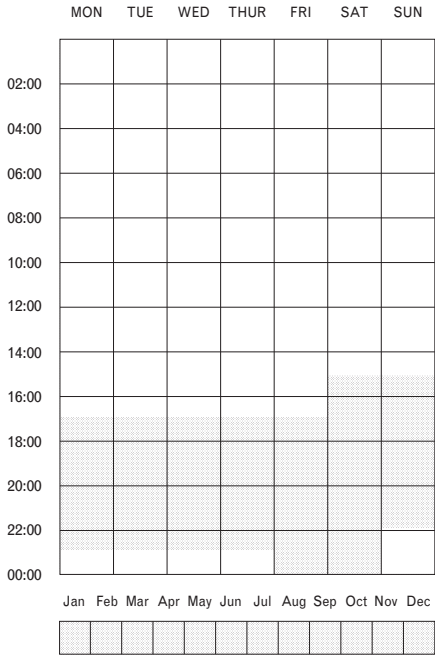Location

# DALSTON ROOF PARK

## LB Hackney, Inner London

A rooftop space on the roof of a 19th century light-industrial building now used as studios and offices. The roof park is operated by Bootstrap Charity and runs as a bar, venue and events space during Spring/Summer. The space is astroturfed and features picnic furniture designed in an informal way, festoon lighting and grasses & trees in planters. The space is accessed via the same internal lobby and stairwell as the studios.
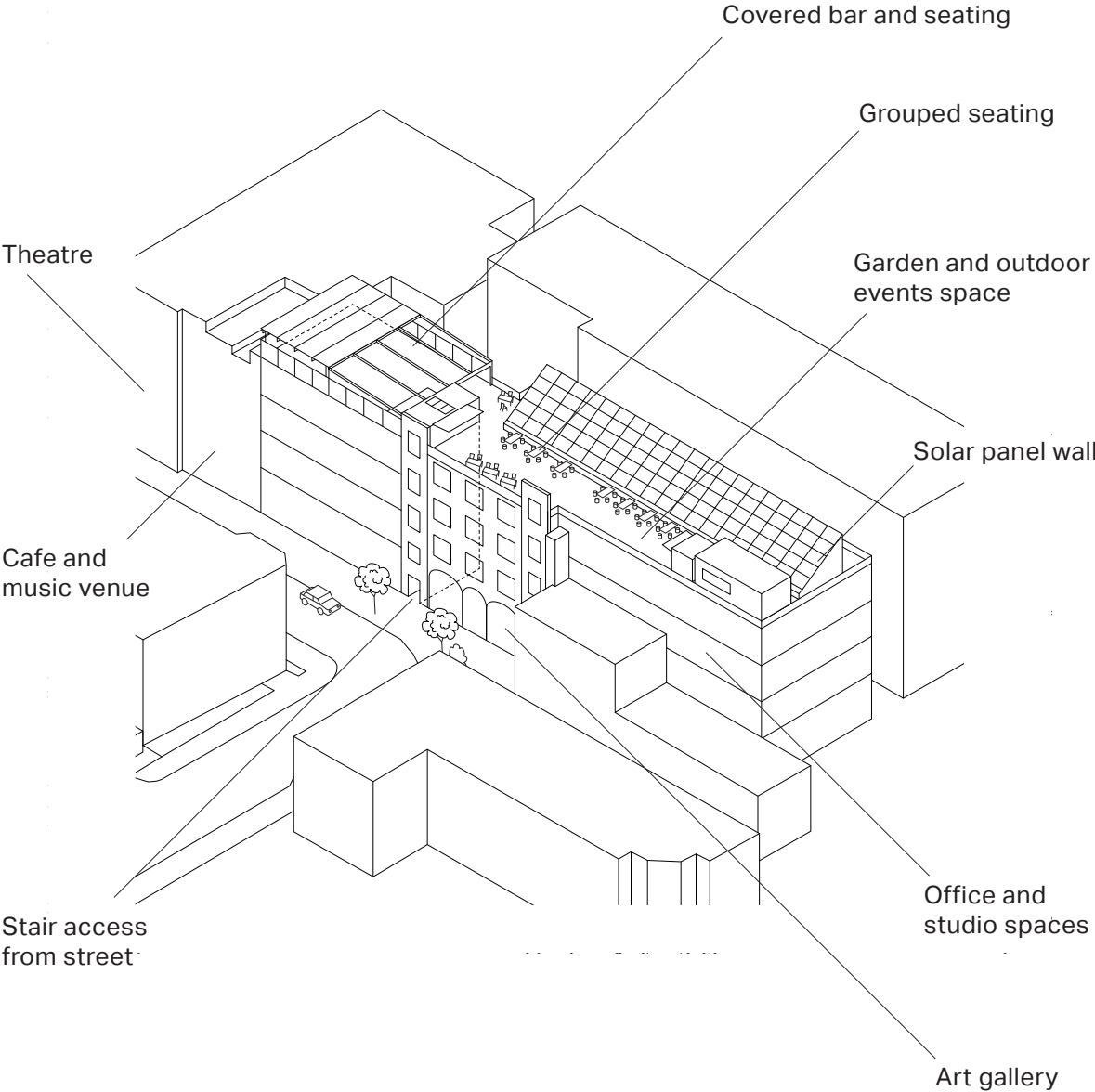
Dalston Roof Park

Location

### When is it open?



Covered bar and seating

Grouped seating

Garden and outdoor events space

Theatre

Solar panel wall

Cafe and music venue
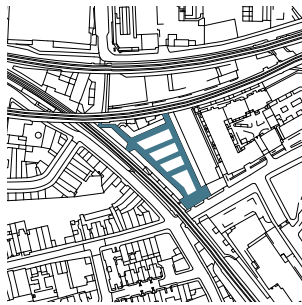
Stair access from street

Office and studio spaces

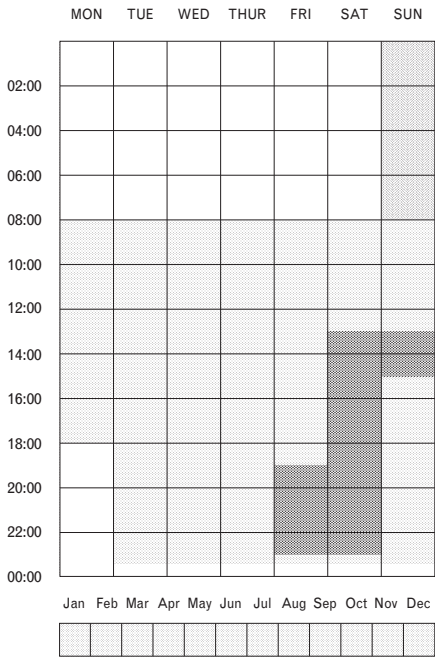Art gallery

# GRANVILLE ARCADE
## LB Lambeth, Inner London

Built in 1937, the arcade - actually a series of arcades - has long specialised in food and provisions aiming at the Afro-Caribbean community. Access is via a series of commercial frontages. The arcades are over two storeys high and glazed, and only a few metres wide, such that foodstuffs, provisions and cafe tables can spill onto them. The arcade includes signposted public toilets.
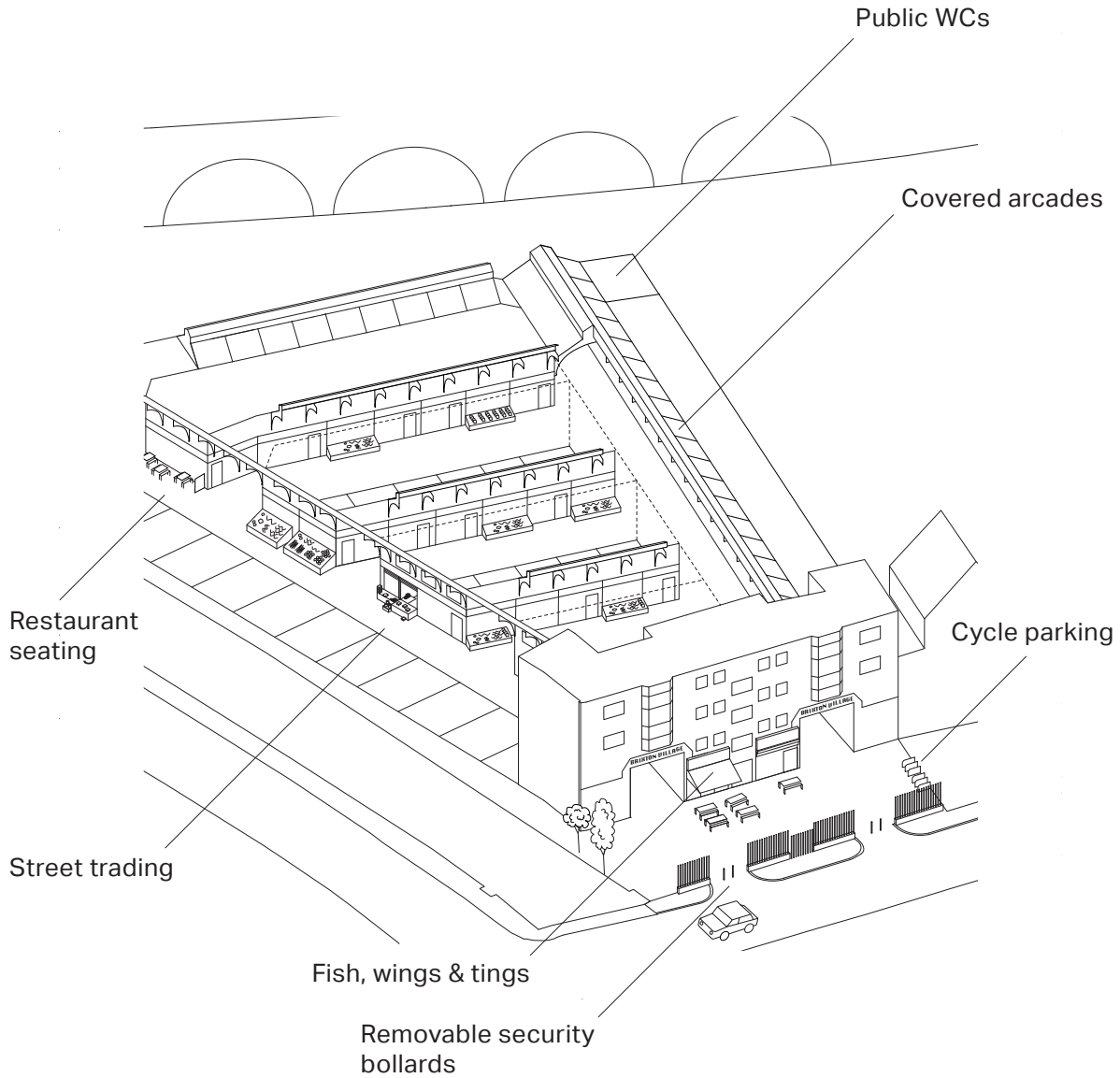
Granville arcades and forecourt



Public WCs

Covered arcades

Cycle parking

Restaurant seating

Street trading

Fish, wings & tings

Removable security bollards



Location

**When is it open?**
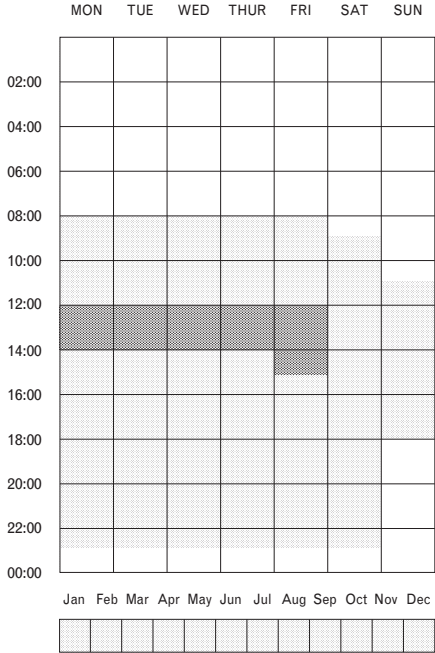
# CARDINAL PLACE
## City of Westminster, Central Activities Zone

A part-enclosed shopping centre created as part of a wider mixed-use development and framed by an earlier commercial building. Granite pavers used throughout the wider area continue into the development. A sculpture is placed at the intersection of the four routes and to the north a raised landscaped space, accessed by stair and open-air escalator, is provided. The space is mostly hard-landscaped and accessible public toilets are provided at ground level.
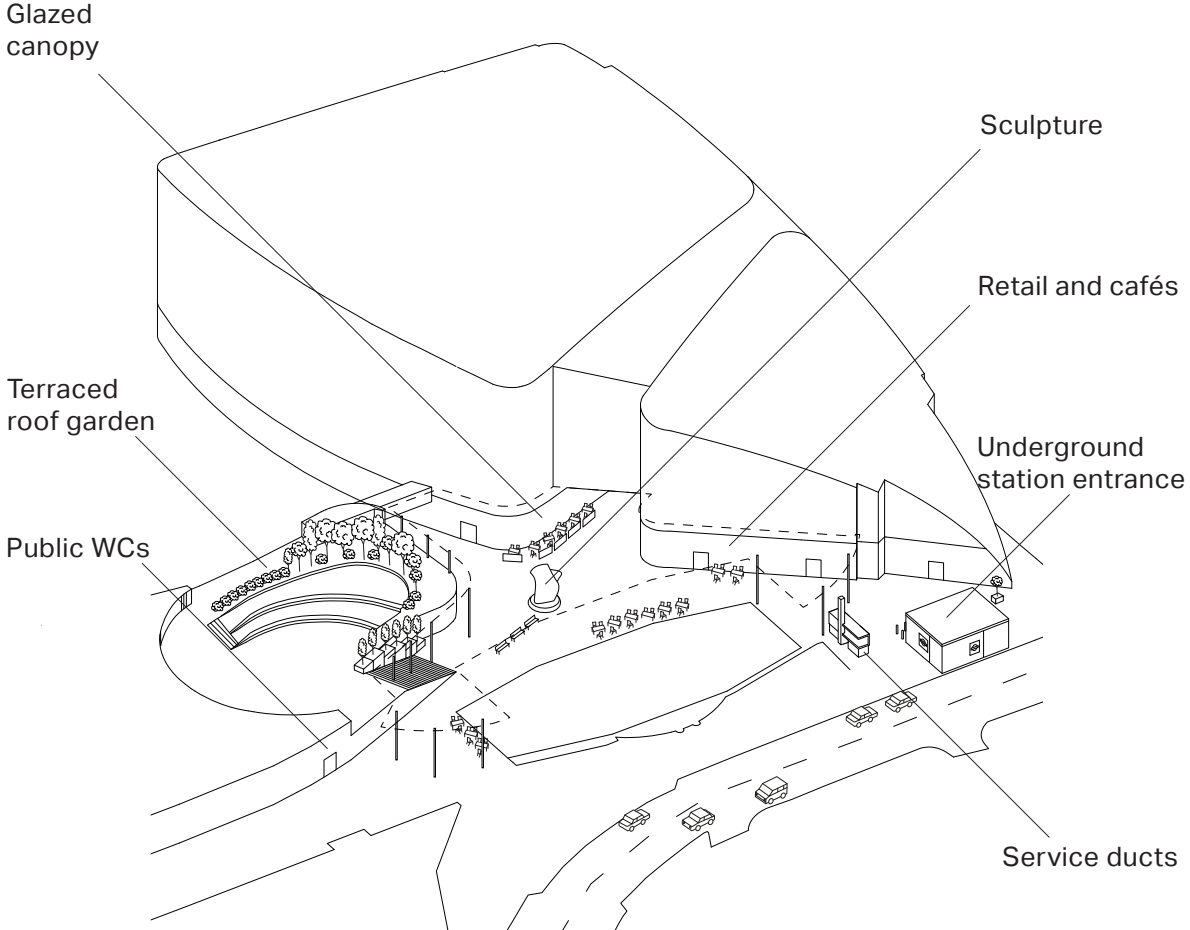
The semi-covered Cardinal Place

Location

When is it open?

Glazed canopy

Sculpture

Retail and cafés

Terraced roof garden

Underground station entrance

Public WCs

Service ducts

# STRATFORD CENTRE
## LB Newham, Inner London

A shopping centre built in the 1970s as part of the comprehensive redevelopment of Stratford town centre. It replaced the previous network of streets with a covered, single storey shopping mall, commercial towers multi-storey car parks all accessed via the mall. During the day they also host long-established market stalls. Roof East, a bar, open air cinema and 'adult playground' has occupied two storeys of one of the car parks since 2014.
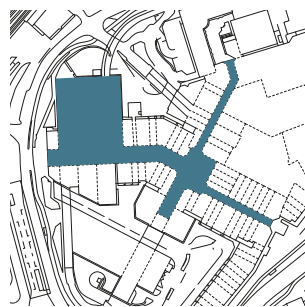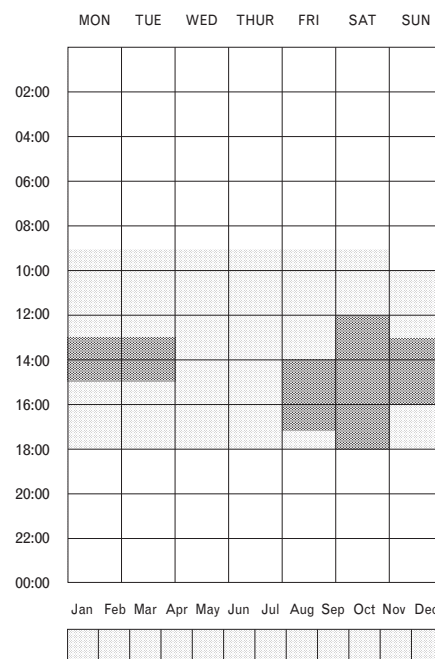
The rooftop and interior spaces of the Stratford Centre



Retail units

Rooftop event space

24 hour mall concourse



Location

When is it open?

# BRITISH MUSEUM
## LB Camden, Central Activities Zone

The Great Court is the largest covered public square in Europe. It is accessed via the museum's main entrance, via street-facing railings, a large forecourt, stepped portico and a security check. A further access point to the museum from the north means that the Great Court is noti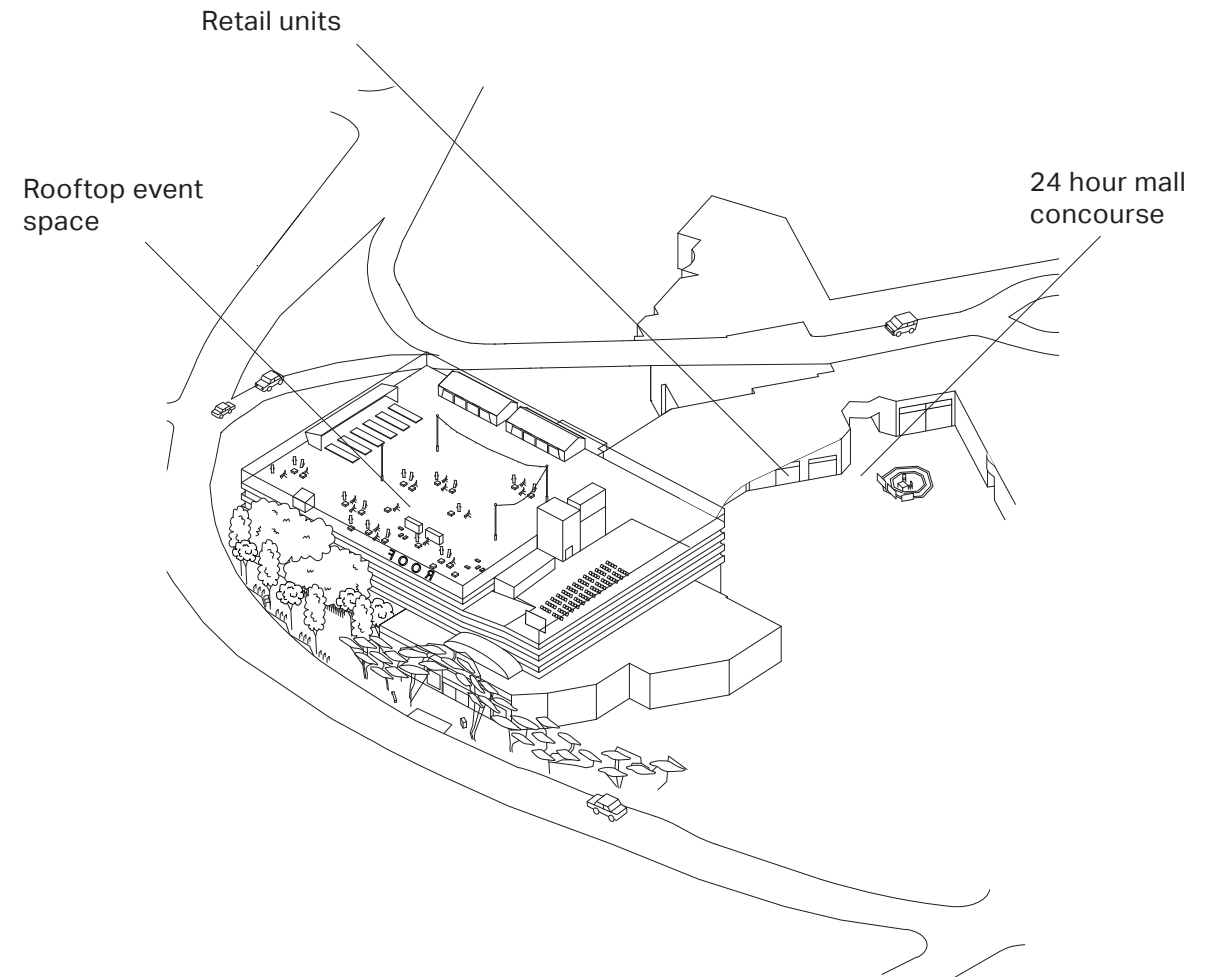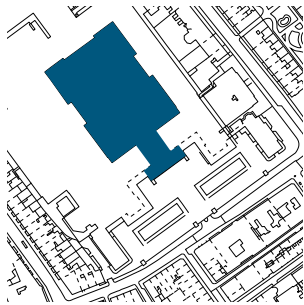onally a north/south route 'through the museum' though elements like the security checks limit this usage, and the north entrance is not heavily signposted from the street.
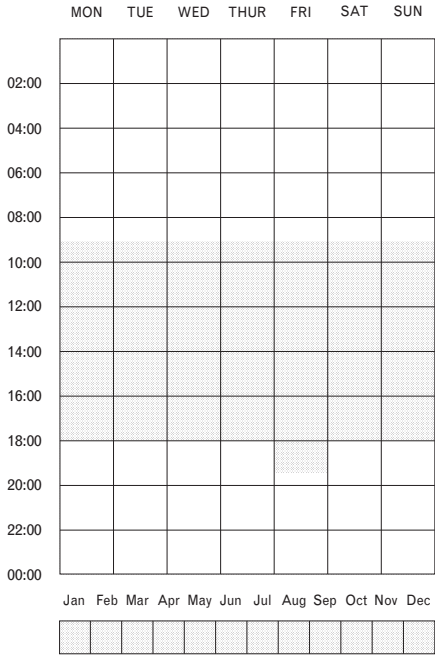
The entrance and Great Court of the British Museum

### When is it open?

|  | MON | TUE | WED | THUR | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 02:00 | | | | | | | |
| 04:00 | | | | | | | |
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| 20:00 | | | | | | | |
| 22:00 | | | | | | | |
| 00:00 | | | | | | | |

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Location



Visitor bag check

Generous forecourt

Security guard stationed

Lockable railings

Visitor bicycle park

Great Court
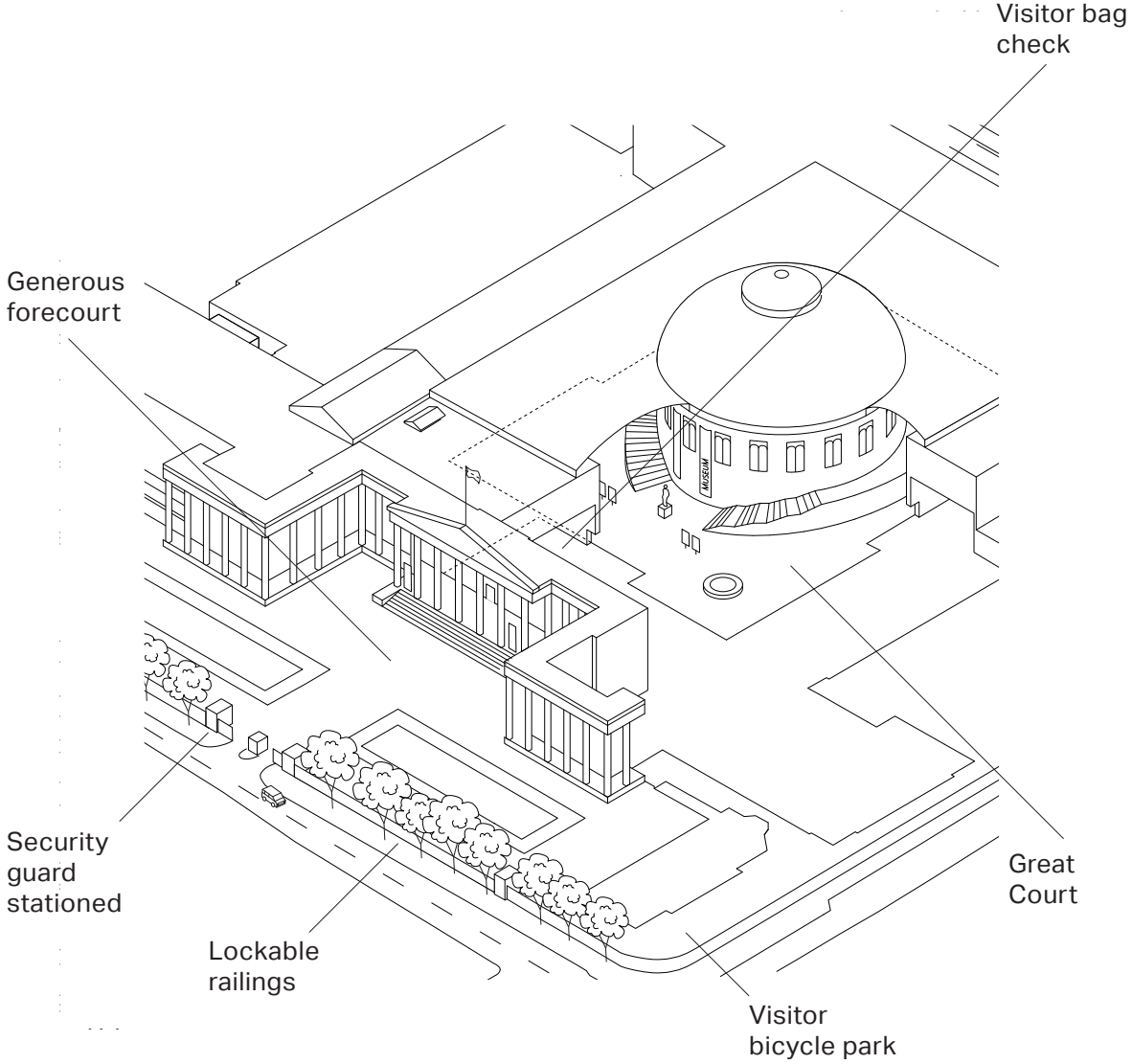
# HEADSTONE MANOR
## LB Harrow, Outer London

Headstone Manor has existed on this site since 1310. The estate came into public ownership in the 1920s to provide outdoor recreation space, and the grade-I listed manor house opened as a local history museum in 1986. The complex includes three listed barns of varying size and age, rentable as venues for events, as well as a newly-built cafe and shop adjacent to the site's entrance which opened in 2017. Together the facilities provide a range of internal rooms and spaces that enrich the programme of the wider park.
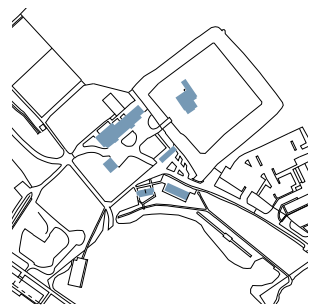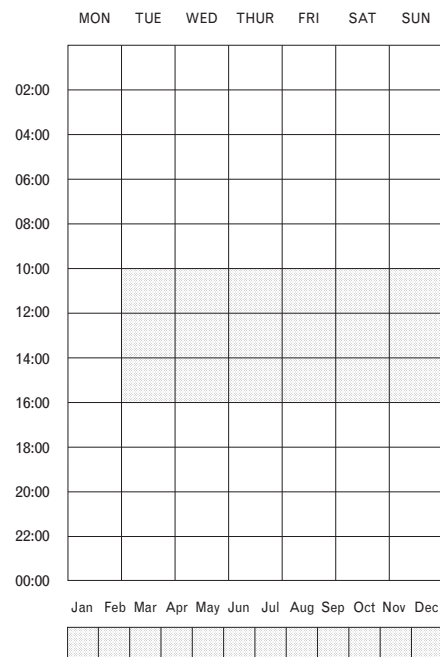
The ensemble of spaces that make up Headstone Manor



Museum

Gardens

Barn wedding venue

Toilets

Cafe

## When is it open?



Location

# BARBICAN CENTRE

City of London, Central Activities Zone

The venue, which includes multiple auditoria, cinemas, galleries, library and restaurants, has a substantial multi-level carpeted foyer which directly addresses the Barbican's Lakeside Terrace. The venue provides a large amount of comfortable lounge-style seating (not directly associated with cafe concessions that serve the venue), plug sockets and free wifi. A refurbishment in 2006 created a more accessible direct route from the street.
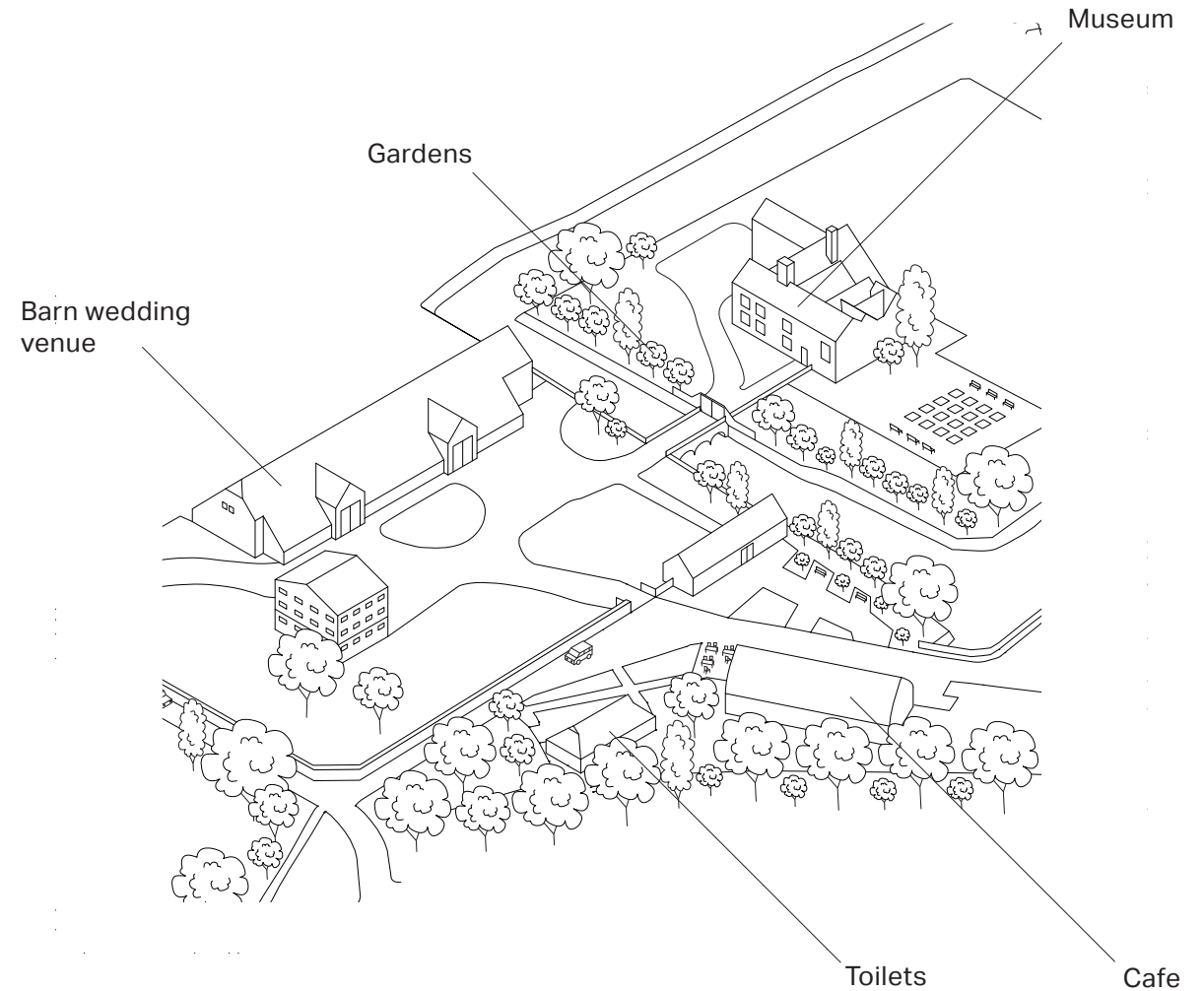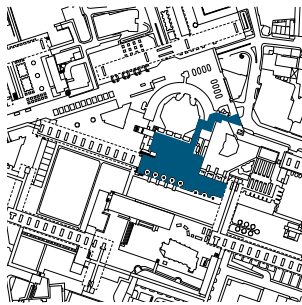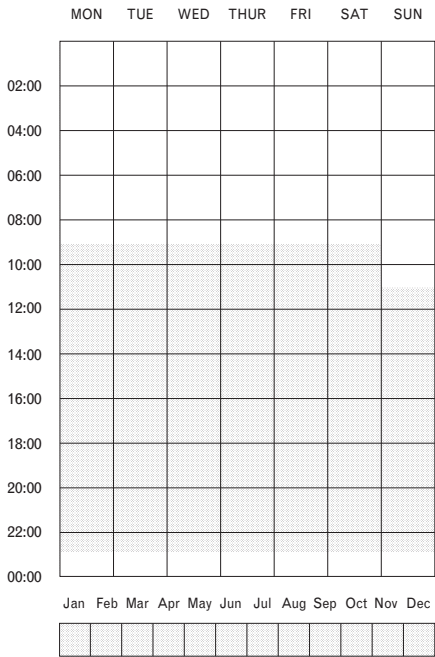
The ground floor lobby and Lake side Terrace of the Barbican

Location

When is it open?

| | MON | TUE | WED | THUR | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 02:00 | | | | | | | |
| 04:00 | | | | | | | |
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| 18:00 | | | | | | | |
| 20:00 | | | | | | | |
| 22:00 | | | | | | | |
| 00:00 | | | | | | | |

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Pedestrian access from street

Glazed staircase

Cafe restaurant

Lobby with seating and multiple plug sockets

Lakeside terrace
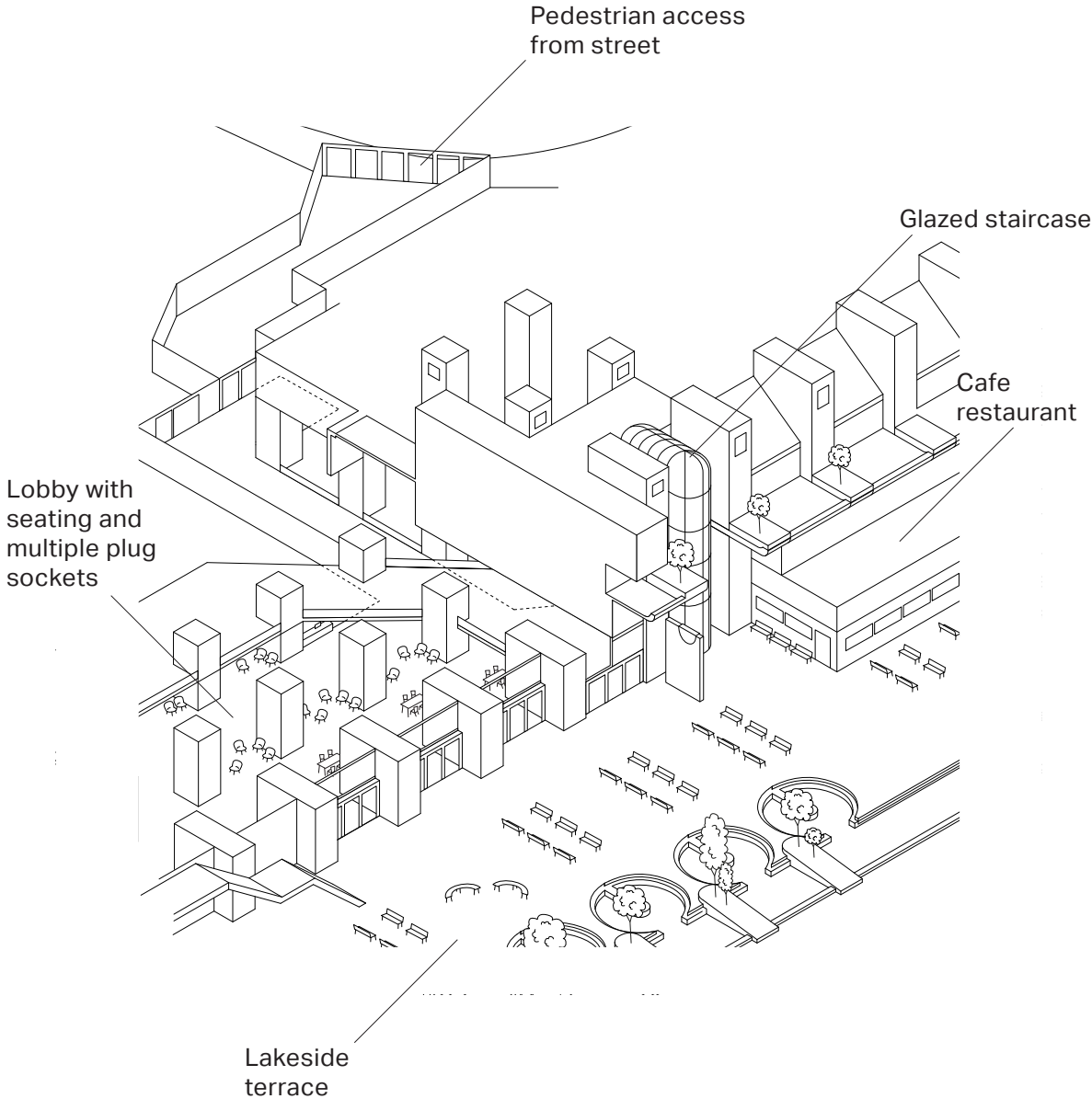
# FAIRFIELD HALLS

LB Croydon, Outer London

A cultural venue built in 1962 and which reopened following an extensive refurbishment in 2019. The complex comprises a large concert hall for up to 1800 people, gallery and theatre, as well as a generous entrance lobby which is split across two levels.
The democratic feel of this lobby, which is strongly reminiscent of the Royal Festival Hall, is such that it is well used by the public even when formal events are not taking place.
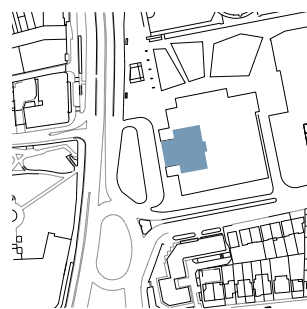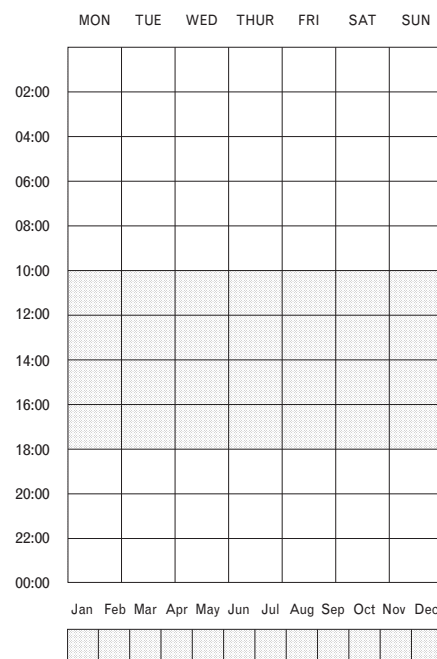
The public interior of Fairfield Halls

Public seating area

Place signage

Cafe and bar

Bicycle parking

Location

When is it open?

|  | MON | TUE | WED | THUR | FRI | SAT | SUN |
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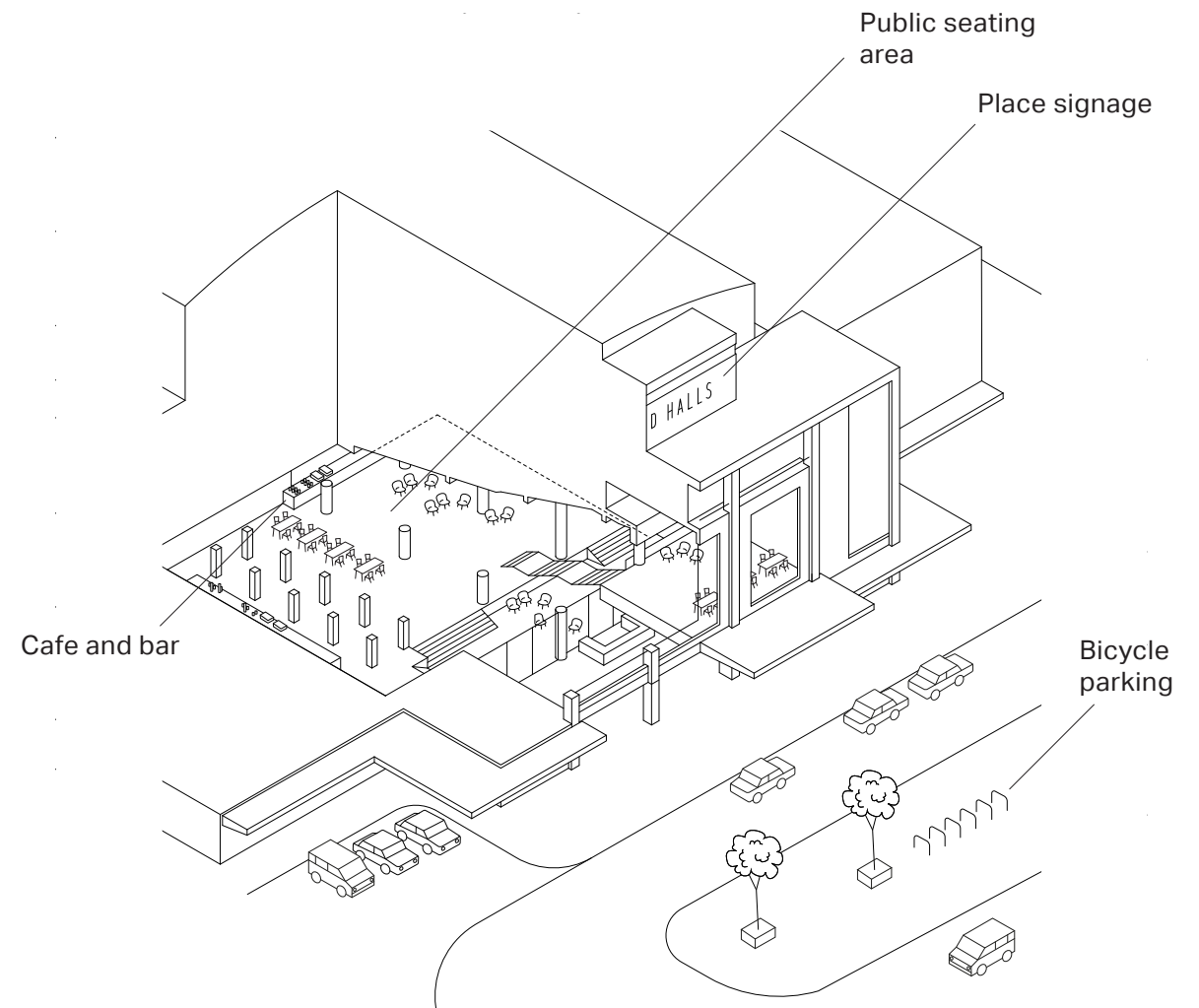
# LEADENHALL MARKET
City of London, Central Activities Zone

Originally a street market, since 1881 Leadenhall has been covered with a richly-decorated canopy, forming a hybrid between street and market hall, a precursor to the modern mall. Market activity has largely 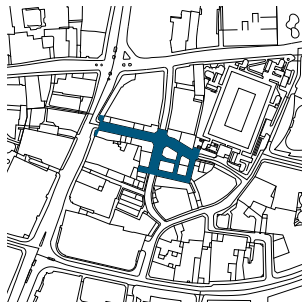been replaced by fine dining, bars and lunch spots, many of which provide dedicated seating in the cobbled common spaces of the building and high-end retail, supported by an occasional events programme.
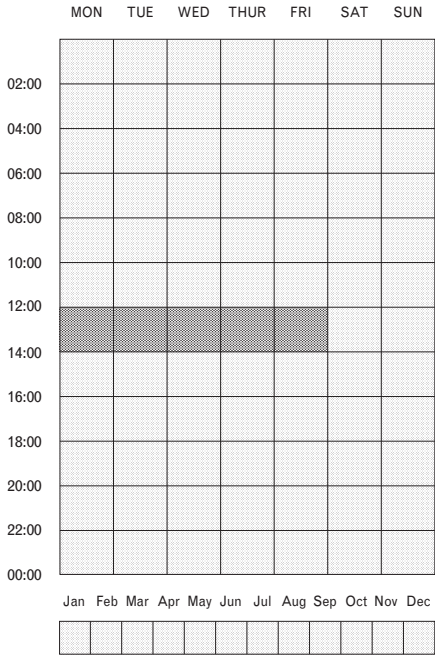
The long arcades of Leadenhall Market

Location

When is it open?

| | MON | TUE | WED | THUR | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| 04:00 | | | | | | | |
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| 00:00 | | | | | | | |

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Pubs and eateries

Glazed canopy

Tortilla Mexican Grill

Cobbled road surface pavement

Security bollards to east and west

Vehicular route from north to south

Cafe seating

Removable security bollards
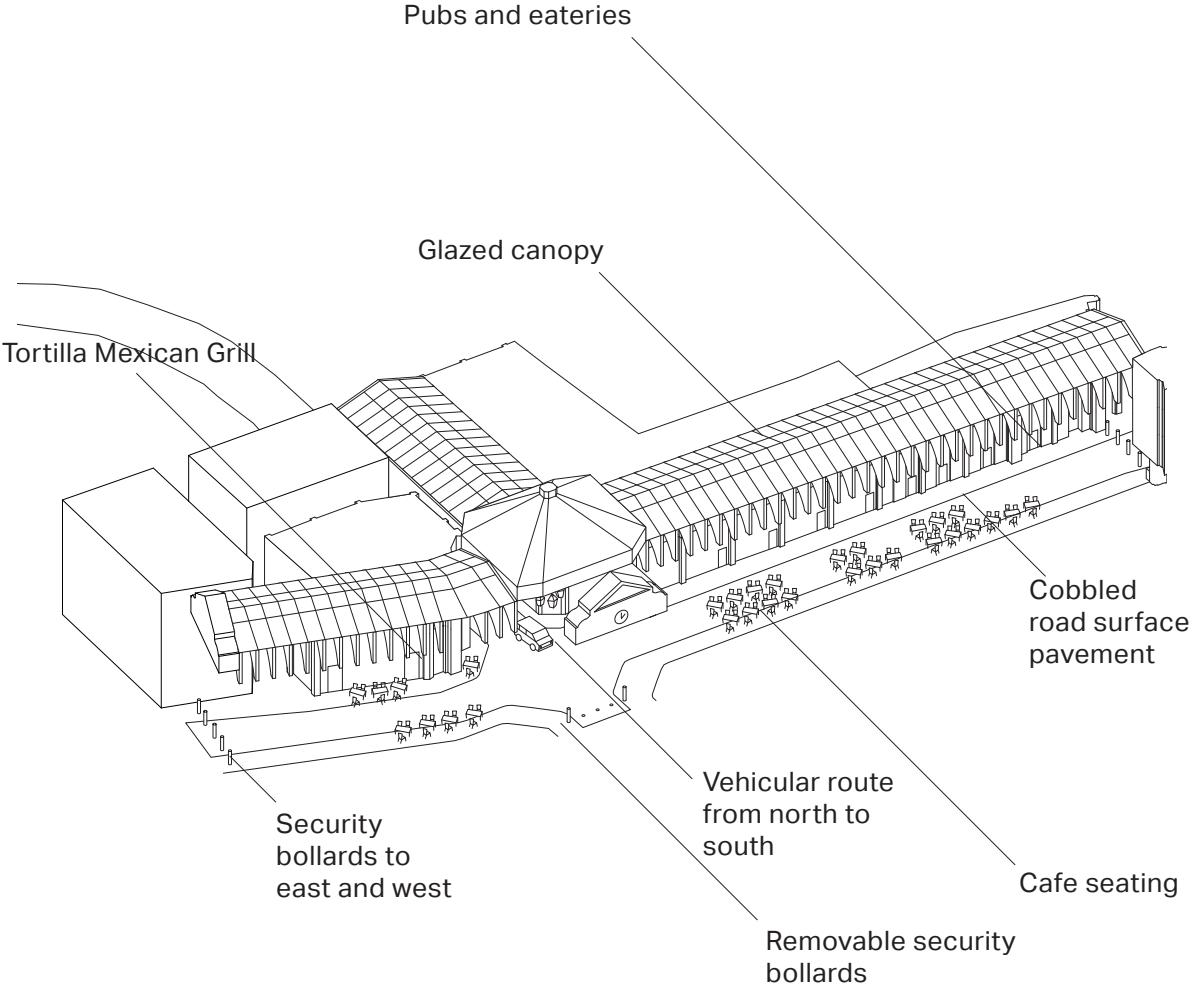
# ROMFORD SHOPPING HALL
## LB Havering, Outer London

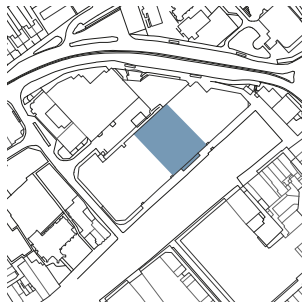The Shopping Hall is part of a mixed-use building facing Market Place in the centre of Romford. It contains over 40 independent shops as well as cafés with an established local following. The centre is part of an internal pedestrian route between an adjacent multi-storey car park and bus stop and Market Place, and from there the wider town centre. Shops surround a central glazed atrium across two floors, and vertical circulation is via two escalators. The building also contains more conventional commercial space as well as housing above.
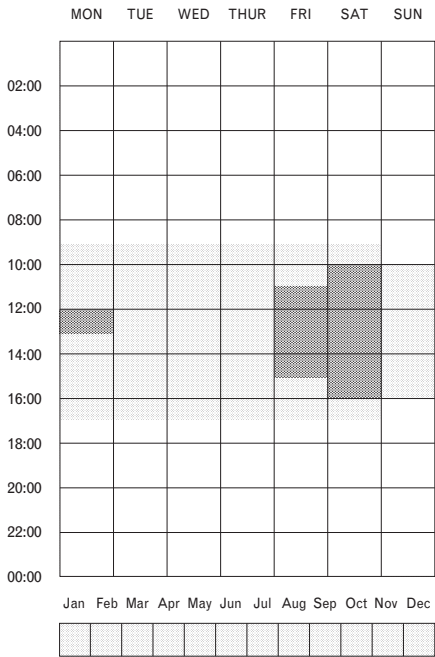
The shopping hall and its elevated pedestrian walkway



Location

### When is it open?





Bus stop

Private housing

Multi storey car park

Pedestrian route from car park

Multi storey shopping hall

Outdoor market square
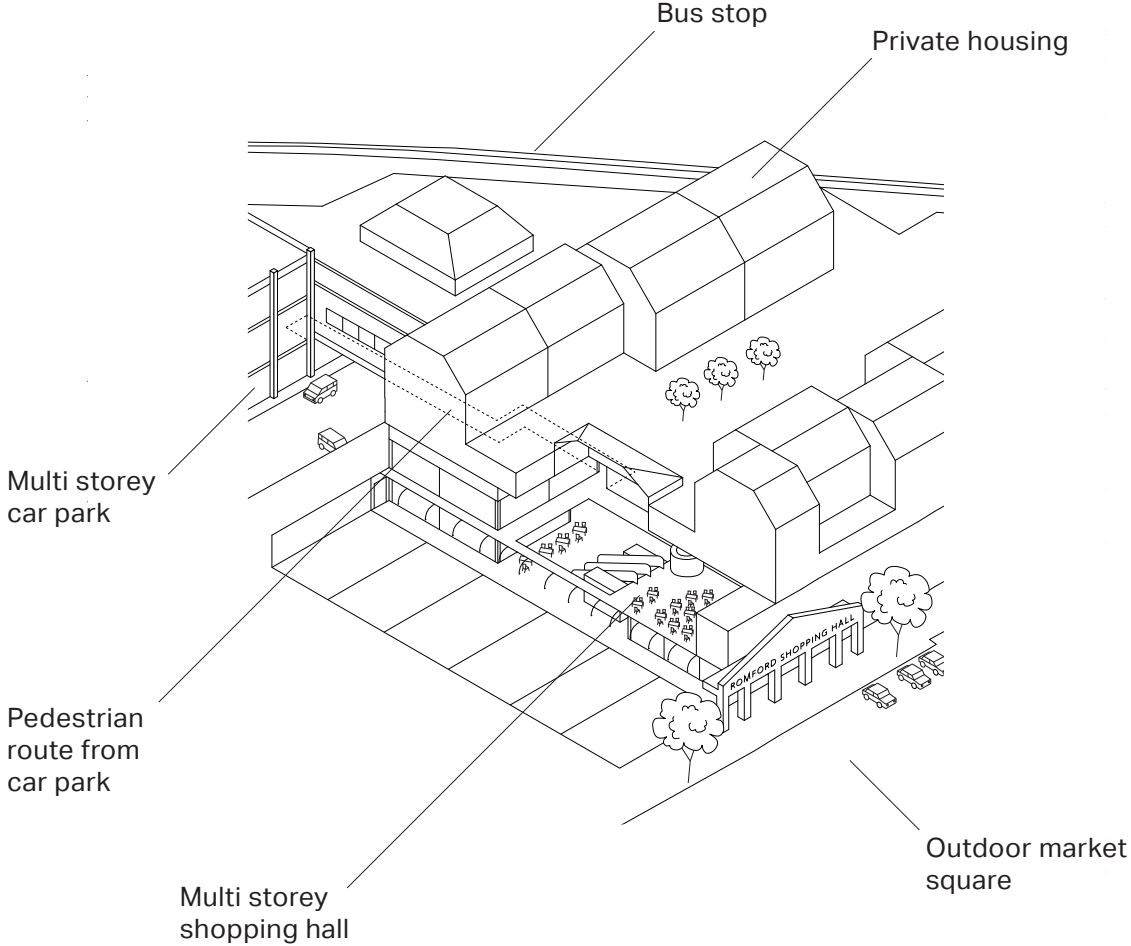
# ONE LONDON WALL
## City of London, Central Activities Zone

This high-spec office building includes a glazed lift and escalator within its curtilage, directly accessible from the pavement and leading to a pedestrian bridge, which gives access to the forecourt of the Museum of London and to the raised pedestrian 'high walk' network that also connects to the Barbican and other nearby buildings.

The route

Office building

Circulation and access in building curtilage

Museum forecourt and pedestrian high walk

Pedestrian bridge

Location

### When is it open?

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec
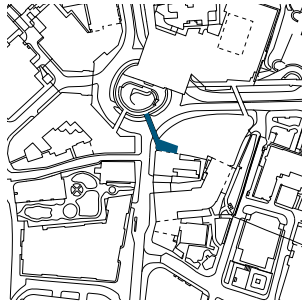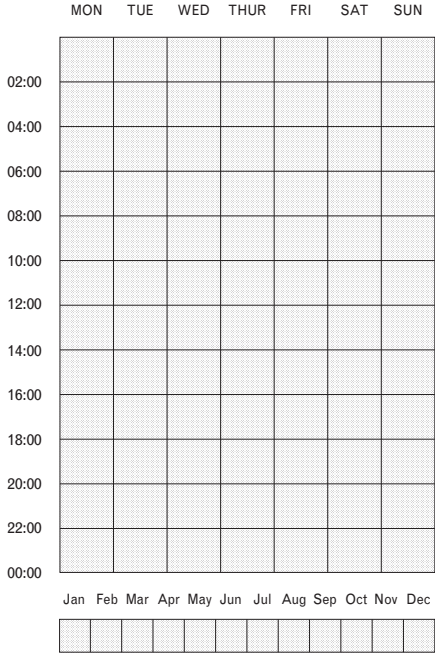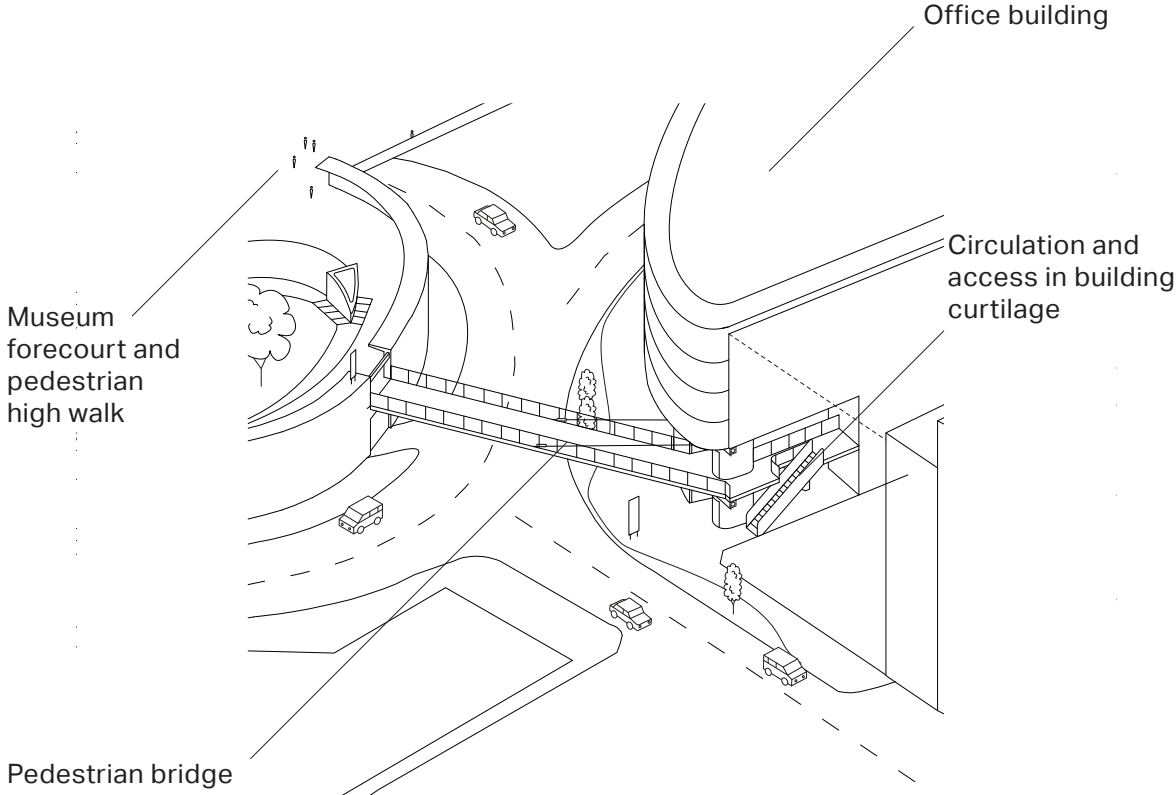
# BASIN AVENUE

City of Westminster, Central Activities Zone

Just off the Edgware Road, this short pedestrian walk connects the local street network to Paddington Basin. The space is used both as a thoroughfare and as an entry point to adjacent retail units and to apartments above. The pavers of the surrounding public realm continue through the walkway and the threshold is marked by anti-vehicle barriers. A pair of tall security barriers enable the route to be closed to the public.
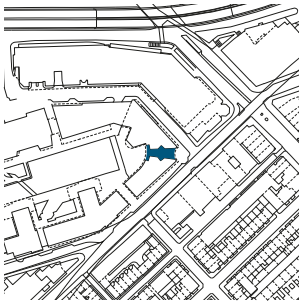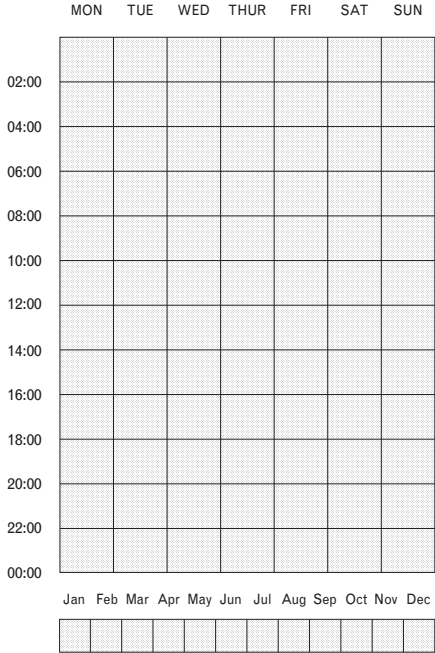
The route in relation to Edgware Road and the basin

Paddington basin

Private apartments

Retail units

Gated access to basin

Location

### When is it open?

MON  TUE  WED  THUR  FRI  SAT  SUN

02:00
04:00
06:00
08:00
10:00
12:00
14:00
16:00
18:00
20:00
22:00
00:00

Jan  Feb  Mar  Apr  May  Jun  Jul  Aug  Sep  Oct  Nov  Dec
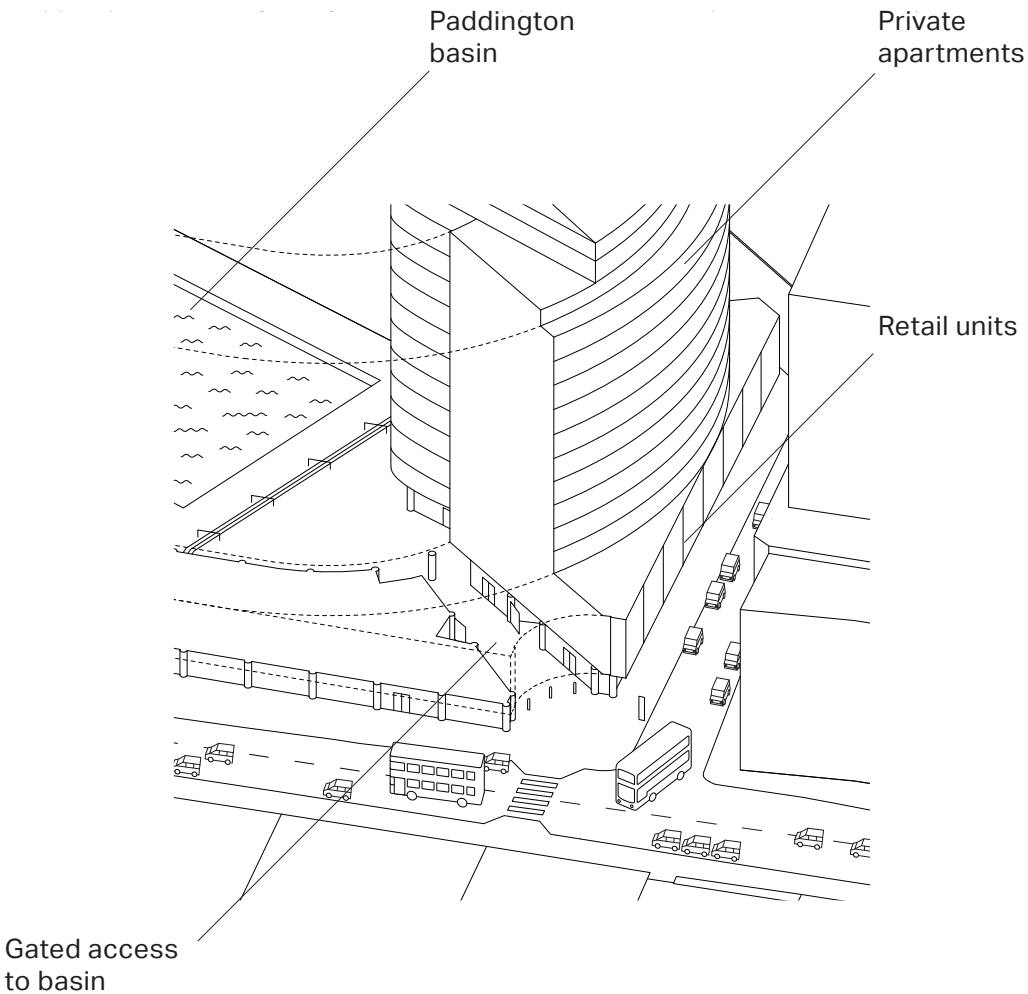
# BLUE HOUSE YARD

## LB Haringey, Outer London

A 'meanwhile' complex of studios, retail and food outlets, and event space. There is an existing building, now used as studio space, and temporary structures housing retail units and studios. The informal spaces created, including a converted bus, are adaptable to demand, and will exist on the site for a maximum of five years. The project is part of a series of measures to enrich the economic and cultural activity of Wood Green in advance of long-term regeneration.
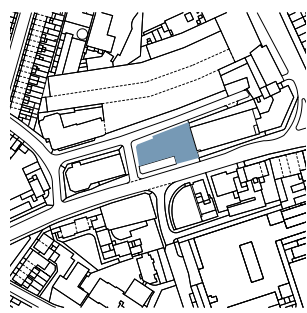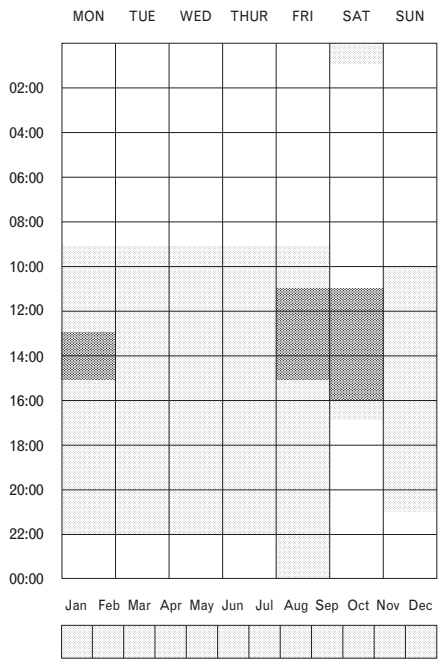
The ensemble of buildings that make up Blue House Yard



Local authority offices

Retail units/ "work sheds"

Yard for events

Studio spaces

Retained taxi office



Location

### When is it open?
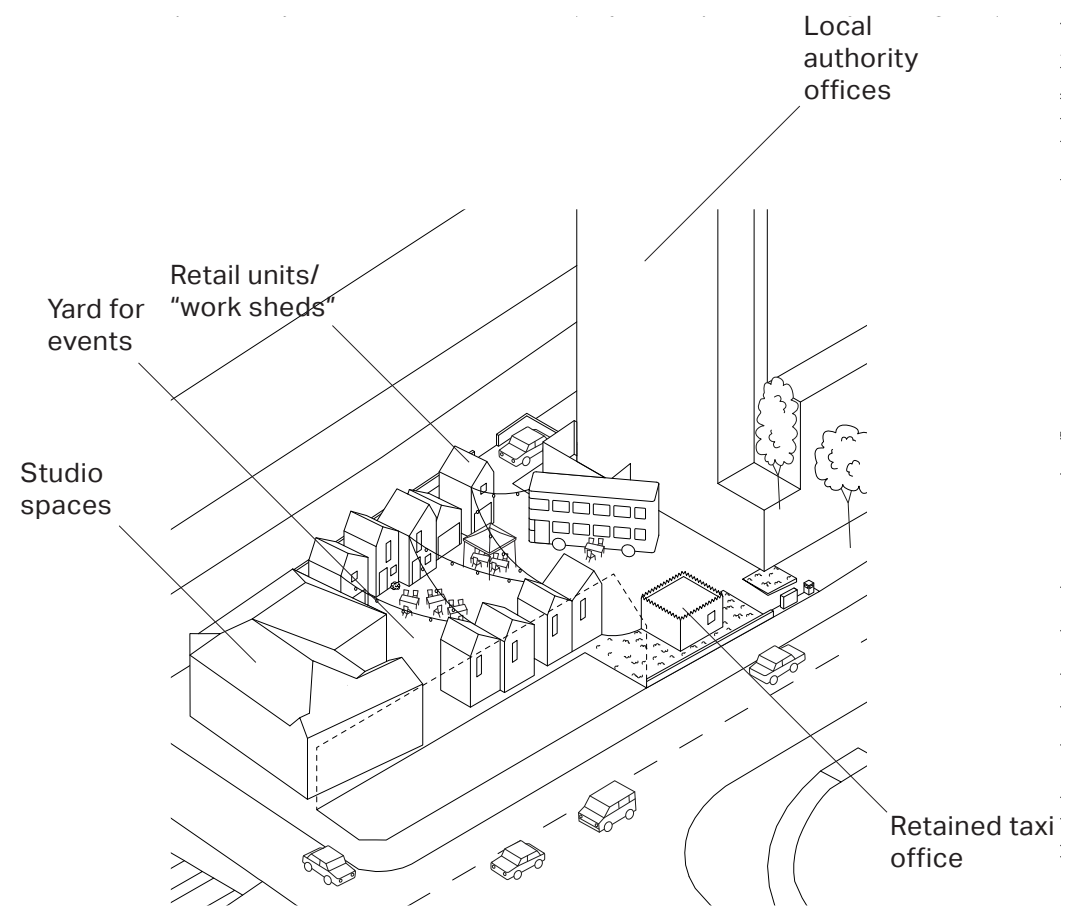
# PHYTOLOGY

## LB Tower Hamlets, Inner London

A project in a nature reserve left over during postwar redevelopment. Phytology runs workshops, growing space, a commissioning programme and a series of events and projects, much of which are about allowing local communities and schools to re-engage with nature in the city and environmental issues. A billboard commission at the reserve's most public corner is used to 'speak' beyond the site's boundary railings, especially when it is closed to the public.
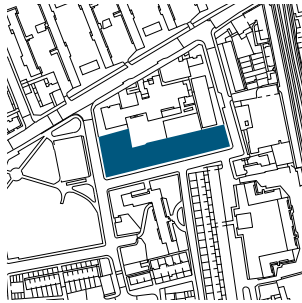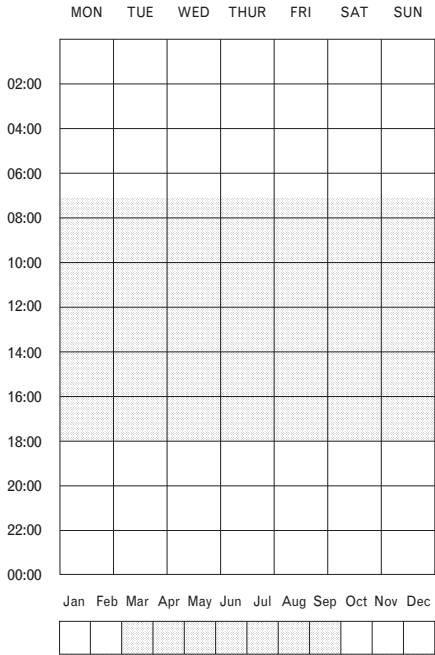
The rich ecological habitat at Phytology

Location

When is it open?

|  | MON | TUE | WED | THUR | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 02:00 | | | | | | | |
| 04:00 | | | | | | | |
| 06:00 | | | | | | | |
| 08:00 | | | | | | | |
| 10:00 | | | | | | | |
| 12:00 | | | | | | | |
| 14:00 | | | | | | | |
| 16:00 | | | | | | | |
| 18:00 | | | | | | | |
| 20:00 | | | | | | | |
| 22:00 | | | | | | | |
| 00:00 | | | | | | | |

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec



Secondary school

Composting facility

Wetland

Medicinal garden

Changing billboard artist commission

Fenced boundary
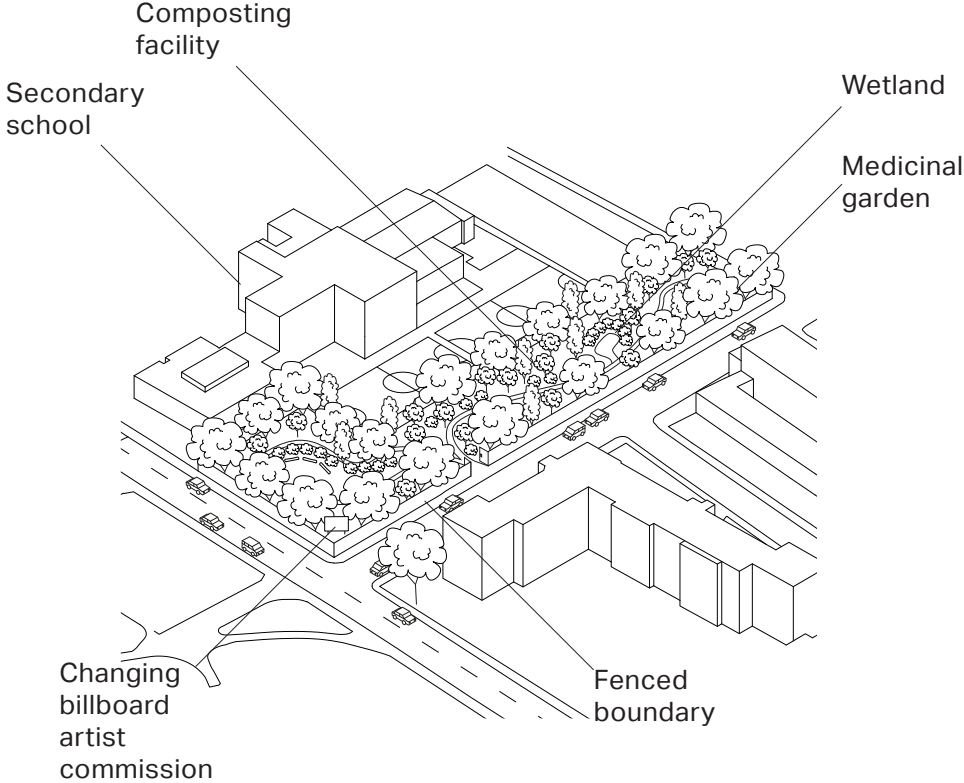
# BARKINGSIDE TOWN SQUARE
## LB Redbridge, Outer London

A modernist library and swimming pool were built in Barkingside High Street in the 1960s, along with a series of public spaces that were underused. In 2015, a new loggia was added to a blank wall addressing one of these spaces and the wider High Street, with the aim of providing shade, shelter, meaning and the necessary infrastructure to promote formal and informal inhabitation of the existing space. The form of the loggia evokes the civic character of the original library.
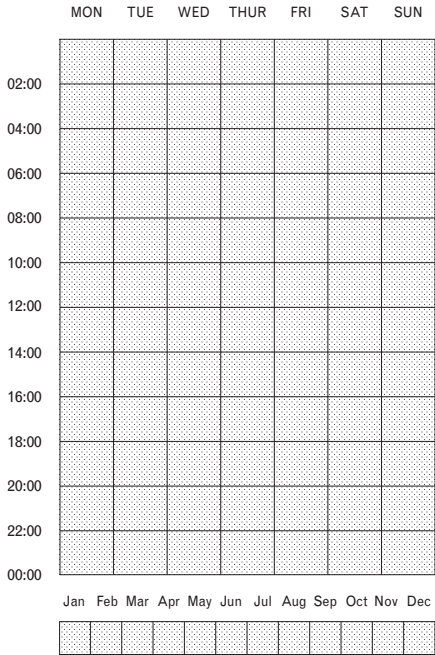
The loggia and the spaces around it

Loggia

Swimming pool

Library

Bicycle parking

Unassociated seating around base of trees

Location

When is it open?
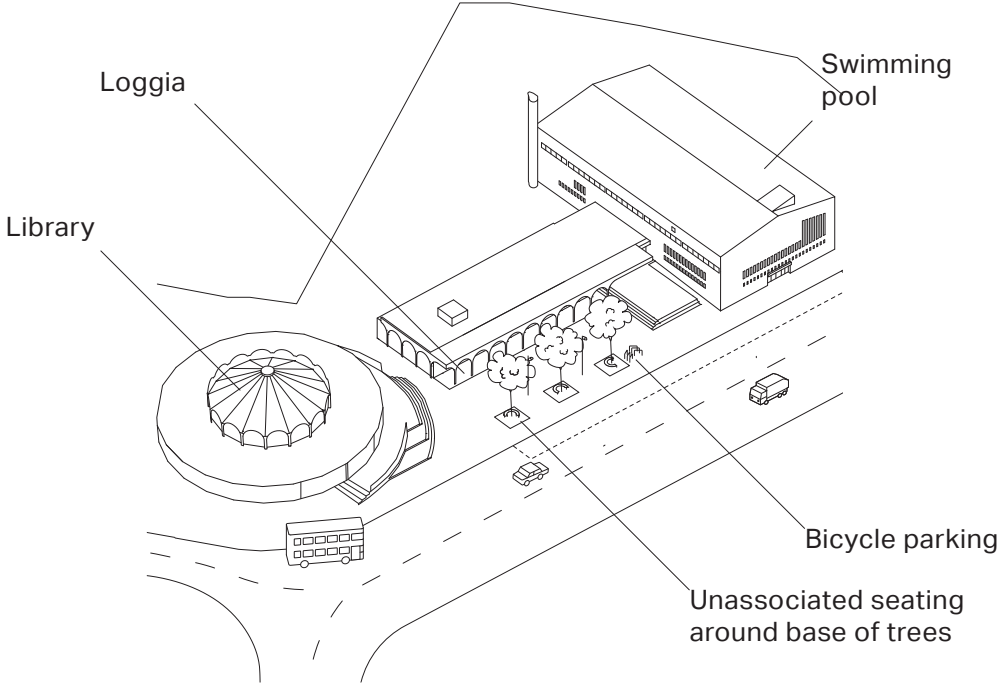
# LIMITATIONS OF EXISTING SPACES

Retail frontage dominates

No 'unassociated' seating

No step free access

Not part of legible public route

Frequently closed

Vertical circulation occasionally not in use.

Booking, access and timed entry limit sense of publicness

Does not contribute to ecology or climate change mitigation

Confusing relationship to wider public realm

Security features detract from sense of publicness

Only accessible seasonally

Spaces for movement overwhelm spaces for dwelling

# SUCCESSES OF EXISTING SPACES



Accessible public WCs

Security elements do not dominate

Strong sense of community ownership

A relation to local character and economy

Protection from the elements

Free 'unassociated' seating in good location

Balance achieved between moving and dwelling

Strong connection to wider public realm

24 hour access

Space feels democratic and open for all

Non-corporate design language

Contributes to local ecology and local resilience

Strong sense of welcome and generous threshold

## Lessons learned

### Community

The strong sense of community, local economy and distinctiveness at places such as Granville Arcade and Fairfield Halls are highly valued. The more successful public spaces incorporated extensive community engagement efforts throughout the design and operation phases. Spaces which responded directly to local demand and character, and evolved out of existing public uses, often continued to foster strong connections within the local community.

### Climate and ecological change

Many of the spaces fail to make a positive impact in relation to mitigating the effects of the climate and ecological emergency. Where ecology and greenery was approached with sensitivity and complexity, such as at Phytology, the space was able to contribute in a meaningful way to local ecology and resilience.

### Accessibility and comfort

Many of the emerging types of public space analysed in the type study were not part of a legible public route. Some have a complex relationship to the public realm, like the Barbican, which might act as a barrier to access and mean someone passing by is less likely to stumble upon the space and feel encouraged to stay. Some stations (e.g. West Ruislip) have a strong sense of welcome achieved through a generous threshold that clearly signals the space. Stations where there is a lack of good enclosure, such as Vauxhall bus station, have the tendency to feel uninhabitable for periods when the weather is unpleasant.

In several of the spaces studied such as the Skygarden, the seating provided was only available to those willing to spend money, whether eating at a cafe or restaurant. Frontages of retail and commerce predominated the visual environment, leading to an increased sense that a user must spend money to stay in the space. Where free 'unassociated'

seating was found (e.g. Garden at 120) the sense of publicness of the space was a lot higher.

The ability to access public space 'spontaneously' or without barriers is an important condition of accessibility and publicness. Many of the new types of emerging public spaces, such as viewing platforms, roof gardens and shopping malls, have limitations on access in the form of booking and timed entry slots. At some locations, such as Dalston Roof Park, there was no-step free access. Many could only be accessed seasonally, meaning that these pieces of the city become inaccessible for parts of the year. This has consequences for the whole public space network if a prevalent condition. A good number of spaces had fixed opening times, again detracting from the feeling of being open and accessible for all.

### Security measures

The quality of spaces such as Fairfield Hall meant that they felt open and democratic to all. Non-corporate design language was also successful in creating a feeling of welcome at Peckham Observatory. Due to the privately-owned nature of a lot of the spaces, there existed both obvious and obscure methods of surveillance and security in place. Where it was prevalent (bag-checking, security booths) the existence, location and design of these security measures detract from the sense of publicness. At Leadenhall Market the bollards preventing vehicles entering the covered arcade feel of a design language that complements the rest of the structure, and does not dominate as a result.

### Openness

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted new questions about public space. Connective spaces such as One London Wall, a useful route for Londoners, closed during the pandemic. The ability for private owners to close these emerging types of space at will has the potential to have negative affects across the public space network. Routes and thoroughfares should therefore carefully considered in the design guide to ensure whole parts of the city do not become inaccessible when such situations occur.

# 3

# WORKSHOPS

## Workshops

Our research involved workshop-based engagement with people who represent public space user groups as well as individuals involved in the creation of public space, from developers and town centre managers to development management officers. This process had several aspirations: to understand how people perceive and use these types of spaces, to understand what the challenges facing those delivering and designing these types of spaces are and to gather a diverse set of views regarding what design features should to be present in a space in order for it to feel 'public', or rather, for it to be open and accessible for as many people as possible.

## Format and content

The workshop process was coordinated by Future of London – the capital's independent network for regeneration, housing, infrastructure and economic development practitioners. A shift from in-person workshops to online workshops was made due to COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings at the time. Future of London developed a live note-taking process to allow interaction throughout the workshop, which aided good discussion.

The first workshop brought to the table existing examples of internal, semi-internal and elevated urban spaces around London, for participants to unpick, challenge, discuss and propose alterations to. After incorporating this knowledge into our work, which are highlighted in the following pages, the second workshop presented a draft chapter of the design guide. Participants were invited from a broad range of organisations to review this draft in relation to their earlier thoughts and recommendations. Representatives attended from local government, housing developers, civil society organisations, universities, charities as well as design professionals. A list of contributors is included in the appendix. The following pages document the themes that emerged from the discussions.



Workshop Two, organised by Future of London. Both workshops took place virtually
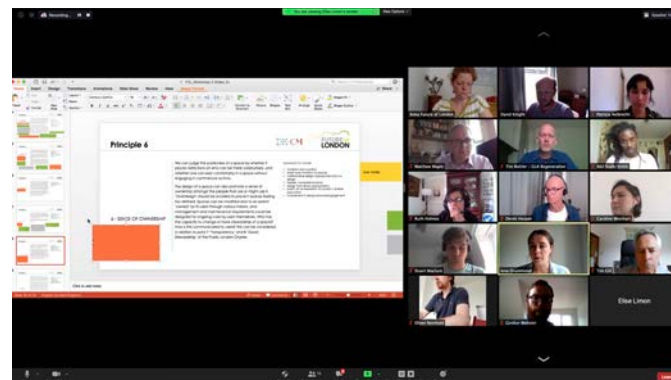
## THEMES

**Climate and ecology:** Spaces should have the implications of the climate and ecological emergency at the forefront of design and consider the cumulative affect of each intervention. Spaces should be considered in relation to the micro-climate. Orientation, quality and amount of natural light are particularly important to the feeling of wellbeing in interior spaces.

**Interconnectedness:** The spaces should have continuity with London's wider public realm network, even when elevated. They should be conceived of as a whole. This might be achieved through literal spatial continuity, visual or material design cues or with wayfinding, or a combination of these.

**Access:** There should be the highest level of access possible, for those with reduced mobility and space should be designed as not to exclude anyone.

**'IF I HAD MY PACKED LUNCH, AND I HAD 10 MINUTES TO EAT IT, WHAT WOULD THAT SPACE LOOK LIKE?'**

**Movement and dwelling:** The relationship and balance between movement and dwelling in a space should be considered, particularly in the case of transport interchanges and movement spaces, whilst recognising that for many people spaces to rest are a fundamental part of movement. What possibilities do recent digital innovations offer for the spatial layout of interchange spaces?
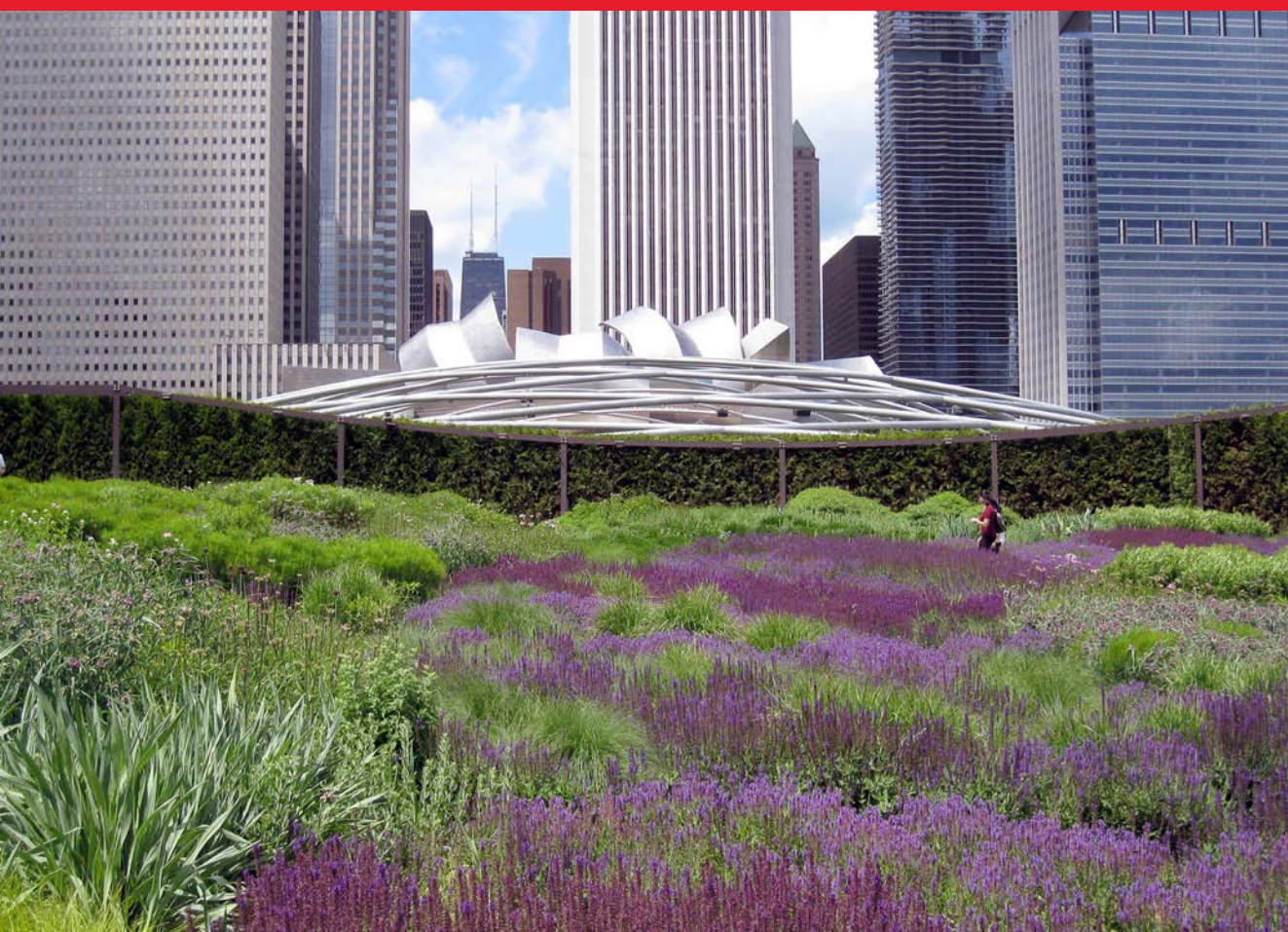
**Complexity:** It was clear that it is important to consider the benefits and value of spaces which have particularity or distinctiveness. Places with spatial complexity, a complex mix of uses & programmes and multiple design languages, such as Granville Arcade, were consistently identified as having a high level of publicness. The qualities of curiosity, hiddenness and discovery were identified as positive aspects of certain public spaces. The 'layering' and complexity of this can be beneficial to the development of meaning and identity. As these newly defined spaces are not often at street level or outside, they need to work harder to be legible and inclusive in their designs.

**Greening:** The presence of 'greening' in the form of planters is not enough. Soft landscaping and planting should be appropriately designed and considered, both internally and externally. Rougher, wilder forms of greenery and how it might encourage biodiversity in a way that is appropriate to the microclimate is important.

**Flexibility:** Can the inherent flexibility of good streets, squares and parks be better mirrored in the new types of public space? Or how can the benefits of a particular single use be clearly evidenced? Spaces should allow for diversity of activity where possible. This might include temporary activities; thought should be given to balancing the everyday and the occasional.

**Security:** The physical processes used to deal with security issues should not dominate spaces. Any security presence should be understood as thoroughly as possible at the design stage and mediated appropriately.

**Ownership:** Features should be integrated which allow the community to care for aspects of a space. Well-designed robust processes of co-design should be advocated for to help communities feel a sense of ownership.



Image credit: Robbrecht en Daem architecten | Marie-José Van Hee architecten © Marc De Blieck

**CASE STUDY**
Market Hall, Ghent:

A generous roof which provides cover over part of a public square, with room for a diverse range of activities to happen below and around it.

**Furniture:** Furniture in the space should encourage sociable activity and allow for various seating postures, positions and configurations. Traditional public spaces often have a focal point to congregate around, like the fountain or a statue. What are the new forms of this? Can the space feel like the city's living room?

**CASE STUDY**
Fairfield Halls, Croydon:

An internal space, sunken and off the street, which feels inviting and comfortable.

Image credit - MICA Architects, Photography by ©Hufton+Crow

**Welcome and arrival:** The relationship between internal, semi-internal and elevated spaces and the wider public realm must be considered.

**Operators and commerce:** The presence of a commercial or other operator, including but not limited to food and beverage and retail, should be appropriate to the space local context. If operators dominate or are ill-suited to the space and the needs of the users this has a negative impact on inclusion and publicness. Local-based or locally relevant or embedded businesses have a particular role to play here. Unusual typologies, experiences and spatial qualities can be introduced to a piece of city through operators.

**Curation:** Spaces should not be overwhelmed by design. Internal, semi-internal and elevated urban spaces are typically more 'designed' and curated such that they can often restrict opening times and feel less welcoming due to their disconnection with the wider public realm. The design guide should encourage more open and collaborative approaches to the design process. Is there an argument for a deliberate 'lack' of coherent design aesthetic? Or of specific types of design?



Image credit - © Brooklyn Grange Rooftop Farm
www.BrooklynGrangeFarm.com

**CASE STUDY**
Brooklyn Grange, New York, USA:

An example of an operator animating a rooftop with a highly particular programme.

## Informing the design guide

This body of research forms part of, and should be read in conjunction with, the *Expanding London's Public Realm: Design Guide* document.

The research and feedback received during this process has fed directly into the development of the design guide principles for new internal, semi-internal and elevated public spaces.

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We would like to thank the following for their valuable insight, knowledge and pertinent suggestions made during workshops:

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