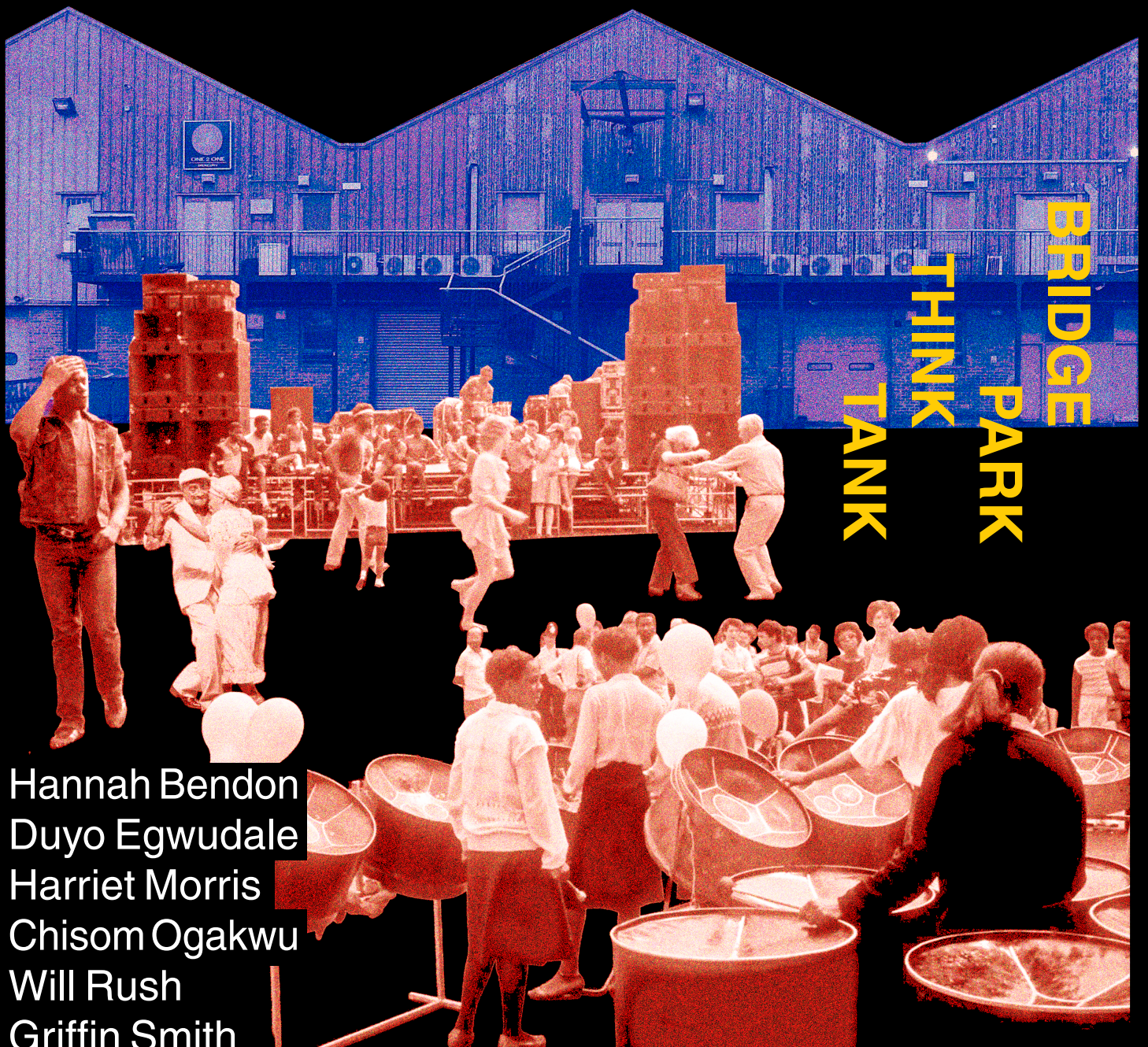


Don't Let Stonebridge Start From Scratch.

Final report into a vision for the future of Bridge Park



Hannah Bendon
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Harriet Morris
Chisom Ogakwu
Will Rush
Griffin Smith

BRIDGE
PARK
THINK
TANK

Glossary

This report deals with a lot of terms which have become very familiar to us, having been delving deeper and deeper into this topic. However to understand this work from a glance, some definitions may help!

Legacy

The continued memory of and relationship to the original vision.

Resilience

The empowerment of the scheme to be able to navigate social, political and economic challenges in the future.

Agency

The ability for the design and management of this scheme to be decided by and for local people.

Transparency

Establishing lines of communication between the council and local people, and giving clear updates on what is (or is not) happening to the site in the future.

Severance

The disconnection of the site by major pieces of infrastructure, geography and decision making. This manifests in both a physical and social disconnect from the site.

Meanwhile

Engagement with the site's fabric for public benefit, in the intermediate time between now and any future visions, and using this process to guide future development.

Community

The group of individuals who live, work and play in and around Stonebridge.

Stewardship

Care and involvement over the vision and continued growth and maintenance of the site.

Participatory Design

Strategies for local people to be involved in all stages of the project, and the process of valuing local expertise on par with traditionally recognised professionals.

False Choice Urbanism

Highlighting the increasingly common binary context in which urban development and decision making occurs. Decisions are presented as ultimatums rather than conversations and opportunities for context specific and appropriate development. For example, the *False Choice Urbanism* currently facing Bridge Park; 1) Complete demolition and restarting from scratch, or 2) Continue letting the building fall into disrepair and decay.



Harlesden Peoples Community Council

Abstract

Bridge Park is not just a building. It was a lifeline born from struggle, vision, and the fierce determination of a community that refused to be broken. Created by and for the people of Stonebridge, it offered belonging, dignity, and the radical possibility of shaping a future on their own terms. In the aftermath of systematic racial injustice and uprisings that scarred Britain in the 1980s, Bridge Park arose with a message of determination and hope: "Let's build, not destroy." As Darcus Howe expressed, "We built because we needed somewhere to think, to learn, to grow strong together." Bridge Park became a home, a classroom, a refuge, and above all an opportunity in the face of adversity.

Today, many of those same injustices persist in new forms, and Bridge Park's legacy feels more necessary than ever. The site sits in a moment of acute precarity, threatened physically through demolition and redevelopment and culturally through erasure of the pioneering community legacy. This exposes ongoing value and heritage exclusion, revealing how Black British histories are **systematically undervalued** within planning, conservation, and regeneration frameworks.

Through Policy interrogation, the Bridge Park Think Tank examines the conditions that frame Bridge Park's vulnerability. We **challenge "False-Choice" Urbanism**, rejecting the narrative that demolition is the only route to progress. Instead, we argue for continuity, care, and repair as generative and legitimate urban futures. We understand Bridge Park's current state to be the result of almost two decades of a process of managed decline, driven by mismanagement, underinvestment, and eventual shutdown, conditions that attempt to render demolition inevitable.

Our project positions retrofit and reuse as environmental imperatives, ethical obligations and honouring the original Harlesden People's

Community Council (HPCC) vision. Severed from the its surroundings by two major roads and three major train lines, the Bridge Park site deserves reconnecting and revaluing into the communities it has served for over four decades. In addition, with new understandings of the built environment's responsibility in the face of our changing climate, the site needs to step up to these rising challenges.

Furthermore, we adopt co-design as governance, aiming to further **co-design** discourse, and find legitimate and appropriate ways of redistributing decision making back to the community, while advancing a Secure by Design critique that challenges surveillance-led planning and the erosion of informal social and public space.

Our response is being led by interrogations of the policies and frameworks which shape our built environment, informing our understandings of how the site has been shaped, and how the site should be shaped in the future. From this, we are developing a set of outputs to demonstrate the important cultural legacy of Bridge Park, and how this should underline any future development on the site. Starting with archiving the overlooked architectural fabric of the site, a meanwhile use scheme connects this towards an adaptive reuse strategy and vision. This sits alongside a development matrix, mapping the potential futures for the site, and how they stack up in key assessments such as; demolition and density. Through this process we aim to demonstrate that a **culturally-specific** and **legacy-appropriate** future for Bridge Park is possible.



Bridge Park Think Tank

1.0

Critical Narrative



“If it’s had a real impact, it will be resurrected”

Where is Bridge Park?










BRENT LONDON

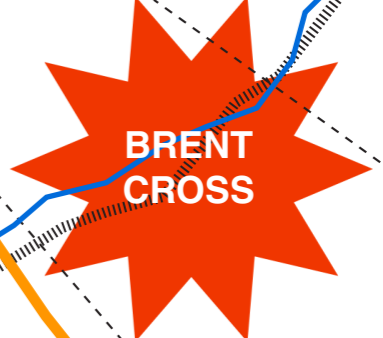
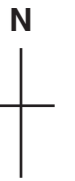
Bridge Park is in the southern part of the London Borough of Brent, in the ward of Stonebridge. The site is bound by the North Circular to the north, mainline and regional train lines to the south, and Brentfield Road to the east.

NW London is a strategic transport corridor for London and the wider UK, resulting in a setting of severance for the lived experience of people in the area. Despite being so close to major centres such as Wembley, Brent Cross and Park Royal, Bridge Park itself is disconnected from it's surroundings by these major pieces of infrastructure.

Key:

-  Brent boundary
-  Major centre
-  Stonebridge
-  Bridge Park
-  Train line
-  North circular
-  Waterways

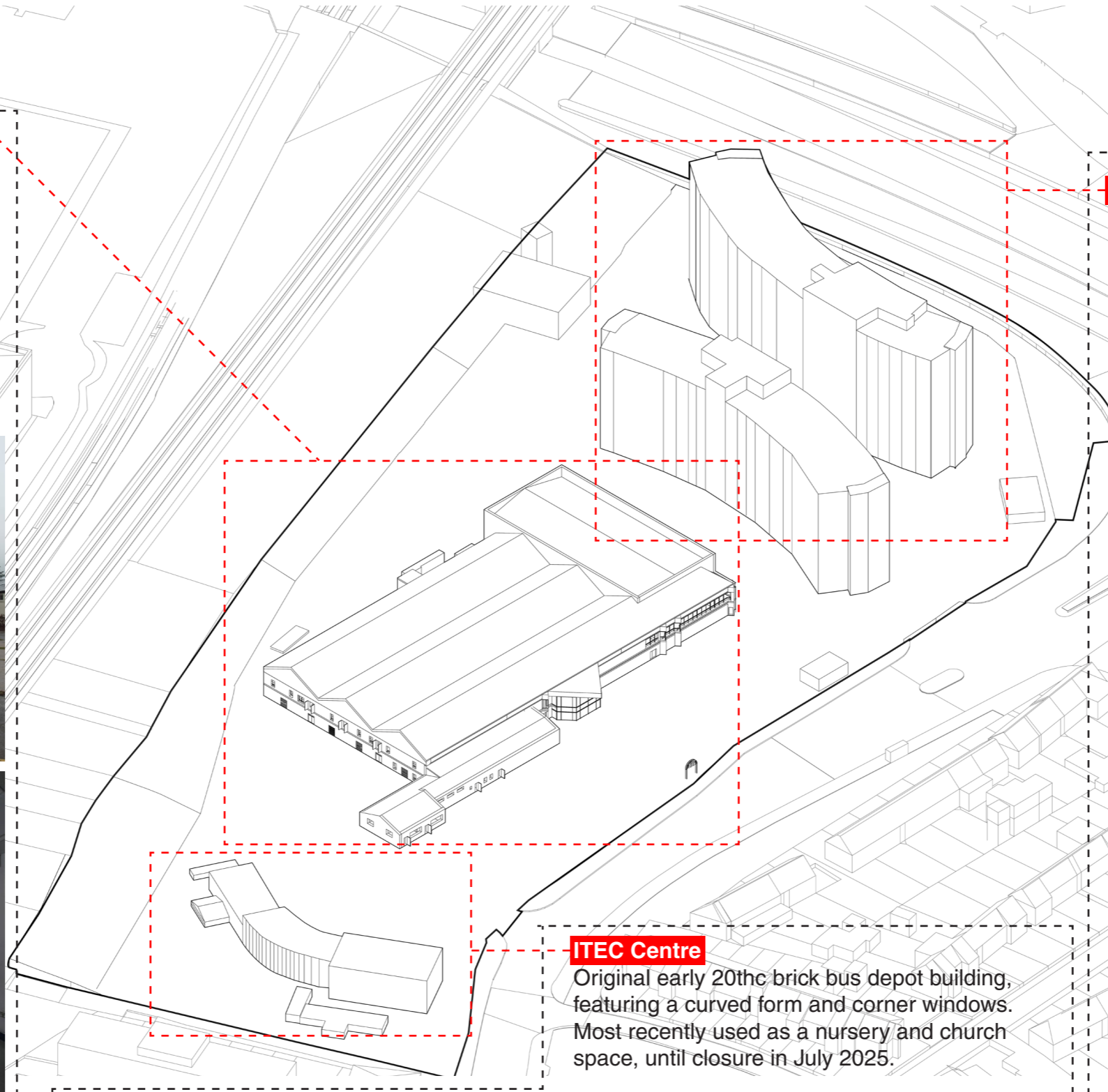
1000m



Existing Fabric

Bridge Park Enterprise Centre

Original c.1905 brick and steel frame bus depot shed, converted into its current form between 1981 and 1988. Although closed in July 2025, facilities in the centre include a large scale sports hall, theatre, gyms, business units and office space. The architectural form expresses the pragmatism and community organisation required to get a project like this off the ground, in the adverse conditions afforded to Black British inner city youth in the early 1980s.



UNISYS Towers

7 and 8 story crescent shaped concrete office towers, built around the late 1960s and early 1970s. Abandoned in 1996 and sat derelict since. The land around the base is currently used as a car wreckers yard.

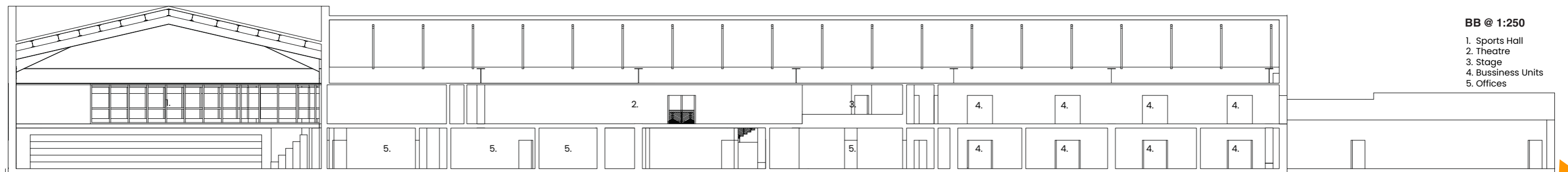
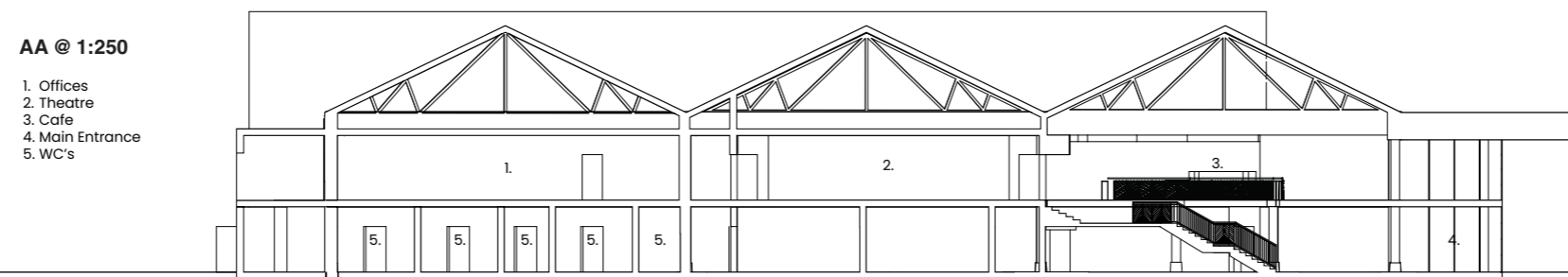
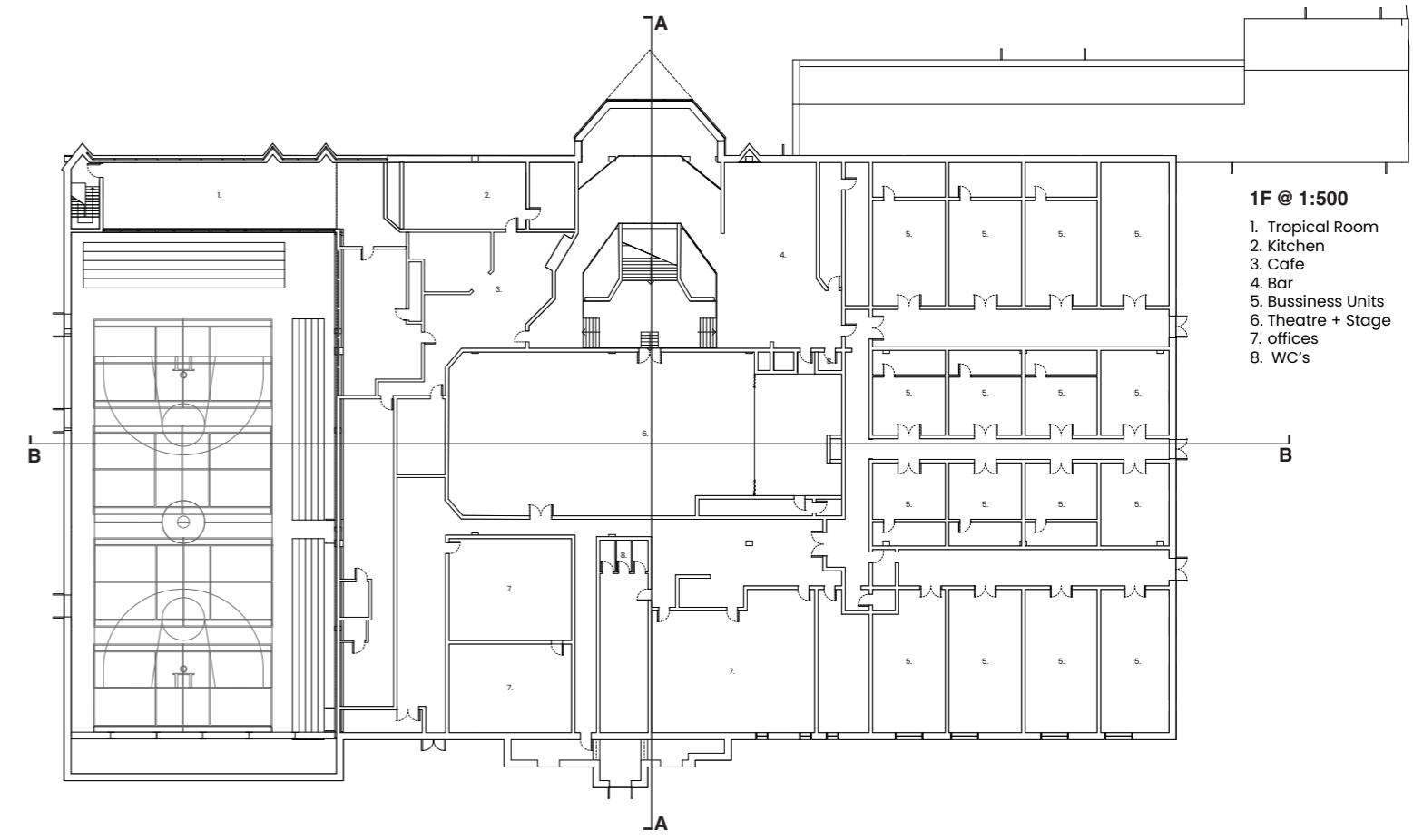
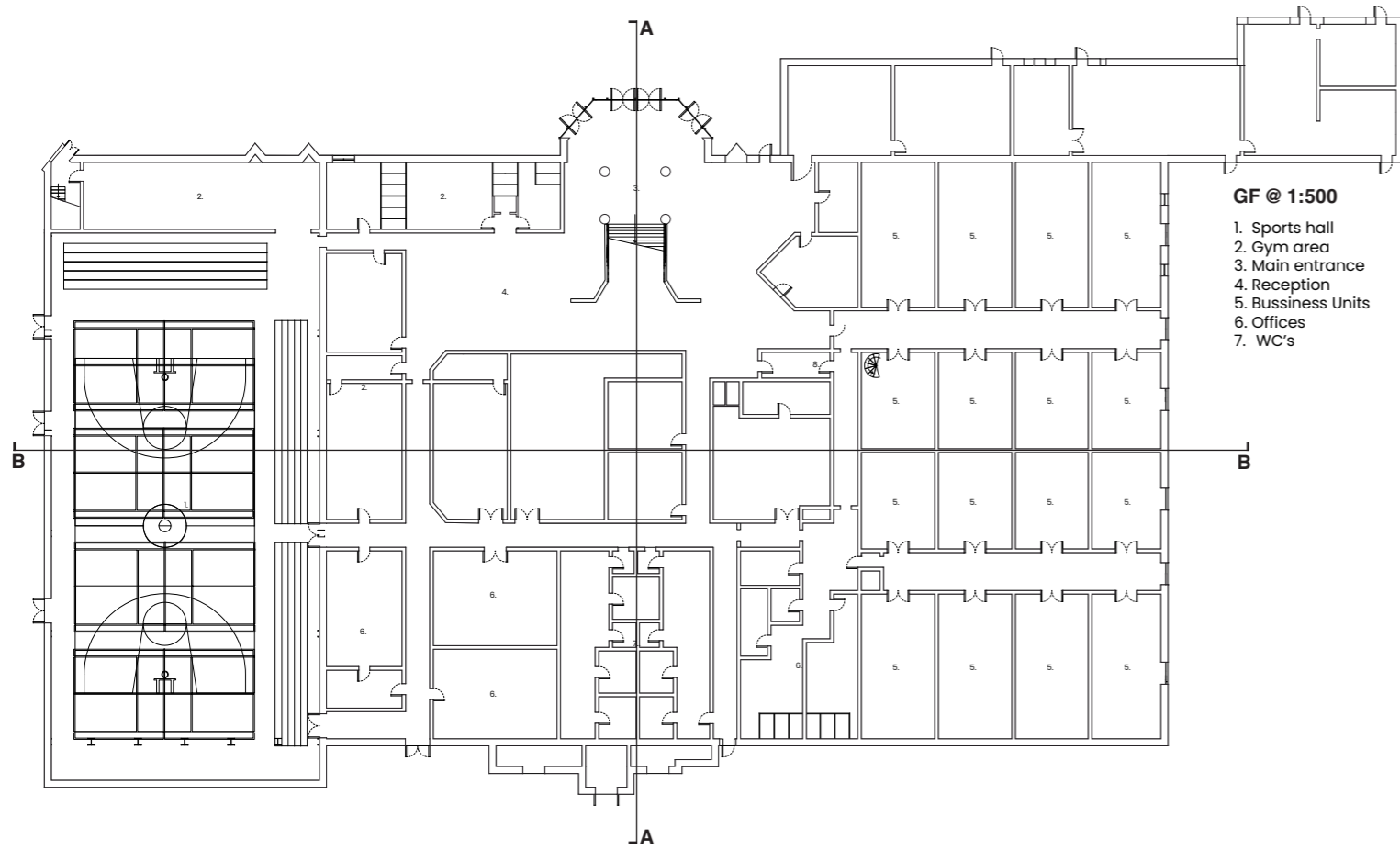


ITEC Centre

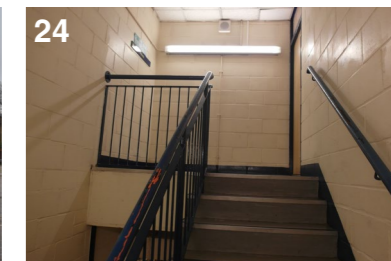
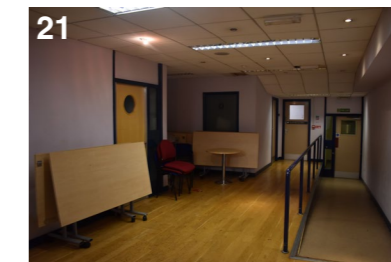
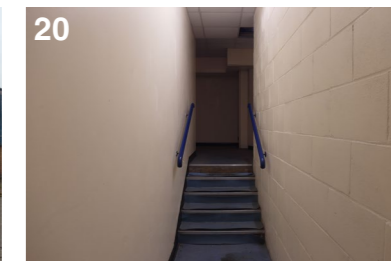
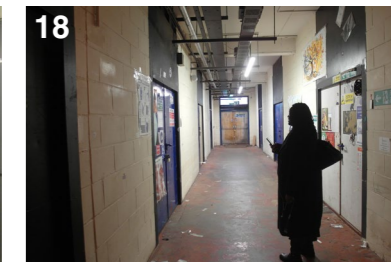
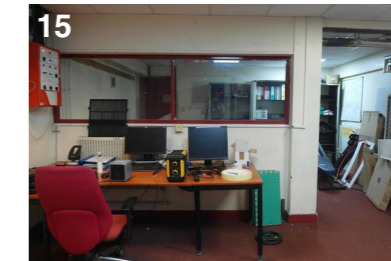
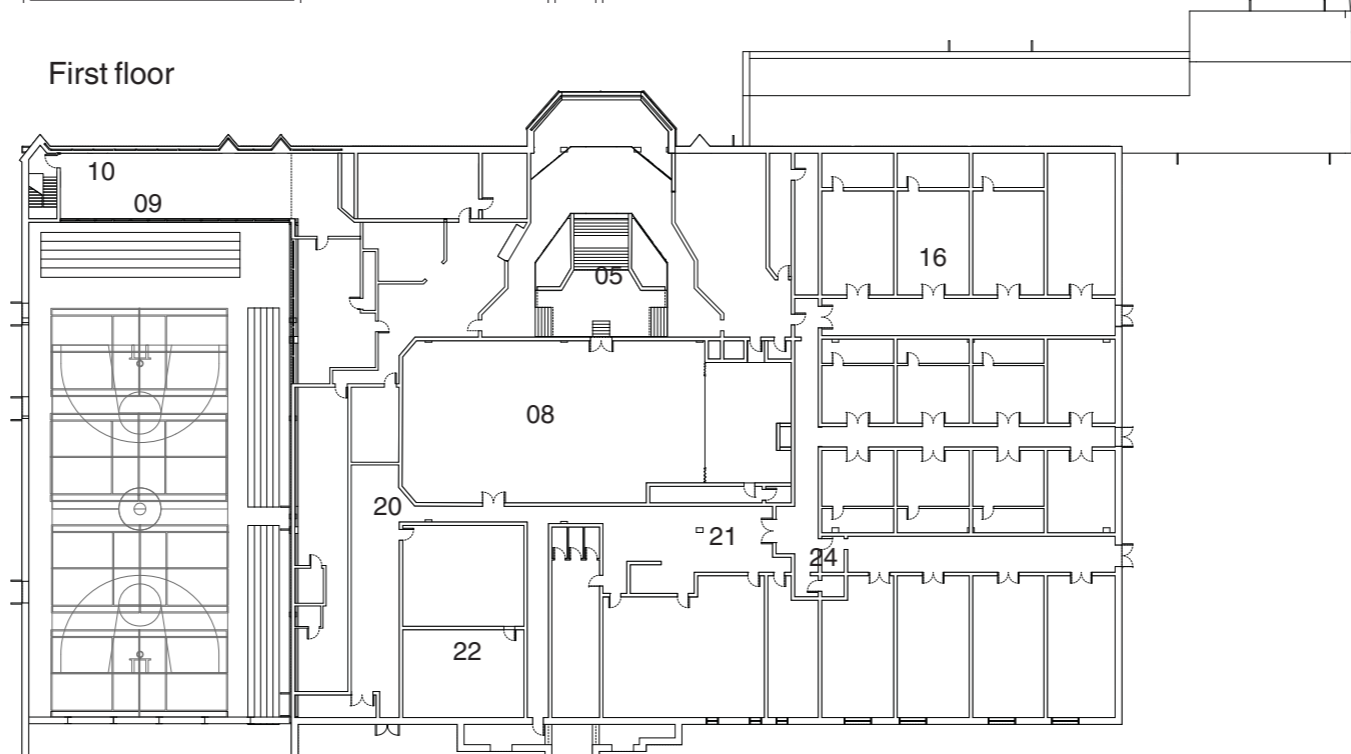
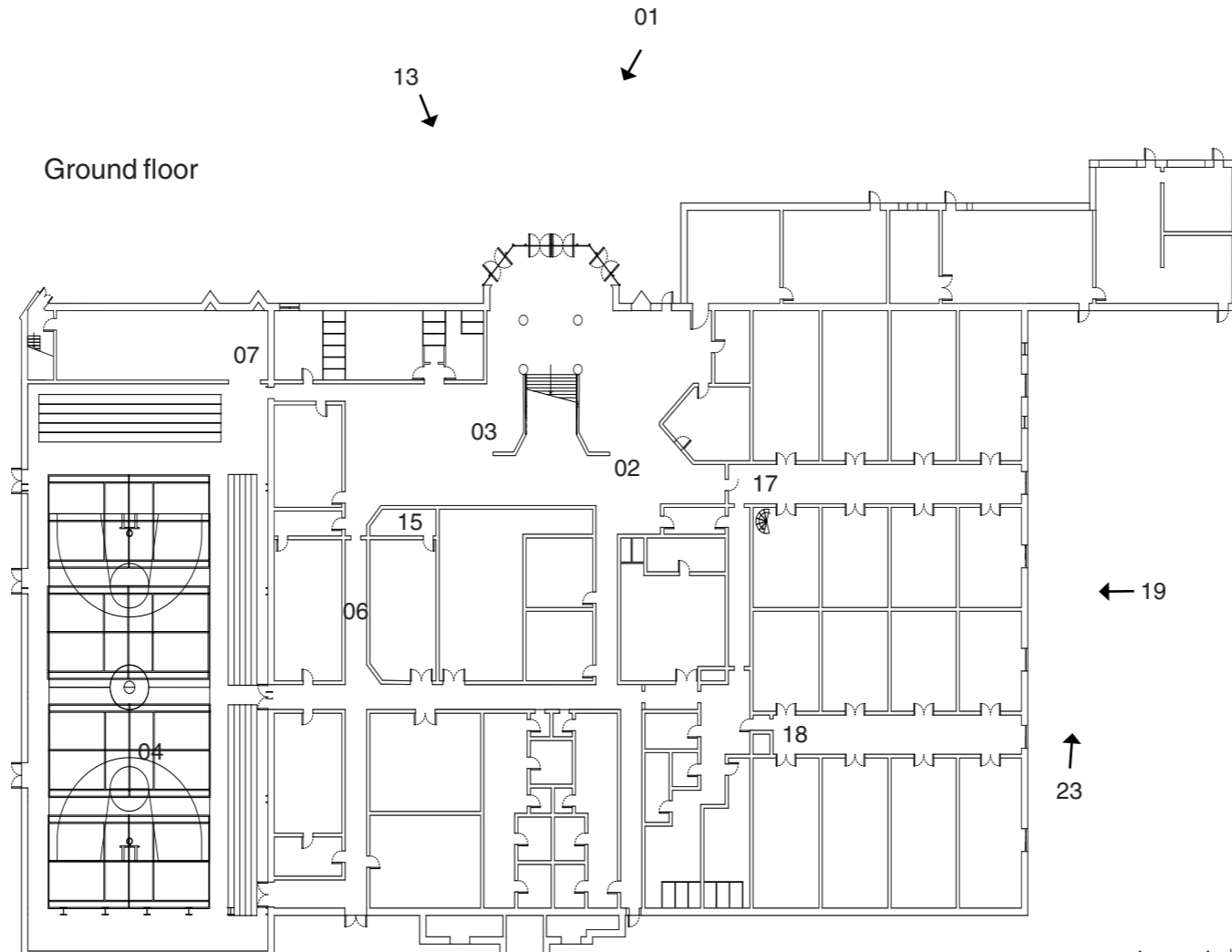
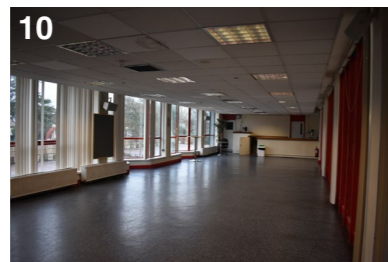
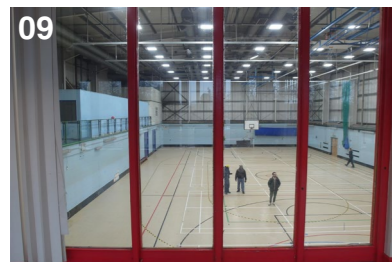
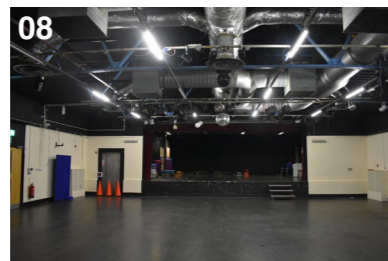
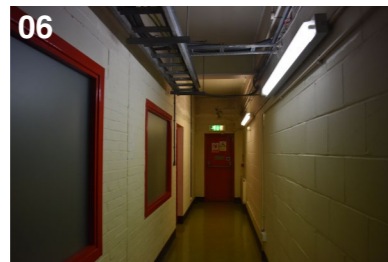
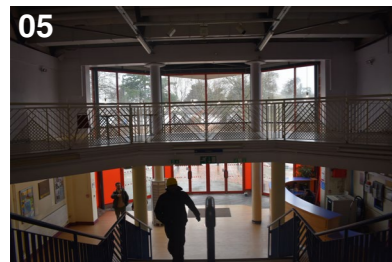
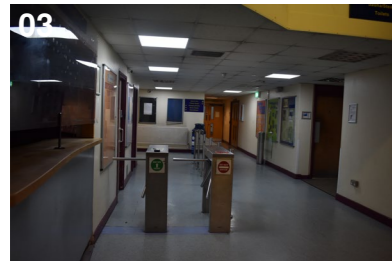
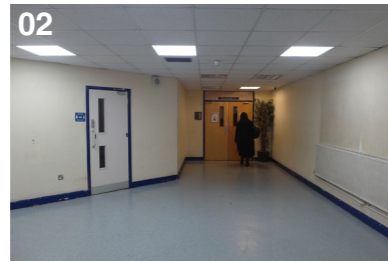
Original early 20thc brick bus depot building, featuring a curved form and corner windows. Most recently used as a nursery and church space, until closure in July 2025.



Bridge Park - Existing



Bridge Park Enterprise Centre



Assemble Outreach

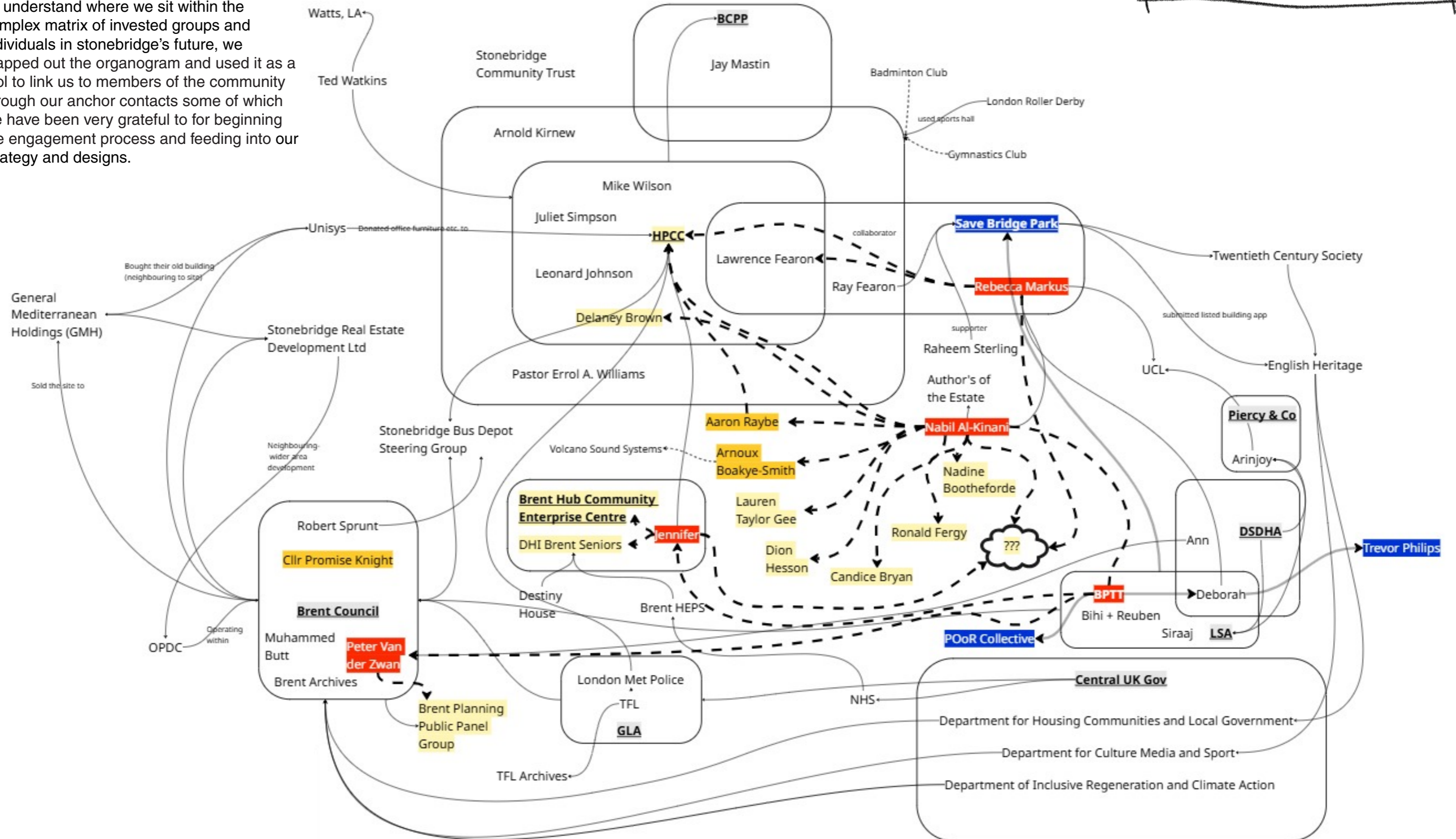
To understand where we sit within the complex matrix of invested groups and individuals in stonebridge's future, we mapped out the organogram and used it as a tool to link us to members of the community through our anchor contacts some of which we have been very grateful to for beginning the engagement process and feeding into our strategy and designs.

Outreach contact for codesign/ engagement

Potential outreach group/individual for engagement

Community Conversation started/ booked in

Outreach media for raising + spreading message

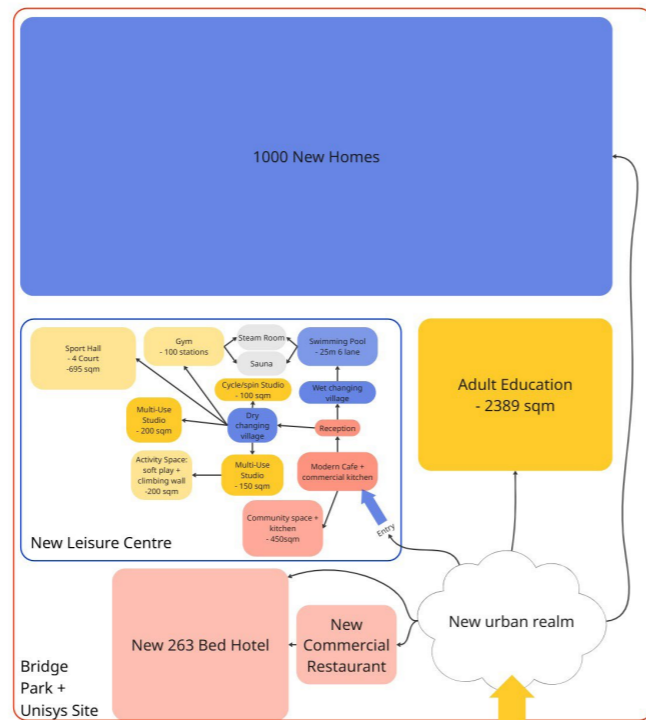


Key Characters !

As we developed our organogram, there were several key characters who emerged as having the biggest stake in both the history and future of Bridge Park. In order to gain an understanding of the site and its stories, we split the initial research tasks into these perspectives, which allowed us to understand the relationship each one has to Bridge Park, their successes, challenges and visions for the future. It was then in recompiling these varying perspectives that we found a lot of the richness to our research in the overlaps: where groups went about achieving the same goal in different ways, where they worked together or opposing each other, why- in response to what external factors , and the impact this has on the community.

Brent + GMH

Brent currently have a conditional land sale agreement with GMH (General Mediterranean Holding) which was established in 2017. On the condition of planning, Brent will sell the site to GMH for it to be developed mostly into housing, with additional leisure facilities, adult education and a hotel. Despite the planning decision being scheduled to take place last year, an application is yet to be submitted as of writing.



Council proposed schedule of accommodation

Aims of the Brent Council	Modern Community and Leisure facilities	→	Shared need to meet local, national housing targets as well as provide profit, takes priority over the previous use of the Bridge Park community enterprise centre	Aims of the Developer (GMH)	
More homes to meet the needs of Brent's growing population		→			Redevelop Bridge Park site to provide housing and leisure facilities
	More jobs and small businesses contributing to the local economy	←			Raise the value of the Harlesden area

HPCC

The HPCC (Harlesden Peoples Community Council) is a community organisation established by Leonard Johnson and other young people living on the Stonebridge Estate in 1981 amidst the context of increased discriminatory policing and the Brixton uprisings. They were responsible for the original vision for Bridge Park as a local entrepreneurship, education and leisure centre and undertook much of the management of both the building project and running the centre until to 1996. Then HPCC back the Save Bridge Park campaign which looked to list Bridge Park and aim for the site to be developed in a way which honours the original legacy of the project and avoids total demolition.

BPCC

In 2020, as the council prepared to sell the site to GMH, the HPCC filed a claim against them to dispute their right to do so under the original purchase in 1982 which was completed on behalf of the HPCC by Brent using combined funds of the council, the Department of the Environment and the GLC. The BPCC (Bridge Park Community Council) was formed to represent the HPCC and aimed to create an alternative proposal, but one which still involved total demolition of the original buildings. However, between the original court date and the high court trial, the B/HPCC disagreed with the way they were presenting evidence and arguments, which led to a fractured presentation and the trial ended in Brent's favour with the dissolution of the BPCC following shortly after.

Successful methods:

- 1. Collaboration
- 2. Sustainable growth
- 3. Negotiation
- 4. Respond to desires of community
- 5. Empowerment not charity

Challenges faced:

- 1. Reliance on larger organisations
- 2. Fracturing of goals
- 3. Battle of bureaucracy
- 4. Lack of protective legislation

Successful methods:

- 1. Transparency with community
- 2. Strategic future planning
- 3. Fundraising and volunteer mobilisation
- 4. Community engagement

Challenges faced:

- 1. Reached legal limits
- 2. Fracturing of internal relationships
- 3. Public support vs policy influence
- 4. Loss of momentum and capacity constraints

Critical Narrative

March 1981

Leonard Johnson, along with Lawrence Fearon + Juliet Simpson founds the Harlesden People's Community Council



HPCC start running classes out of the annexe teaching maths, english, black history, electronics and drama. They renovate the annexe and negotiate use of the Hilltop Club



April 1981

Leonard Johnson urges youths in Stonebridge to 'build not destroy' in response to potential agitation and the crowds dispersed without riot



Summer 1981

Ted Watkins of Watts County, LA visits the UK and starts mentoring the HPCC



March 1982

The Bus Depot is purchased for £1.8mil by Brent Council, the DfE and GLC on behalf of the HPCC. A Steering Group (7 HPCC, 2 Brent, 3 Community reps) given license to plan the site)



1982

Funding gathered by HPCC lobbies of funding bodies at local, national and international scale, including EU social fund.



Sept. 1983

Phase 1 of Bridge Park (the ITEC in the former office) is built and opened, offering IT + enterprise classes, changing rooms for the rec and a creche. Visited by Leon Brittan, home sec.



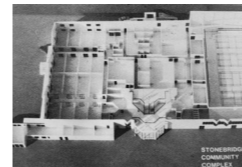
1984

Phase 2 begins on site and plans develop, relying on community engagement and splitting contract tenders to allow local spending + training



1985

£50k is lost from Bridge Park accounts. Brent Council takes over the development, installing new consultants to reduce the cost from £5.8-3 mil with no requirement to consult the community



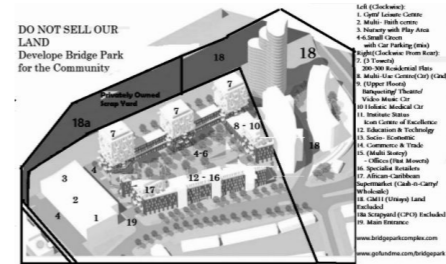
1987-8

Phase 2 is opened as a mixed-use entrepreneurial and leisure centre, inaugurated by Prince Charles in Dec. The largest black-led community centre in Europe.



2013-7

Brent Council release the covenant on the Bridge Park site and agrees a CLSA with GMH. Their development plans are met with an alternative scheme and legal battle are launched by the HPCC + BPCC



1996

Brent Council take over management of the centre



2020

High court case over ownership of the site between the B/HPCC and Brent Council.



2023

Leonard Johnson passes away, the fasted posthumous blue plaque is installed on Bridge Park facade for his work



April 2025

Save Bridge Park Campaign launched. Bridge Park applied to Historic England for listed building status



July 2025

Bridge Park closed and hoarded up



Spring 1981

Stonebridge Estate has 50% unemployment rate for young people

April 1981

Brixton Uprisings in response to increased police harassment, poor housing + systemic racial discrimination



Uprisings spread to 30 towns + cities across the UK, but not Stonebridge

Summer 1981



Nov. 1981

Scarman Report in response to uprisings. Acknowledges unequal opportunities but not systemic racism



Uprisings in Brixton following the shooting of Cherry Groce during police raid

1985



1987

Film 'Struggle for Stonebridge' released on BBC2 40 minutes

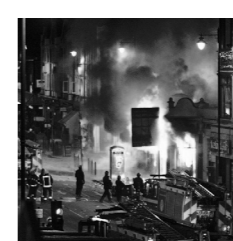


Thatcher's 'No such thing as society' Woman's Own Interview

1987

1997-2007

Demolition of the Chalkhill Estate blocks, 1997-2002. Demolition of the Stonebridge Estate block, 2007.



Mark Duggan's killing by the Met Police in Tottenham sparks uprisings across London and the UK, the largest civil unrest in over a decade

Aug. 2011

2020-1

The global COVID-19 pandemic drastically revealed health inequalities and closed all community facilities (many of which would never recover). Many suffered with the cost of living crisis and severe isolation











Following the killing of George Floyd by police in the US, BLM protests around the globe brought into focus the continued systemic racism within western policing and wider society

2020

Then + Now

Many of the social, political and economic circumstances of the 1980s which led to the desire for bridge park and the services it provided are paralleled today, highlighting the importance of maintaining social infrastructure, ongoing education and opportunities for greater economic independence for all. As importantly, the space and connection which Bridge Park provided in an often divided world, bringing together a wide catchment and range of backgrounds is still strongly desired today by local residents.

 movements	Discriminatory policing		 Brixton Uprisings, 1980s	Scarman Report, 1981
 direct action				
 policy/report				
New Cross Fire Protest, 1981				High Unemployment
	Low quality + lack of housing			
	Inflation			Rhodes Must Fall Campaign + inspired offshoots (2015-)
	Black Lives Matter Movement (2013-)		 Secure by Design Policy.	
	Greater extremist politics			Report on Institutional Racism in the Met Police, 2025

BBP (British Black Panthers - Brixton 1968-72)	
	Grunwick Strike, 1976-8
Economic Recession	
Decolonial Education Program	

Bridge Park in Numbers

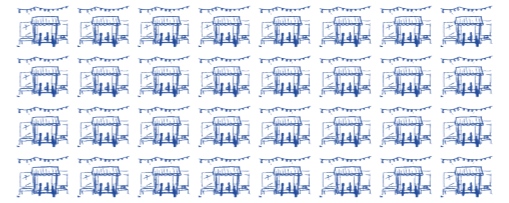
 10 People

Throughout its founding and heyday, bridge park served the local community in a variety of ways, strengthening the local economy through both jobs and spending opportunities. We believe that by finding the current demands for the neighborhood bridge park can continue to shape and positively impact thousands more lives and become a space where they can be served.

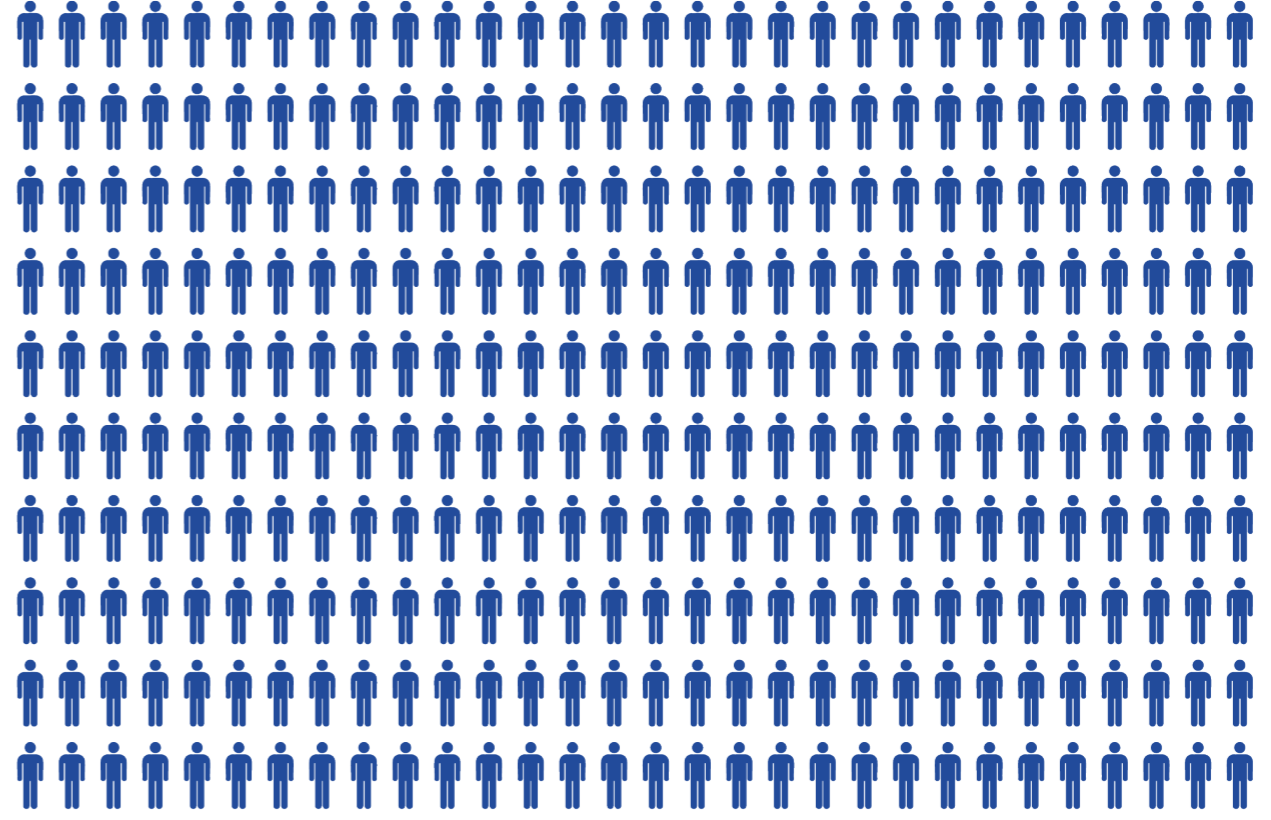
3 Major Tender Packages Carried Out by 2 Community Construction Companies



32 Startup Business Units



3000 People Served Weekly



400 Local People Trained Onsite



150 Youth Training Placements/ year



300 Jobs Created



Erasure of Community Spaces

Six Public Libraries Closed

3/4 Council-Run Youth Centres Closed

Community-led Initiatives Under Threat

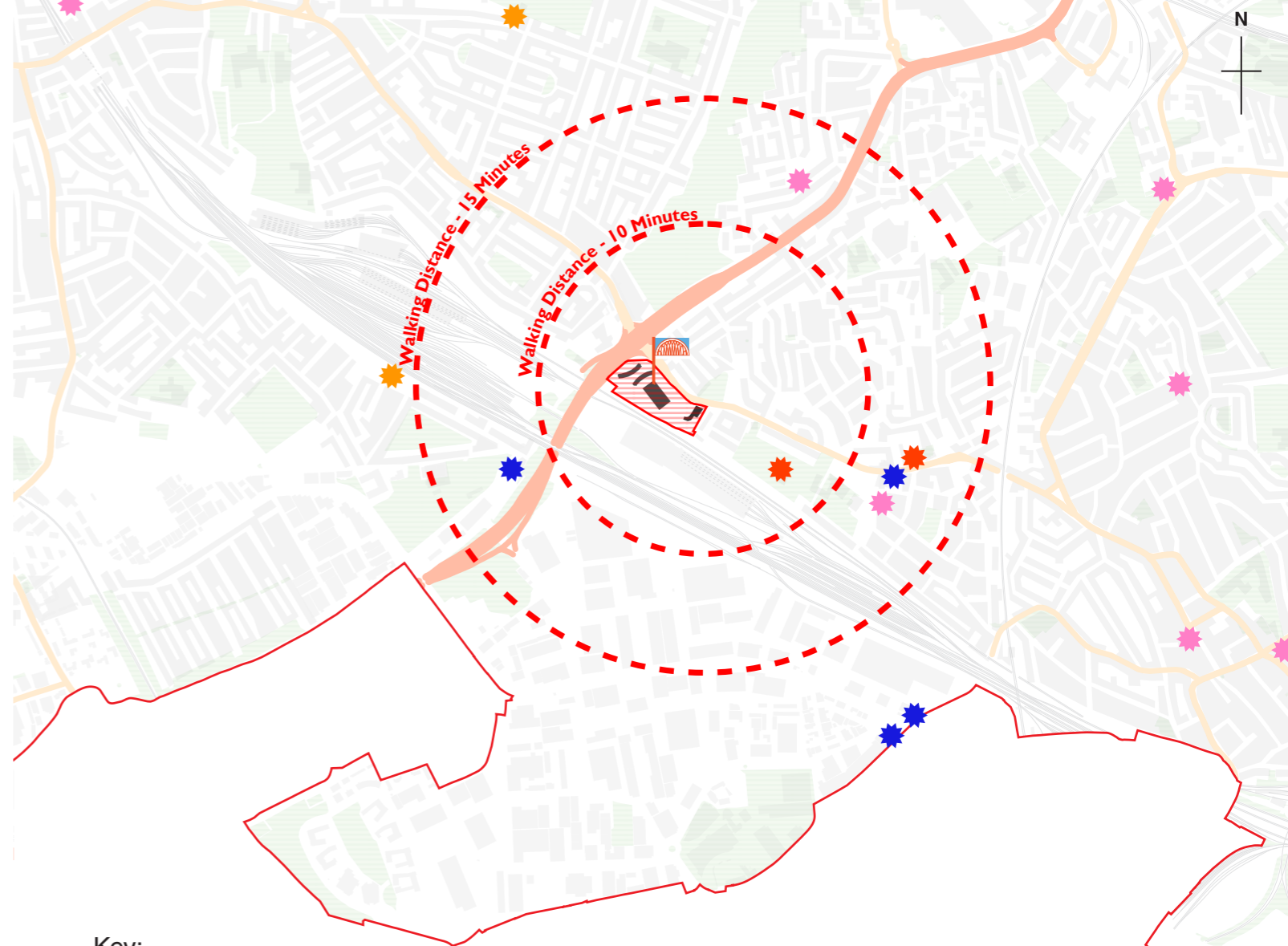
Closed/Demolished by Brent Council —
 Saved by the Community +
 Under Threat *

- Barham Library, Wembley — +
- Preston Road Library —
- Tokyngton Library, Monks Park —
- Neasden Library Plus —
- Grickeewood Library — +
- Kensal Rise Library — +
- Yaseen Youth Centre —
- Wembley Youth Centre — +
- Bridge Park Community Centre *
- Poplar Grove Centre *
- Welsh Harp Environmental Education Centre *
- Roundwood Youth Centre —
- The Carlton Centre *
- The Granville Centre — +*
- Mosaic Youth Centre —
- Brent Community Law —
- Brent Energy Solutions —
- Gopland Playing Fields —
- Stonebridge Adventure Playground —

“Robust community facilities and accessible services and support to young people are integral to fostering equal access to vibrant and supportive environments.”
 - Sarah Nelson, CEO at Foundation for Future London
 (Nelson, cited in Glass 2024)



Reproduction of Rebecca Markus's Plan showing community spaces closed / under threat of closure by Brent as of 2023



- Key:
- Site Boundary
 - Brent Borough
 - Walking Distance
 - Community Food Banks
 - Independent Businesses
 - Community Charities
 - Community Facilities
 - Green Spaces

Lack of local community infrastructure around Bridge Park

“ Massive cuts to the youth service and police shouldn't be the logical explanation for why there is so much violence. It is merely short sighted to expect an austerity-ridden institutionally racist society to parent and raise young minorities. The power is at home - family and community.”
 - Vanessa Tenkorang, Theory of change, Author of the Estate (Chalkhill Estate, 2019)

Across Brent, the cumulative closure of community spaces has shrunk the local infrastructure central to sustaining community social life, cultural expression, and local opportunities. Research by the Foundation for Future London found that Brent Council had the highest number of community space closures across the boroughs between 2018 - 2023 (Glass, 2024); revealing a pattern that is not just incidental but systemic.

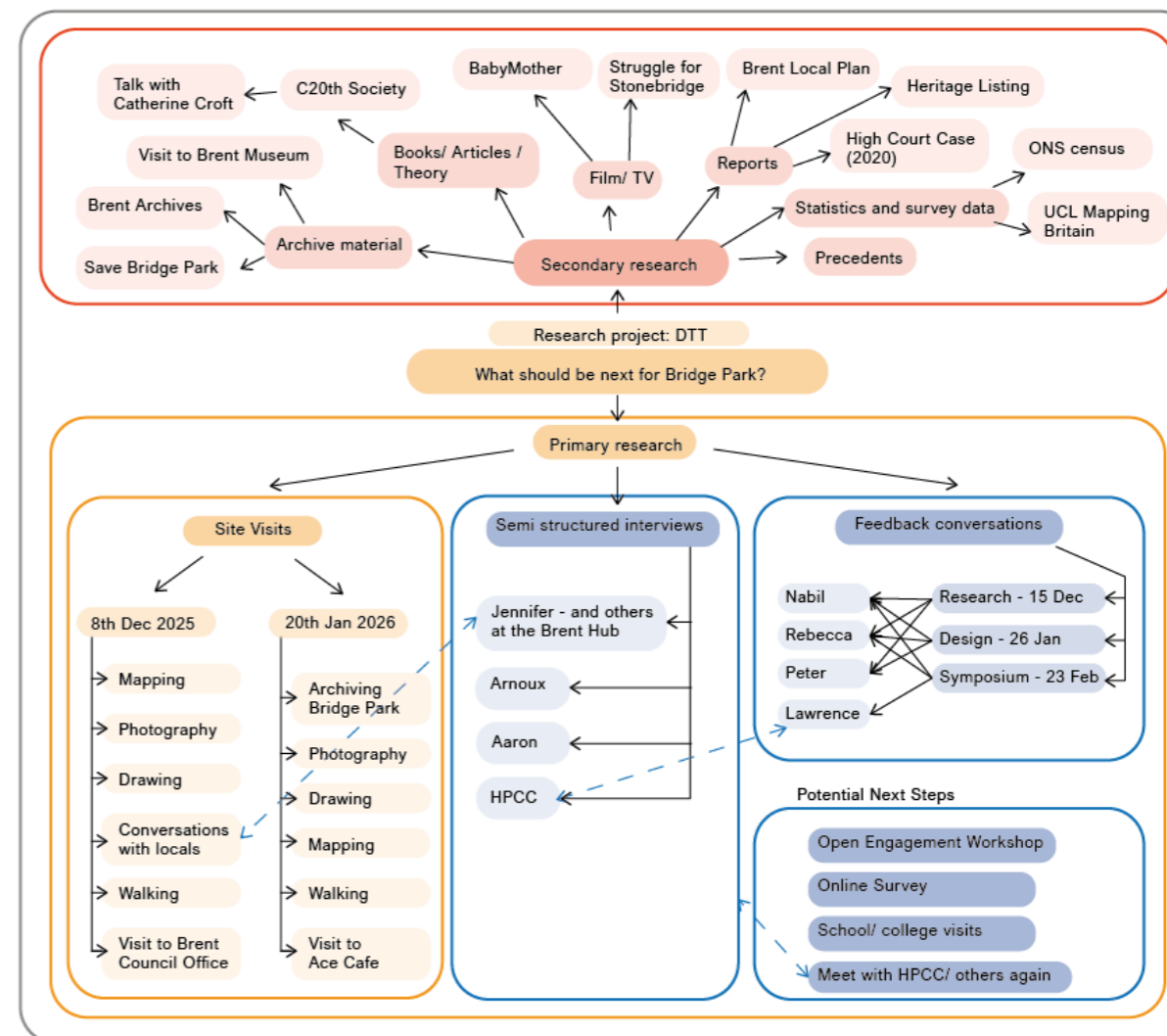
Around Bridge Park, the reality is especially stark. Local residents live with extreme scarcity of accessible, community-run spaces within walking distance, fostering an environment where connection becomes harder and harder. Bridge Park is not just another site; it is one of the last remaining community foundations in the area and it must be protected.

2.0

Critical Stand Point

Methodology

Our methodology has been continuously evolving, with much of our initial research comprising of secondary sources. In the first rounds, topics were split by identifying key themes or characters and detailed in depth by each group member to avoid overlaps and gain a deeper understanding. These were combined to see where the overlaps and potential gaps occurred and the topic was discussed and analysed as a group to derive which avenues warranted further investigation. We have also done several forms of primary research including seminal site analysis including producing architectural drawings and models which do not exist publicly.



This more quantitative research is balanced out by semi structured interviews with local people where we gathered opinions on the future of the site, the local attitudes towards the project past and present and personal stories connected to Bridge Park. The semi structured approach suited us for working with a range of people who had very different approaches to the site and its future and allowed us to have a successful interview even when we were hit with unexpected responses which was a great learning curve. We would ideally have liked to have carried out more primary research including more open engagement to widen the scope of potential voices. However, the timeframe of the DTT and the length of time taken to build up a trusted network and organise these means that although we have planned these and are ready for them, they have not taken place yet. Of course, we realise that in order to do genuine engagement for a project as this, a much longer term approach should be taken so as to not be extractive and self serving and we are also trying to honour this integrity with all our research.

“The people’s palace at risk.”

Uncertain Future!

This think tank has come about as Bridge Park's future is uncertain. The centre was closed in July 2025, and the freehold of the land is in the process of being sold to General Mediterranean Holdings, a financial holdings company with a seriously troubling history of misconduct, subject to planning permission for a redevelopment on the site.

Several development options have been suggested, all of which propose major demolition and loss of the existing physical fabric of the Bridge Park centre. The primary concern here is with the loss of the physical connection to Bridge Park's history, the legacy will be further erased and under valued.

Members of the local community have long been fighting for the protection of the site, spearheaded by original HPCC member Leonard Johnson, until his passing in 2024.

Rebecca Markus of the Save Bridge Park campaign has been involved since 2024, working alongside members of the HPCC to secure heritage listing status, as a mechanism to protect the site from inappropriate development.

The 6 of us as Bridge Park Think Tank, build upon the work of those around us, using our efforts to show that the site can work for everyone, whilst also recognising and celebrating Bridge Park's legacy.

Currently, the future of the site is shrouded in mystery.

Local people have been shut out of the decision making process, with limited knowledge of what the council has planned, with the site being boarded up and inaccessible, despite the building being in functional working order. This think tank envisions a future where agency and transparency is returned to Stonebridge.

The Bridge Park site presents an incredible opportunity for Stonebridge, Brent and beyond, with all parties involved wanting to see the site succeed. Our findings to date demonstrate a community deeply invested in the future of the site, ready to contribute to a successful future for Bridge Park.



Top: The theatre space at Bridge Park packed with hundreds of people concerned with the future of the site at a meeting in 2018 (Bridge Park Complex, 2018). Middle: The site boarded up, Dec 2025. Bottom: A visualisation of what is currently proposed to replace the Bridge Park centre after demolition, Brent Council.

Aims

In order to digest the over a century long history of the Bridge Park site, and the wider area's complex and layered social context into a tangible project which we could properly engage with, the Bridge Park Think Tank's outputs are guided by this hierarchy of Objectives, Strategies and Tactics. See on the right.

Identifying these themes took some serious research and critical thinking, and once arrived at, framed the project in a useful way to allow our time spent in the world of Bridge Park to be as useful to all parties involved as possible.

OBJECTIVES: key themes

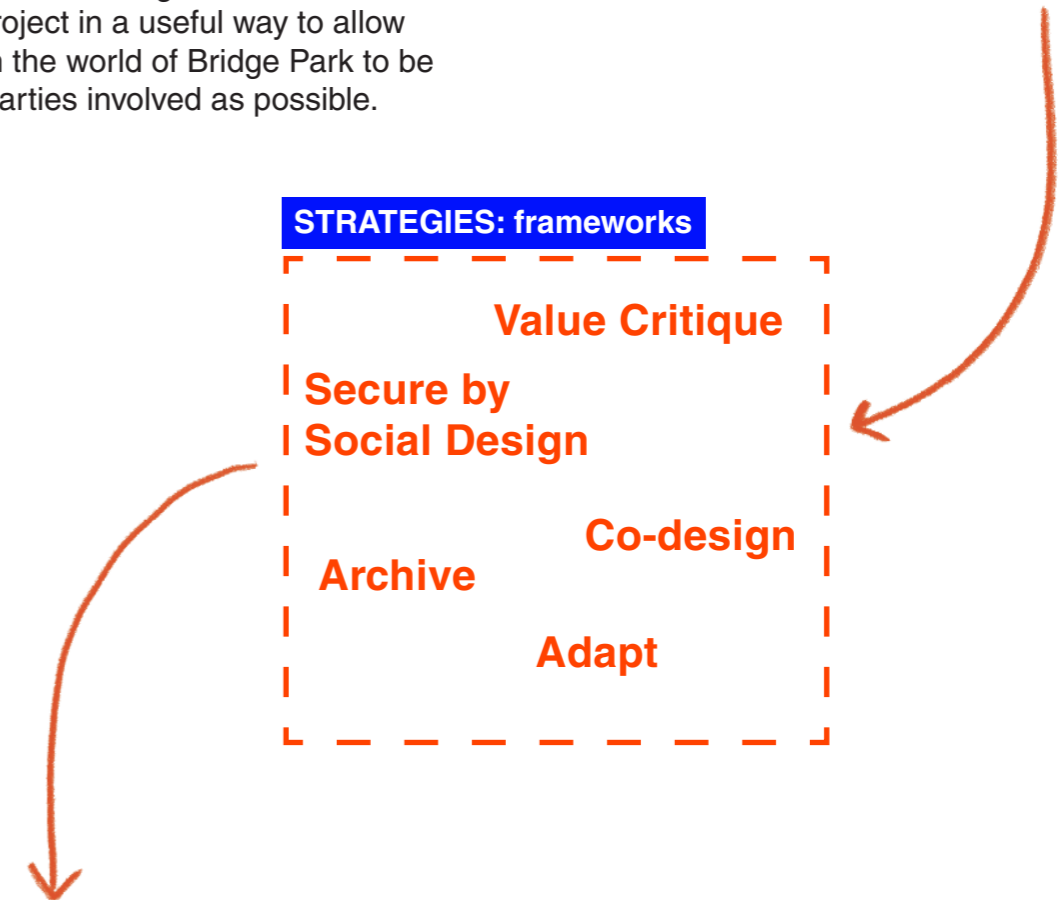
- Legacy
- Resilience
- Agency

STRATEGIES: frameworks

- Value Critique
- Secure by Social Design
- Archive
- Co-design
- Adapt

TACTICS: design

- Un-severing
- Adaptive reuse
- Flexibility
- Celebration
- Transparency



Existing Physical Context

The site is severed from its immediate context. Cut off to the north by the North Circular and west by the railway lines, making the site an enclave. The typologies around the site are characterised by predominantly residential buildings to the north and industrial buildings to the south. The Bridge Park site straddles this divide. The existing pedestrian experience is extreme, with narrow pavements against fast roads.

Despite its harsh context, Bridge Park is situated in a strategic spot presenting multiple opportunities, with regional transport connections, and major hubs such as Wembley and Park Royal nearby.

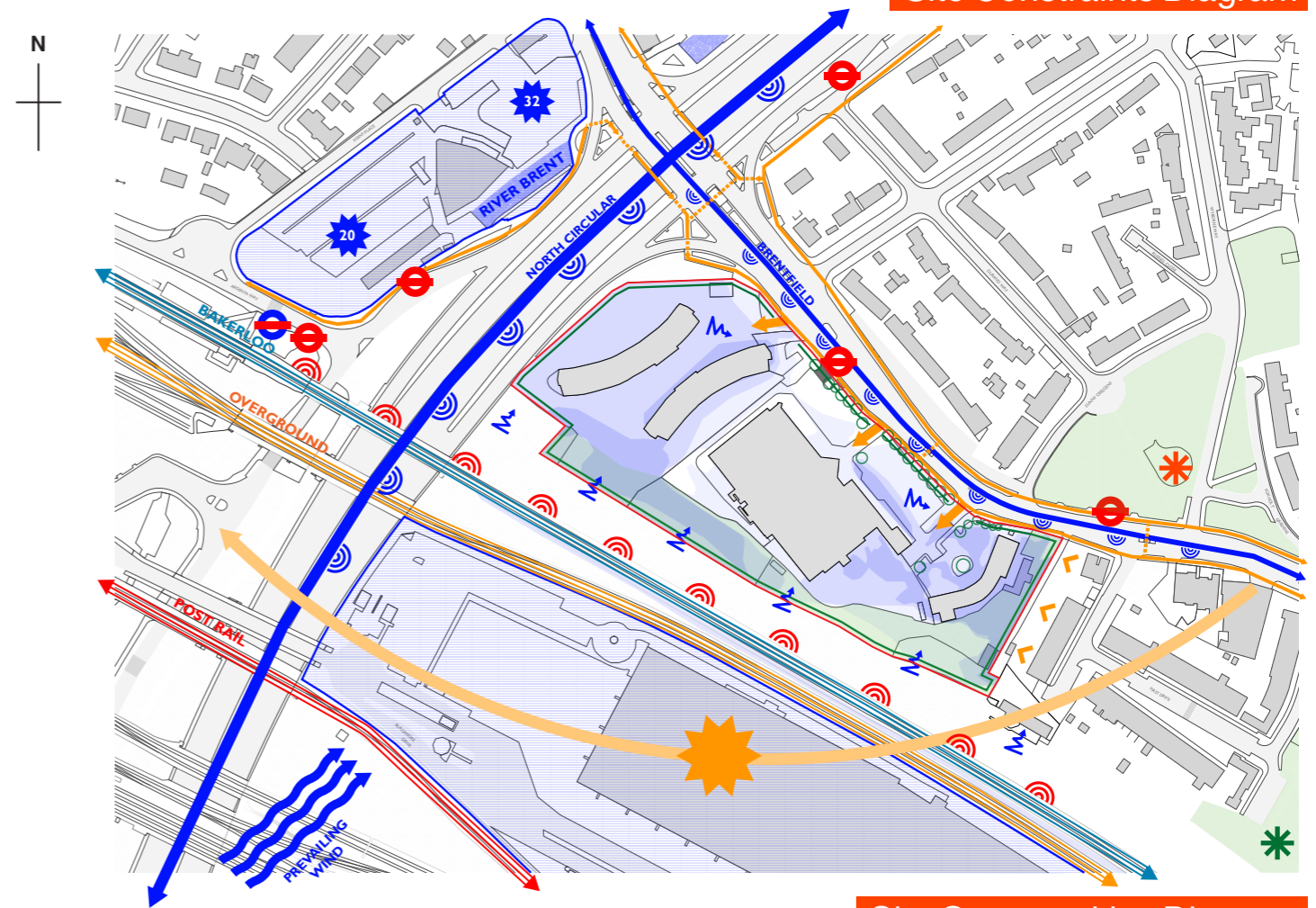
Additionally, the site sits on a flood zone and is prone to surface and river flooding. The flood risk is expected to increase in upcoming years due to climate change.

Alongside this, there are a series of fragmented green spaces in the area, alongside the railways, around the Brent River, and onto outdoor spaces such as Stonebridge Recreation Ground to the south.

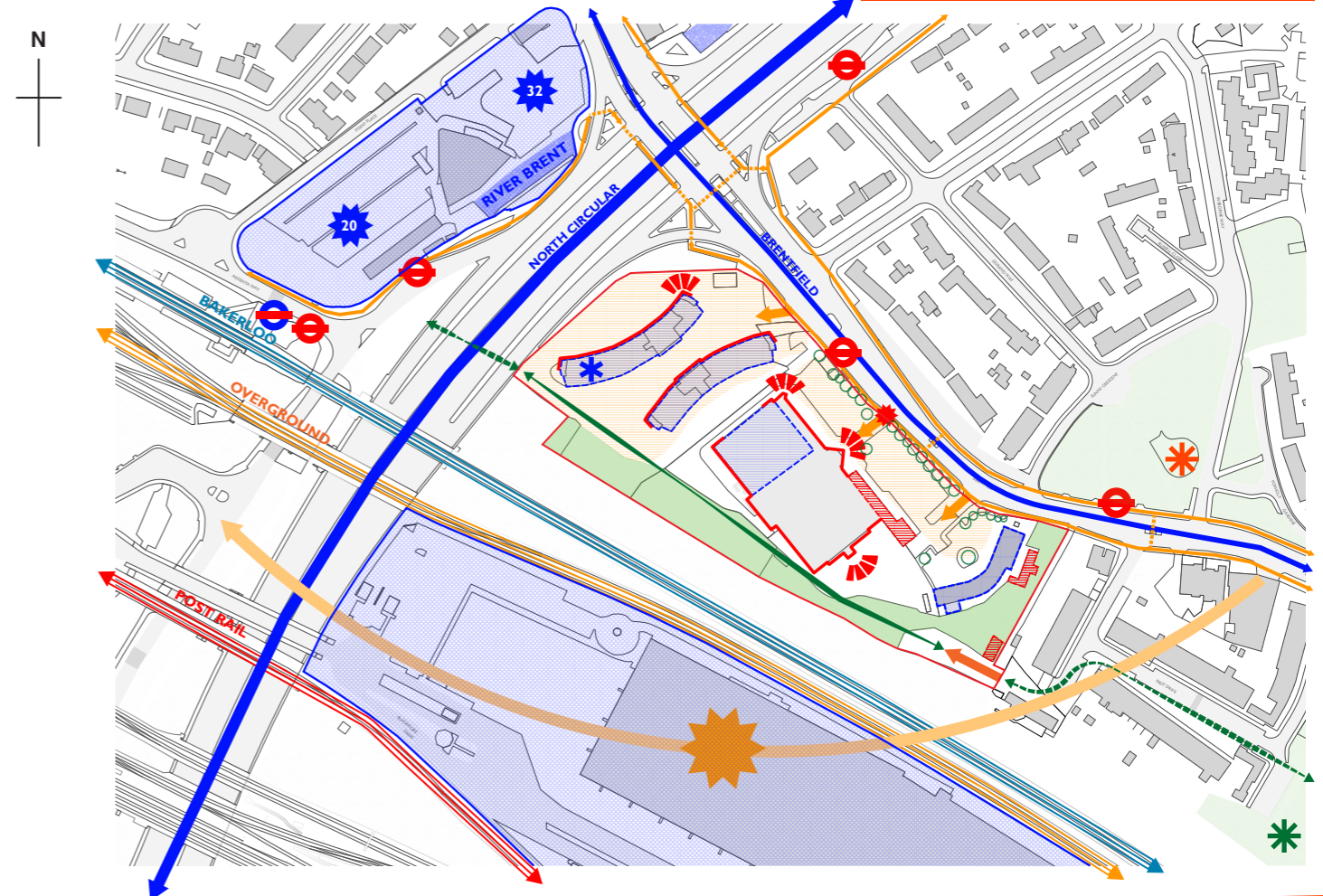
Key:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Red Line Boundary | Proposed Site Access | Marker Building |
| Defensible Planting | Play Area | Existing Bridge Park Gate |
| Potential Height | Recreation Area | Potential Green Route |
| Potential development Area | Green Spaces | Potential Green Link |
| Potential Demolition | Green Verges | Overlooking |
| Improvement to Public Realm | Existing trees | Noise - Train |
| Potential Upward Extension | Flood Risk - High | Noise - Road |
| Level Change | Flood Risk - Medium | Train Station |
| Vehicle Route | Flood Risk - Low | Bus Stop |
| Pedestrian Route | Active Frontage | Postal Rail |
| Pedestrian Crossings | Prevailing Wind | Bakerloo Line |
| Proposed Pedestrian Routes | River Brent | Overground Line |
| Existing Site Access | Key Elevations | |

Site Constraints Diagram



Site Opportunities Diagram



LET'S BUILD, NOT DESTROY

3.0

Frameworks

“You cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain amount of madness.”

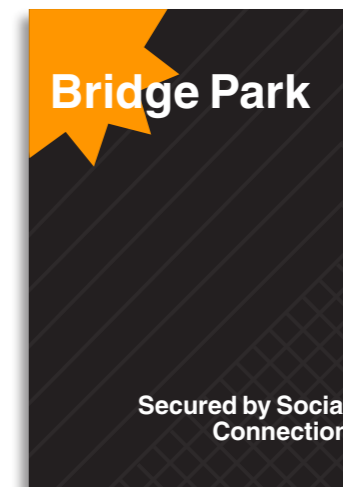
Frameworks

Central to an appropriate future for Bridge Park are our five policy frameworks, developed in response to research into the social, cultural and political landscape around Bridge Park. These frameworks include; a *value critique* of the current approach to heritage recognition, and how this has affected the recognition of Bridge Park; *Secured by Social Connections*, a response to Secure by Design policies, drawn directly from the urban fabric of Stonebridge; a *co-design* framework, to enshrine proper community involvement in Bridge Park’s future; an *adapt* framework, envisioning an environmentally appropriate future; and an *archive* framework, to sustain Bridge Park’s legacy for future generations.

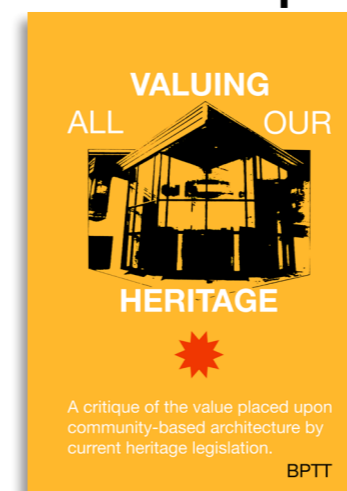
Check them out here!



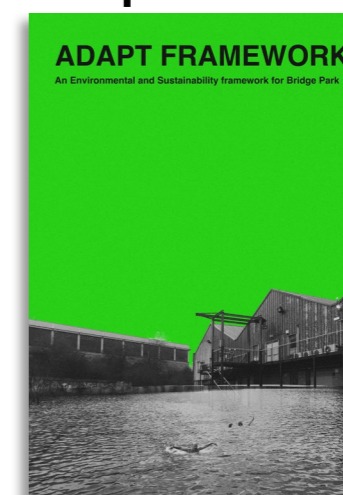
Secured by Social Connections



Value Critique



Adapt



Co-Design



Archive



Value Critique

Discussions around value and heritage have been key in the development of steps towards a vision for Bridge Park's future. Building off the work carried out by Rebecca Markus of the Save Bridge Park campaign, one of our key frameworks, *Valuing All Our Heritage*, begins to interrogate Bridge Park's relationship to value and heritage, how this relates to the wider context of heritage policies, and outlines some initial recommendations concerning Bridge Park's value and heritage in the future.

Beginning to understand the lack of recognition of Bridge Park's heritage value has uncovered the site's turbulent history, the ambiguity and inconsistency in the Britain's heritage landscape, and the misalignment of priorities for the future of the site amongst key stakeholders.

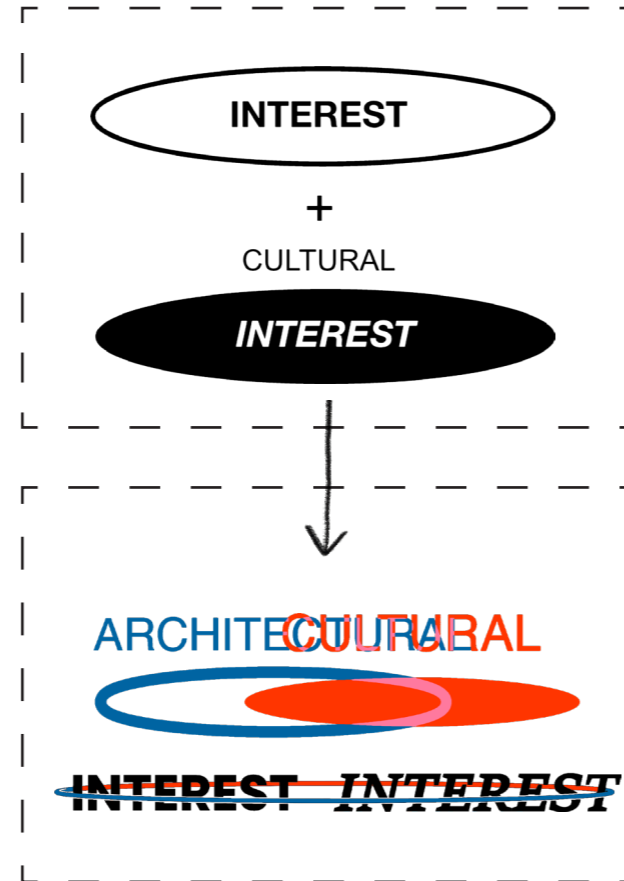
Following the centre's rejection for heritage listing by Historic England, the BPTT worked with the Save Bridge Park campaign to produce an appeal to the DCMS questioning some of the inconsistencies and false findings of the rejection report. It is important to note that for the BPTT, heritage listing is seen as a mechanism by which to reduce the risk of imminent erasure, rather than with a goal to immortalise the building in its current form - Many involved parties agree that aspects of the centre needs updating and rethinking to meet the needs of Stonebridge in 2026.

Key to the findings outlines in the Valuing All Our Heritage report, is an ambiguous and inconsistent dissection between **architectural value** and **cultural value** in heritage discourse.

These terms are applied in different ways to describe different aspects of different heritage assets, leaving questions about why some things achieve heritage listing, whilst others are rejected. Specifically, the subjective nature of terms such as 'cultural value' come into question, especially when the decision relates to an aspect of Britain's heritage traditionally overlooked; Black British Architectural Heritage.



This is fully elaborate in the Valuing All Our Heritage Report, with these pages outlining some of the highlights of this value critique and discussion.

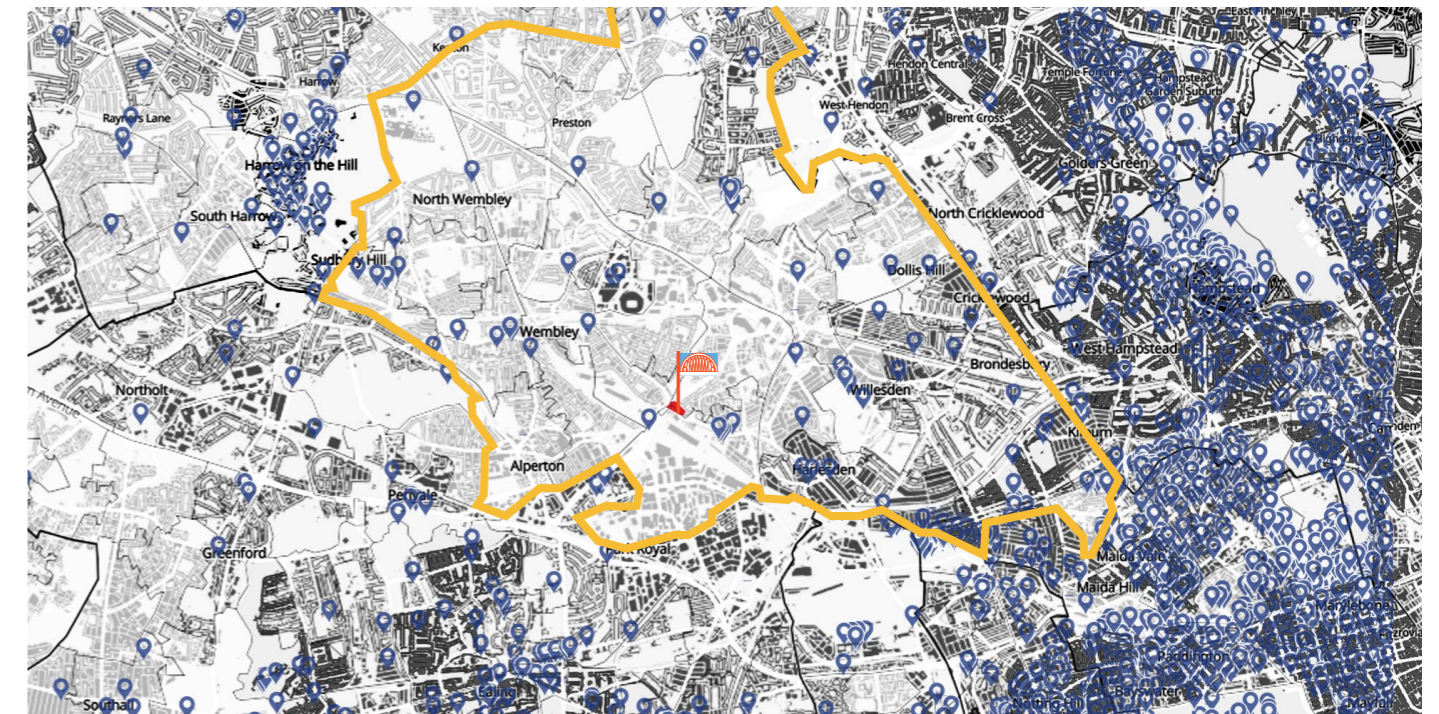


Key Findings

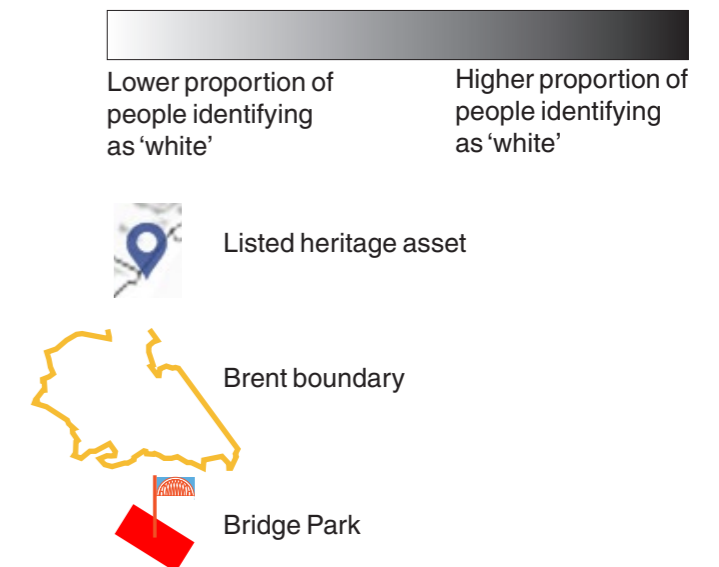
- 01 Limited, vague and inconsistent recognition of cultural heritage
- 02 Disregard for Bridge Park's relevance to national history and legacy
- 03 Limited, vague and inconsistent recognition of non-traditional forms of architecture
- 04 Distinct lack of heritage recognition in Brent's diverse communities

Key Recommendations

- 01 Non-political historic environment record keeping from local authorities
- 02 Greater engagement on community / neighbourhood / heritage panels
- 03 Open source heritage submission; 'The People's at Risk List'
- 04 Alternative routes to heritage listing? - Currently a monopoly
- 05 Encouragement of a Stonebridge local plan



The lack of architectural heritage recognition in parts of Brent is particularly evident when mapped. See above. When overlaid with ethnic identities of NW London, a stark pattern emerges. Areas which identify as more 'white' have a significantly higher number of architectural heritage assets recognised, in direct contrast to areas identifying as less 'white'. It is important for this not to be understood at a directly surface level - There are a myriad of socio-economic and political factors at play here, and this pattern becomes harder to discern in other areas of London. However, when analysing this on a particularly Brent, and more specifically Stonebridge scale, it draws out questions around approaches to recognising local and diverse heritage, especially in the face of Bridge Park's application being rejected.



Heritage Rejection Critique

See here a snapshot of the Historic England recommendation for rejection report, annotated with comments from the appeal, developed alongside Rebecca Markus of the Save Bridge Park campaign.

Historic England Advice Report 12 December 2025

provision. Additionally, some of the original glazed doors have since been replaced with plain ones, reducing their original shop-front appearance.

While the building's multi-functional role continued under its management by London Borough of Brent, the incremental alterations, as well as the lack of spatial interest or surviving late-1980s fixtures of note, means that the current internal layout does not retain notable late-C20 building fabric or spatial interest. Furthermore, several of the specific activities and services originally offered by the community-managed centre when it opened in the late-1980s are not clearly illustrated in the surviving building fabric.

Historic Interest

The key consideration in this case is whether important aspects of national historic interest, events or people are illustrated in the building's current form affording a strong connection with the valued aspect of history.

As explained in the Historic England guidance on Special Historic Interest in Listing, it is unusual for a building to be listed solely on the basis of historic interest. Most buildings have both special historic interest and special architectural interest to a lesser or greater extent, and these two criteria must be considered together. There are occasions when there is little obvious architectural interest, but even when special historic interest is the main factor in listing a building there must always be fabric of interest to protect.

Recent listing assessments have identified the role of under-represented communities and groups in contributing to the special interest of buildings on the List. The Brixton Market buildings (NHLE entry 1393881, Grade II) are recognised for their historic significance as the commercial and social heart of the African-Caribbean community that settled in Brixton after the Second World War. Similarly, the special interest of the late-C20 Brixton Recreation Centre (NHLE entry 1436440, Grade II) includes recognition of its cultural significance as a much-valued social centre for the community which was chosen by Nelson Mandela as part of his historic state visit in 1996 in the area most synonymous with post-war Black British culture. However, for both these buildings, and the Howitt Building cited below, the historic interest contributes to the special architectural and historic interest of the building overall.

It is the case that the Bridge Park Community centre complex is the manifestation of a grassroots initiative, instigated by the local African-Caribbean community to provide much-needed facilities and intended to be managed by the community for the community. It was created following the widespread civil unrest in the 1980s that arose from racial, social and economic inequalities disproportionately affecting Black and multi-ethnic communities. Principally affecting the St Pauls area of Bristol, Toxteth in Liverpool and Brixton in south London, the national significance of the riots continues to be a matter of discussion. In his book *Black and British: A Forgotten History* (2016), David Olusoga describes the riots as 'fought by young black people in response to years of systemic persecution and prejudice' and considers that while they 'marked the beginning of the end of one chapter, the nature of the next new age that followed remains to be seen' (p 517).

Crucially, the riots did not directly relate to the Bridge Park site. The formation of the HPCC, their early community work and the aversion of a potential clash between a group of young local residents and the police, led by co-founder Leonard Johnson, occurred in and around the HPCC's original premises within the Stonebridge estate approximately 400m east of the former bus garage site.

Consultees opine that the HPCC's vision served as an inspiration to other Black communities across the country and more widely, and that the complex stands as a rare and pioneering example of Black-civic enterprise, self-determination and community empowerment. The very specific circumstances under which the conversion of the bus garage into a multi-purpose community centre was conceived, organised, and completed does not allow for easy comparison with similar enterprises of that time. Neither has evidence been presented to allow us to quantify its impact on similar community initiatives nationally. However, it appears that the adaptation or creation of community facilities of this kind with strong involvement from members of the country's African-Caribbean community was witnessed elsewhere in the country during the 1980s. A contemporary, unlisted example is the Malcolm X Centre in Bristol (formerly known as the St Barnabas Community Centre). It is a purpose-built community centre instigated by the St Pauls Community Association, formed in 1982 in the wake of the civil unrest that took place in St Pauls, Bristol, in 1980. Funded by Avon County Council, construction began in 1983 and was completed in 1984. However, due to dissatisfaction with the design provided by the local authorities, the building was not fully adopted by the local community until 1988-1989, when further funding was secured for improvements. There are also some similarities to the Howitt Building in Nottingham (NHLE entry 1454941, Grade II) originally built for the Raleigh Cycle Company, listed for its special architectural interest as a high quality inter-war office building. In the 1980s, it was purchased by Nottingham City Council and in 1981, the building's concert hall was re-opened by the 'West Indian Cavaliers Sports & Social Club' initially as a music venue. Community groups continued

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1.1 This reasoning misunderstands the nature of the historical association. Bridge Park's significance is not contingent on being the precise site of unrest or early HPCC intervention, but rather on being the most complete and enduring embodiment of Leonard Johnson's "Let's Build, Not Destroy" philosophy.

With the estate demolished, Bridge Park remains the sole surviving structure that expresses Johnson's philosophy and Stonebridge youth's profoundly constructive response to one of the most severe episodes of civil unrest in British history.

1.4 Fails to give proper weight to surviving elements of the building's fabric that materially illustrate its historic interest, including:

- A. Business and workshop units
- B. Surviving bus garage fabric and legible adaptive reuse
- C. Theatre, sports hall, and bar
- D. Design style

The fabric of Bridge Park is a direct product of the history and legacy the people of Stonebridge were able to achieve in adverse conditions.

1.2 Bridge Park, by contrast, was never intended as an architectural landmark. Its design is utilitarian, functional, and rooted in urgent community needs. A more relevant precedent is the Bletchley Park huts, associated with Britain's Second World War codebreaking operations.

These characteristics reflect the community-led, urgent response to the 1981 riots and the practical conversion of an industrial building with limited resources, analogous to the functional pragmatism of the Bletchley Park huts.

1.5 The relatively brief period of community-led management does not diminish Bridge Park's special historic interest.

The building demonstrates the ability of Black youth to take an idea from conception to creation, secure funding, achieve national recognition, establish a space that served the community for over 35 years, and leave a lasting legacy that continues to resonate today.

The relatively short period of community-led management reflects challenges common to grassroots initiatives, which are often constrained by structural, financial, and organisational factors.

Historic England Advice Report 12 December 2025

to manage the space as the Marcus Garvey Centre with additional facilities including a creche being provided over the years. The List entry recognises the building's importance to Nottingham's African-Caribbean community, initially due to a landmark challenge to the company's selective employment policy, and subsequently as a cultural and social support centre.

Shortly after the official opening in 1988 the Bridge Park complex was reported to be the largest Black-led complex of its kind in Europe. Although it principally served the local community, following the opening of the Bridge Park Community Centre, the HPCC model was subsequently proposed as a 'flagship' for Black community enterprise across the UK. However, due to various financial difficulties, the community-led SGC's licence to occupy was revoked in 1992, and the SGC went into liquidation in 1994. As such, the distinctive period of community-led management of the building was relatively short-lived. Many of the claims to historic interest lie in the activities undertaken by the HPCC as part of their overall enterprise, some of which were in place before the Bridge Park complex was built. The community group's role in drawing in funds for the building's development, creating jobs and training opportunities for an under-served population experiencing high levels of unemployment is fully acknowledged but is not strongly represented in this building of low architectural merit.

Strong views for and against listing Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre have been expressed during our assessment of the case. Listing cannot preserve the function of a building, secure its ownership or prevent demolition; it is primarily a tool to manage the special interest of a building through the planning process. The enterprise created by the HPCC and Leonard Johnson provides a powerful narrative about the imagination and determination of a group of young Black people to improve the lives of their community in the face of systemic discrimination. Bridge Park community leisure centre stands as a testament to their endeavours, and has significant symbolic importance to the local community, but the historic significance of the HPCC, Leonard Johnson and the enterprise created with the community is not sufficiently reflected in the current building to justify listing, given the lack of architectural interest. The legacy of HPCC, Leonard Johnson and its community is a story that should continue to be celebrated but by means other than listing.

The Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre falls short of the criteria for listing; it is recommended that a Certificate of Immunity from listing be issued.

CONCLUSION

After examining all the records and other relevant information and having carefully considered the architectural and historic interest of this case, the criteria for listing are not fulfilled. Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre is not recommended for listing and a COI should be issued.

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION

Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre, an early-C20 former tram depot converted in the 1980s to a multi-purpose community centre, is not recommended for listing, and a COI should be issued, for the following principal reasons:

Degree of architectural interest:

- * the 1980s conversion of the building from an early-C20 tram shed to a multi-purpose community centre does not display any special architectural quality in terms of design, materiality, composition or structure, and apart from a very simple memorial stone and opening plaque there is no meaningful reference in the surviving fabric to the community enterprise which led to its creation;
- * with the rejection of the community group-appointed architect's original design due to funding shortfalls, the final scheme undertaken and approved by the London Borough of Brent, represents a conventional approach to the building as completed;
- * the interior of the building has largely multi-functional spaces without any notable 1980s fixtures, some of which have undergone structural alterations. The most distinctive feature of the building, the former workshops, are one element of the larger whole and although their inclusion is unusual within a community or leisure facility, they are not so significant to raise the building's level of architectural interest.

Degree of historic interest:

- * it was reported at the time of its opening in the late-1980s as the largest Black-led complex of its kind in Europe; however, the community-led management was relatively short lived;
- * there are claims of interest relating to an enterprise led by a group of young Black people from the African-Caribbean community of Stonebridge to provide an extensive range of facilities for the community by

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1.3 The report repeatedly conflates architectural interest with historic interest, treating the absence of architectural distinction as determinative of whether historic significance is adequately expressed in the Bridge Park's fabric.

the report conflates historic interest with architectural interest by treating the absence of architectural merit as determinative of whether the building's surviving fabric expresses historic significance.

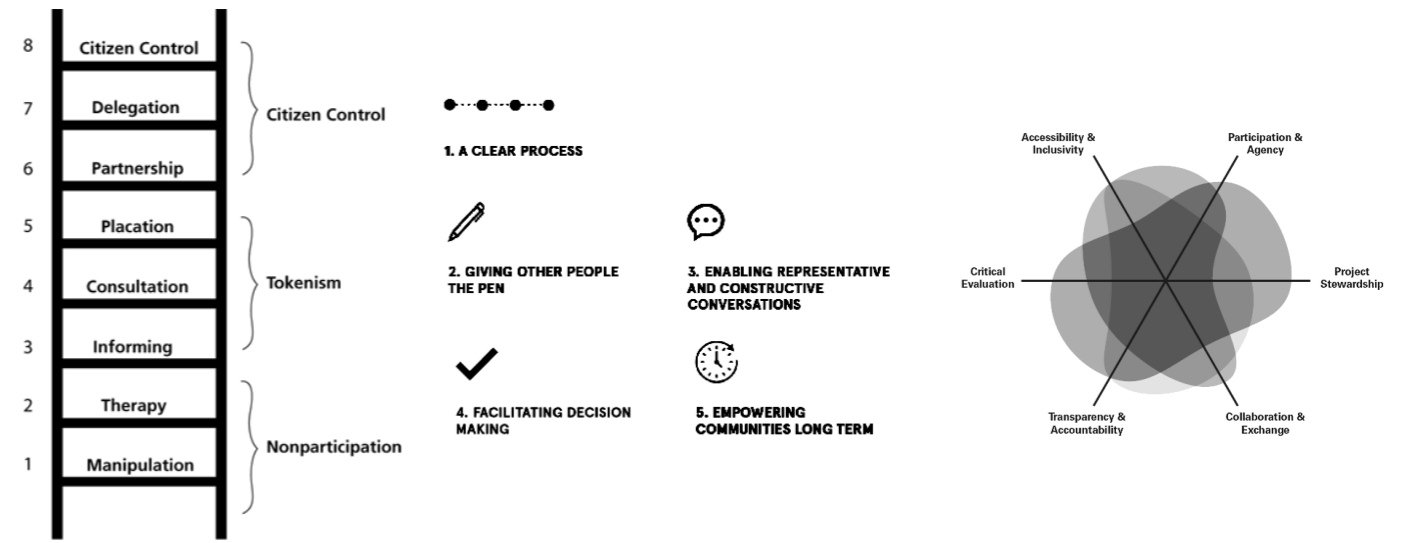
This is a misapplication of the statutory criteria for listing, as set out in the DCMS Principles of Selection. Historic interest is a legally distinct criterion and does not depend on architectural merit to be expressed in a building's fabric, as exemplified by the Bletchley Park huts (see 1.2). The report's conflation of the two constitutes a clear error in assessment.

This statement evaluates the degree to which the building's fabric expresses its historic significance.

Co-Design

Bridge Park is at a pivotal moment where change is inevitable. But how this change takes place is still up for discussion. 'Bridge Park is Ours!' looks to create a stage-by-stage framework of potential methods for involving the community in this process to ensure longevity, adaptability and preservation of the site's legacy and agency. Generally, it looks to methods which can combine to create the greatest breath and depth of local participation, compiled from many industry leading publications and personal experience. It is not a comprehensive guide to all methods, and in particular looks for ways to apply specific methods to the unique identity of Stonebridge and at methods where the values apply most closely with Bridge Park's founding ethos.

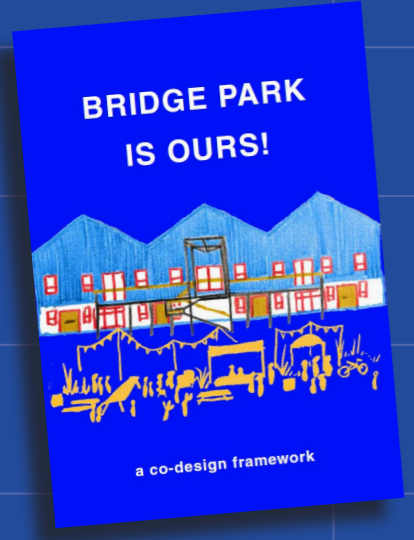
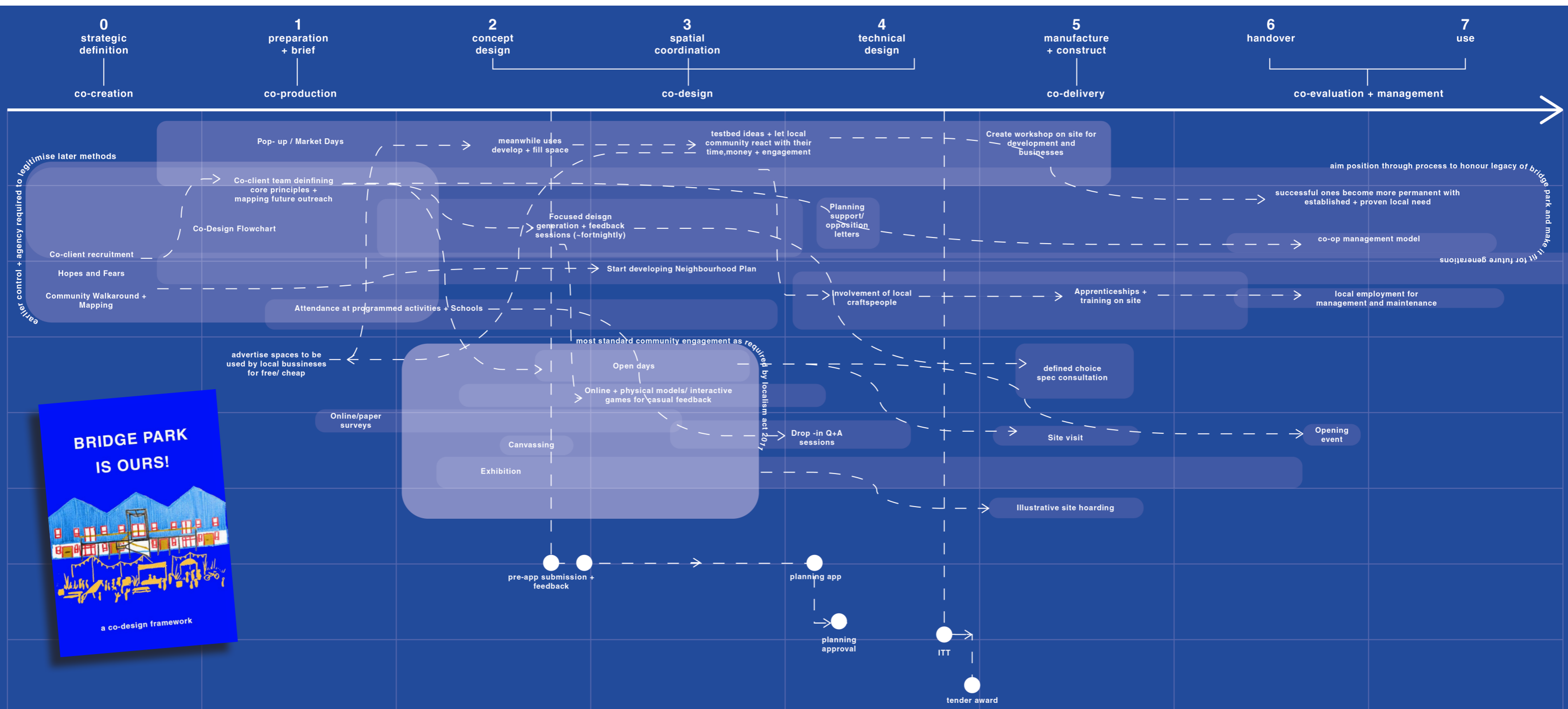
In addition, several ways of evaluating the success of participation methods are introduced and used throughout to show how each method can be employed. Alongside this, this guide aims to illustrate some of the potential wider benefits increased participation could have at Bridge Park for local people now and in the future, demonstrating how this could help contribute to the goals of stakeholders like Brent Council and the GLA.



Ladder of Participation - (Arnstien, 1969)

Co-Design Toolkit - (Archio, 2022)

Towards Spatial Justice - Co Design Guide (DSDHA, 2023)



Community Conversations

Our engagement sessions so far, of which we have had one informal and 2 formal have been vital in shedding light on the priorities of local people and several important themes like safety, space as a way of connecting diverse groups and transparency in communication.

We connected with Jennifer through our site visit to Stonebridge, where she graciously gave us a tour of the Brent Hub and conversed with us at length about her history in the area, including working at Bridge Park and using the facilities as a customer. Aaron and Arnoux agreed to meet with us through our connection Nabil, and gave varied and valuable perspectives of locals with marketing and historic professional backgrounds respectively. Throughout these conversations, we aimed for the direction to be led by the participant, which was really valuable in bringing up new ways of thinking and challenging our pre-conceptions.

We don't know what the development will be but we need things to upgrade around here, upgrade the tempo!

We need a hub for the community, there are so many which we have lost. If we build trust, everyone looks after each other.

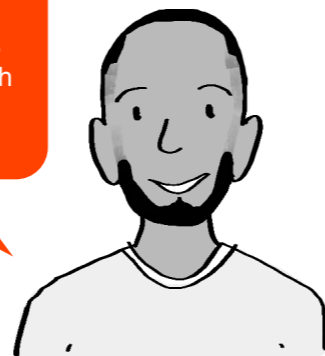
I have noticed a lack of things for young people to do. By making places which feel hostile with no routes through, community is designed out



Jennifer - Social Worker at the Brent Hub, group leader of Brent Seniors

It is really important to interrogate the original HPCC vision and what was aimed for, what was actually achieved what barriers were in place at the time, and how that parallels to today's landscape

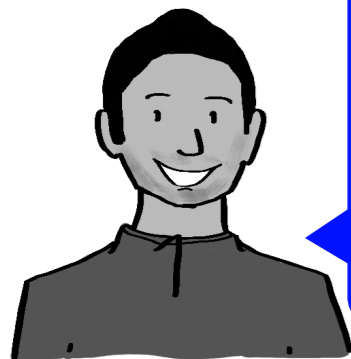
I have Grenfell in mind when I say the importance of transparency, community involved in how buildings are constructed and feeling like they're safe and not echoing the legacies of, as I've mentioned, the troubles associated with so much estate and high density living.



Arnoux - Long time local resident and research graduate on the history of Bridge Park

What's the product? The product is a space for community. Space for the community to express themselves and expression is in a number of different forms. And that's really what it is - keep on saying it! How do the community want to express themselves in this space? Because they're expressing themselves somewhere. There's something happening. Just not here. The job is to find out how does this space serve the need?

Space is a way of connecting. Which could be an interesting start point because the borough is full of difference, different ethnicities, languages, cultures. But it's all disparate and our climate right now, Reform are trying to divide us. It's about asking how you find spaces to connect?



Aaron - Long term local resident, founding director of marketing and communications group

Open Workshop

We plan to hold an open workshop to meet and discuss the project with anyone in the community who is interested in it, to add democracy to our process in addition to meeting people through our contacts. We hope that this can lead to genuine co-production and designing the desires of the community into the brief and design process. We had originally intended to carry out initial sessions within the DTT timeframe, but struggled to arrange a time and venue which would be actually beneficial to the community and wider project, and not simply self serving and potentially creating false hope. Instead, we changed focus to ensuring we planned the best possible session and didn't attempt to rush the process and sever the ties we had worked hard to build. We tested our adaptive reuse worksheets at the design review.



Scan to fill out our digital survey!

LET'S BUILD, NOT DESTROY

What are your connections, memories and stories of Bridge Park?

What is needed in the Stonebridge Community?

What principles are important to you in developing the site?

What do you want for Bridge Park?

What don't you want for Bridge Park?

Schedule

6.00pm

Welcome, drinks and biscuits

6.15pm

Presentation

6.25pm-onwards
Open discussion

Oral History, record memories

Model + scale blocks testing

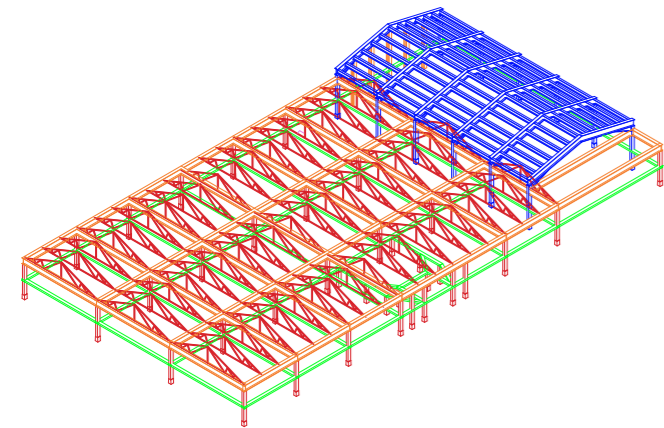
Adaptive Reuse Drawing Sheets

Post-it note response to key questions

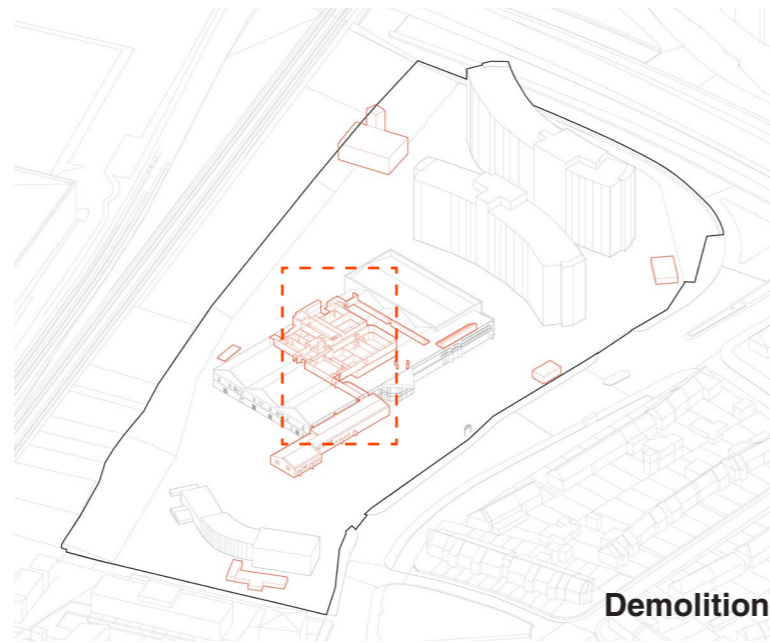
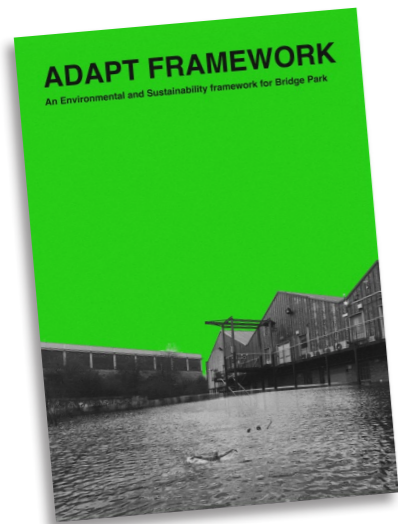
// Paralell Online/ Mobile Survey

Adaptive Reuse!

Understanding, interrogating and reimagining parts of the existing fabric of the site is important to our vision for the future of Bridge Park on many levels. Primarily, retaining the physical fabric honours the legacy of those who worked to build Bridge Park in the first place, and maintains this visual connection into the future. Secondly, reusing much of the existing fabric aligns with responsible design practice in the face of the climate emergency. As it is now understood, the most sustainable building is the building which already exists. Working with the existing site fabric greatly reduces embodied carbon in aspects of demolition, manufacturing, transport and construction.



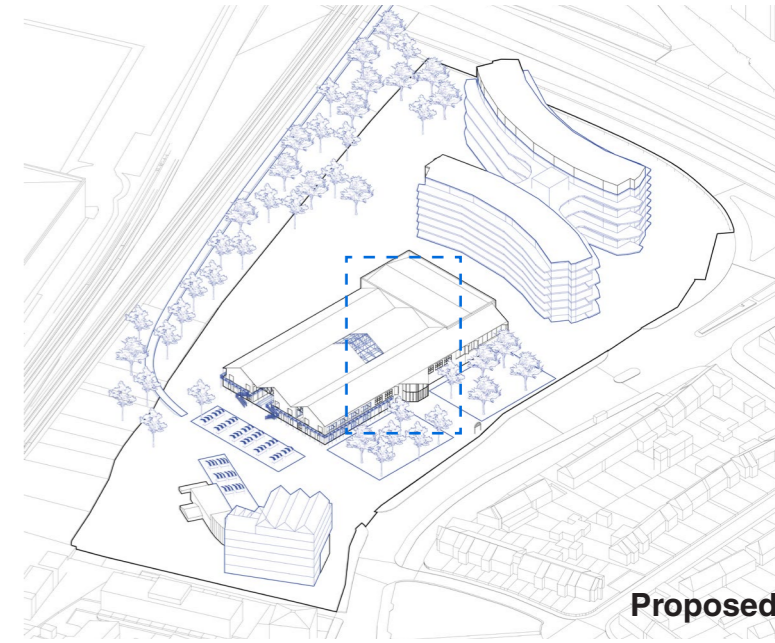
Above: Axo showing existing structure



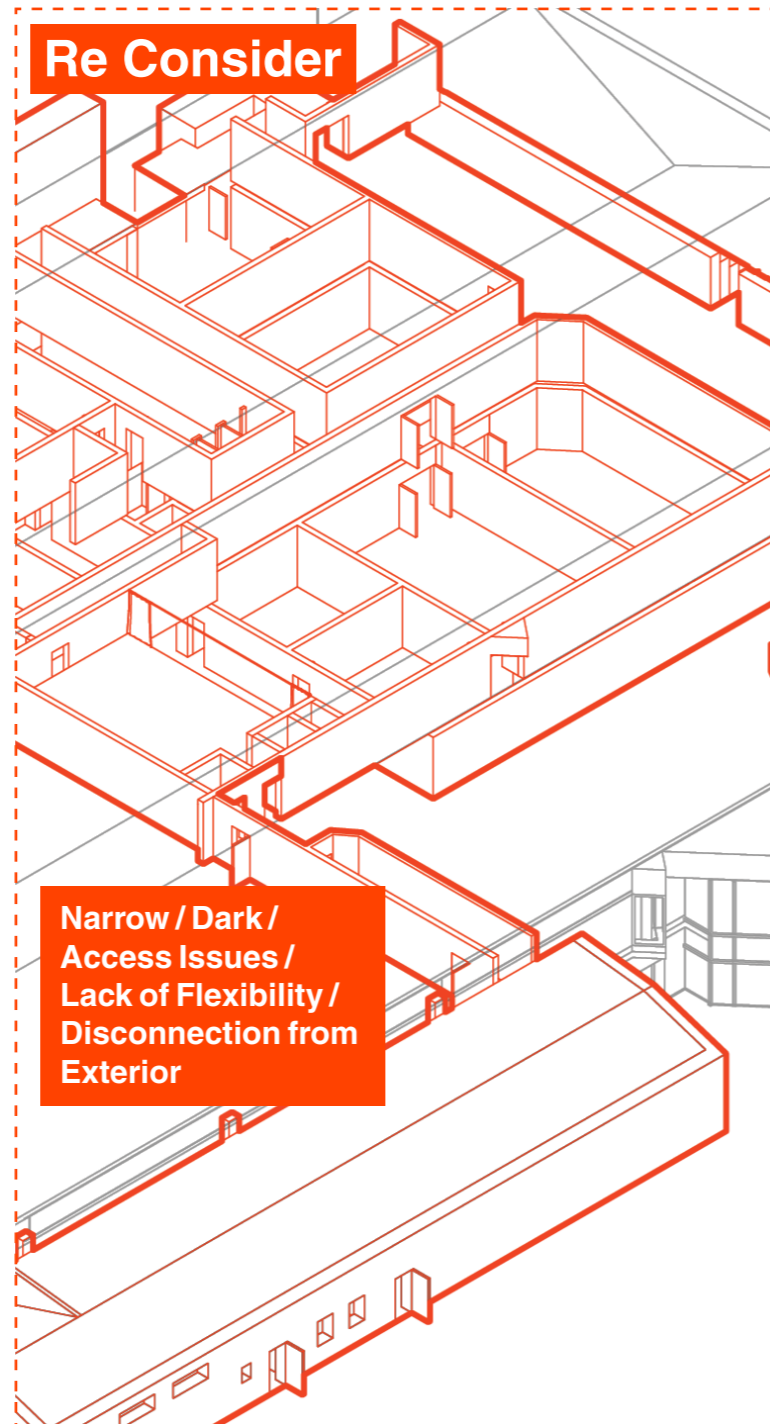
Demolition



Retaining

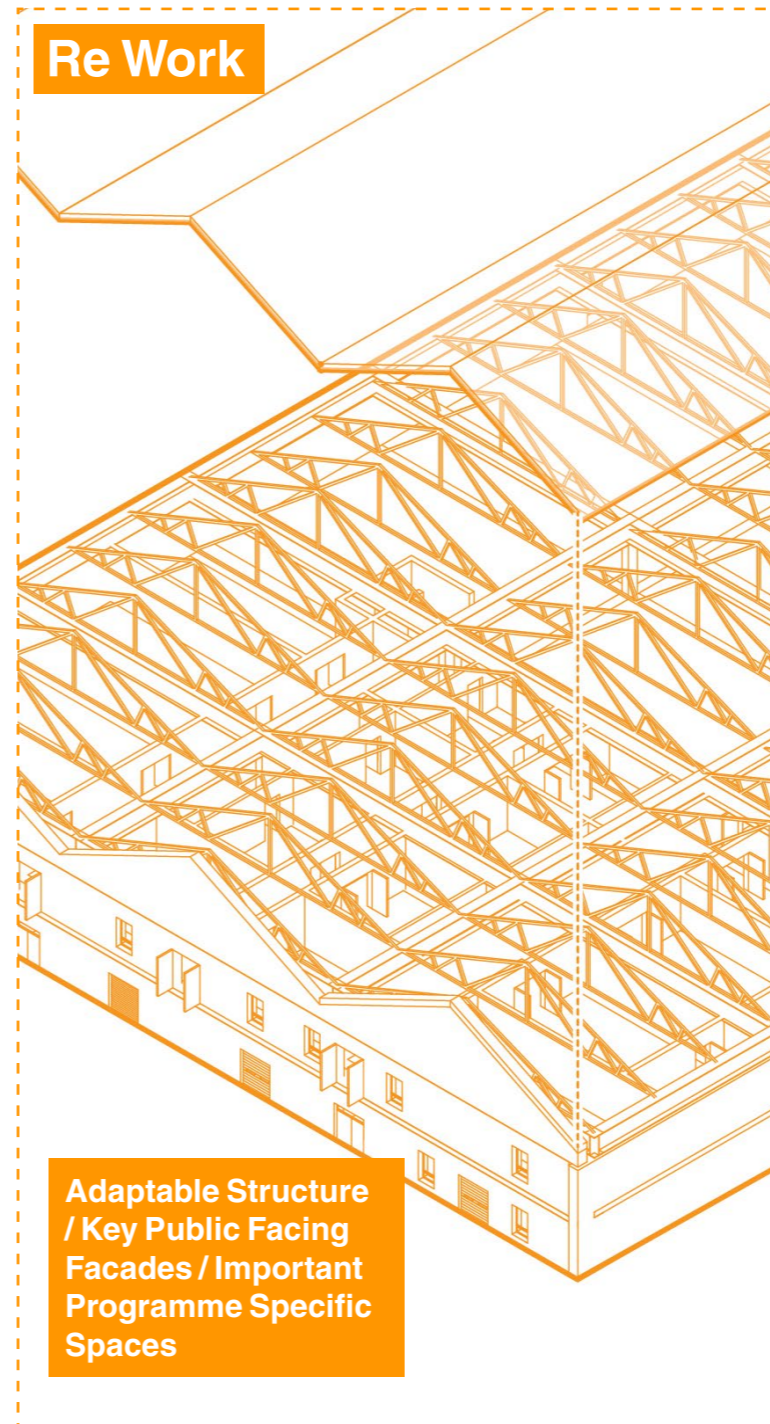


Proposed



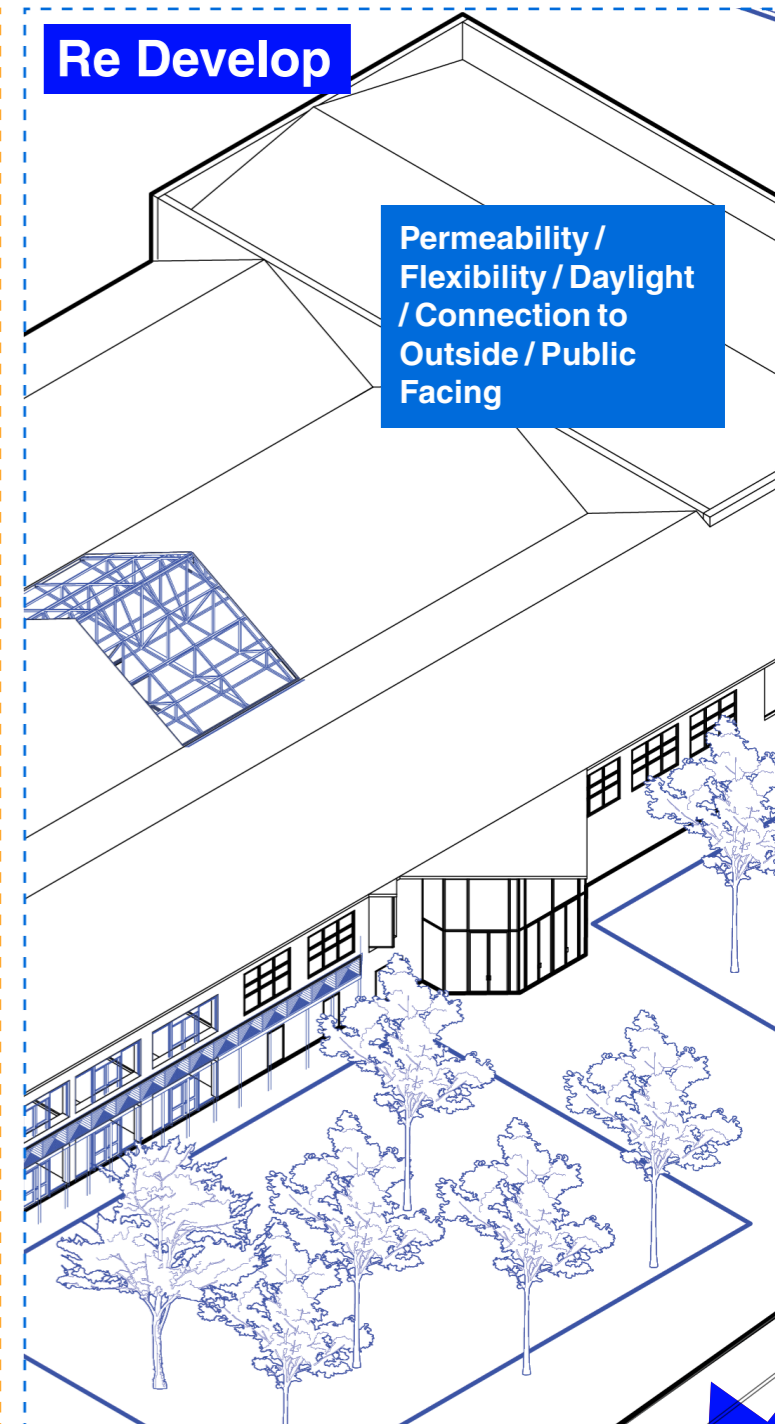
Re Consider

Narrow / Dark /
Access Issues /
Lack of Flexibility /
Disconnection from
Exterior



Re Work

Adaptable Structure /
Key Public Facing
Facades / Important
Programme Specific
Spaces



Re Develop

Permeability /
Flexibility / Daylight
/ Connection to
Outside / Public
Facing

Climate Resilience

1

Problem

- Flooding
- Fragmented Green Spaces
- Erasure

2

Response

- Repair of Ground
- Repair of Ecology
- Repair of Carbon
- Repair of Infrastructure
- Repair of Dignity

3

Spatial Strategies

- Reshape Landscape
- Adaptive Reuse
- Green Bridge





Secured By Design

Both Secured by Design and the 30 Patterns of Harm reports offer initial insights into how to identify risks such as **poor visibility**, **ostracisation**, and **inequality**, and give recommendations to 'solutions' to mitigate these risks. However, when these strategies are translated into spatial terms, they become overly clinical, behaviour-focused and extremely risk-averse. This results in a culture that **views people as potential threats** rather than as vital contributors to effective and sustainable placemaking. From our critique of these reports, we created the Secured by Social Connection.



Secured By Social Connections

There must be a reframing of the discussion of safety from "How do we design out harm?" to "How do we design for social connection?" The Secured by Social Connection explores the social, relational, and cultural dimensions of safety that are not orchestrated through surveillance and control.

By designing for 'social behaviour' rather than 'anti-anti-social behaviour', architects create spaces that are not only **safe** but also **sustainable**. The recommendations in our report have influenced the design decisions for the proposed public realm.



The Problem

- Anti-social behaviour
- Deep mistrust between police and local communities
- Local residents seen as potential threats
- Safety is something that needs to be enforced rather than fostered

Current 'Solutions'

- Anti-anti-social behaviour
- Secured by Design and 30 Patterns of Harm prioritise control.
- Reliance on surveillance, suspicion, and defensive design.
- Aim to manage behaviour rather than support residents.
- Approaches often cause mistrust that worsens fear and disconnection within communities.

The Goal

- Social behaviour
- Support informal, everyday social behaviours for community connection.
- Safety fostered through trust and everyday presence.
- Community stewardship for community resilience.



Secured by Social Connection Spatial Principles

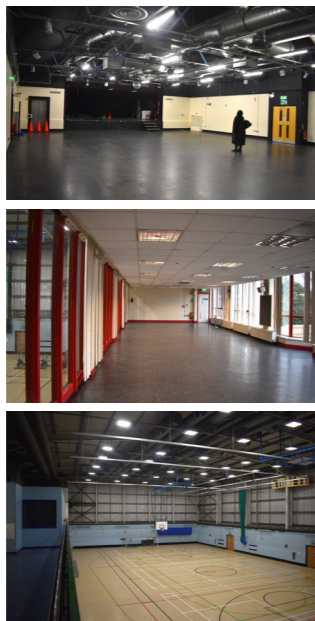
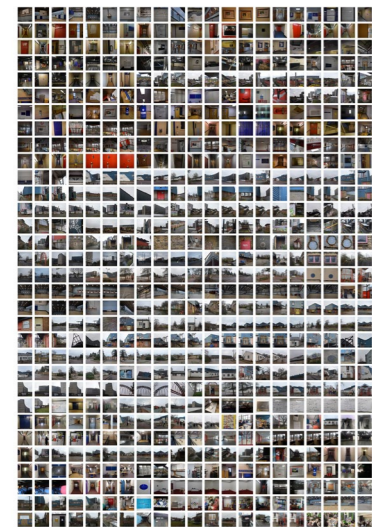


Archive

The speedy closure of BP in 2025 limited the ability to properly prepare and document the legacy of over 40 years of history.

By contributing our architectural skills and unique position as students at the LSA to collect, replicate and preserve the legacy of Bridge Park in physical and digital media.

Through drawing, sketching, designing, building, modelling, scanning and photographing, we have set to return a sense of control and ownership to the narrative around the site to local People.



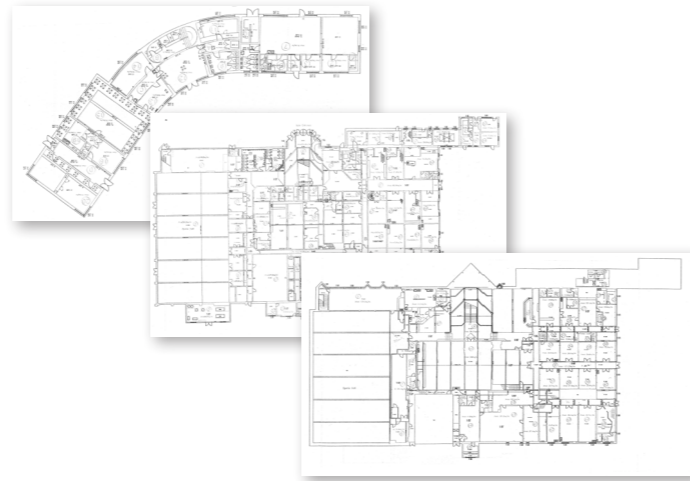
Existing fabric of the site 2025 - 500+ recorded images

3D Scans

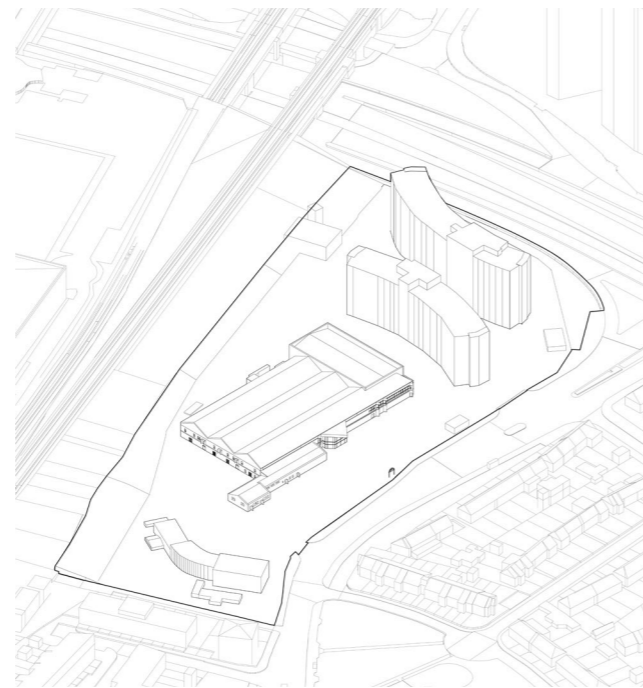


BRIDGE PARK THINK TANK

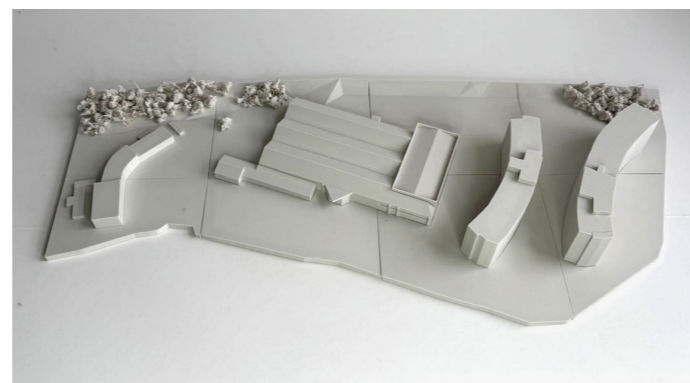
Digitised Plans



Digital Model



Physical Model



3D printed at 1:500

Physical Models

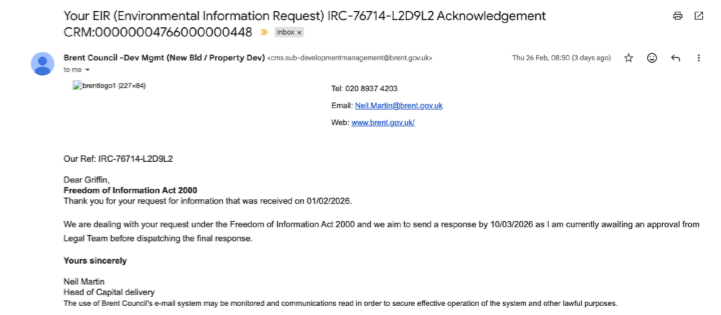


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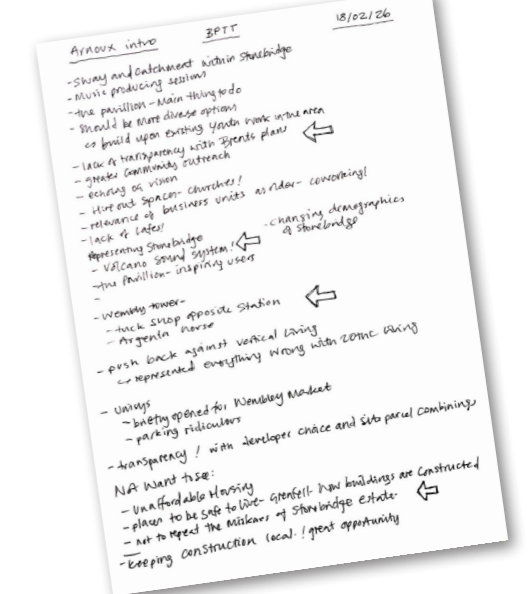
Save Bridge Park Campaign Badges



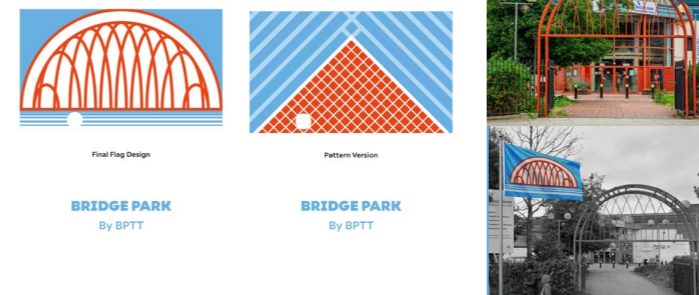
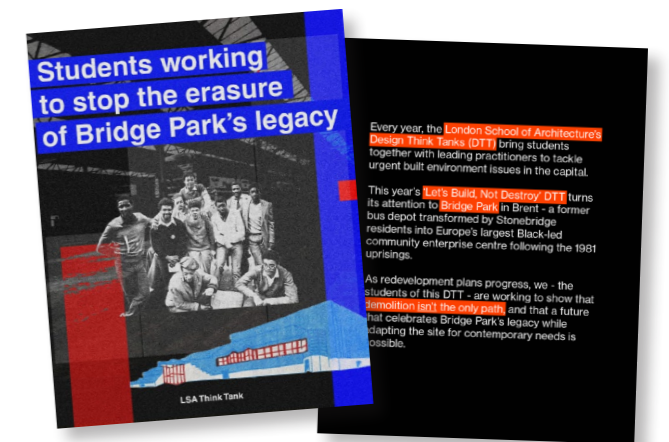
FOI Requests



Community Stories



Social Media



BP Flags with POor Collective



LET'S BUILD, NOT DESTROY

4.0

Design

“What’s the best that could happen?”

Upskilling at BRIDGE PARK



“Construction began in 1985 and in the years leading up to the centre’s completion in 1987, over 400 local people were trained through the Manpower Services Commission and other schemes while working on the site, with local firms created by the HPCC among the appointed subcontractors.”

Self build scheme at Nubia Way, 1997

Internships

Support

Qualifications

Training

The future of Bridge Park will be shaped by and for local people. We are calling out for local enterprise, industry, skills and individuals who want to play a role in building this future together.

STONEBRIDGE ON THE MOVE!

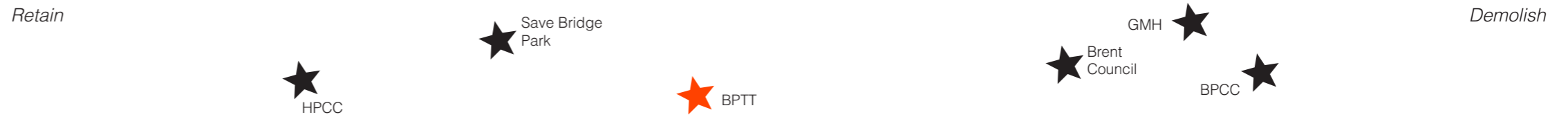
Stakeholder Aims

One of the challenges of Bridge Park's future is who's wants and needs deserve to be reflected on the site.

Each Stakeholder previously identified has a vision for Bridge Park. When analysing the aims of the HPCC, BPCC, Save Bridge Park campaign, Brent council and GMH, we found similar threads which could provide for the present and future needs of the Stonebridge community.

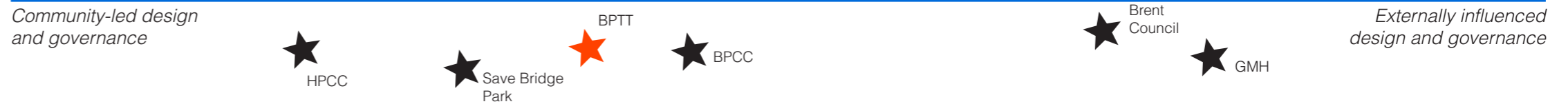


Should the Bus Depot building be **retained** or **demolished**?

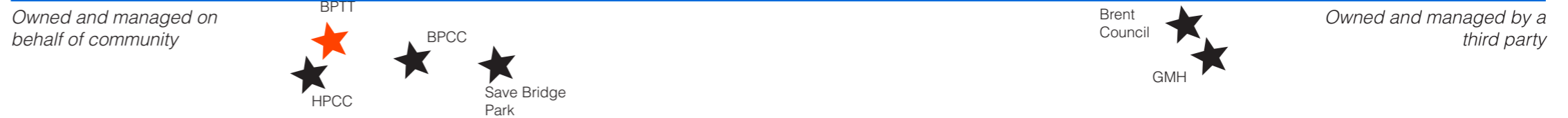


Who should the site future **designed** by?

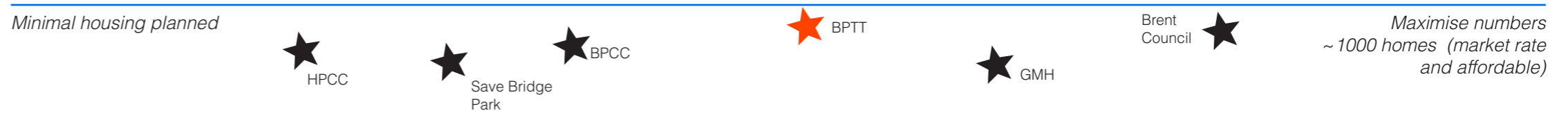
Is re-establishing a **community-led** approach to its governance an option?



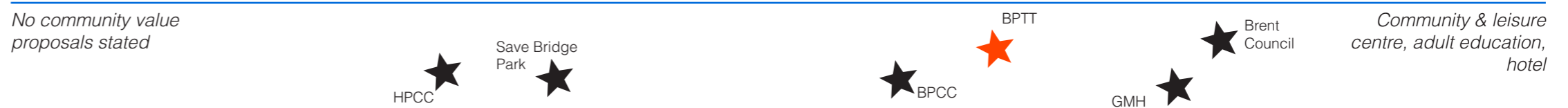
Who should have **ownership** of Bridge Park?



What are your plans on **housing**?

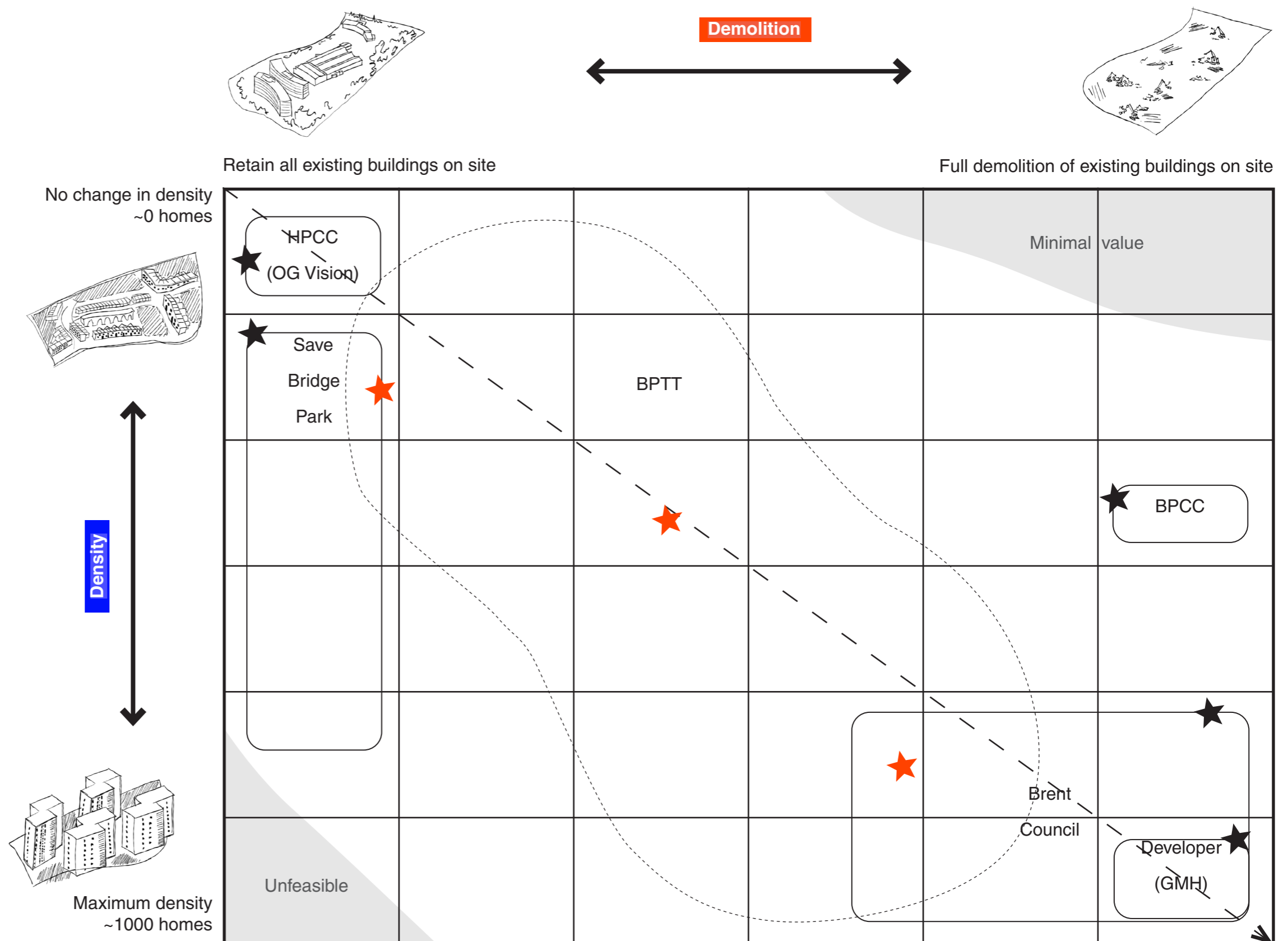


Focus of **community** offerings



Design Matrix

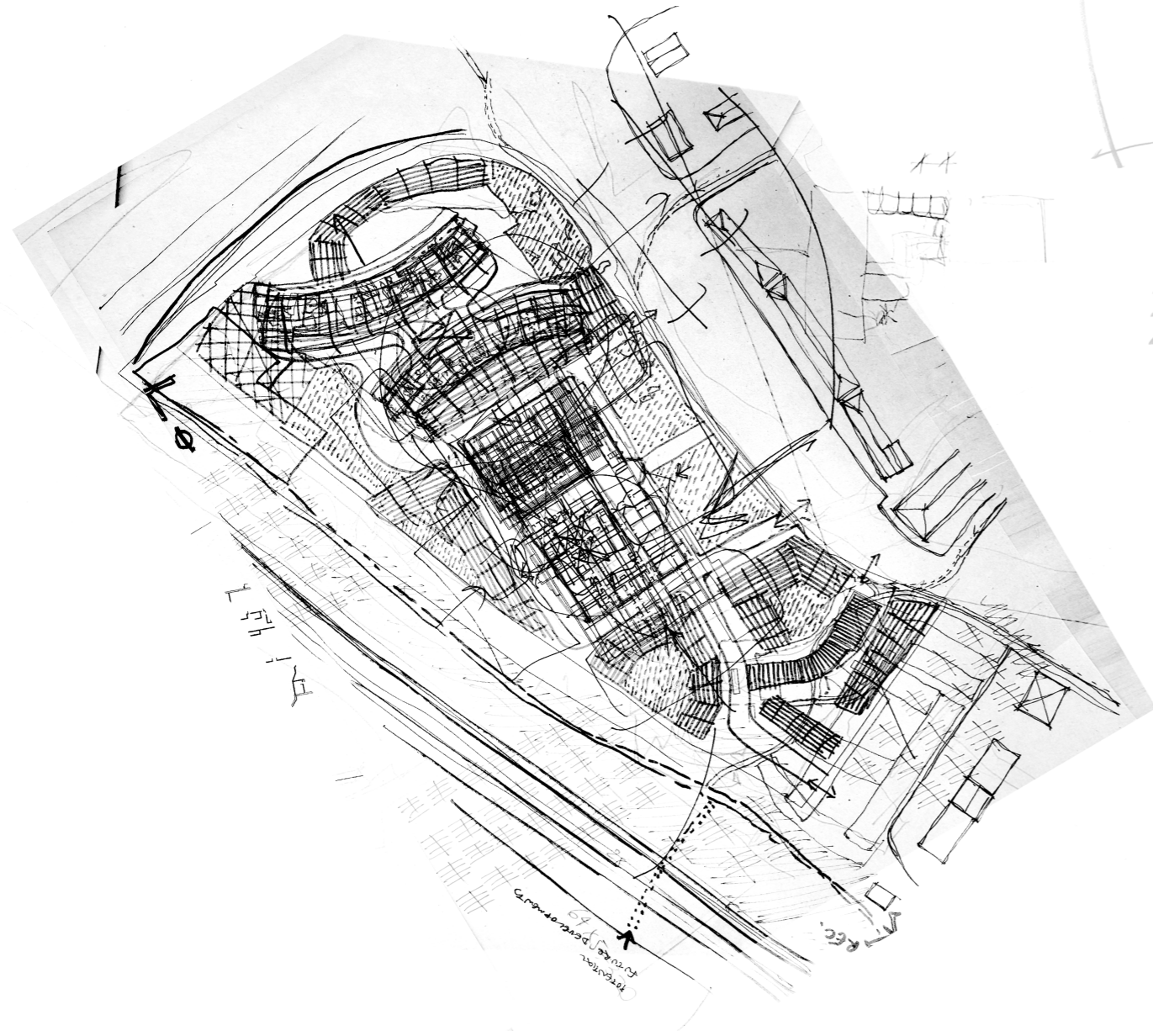
The creation and mapping out of a 'design matrix' has greatly helped this think tank digest the many complex and conflicting opinions and visions surrounding the future of Bridge Park. By plotting various stakeholders against two key measurements, extent of demolition, and proposed density of housing, we have been able to establish where the missing gaps are. The Bridge Park Think Tank's vision aims to plug these gaps, and show that there is a viable future for the site which works for all stakeholders involved. The BPTT's approach sits in 'the peanut of opportunity' in the centre of the matrix.



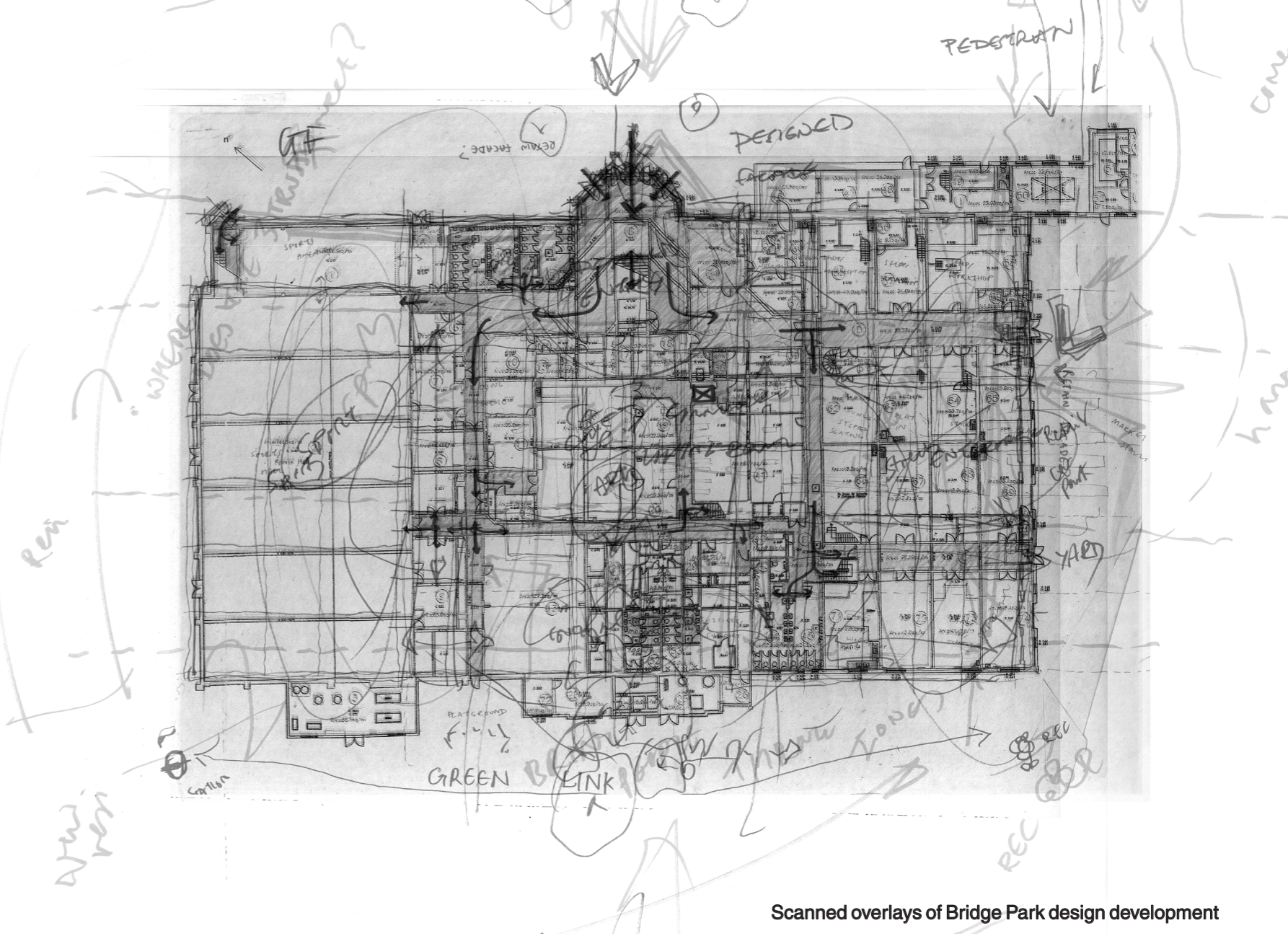
Design Development

As architecture students, one of the key skills we can bring to the wider project work was our ability to analyse the existing building and site, finding feasible opportunities to adapt, reuse and add to.

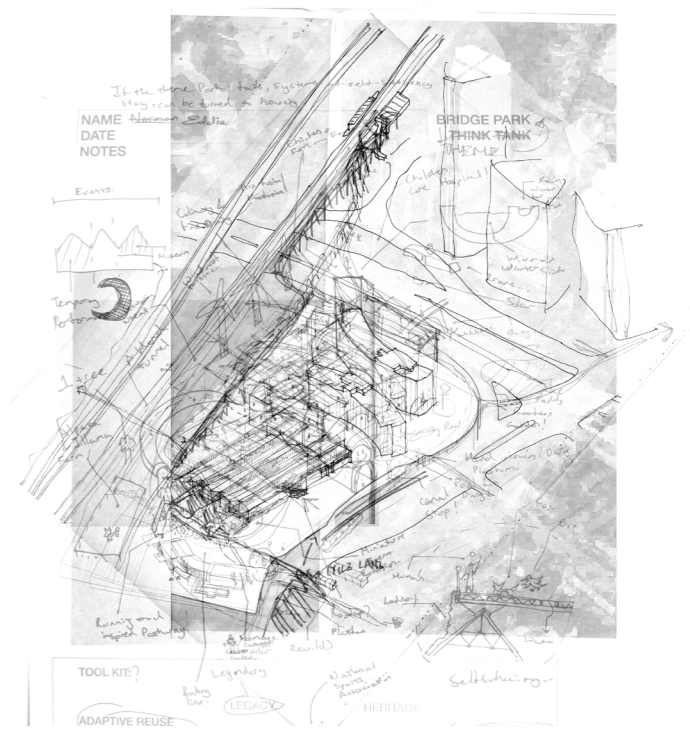
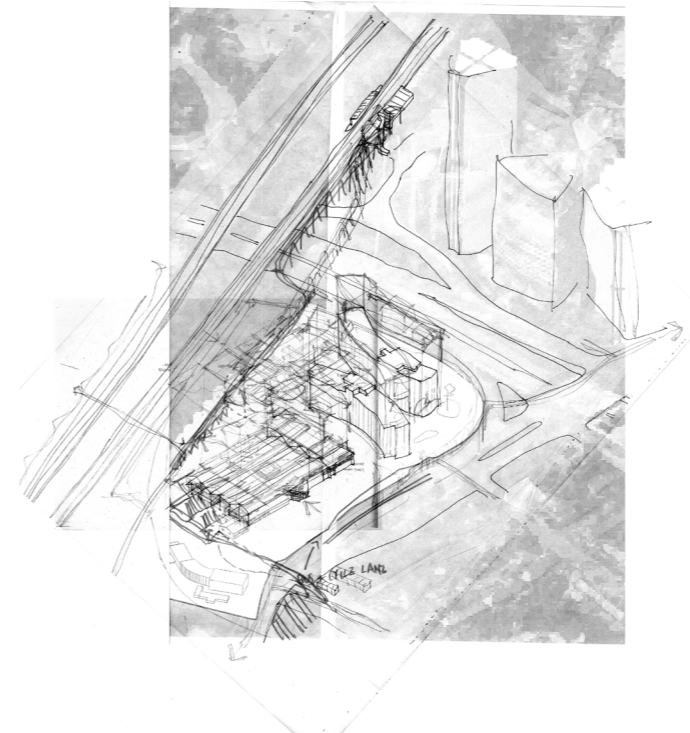
This mainly consisted of creating layers of hand drawing, working into the site at the range of scales and projections. These drawings were then brought together to give a rounded analysis and directly fed into the big moves we decided to make on site.



Scanned overlays of developing the site big moves



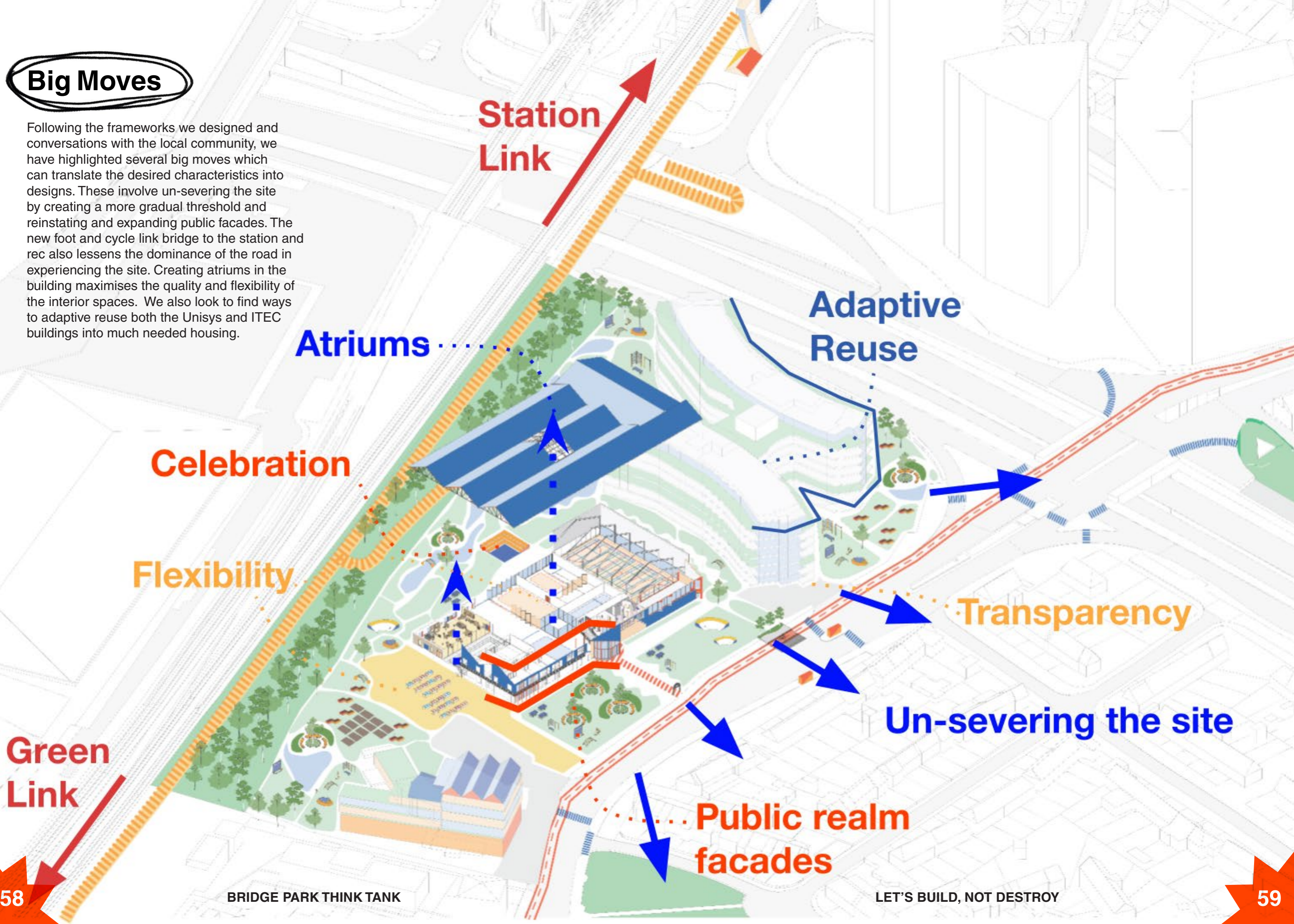
Scanned overlays of Bridge Park design development



Scanned overlays of Bridge Park design development

Big Moves

Following the frameworks we designed and conversations with the local community, we have highlighted several big moves which can translate the desired characteristics into designs. These involve un-severing the site by creating a more gradual threshold and reinstating and expanding public facades. The new foot and cycle link bridge to the station and rec also lessens the dominance of the road in experiencing the site. Creating atriums in the building maximises the quality and flexibility of the interior spaces. We also look to find ways to adaptive reuse both the Unisys and ITEC buildings into much needed housing.



Phasing Design

A really key strategy we are keen to implement is meanwhile use, to keep the site activated and allow for gradual, manageable expansion. We are currently unsure if there are any physical restrictions on the building use, and are awaiting a freedom of information request return.

For the procurement of the wider site, our engagement work so far has led us to currently suggest that this is broken into smaller dedicated packages which allow locally-owned contractors to bid on them and win work. We also think that the tender returns should have a social value as a key component, encouraging local spending, employing and training young people as apprenticeships and facilitating community engagement through the construction phases.



One thing which really stood out to us when visiting was the vast amounts of space available.



The car park and yard could be reactivated for a pop-up market or event simply with keys to the site.



We then propose that the street facing shops, an original feature, becomes the first wing reopened and could be rented out as flexible short term workspace and pop up retail, allowing entrepreneurial spirit the resources to find it's footing.



We then propose that creating a workshop on site by removing some internal partitions



This could begin the serve the wider development of the building and site, giving the space and resources to skills build, and alter and maintain the building.



Residential Study

In an ever increasingly housing-stressed London, it is no surprise that an underutilised site like Bridge Park has been identified as having the potential to provide a considerable amount of housing in any future vision, by both Brent Council and some parts of the Stonebridge community.

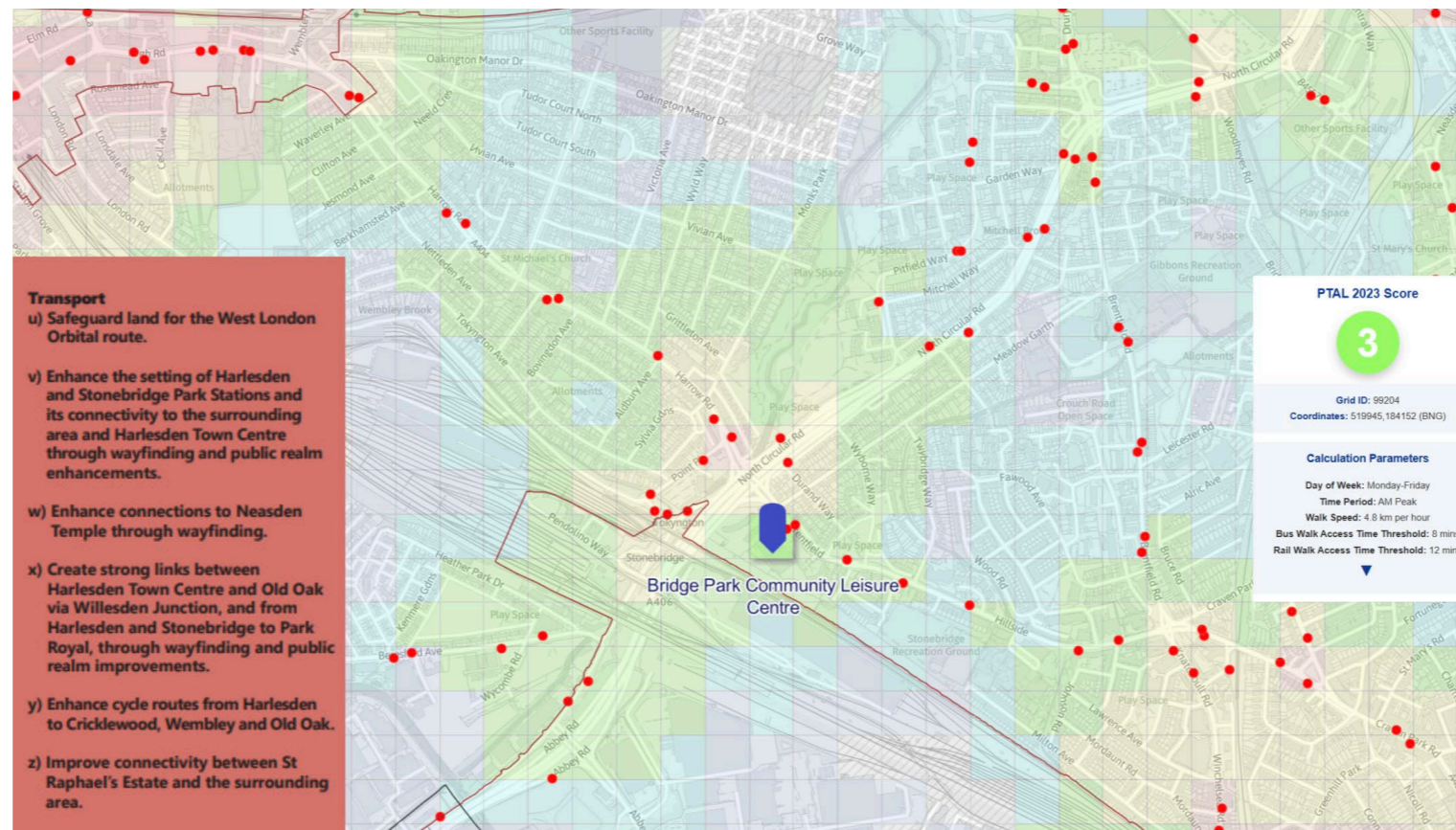
Much of the Stonebridge community who have lived in the area for longer than 20 years, are deeply sceptical at the prospect of high density living returning to Stonebridge. For much of the 20th century, the area was dominated by the Stonebridge Estate, a typical modernist housing estate featuring aspects such as brutalist forms, deck-accessed units and bridges in the sky.

Built in the 1960s embodying the era's top-down utopian vision for urban living, the estate became a dangerous and isolating place to live for its few remaining residents by the 1990s. The original estate housed some 2000 families, and once demolished and replaced with lower density terraced and mid-rise apartment typologies, only 400 families remained in the same area.



Above: The Stonebridge Estate pictured in December 2002. Nico Hogg, Flickr.

With the identified development area at and around the Bridge Park site, of about 28,000m², typology and density potential for the site has been explored through precedent analysis.



Above: Snippet from the Brent Local Plan, using PTAL data to outline Brent's prospective connectivity improvements in the area.

Right: Snippet from the London Plan outlining suitable housing densities in relation to PTAL score and level of urban setting.

Map Key - PTAL

- 0 (Worst)
- 1a
- 1b
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6a
- 6b (Best)

Setting	Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL)		
	0 to 1	2 to 3	4 to 6
Suburban	150-200 hr/ha	150-250 hr/ha	200-350 hr/ha
3.8-4.6 hr/unit	35-55 u/ha	35-65 u/ha	45-90 u/ha
3.1-3.7 hr/unit	40-65 u/ha	40-80 u/ha	55-115 u/ha
2.7-3.0 hr/unit	50-75 u/ha	50-95 u/ha	70-130 u/ha
Urban	150-250 hr/ha	200-450 hr/ha	200-700 hr/ha
3.8-4.6 hr/unit	35-65 u/ha	45-120 u/ha	45-185 u/ha
3.1-3.7 hr/unit	40-80 u/ha	55-145 u/ha	55-225 u/ha
2.7-3.0 hr/unit	50-95 u/ha	70-170 u/ha	70-260 u/ha
Central	150-300 hr/ha	300-650 hr/ha	650-1100 hr/ha
3.8-4.6 hr/unit	35-80 u/ha	65-170 u/ha	140-290 u/ha
3.1-3.7 hr/unit	40-100 u/ha	80-210 u/ha	175-355 u/ha
2.7-3.0 hr/unit	50-110 u/ha	100-240 u/ha	215-405 u/ha

Figure 2.1: Recommended housing densities in the London Plan

hr = habitable rooms
u = a dwelling unit, i.e. a flat or a house
ha = hectare

Brent Council claims to be able to provide 1000 homes on the site, requiring complete demolition of all existing structures. With our learnings from conversations with the community, this prompted the BPTT to undertake a study of possible residential options.

Currently the Bridge Park site has a Public Transport Connectivity Score (PTAL) of 2-3, which at maximum numbers as designated by the London Plan, should support 70 - 170 units/ha. The Bridge Park site combined with the neighbouring derelict UNISYS site is in the region of 2.8 ha. This sets out a few options;

Option A: Maintain existing PTAL

At **70 - 170 units/ha**, the Bridge Park site could fit just over **300 units**. This seems feasible given the constraints of the site.

Option B: Increase PTAL

If the connectivity of the site is improved, and a PTAL score of 4-6 is achieved, the site could support at maximum, **70 - 260 units/ha** could be provided on site. This means the Bridge Park site could fit in the region of **470 units**.

Option C: Increase PTAL

In a hypothetical third scenario, where the 2.8ha site were to fit 1000 homes, as suggested under Brent Council's proposals, this **exceeds the London Plan's recommended dwelling/ha limits** by more than double.

Even in a future where the connectivity of the site is improved to the maximum score, 6b, a proposal of 1000 homes evokes similar concerns the people of Stonebridge felt about the Stonebridge Estate. An incredibly density of people, in an already socially under-resourced and severed area.

Residential Vision + Site Precedents

This negative impacts of such a high density scheme would be further exacerbated by a proposed lack of affordable housing provision, as it would not improve any of Stonebridge's existing housing stresses. Adding housing for resident's with a higher purchasing power than existing Stonebridge residents into Stonebridge, would drive the inequalities and competition for already scarce social services wider.

The BPTT's research points to a future for the Bridge Park site which provides somewhere between **300-500 homes on the site**. This would likely require an improvement to the connectivity, of which our proposal facilitates via a separate pedestrian and cycle link over the North Circular to Stonebridge Station - *More on this in a bit...*

Following these findings, a prospective residential vision for the Bridge Park site has been set out. Paired with our Adapt Framework, this recommends the reuse and re-imagining of the existing UNISYS and ITEC structures.



Vault Youth Zone, Preston, John Puttick Associates, 2026.
Youth space / Recreation / Flexibility / Kit of parts



Marline Anderson's Grapefruit Tree, Battersea, 2025.
Heritage / Public space / Legacy



Bradbury Works, Dalston, Y/N Studio, 2022.
Adaptive Reuse / Workspace / Public Space / Business Units



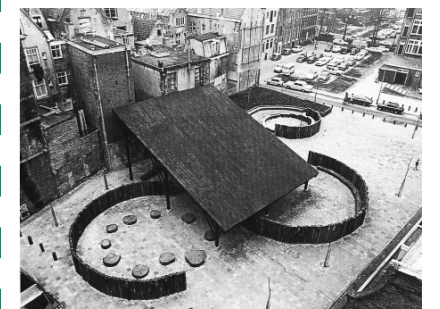
The Green Bridge, Mile End, CZWG Architects, 1999.
Severance / Green space / Connectivity / Reclamation



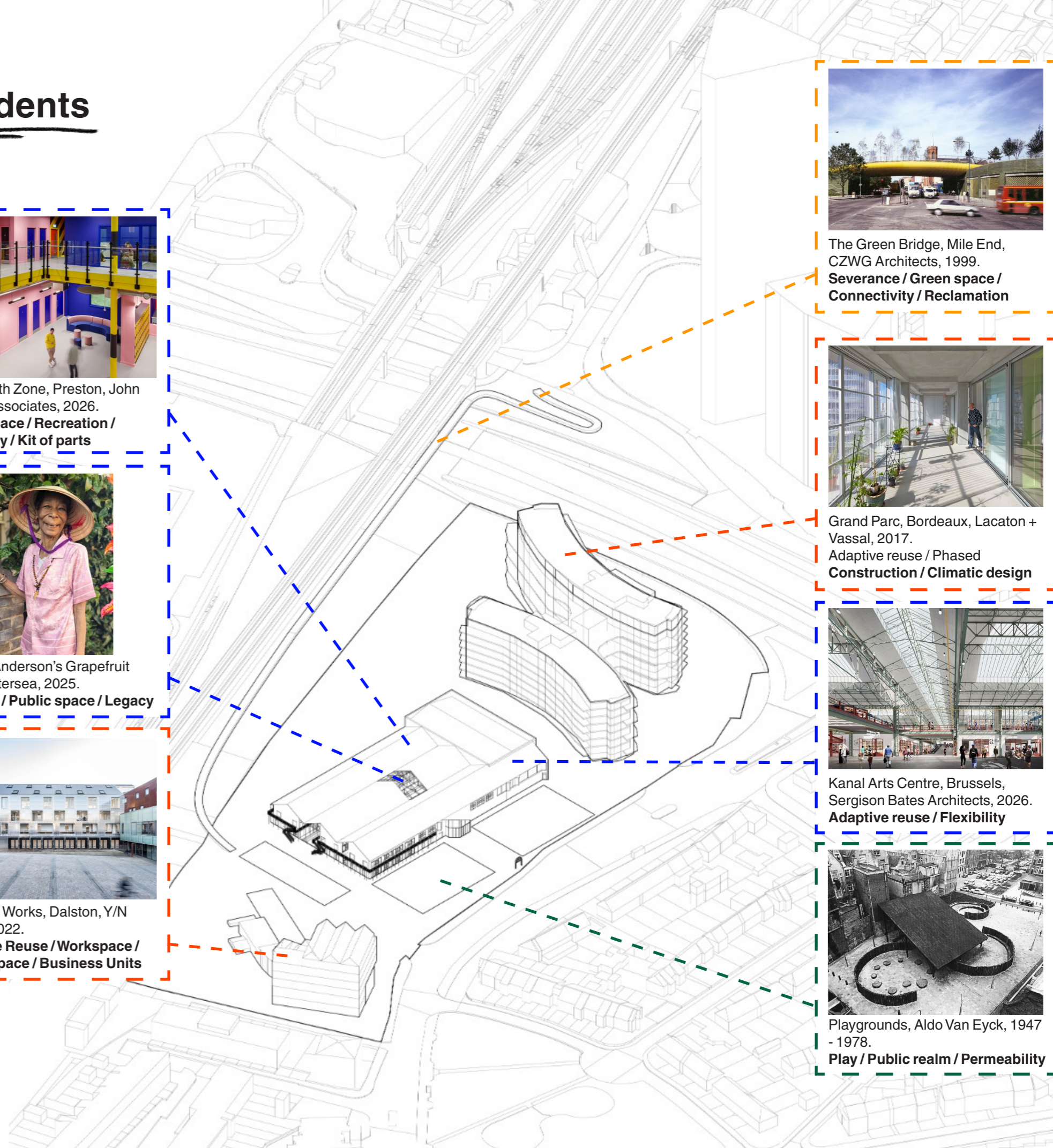
Grand Parc, Bordeaux, Lacaton + Vassal, 2017.
Adaptive reuse / Phased Construction / Climatic design



Kanal Arts Centre, Brussels, Sergison Bates Architects, 2026.
Adaptive reuse / Flexibility



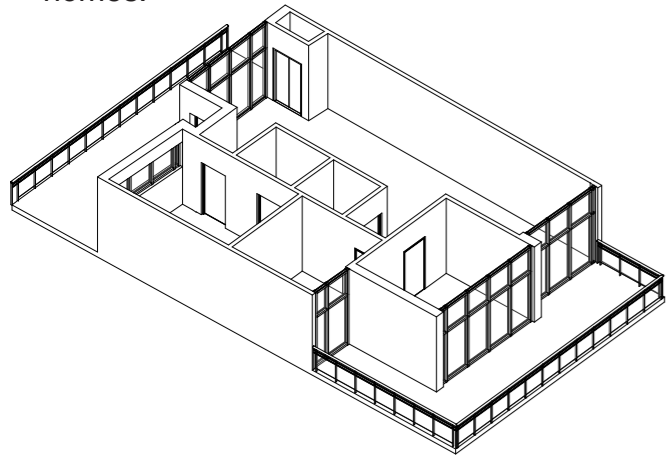
Playgrounds, Aldo Van Eyck, 1947 - 1978.
Play / Public realm / Permeability



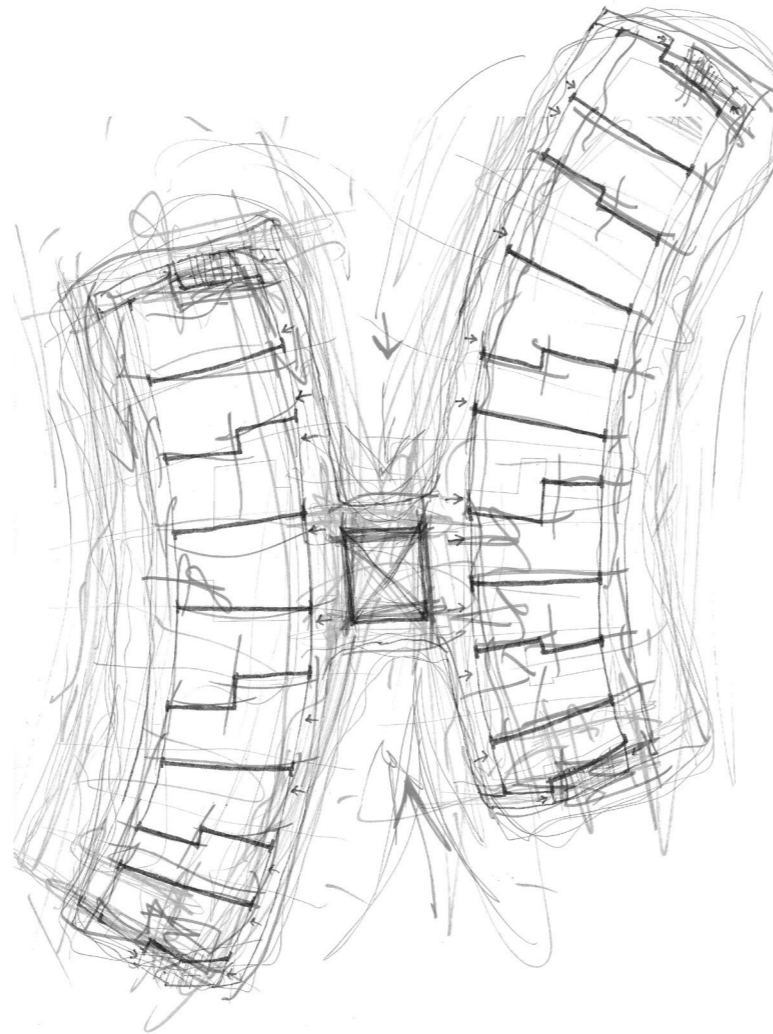
Reuse of UNISYS + ITEC

UNISYS

Reuse of the existing concrete structure, with added deck access balconies on primary facades. Removal of old core within existing floor slabs to open floor plate up for residential accommodation. Addition of one central core at the narrowest point between the two towers, wrapped in the deck access terraces. Maintaining of existing additional staircores at both ends of each tower. All units to be dual aspect, with a range of 1, 2 and 3 bed units. With this approach within the existing structure only, roughly 150 homes could be provided. With a vision of additional floors extruding the floor plates up, the unisys structures could provide somewhere in the region of 200 homes.



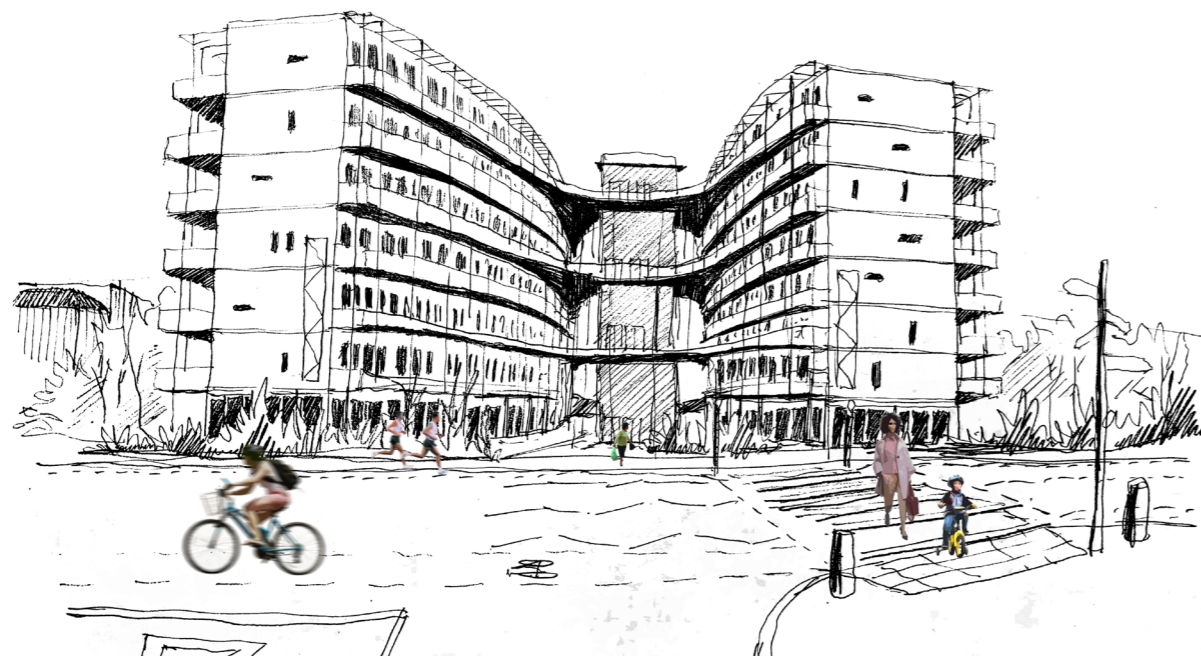
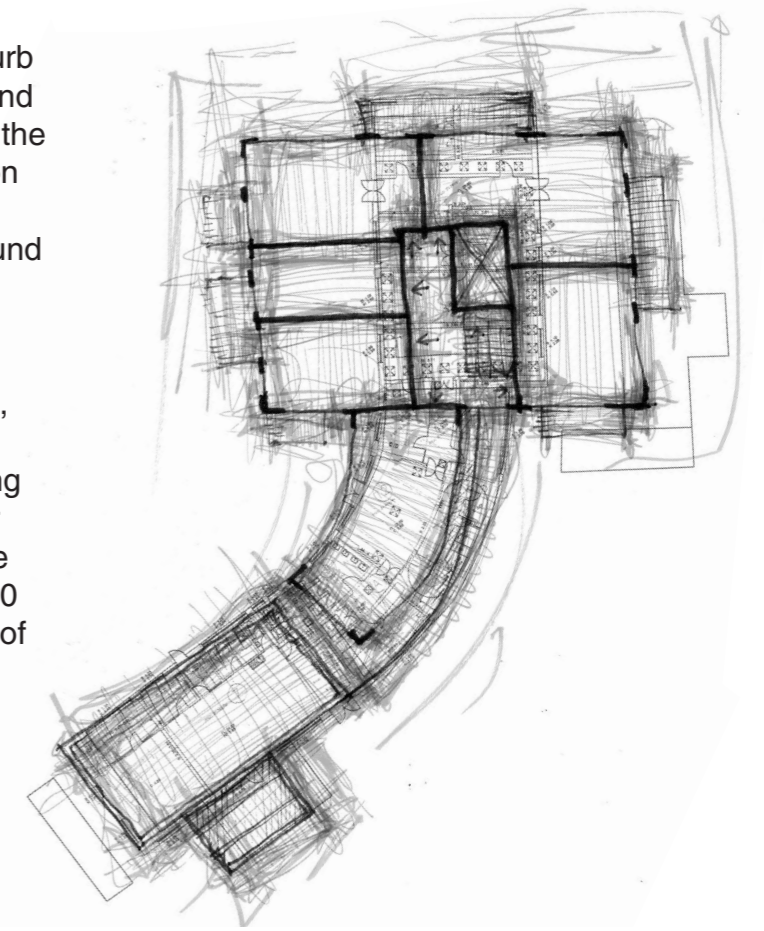
Above: Mock-up of a deck access unit



ITEC

Preservation of existing brick structure. Refurb and restoration of existing original joinery and fittings to provide mixed use floor space on the ground floor, and residential accommodation above. Drawing from a key precedent of Bradbury Works, the extensions wraps around the existing structure, extending the space beyond its current floor plan.

This approach creates the opportunity for 1, 2 and 3 bedroom homes accessed from a new central core. In keeping with the existing 4 storey neighbours just beyond this corner of the site, this extension of the ITEC centre could provide somewhere in the region of 30 homes, aiming for 5 additional floors on top of the existing 2 storeys.



BRIDGE PARK THINK TANK



LET'S BUILD, NOT DESTROY

Kit of Parts by BPTT

 Large Hall	 Refurbished Entry	 Shop Fronts	 Market	 Tropical Room
 Workshop	 Flexible Spaces	 Recording Studio + Radio	 Roof Cut-Outs for Atrium	 Dropped Seating
 Adaptive Reuse ITEC	 Shop Units "Street"	 Adaptive Reuse Unisys	 Green + Station Link	 Enhanced Bus Connectivity
 Allotments + Flower Beds	 Skate Park	 Stepped Connection to Link	 Public Activities	 Outdoor Fitness
 Public Seating	 Cycle Paths	 Playground Pieces	 Ampitheatre	

Don't let Stonebridge start from scratch

50% Off Adaptive Reuse

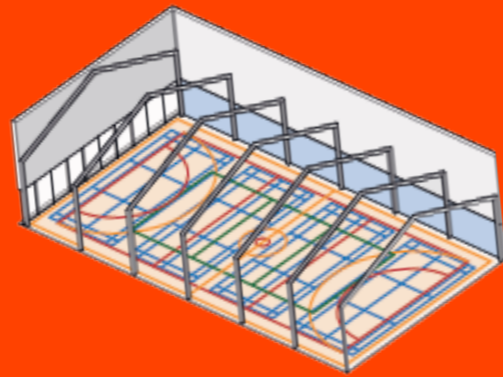
Kit of Parts

We encourage you to think of these elements as a kit of parts, which would be added to and altered through a comprehensive co-design rollout. They provide the opportunity to create endless possibilities which reflect the aims and legacy of the site in exciting new offers which could make bridge park an asset and a destination for years to come.

Large Hall

The large competition sized hall was established as a unique facility in the area, which created economic opportunity allowing it to be hired for wider area sports, parties and events. From community conversations, we have gathered that this is still a needed facility locally, and groups like the gymnastics club, badminton and roller derby have been made homeless and had to relocate further from many of their members and downgrade their facilities.

The hall is already ready to go, and therefore can be reactivated with just the keys to the building, more minimal cost and ease.



£

PHASE 1

REUSE

Shop Fronts

The business units in the original scheme were a key part of the HPCC's vision for a tighter local economy where people could spend and sell to local people and investment was maintained in the area. As identified in our mapping, there aren't currently many retail units, offices or co-working spaces in Stonebridge. Additional shop fronts allow new start-ups and long standing independent businesses more presence and to express themselves.

As a vital part of the project, which already have an adequate layout, the units are prime for being the first wing reopened. The additional shop fronts on the northern facade can be done in collaboration with entrepreneurs.



£

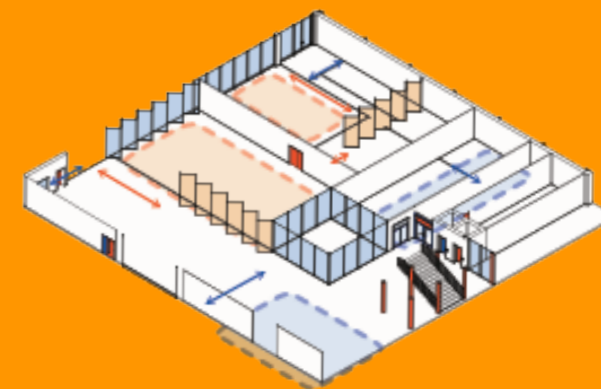
PHASE 2

ADD

Flexible Space

The main interior spaces, which are currently some of the least useable due to the lack of daylight, difficult navigation and sheer quantity of small warren-like spaces can be opened up within the structural steel grid. Inserting an atrium brings much needed light and creating a series of folding partitions allows for bigger and smaller spaces to be created to hire and use for any event demanded.

The flexible spaces should be created following the initial reactivation of the site, and after the establishment of the workshop, which can be used to help do the work. Ensuring that the demo and construction work is done safely and robustly also means that it will be one of the more expensive elements of design.



£££

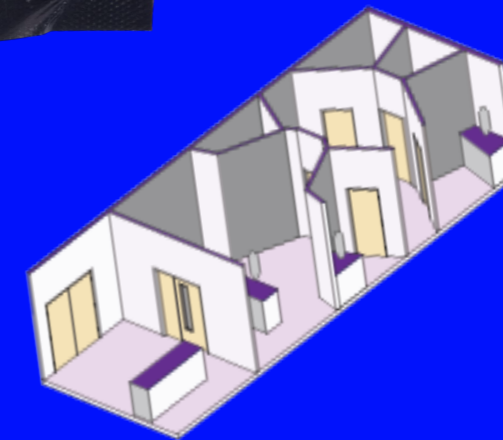
PHASE 3

ADAPT

Music Studio

Music is a key part of the local identity in Stonebridge, from the musical 'Babymother' to local company Volcano Sound Systems which gets people involved in sound systems at events such as the Notting Hill Carnival. Creating a studio gives space and resources for expression, learning and community. The possibility for a local radio and for local people to record and distribute their own music widens this soft infrastructure further.

The music studio is a relatively small, entirely internal space, which means it can be done on a moderate budget, requiring some minor partition changes. The most costly element is the specialist equipment, which can be added to and upgraded over time.



££

PHASE 3

ADAPT

Workshop

The workshop can act as a space for upskilling, providing space and resources to local craftspeople and contractors. It can support the wider development of the site and encourage more self-built and/or modular elements. An ongoing workshop encourages a culture of maintenance, repair and adaptation, allowing Bridge Park to remain flexible and change to fit future desires. It also allows these things to be kept in house, training local people how to work on the building, keeping it more self sufficient.

The workshop should follow the initial meanwhile uses of the outdoor space and business units, and can be created by removing internal partitions in the southern non-original units. Specialist equipment can be added to gradually, potentially supported by local contractors and industry.



££

PHASE 1

ADAPT

Seating

As part of our secure by social connection framework, creating public seating was a key way of introducing casual interaction and inviting people to spend time there. It gives the landscape more moments of rest and surrounding it with soft infrastructure like trees and ponds gives a variety of smaller, human-scale spaces where people can feel comfortable.

The initial seating could be created in the early stages of the project, supporting meanwhile uses of the grounds like pop up events and markets



£

PHASE 2

ADD

Play Structures

As a way of creating a more active and dynamic landscape, a range of play structures are proposed throughout the site, taking precedence from the approaches of Aldo and Hannie Van Eyck. We are keen that these are dispersed to encourage movement through the site, and not directly replicate the fenced playground across the road at Wyborne Way.

These can be gradually added as the project expands the activation of the site and more people start going there on a regular basis. It is a great opportunity to involve local young people in the design and build of the elements which can be fun and expressive and encourage their future sense of ownership and maintenance over the site.



£

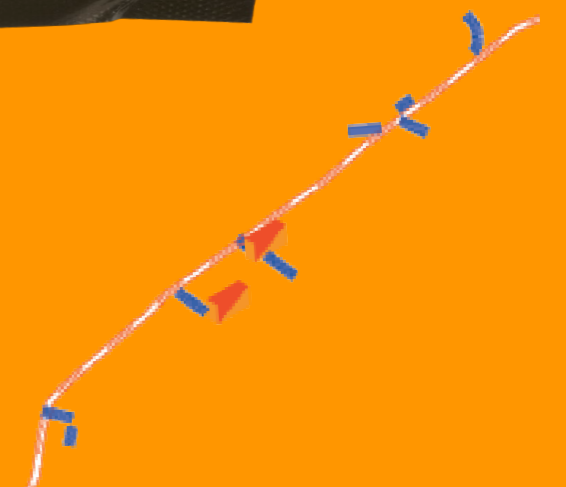
PHASE 2

ADD

Bus Connections

Bus connections are key for local access, and in the long term, changing the layout of Brentfield Road to create more accessible bus infrastructure would help people access Bridge Park more easily. Bus islands with dedicated small crossings allow pedestrians and cyclists priority over vehicles and encourage people to use these modes of transport. We have been careful to introduce these crossings at entrances and along long straight sections of road to allow cyclists good visibility and the ability to slow down for people crossing.

This is likely to be one of the later interventions due to the coordination needed with the council, Highways England, TFL and road users.

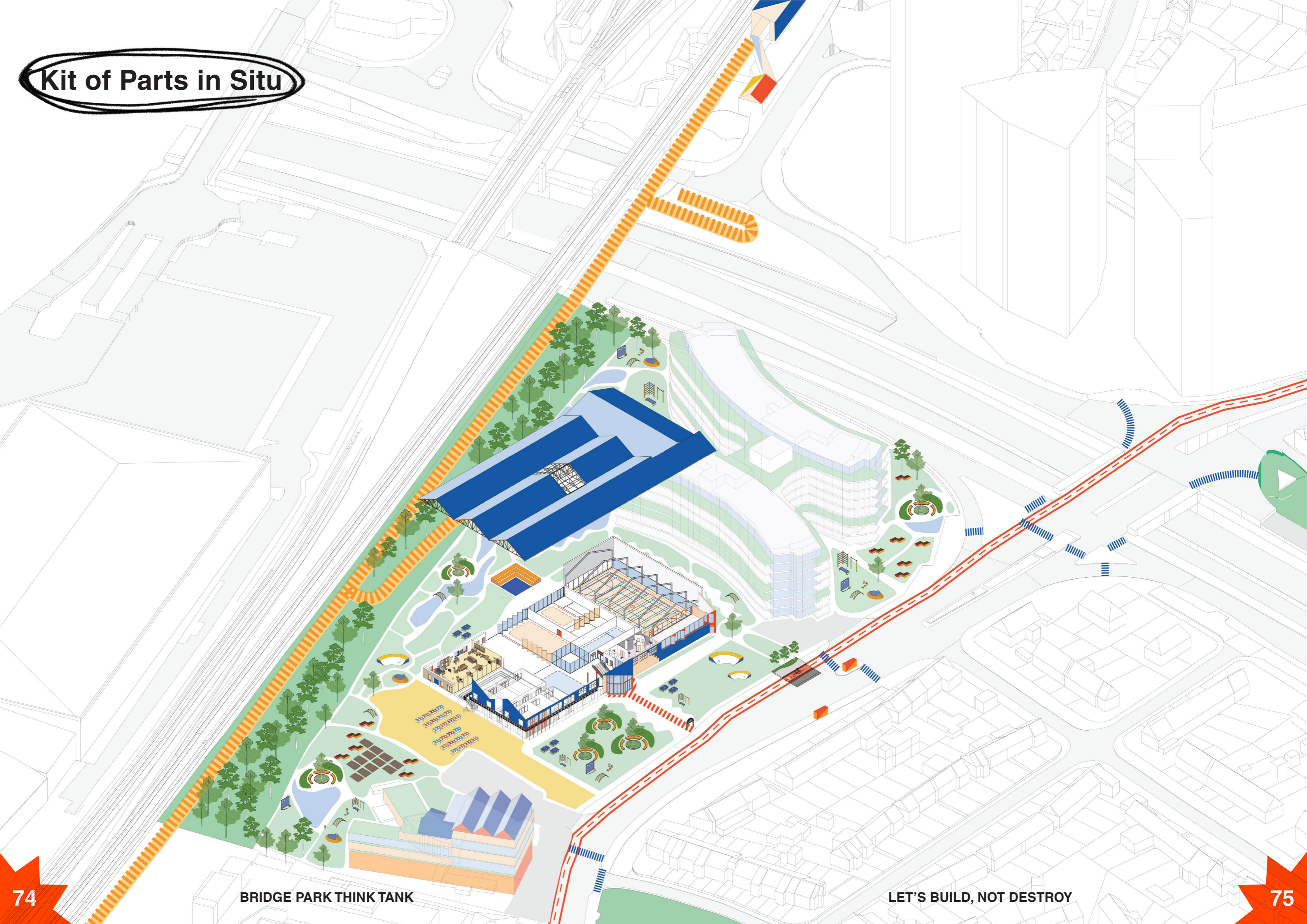


£££

PHASE 4

CONNECT

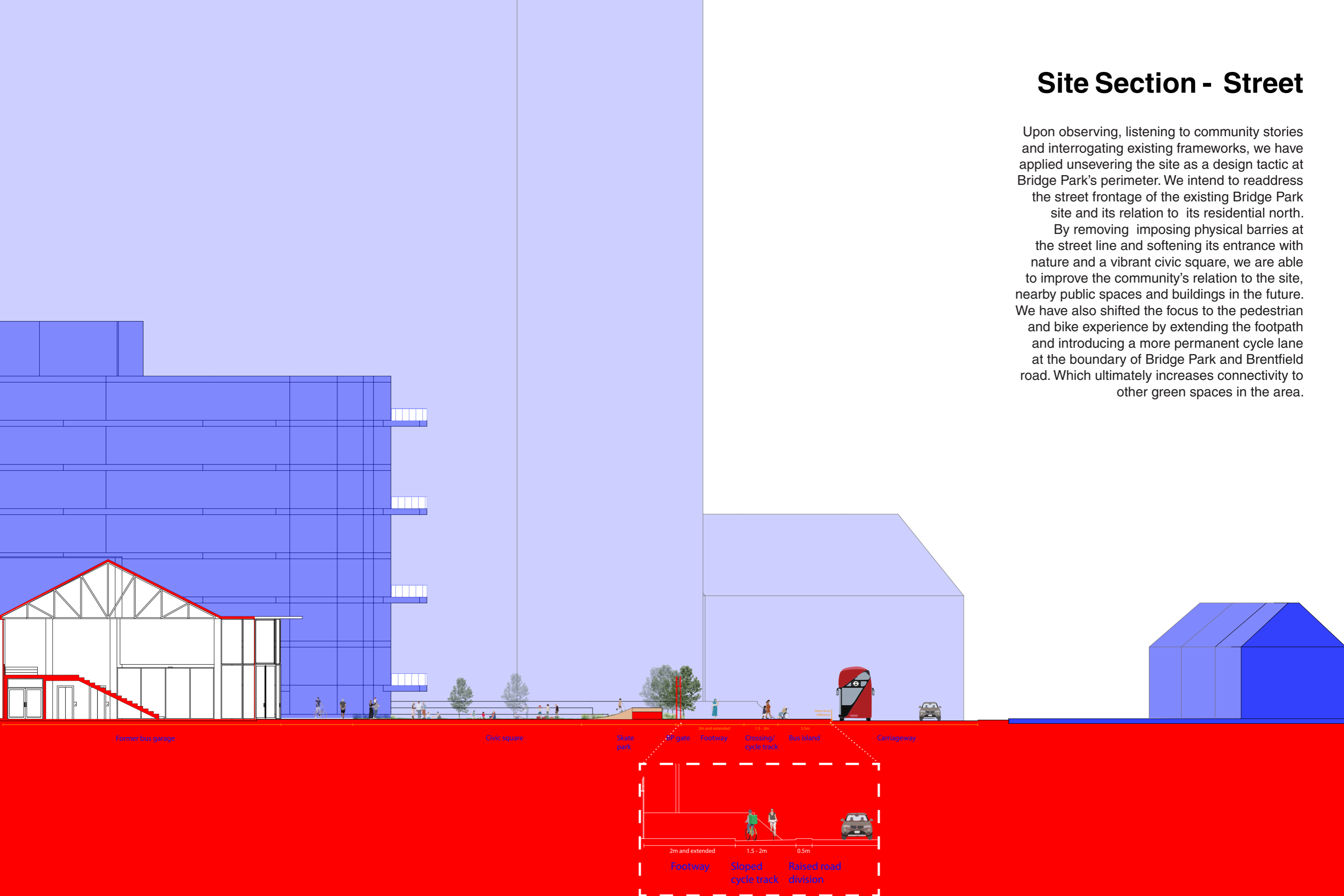
Kit of Parts in Situ



Site Section - Street

Upon observing, listening to community stories and interrogating existing frameworks, we have applied unsevering the site as a design tactic at Bridge Park's perimeter. We intend to readdress the street frontage of the existing Bridge Park site and its relation to its residential north.

By removing imposing physical barriers at the street line and softening its entrance with nature and a vibrant civic square, we are able to improve the community's relation to the site, nearby public spaces and buildings in the future. We have also shifted the focus to the pedestrian and bike experience by extending the footpath and introducing a more permanent cycle lane at the boundary of Bridge Park and Brentfield road. Which ultimately increases connectivity to other green spaces in the area.

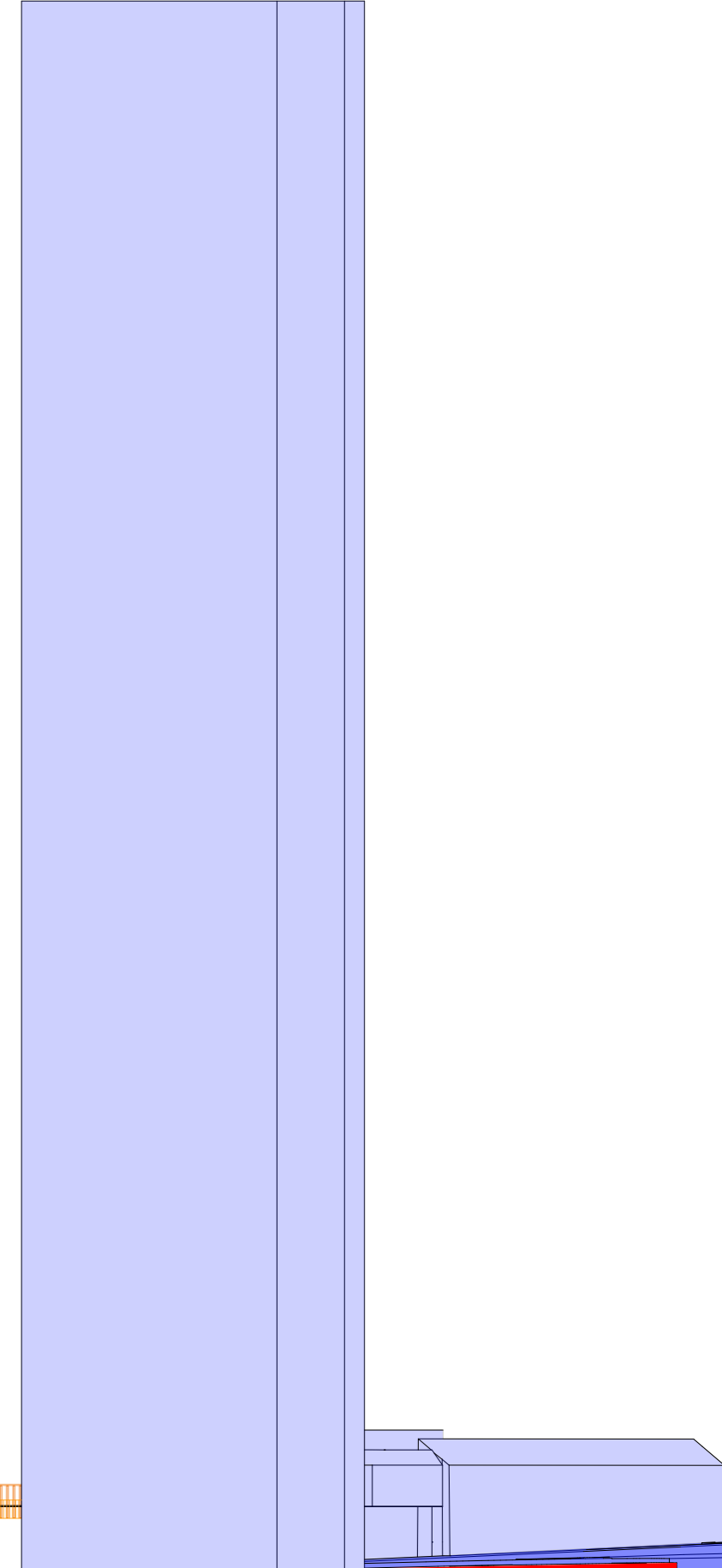
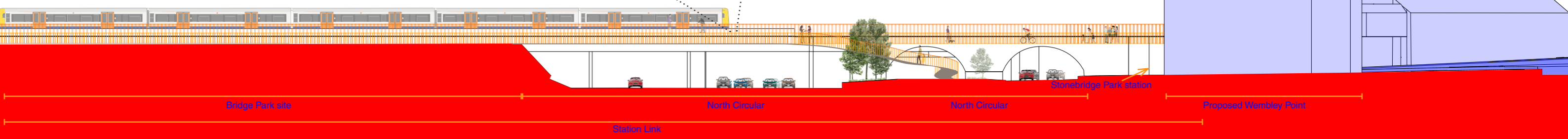


Site Section - Bridge

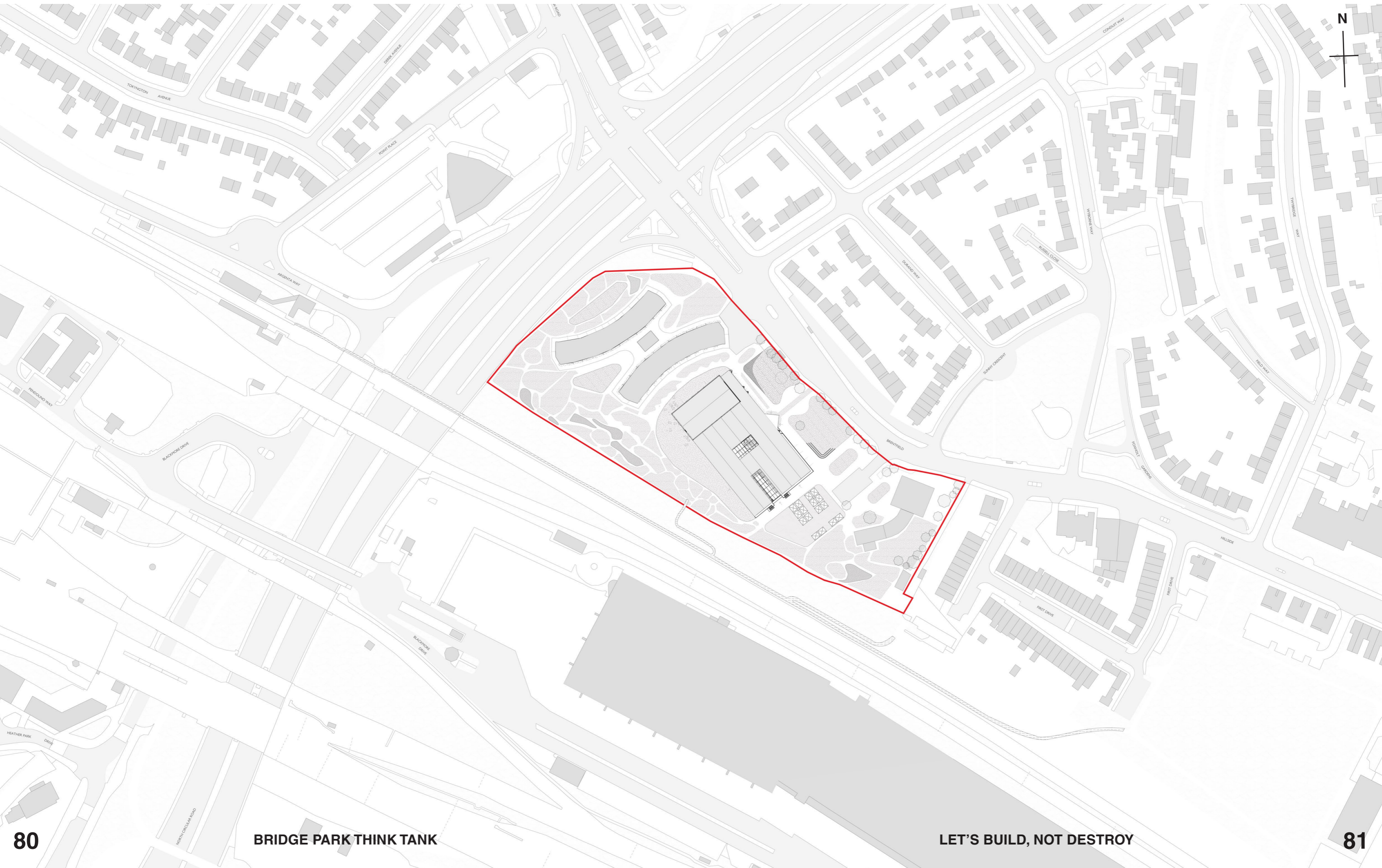
To tackle the serious severance and disconnect currently facing the site, the Bridge Park Think Tank's vision proposes a bridge and walkway to connect Stonebridge Station, the Bridge Park site, Wyborne Way Park, Brent River Park and the Stonebridge Recreation Ground.

This ties into the existing green corridor created by railway adjacent land, and provides a safe pedestrian and cycle route, separate from the North circular and Brentfield Road. This also shortens the distance to the station, and links together many existing well used public spaces - especially Stonebridge Rec.

By linking these spaces together, the permeability of the site greatly increases, giving local uses greater agency over their methods and routes of travel, in significantly more pleasant spaces, than the current pedestrian crossings across the North Circular slip roads.

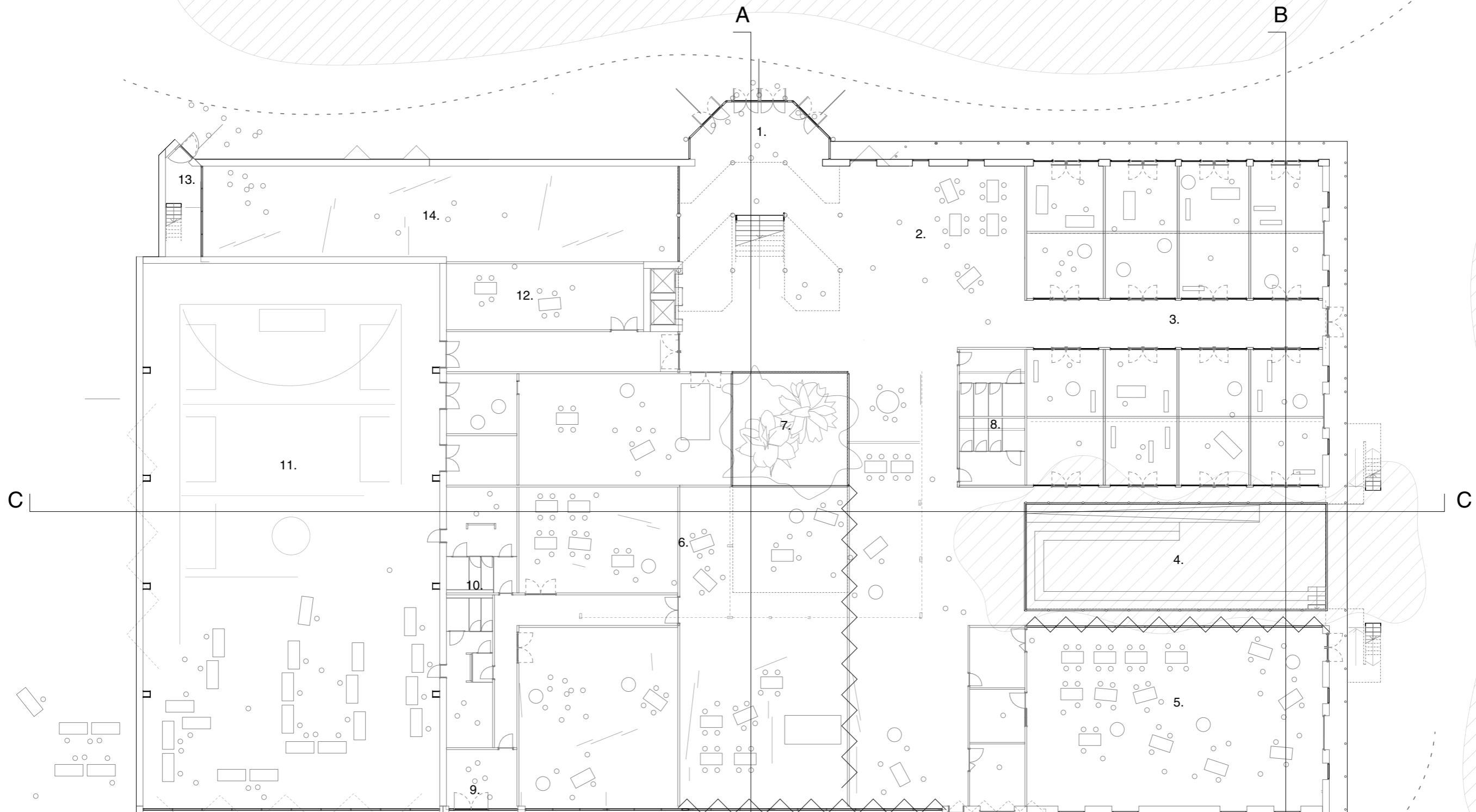


Bridge Park - Proposed Site Plan



Bridge Park - Proposed Ground Floor Plan

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1:200 @a2

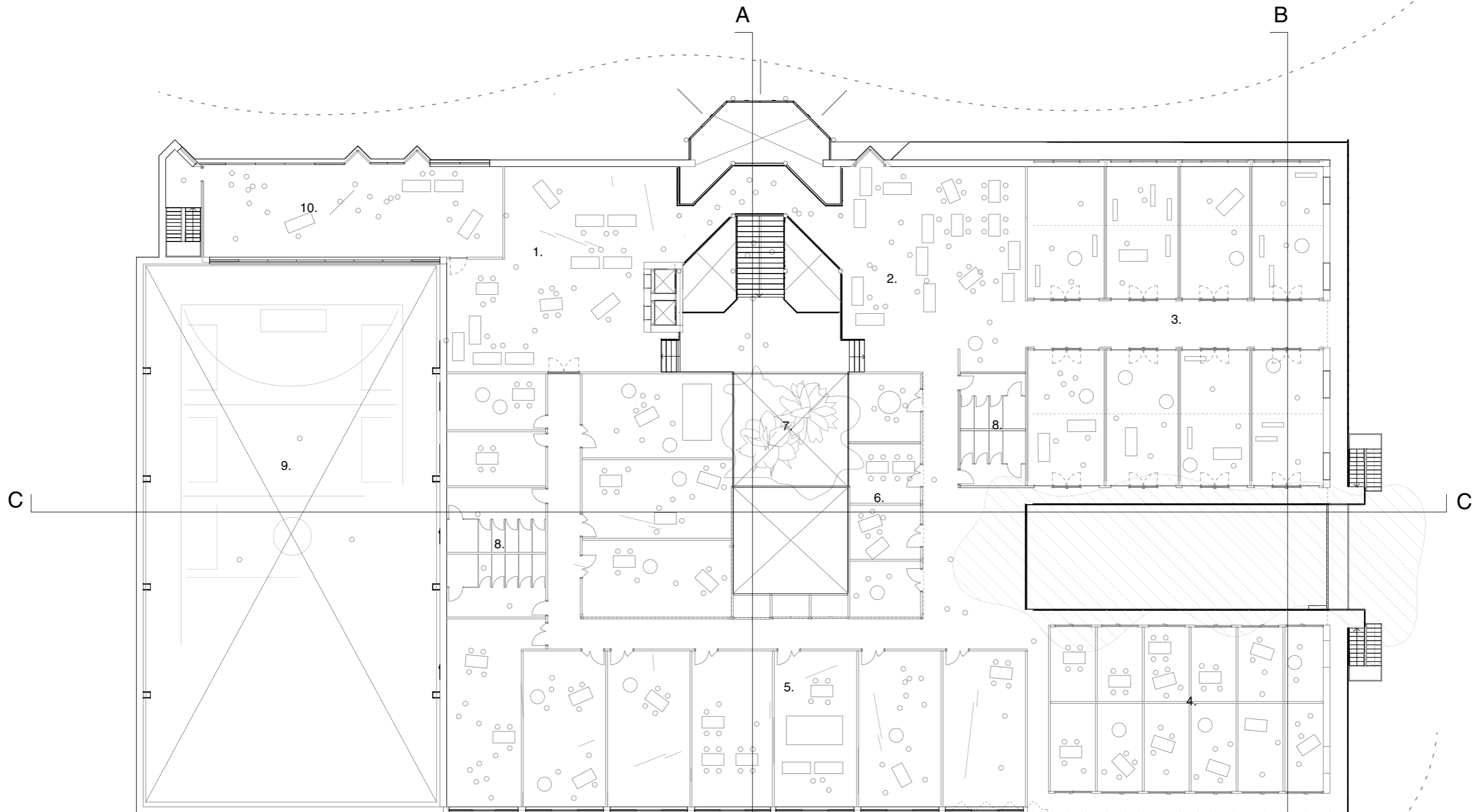


- 1. Main Entrance
- 2. Entry "Community Living Room"
- 3. "The Streets" Business Units
- 4. Sunken Seating, Balconied Atrium
- 5. Workshop
- 6. Flexible Hireable Space
- 7. Atrium with New Tree
- 8. WCs
- 9. Sports Entrance
- 10. Changing Rooms + Storage
- 11. Large Hall
- 12. Studio
- 13. Exhibition Entrance
- 14. Exhibition Space



Bridge Park - Proposed First Floor Plan

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1:200 @a2



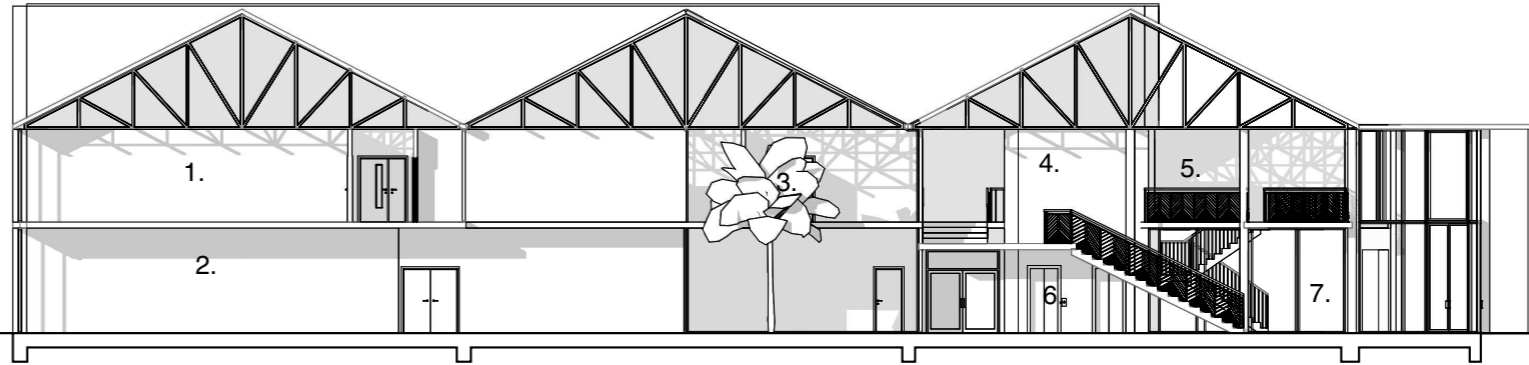
- 1. Co-working Space
- 2. Education Information Commons
- 3. Office Units
- 4. Small Specialised Workshops
- 5. Classrooms
- 6. Group Rooms
- 7. Atrium with New Tree
- 8. WCs
- 9. Double Height Void of Large Hall
- 10. Tropical Room



Bridge Park - Proposed Sections

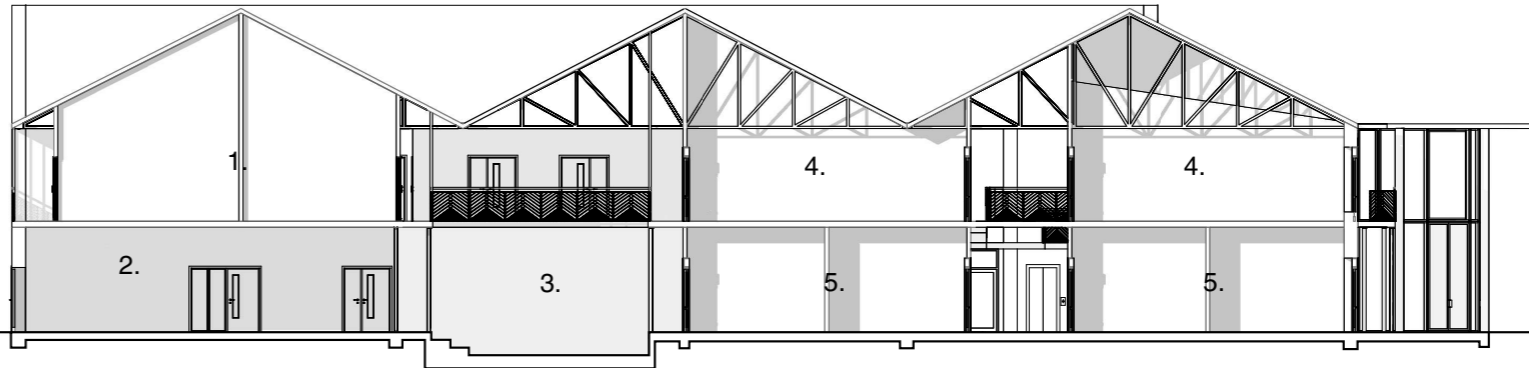
0 2 4 8 12 20m
1:200 @ a2

- 1. Classroom
- 2. Small Hall
- 3. Atrium
- 4. Staiway
- 5. Co-Working
- 6. Circulation
- 7. Entrance



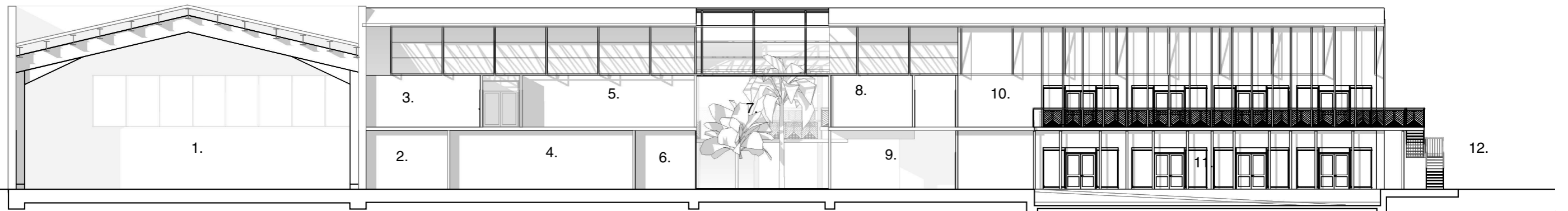
Section AA

- 1. Small Workshops
- 2. Workshop
- 3. Atrium + Sunken Seating
- 4. Office Units
- 5. Business Units



Section BB

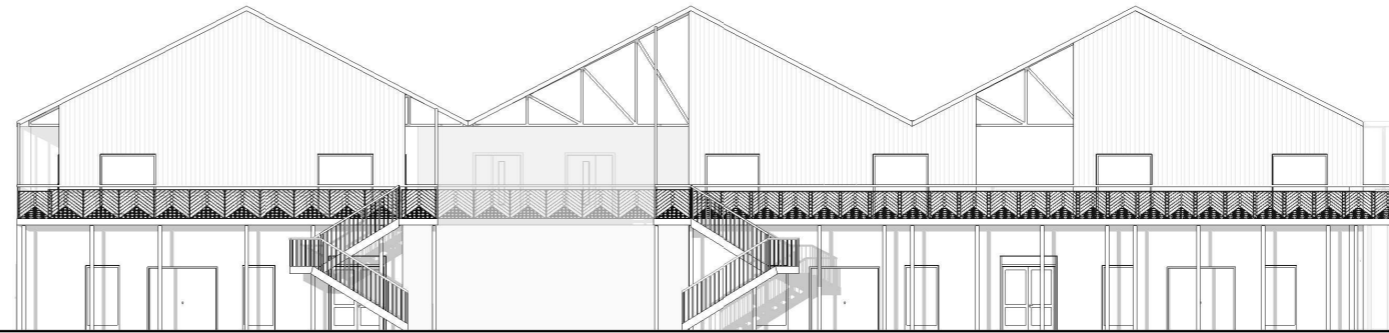
- 1. Large Hall
- 2. Hall Store
- 3. WCs
- 4. Flexible Space
- 5. Classroom
- 6. Flexible Space
- 7. Atrium with New Tree
- 8. Group Room
- 9. Open Space
- 10. Changing Rooms + Storage
- 11. Sunken Seating and Shop Fronts
- 12. Yard



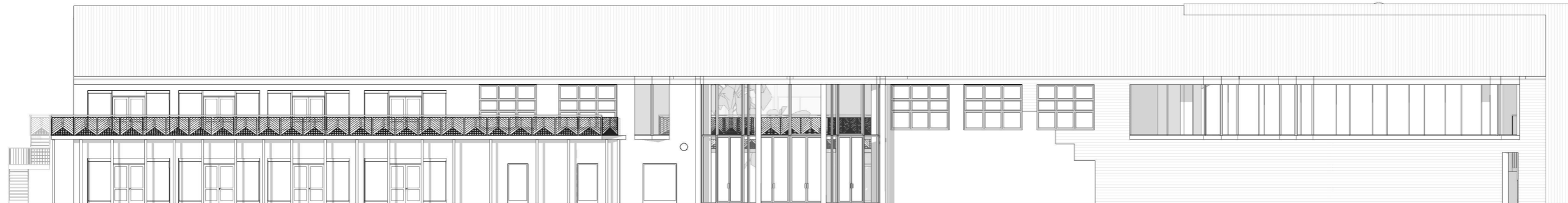
Section CC

Bridge Park - Proposed Elevations

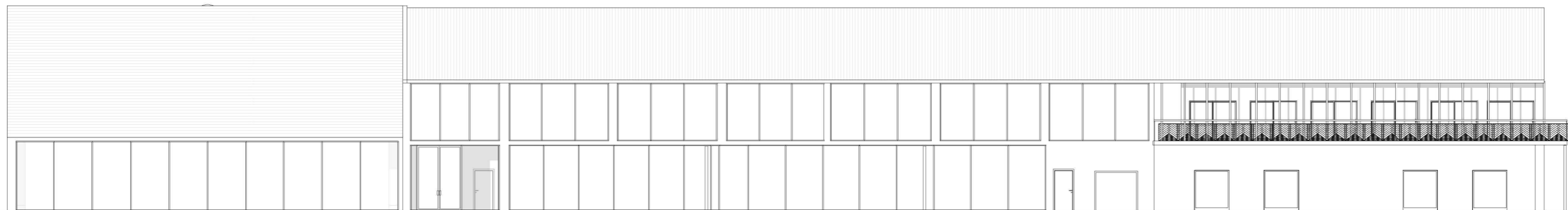
0 2 4 8 12 20m
1:200 @ a2



East Elevation



North Elevation



South Elevation

5.0

Next Steps

“Bridge Park on the move... Again!”

NEED WORKSPACE?

Retail!

Offices!

Hot Desking!

Cheap Rents based on Commission

Come to Bridge Park!

Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre,
Brentfield, Harrow Rd, London NW10 0RG

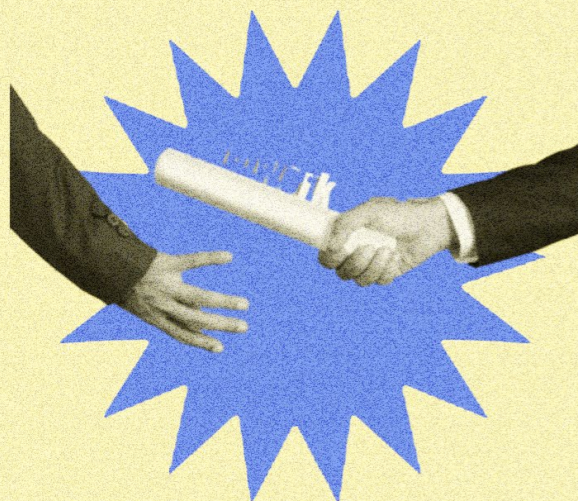
HPCC Engagement

'The council is mostly focused on economics'
-Michael Wilson



'Meanwhile use is essential for maintaining the social fabric during redevelopment'
- Sar'i McLean

'Not having adaptive reuse and meanwhile use would make it harder to pass on the baton to the next generation'
- Paul Anderson



'So many who grew up with it had their lives changed by the 'Bridge Park Experience'
-Errol Williams

NOTES FROM THE HARLESDEN PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY COUNCIL

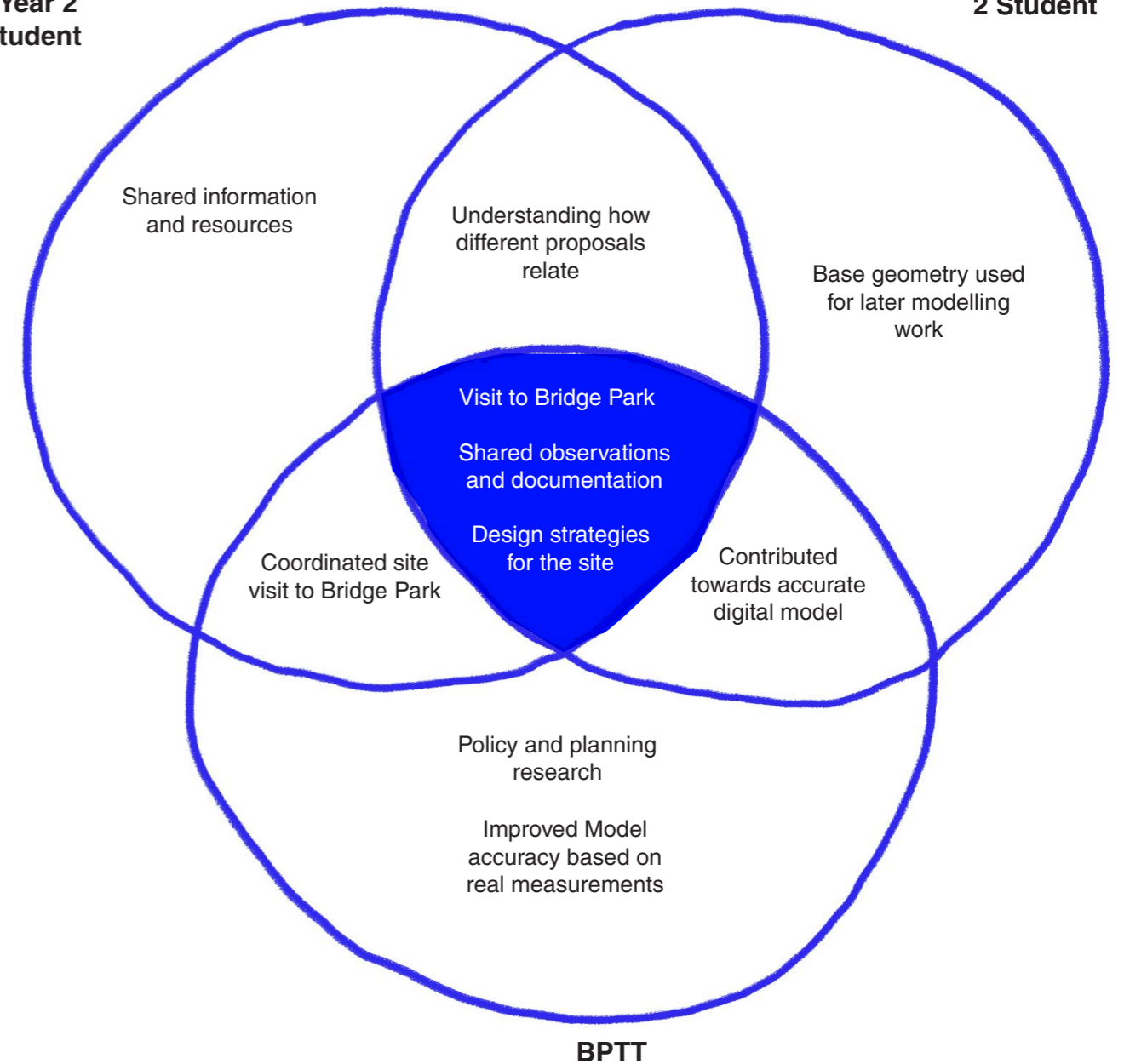
Cross Student Collaboration

This diagram illustrates how site access, modelling, and research were shared between our group, Reuben and Bihi, allowing a more accurate understanding of Bridge Park to develop collectively.

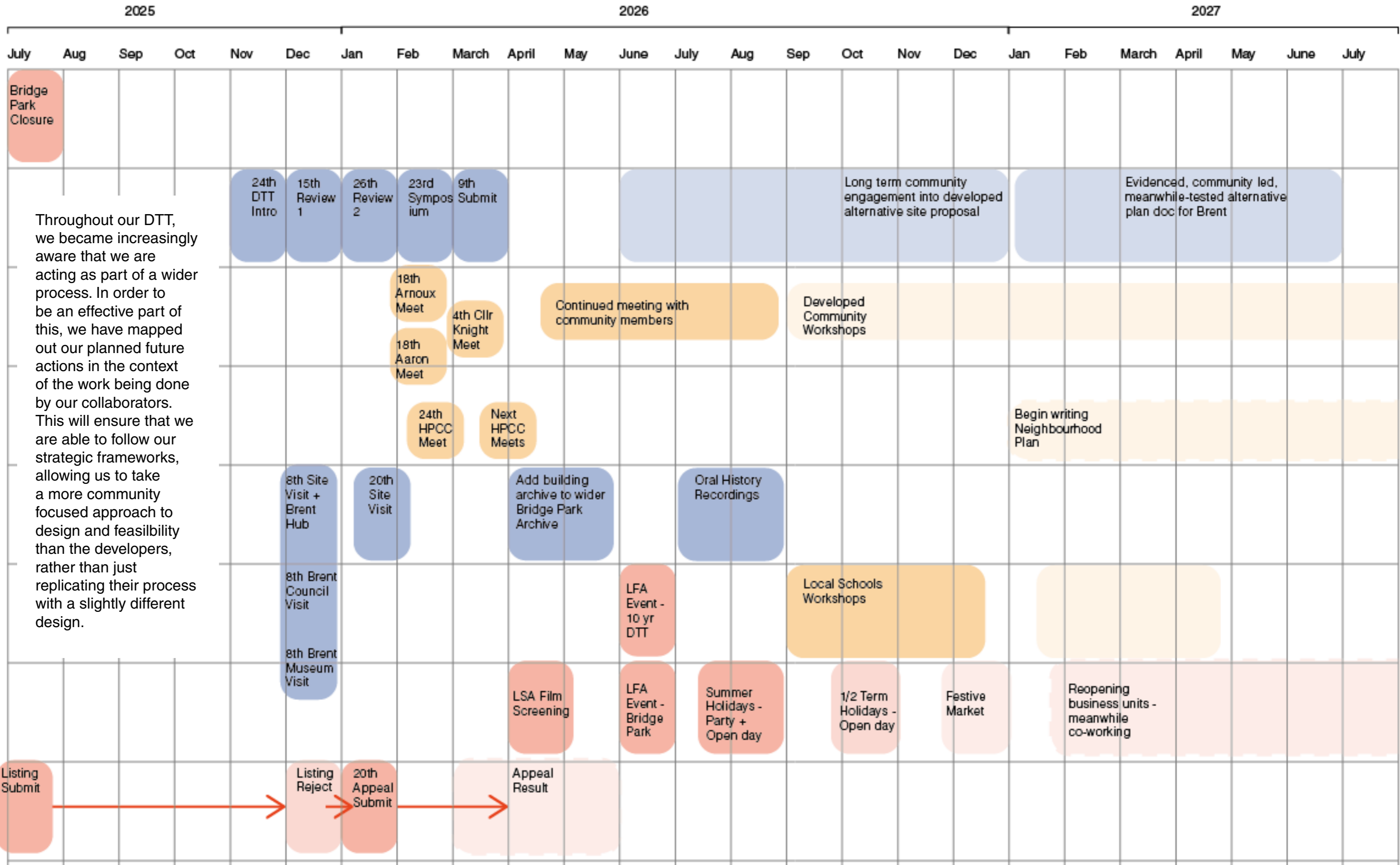


**Rueben
- Year 2
Student**

**Bihi - Year
2 Student**



Next Steps + Bigger Picture



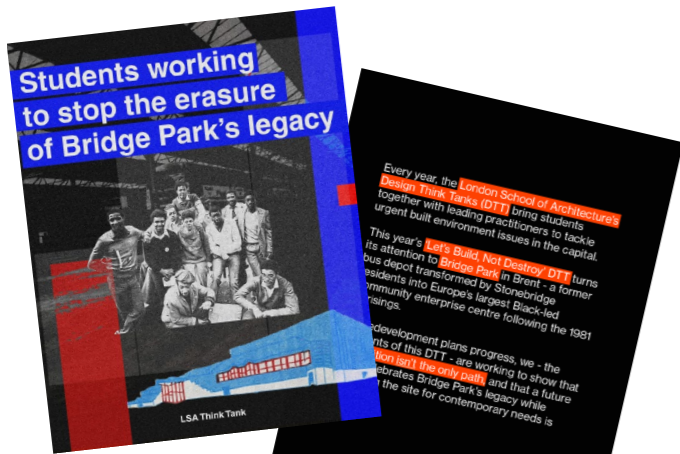
The Path Ahead

The Bridge Park Think Tank is already engaging in discussions with key collaborators such as Nabil Al-Kinani, Rebecca Markus, Reuben Fatoye and Bihi Mohamed, about what all our respective efforts can weave together to create.

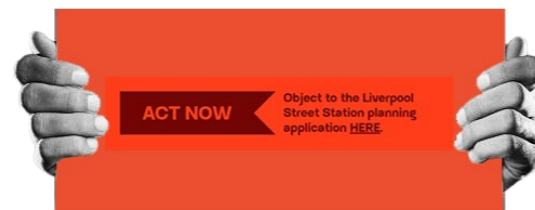
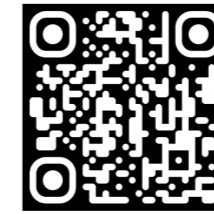
At this stage, this is looking like it will take the form of a more finalised alternative proposal for the site, making the physical future of the Bridge Park site more tangible to key stakeholders with the power to inform the future of the site.

The Bridge Park Think Tank is influenced by the recent alternative proposals to respective controversial development for Liverpool Street Station and Brick Lane.

Our outreach beyond this think tank has already begun, sharing our visions and aims via social media, through the London School of Architecture and the Save Bridge Park networks.



Keep up to date with the Save Bridge Park campaign here!



Imagery from the alternative vision for Liverpool Street Station

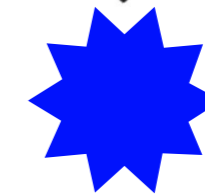


Imagery from the alternative vision for Brick Lane



Aims

To create a resource for Brent Council and the Stonebridge community that supports the development of an alternative future for Bridge Park.



Approach

Within the three month timeframe of the module, we focused on research, site analysis, and the development of frameworks to guide design thinking and decision making.



Outcome

A set of project frameworks and a design menu that outline possible strategies for the future of Bridge Park. These resources are intended to act as a foundation that others can build upon, allowing the work to be continued beyond the scope of this project. And contribute to wider discussions about spatial justice, heritage and racial discrimination.

Bibliography

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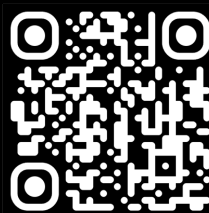
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“This is more than just about buildings, this is about people.”

Lawrence Fearon, Founding member of the HPCC



**Bridge Park
Think Tank**



Save Bridge Park

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ARCHITECTURE**