

WHITECROSS STREET ESTATE

2010

Publica

Dedicated to the memory of

MICHAEL SMOUGHTON

11th December 1974 – 20th November 2010

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- ## APPENDIX

In September 2010 the Peabody Tenants' Association Whitecross Street (PTAWS) commissioned Publica to produce a report on the public spaces and amenities of the Whitecross Street estate. Funding for the report was provided by Peabody.

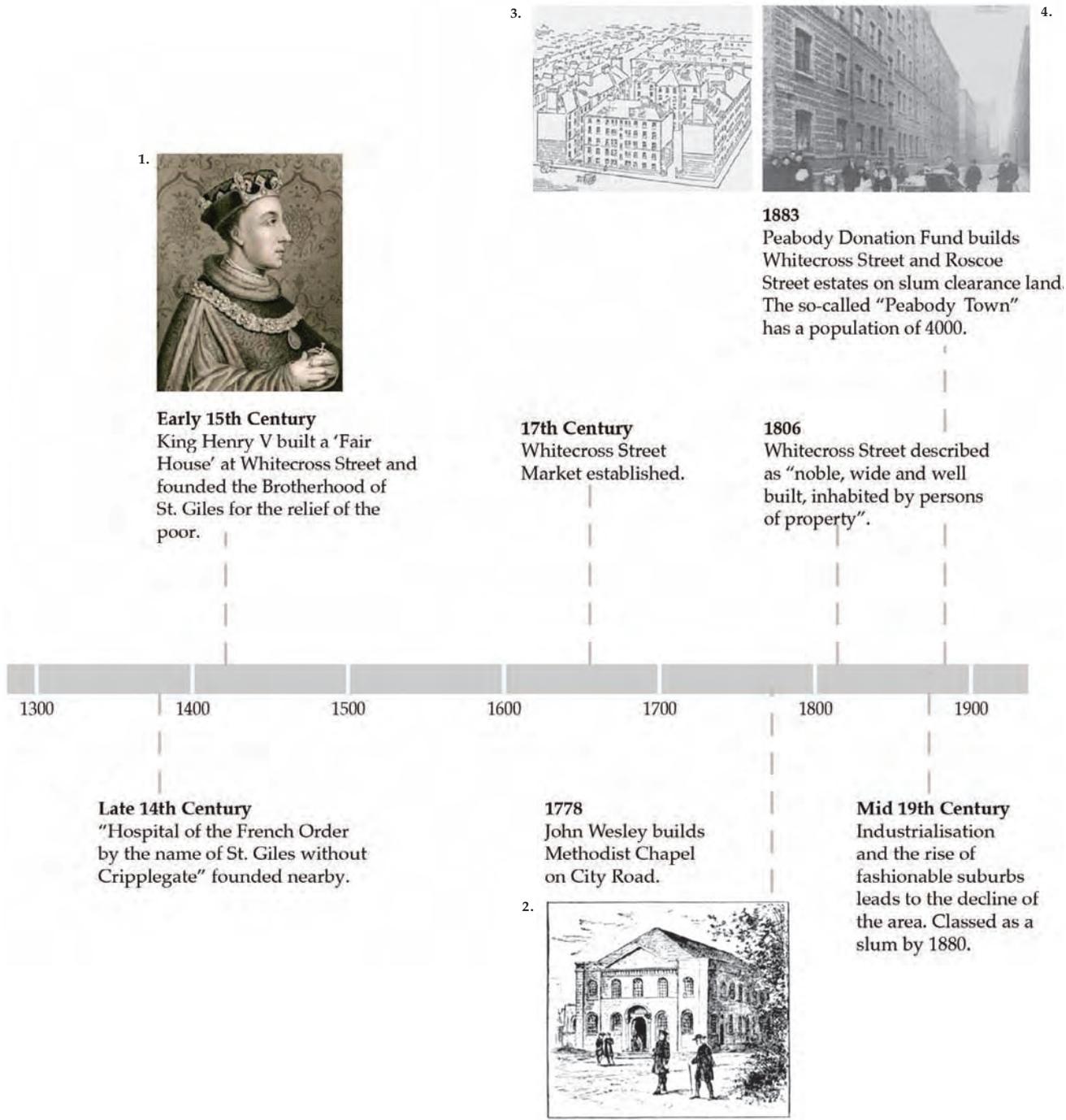
The purpose of the report is to provide evidence of the strengths and weaknesses of the estate's public realm, including residents' own experiences and opinions of the estate.

From this evidence, a proposed vision and set of principles for the future of the estate has been drawn up. The vision and principles are intended to help residents in discussions with Peabody and other stakeholders about future improvements and developments on the estate.

The report provides a snapshot portrait of the estate as encountered by Publica in October and November 2010.

At the heart of the report is the presentation of residents' opinions and concerns about the estate's public spaces and amenities. These were collected on a series of walks and meetings, as well as via email correspondence and a project blog. These opinions are presented as a series of quotes, which are arranged by theme and cross-referenced with specific spaces on the estate.

The vision and principles for the future were prepared by Publica in discussion with members of the Estate Improvements Steering Group. They are wholly informed by the research undertaken with residents over the course of this study.

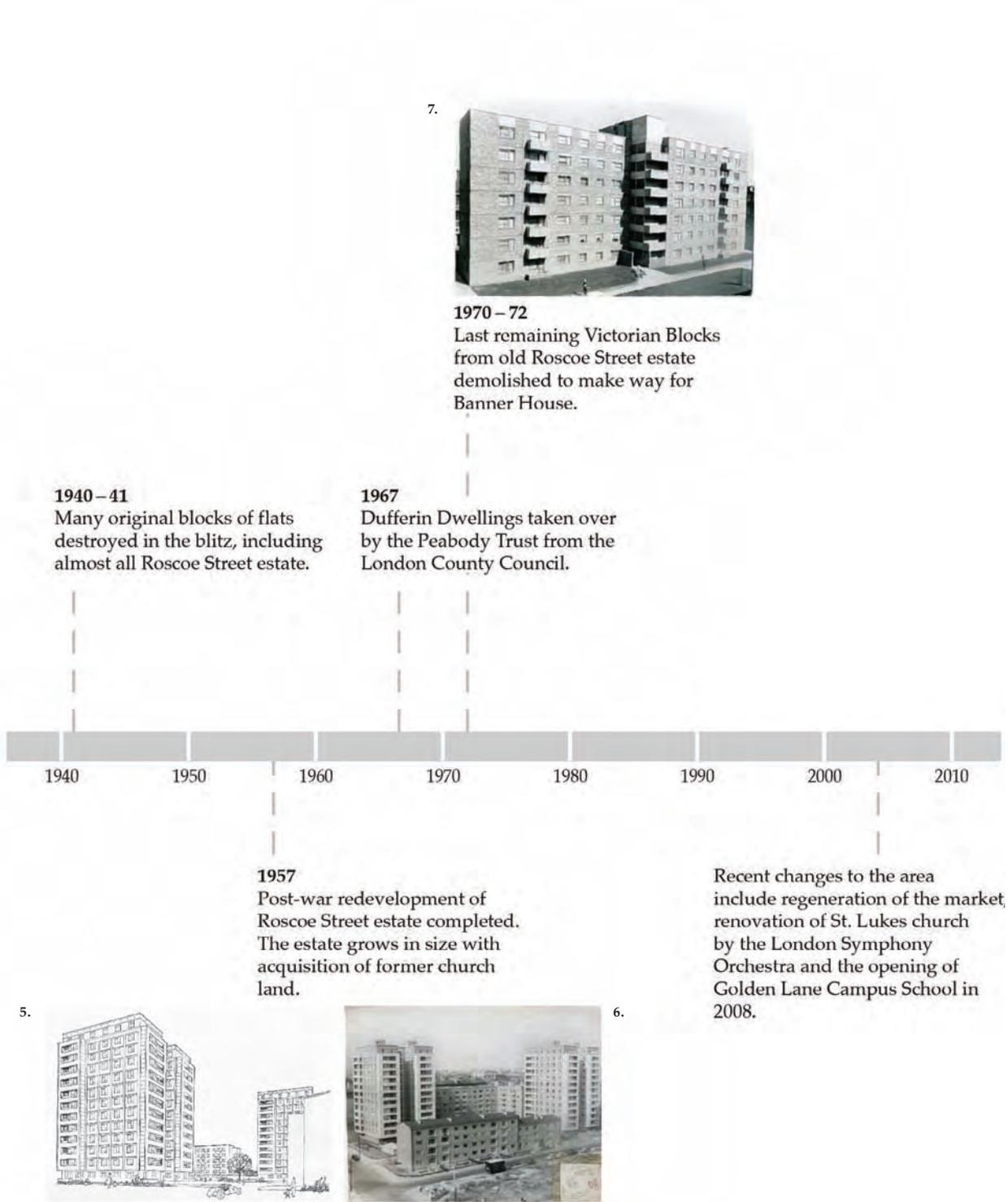


1. Henry V (reign 1413–1422), Reproduced in *The History of England* by David Hume, 1826.

2. John Wesley's Chapel, City Road as it originally appeared in 1778 (Wesley Center Online).

3. Whitecross Street estate, as illustrated in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1883 (Peabody Archive).

4. Chequer Street, c.1900–1911 (Islington Local History Centre).



5. Perspective view of the proposed Roscoe Street estate, 1955 (Peabody Archive).

6. The newly constructed Roscoe Street estate viewed from the south, c.1957 (Peabody Archive), also used

in an advertisement for the builder Y.J. Lovell in *The Finsbury Story*, 1960 (Islington Local History Centre).

7. The newly constructed Banner House, 1972 (London Metropolitan Archive, copyright Peabody).

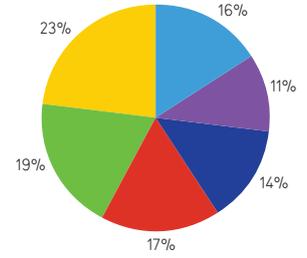
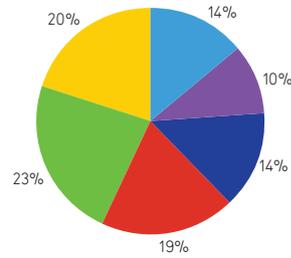
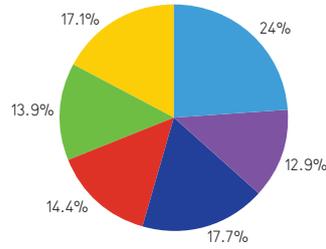
WHITECROSS ESTATE

ISLINGTON BOROUGH

LONDON

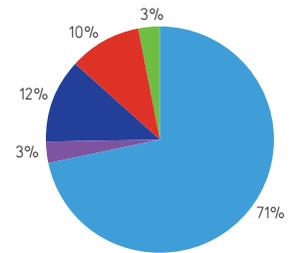
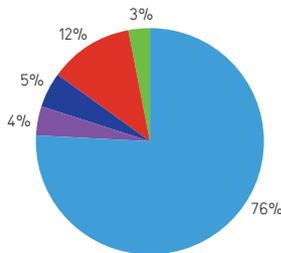
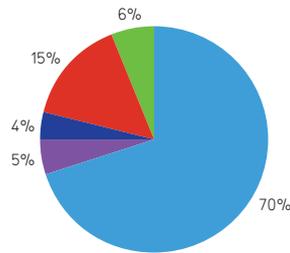
AGE

- OVER 60
- 50-59
- 40-49
- 30-39
- 18-29
- UNDER 18



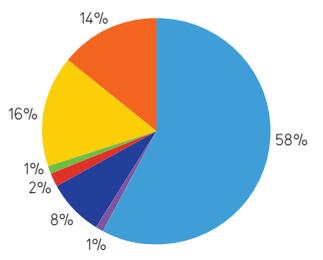
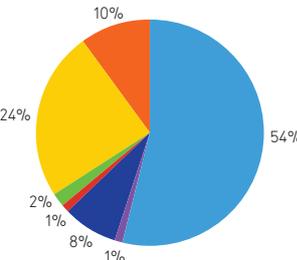
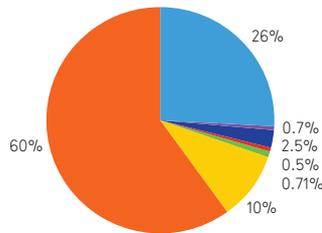
ETHNICITY

- WHITE
- MIXED
- ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH
- BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH
- CHINESE OR OTHER ETHNIC GROUP



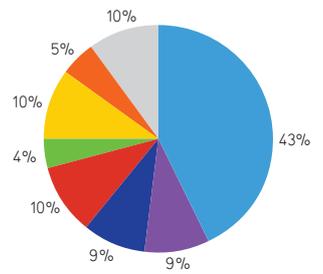
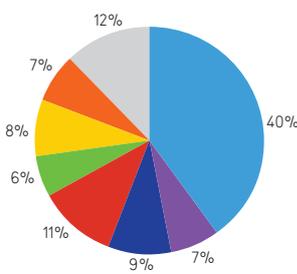
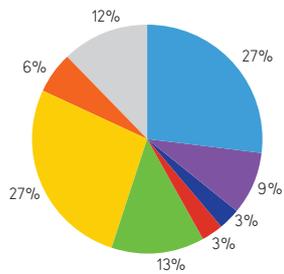
FAITH

- CHRISTIAN
- BUDDHIST
- MUSLIM
- JEWISH
- OTHER
- NO RELIGION
- NOT STATED



WORK

- FULL-TIME EMPLOYED
- PART-TIME EMPLOYED
- SELF-EMPLOYED
- STUDENT
- UNEMPLOYED/JOBSEEKER
- RETIRED
- LONG-TERM SICK/DISABLED
- OTHER



POPULATION

There are officially 992 residents of the Whitecross Street estate, living in 543 properties, which are mainly one, two and three bedroom flats.¹ The official population density is 413 people per hectare. However, it is thought that the true population of the estate is at least 1200, taking into consideration those not registered as residents.² Over a third of residents have lived on the estate for less than five years, yet many stay long-term, and some even grew up on the estate – 10% have lived on the estate for over 30 years.

AGE

Nearly a quarter of Whitecross Street estate residents are over 60 – significantly higher than in Islington borough as a whole. 17.1% of people living on the estate are under 18, and 23% of households are families with children. Compared to the Islington average, there are less children and young people but more families, reflecting smaller family units and perhaps also a lack of housing provision for larger families.

ETHNICITY

70% of residents are White, which is lower than the borough average but about the same as London as a whole, and 59% are White British – slightly higher than the Islington average of 56.8%. A third of people living on the estate are black or of minority ethnic origin. English is the first language of nearly 9/10 respondents to the latest Peabody survey. The next most common first language is Somali, spoken by 2.4% of respondents. Other languages include: Arabic, Bengali, British Sign Language, Cantonese, Chinese, Dutch, Eritrean Tigrigna, Filipino Tagalog, Ewe (Niger–Congo), French, Kurdish Kurmanji, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, Swahili, Thai, Turkish and Wa (Myanmar).

FAITH

Three fifths of Whitecross Street estate residents chose not to state their faith in the Peabody survey. However, the faith profile of those who did respond is very similar to that of Islington borough. The

largest faith group by far is Christian, followed by Muslim, then Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism. 10% state 'no religion'.

HEALTH

In the Bunhill Ward in which the estate is located, 66% of residents consider themselves to be in good health, compared to 71% of all London residents. 12% consider themselves to be in poor health. These figures suggest a generally healthy population considering the slightly higher age bracket of residents in the area. However, the average life expectancy in the Bunhill Ward is 75.6 years, which is towards the lower end of the national average. 11% of people living on the Whitecross Street estate are disabled in some way, including sight and hearing impairments. Half this number have restricted mobility or are wheelchair users. 6% of working-age adults are long-term sick or disabled, which is in keeping with the borough and London average.

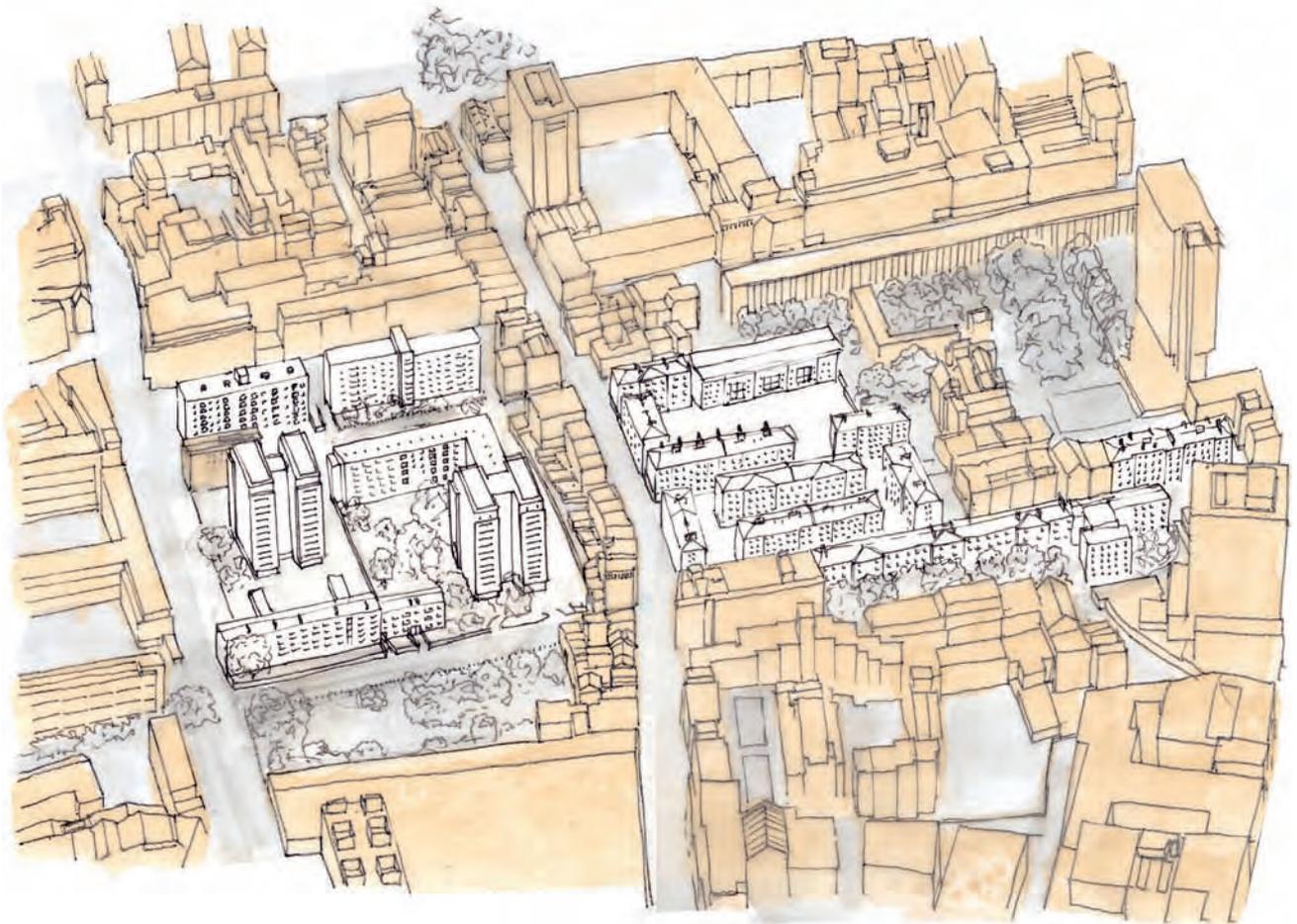
WORK

The proportion of Whitecross Street estate residents in employment is considerably lower than the borough and London averages – 39% compared to 56% and 61% respectively. 27% of adults are retired, also considerably higher than the national or local average of 8% and 10%, which would contribute to the lower figures for adults in employment. However 13% are registered jobseekers, which is twice the number of the borough average and three times that of the London figure, suggesting there may be barriers to work for some residents.

1. Demographic figures for the estate supplied by Peabody, supplied October 2010.
2. The Neighbourhood Manager states that the true figure could be nearer 2000. He encourages people with more residents in a property to register the correct number of occupants.

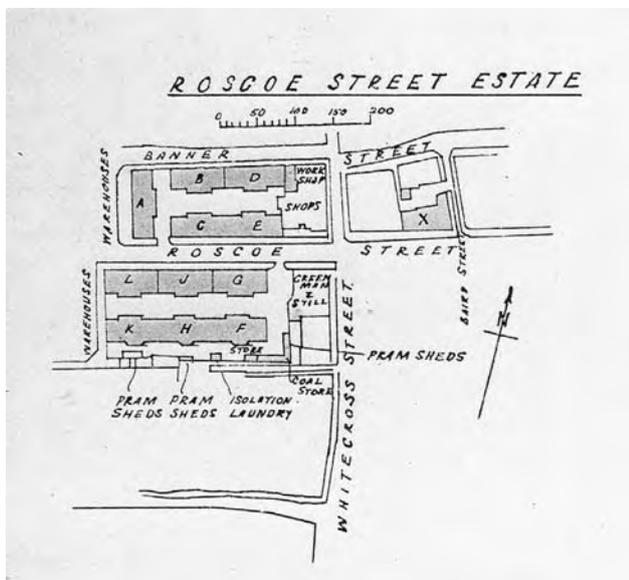
SOURCES:

Peabody Whitecross Street estate residents survey data, October 2010.
Key Statistics, Bunhill Ward and Islington, published by London Borough of Islington. Data Source: 2001 Census Key Statistics tables K801–K804, KS01–KS24.
Census 2001, Key Statistics, London Borough of Islington, May 2003.



In 1883 the Peabody Donation Fund built two estates, one either side of Whitecross Street: The Whitecross Street estate comprised 21 blocks on the east side of Whitecross Street between Roscoe Street and Errol Street, including three blocks at the eastern end of Dufferin Street. The Roscoe Street estate comprised 11 blocks to the west of Whitecross Street, and block X to the east. It covered a large part of the area now occupied by the western side of the present estate. None of the original Victorian buildings of the Roscoe Street estate remain. Although they were two distinct estates, they were considered by one contemporary observer to be one. An anonymous article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* from 1883 said of the new estates:

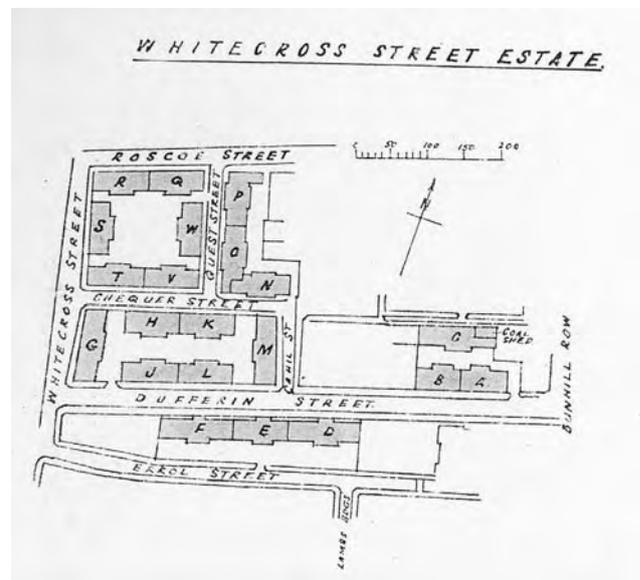
*"You will be confronted, when you reach the top [of Whitecross Street], by several lofty structures, which form what, from the number of blocks, we have ventured to describe as Peabody Town."*¹



Plan showing the original layout of the Roscoe Street estate, undated. Before 1940 (Peabody Archive).

It was reported that the collective cost of the new estates was £194,000 – including land and building costs – and that, “the population of Peabody Town is now close on four thousand souls.”² Together, the two estates were the second and largest in a series of estates built by Peabody in collaboration with the Metropolitan Board of Works.³

The architect of both sides of ‘Peabody Town’ was Henry Astley Darbishire (1825–1899).⁴ The buildings were a mixture of five and six storey blocks on a series of plots of land and in a combination of layout patterns that included two courtyards.⁵ The blocks were built from shades of honey-coloured brick in a pared down ‘Italianate’ style. This pattern can also be seen at other Peabody estates around London, for example close by at Clerkenwell. The Whitecross Street area was badly affected by the Blitz in 1940–41. Many buildings were damaged beyond repair. Looking at



Plan showing the original layout of the Whitecross Street estate, undated. Before 1940 (Peabody Archive).

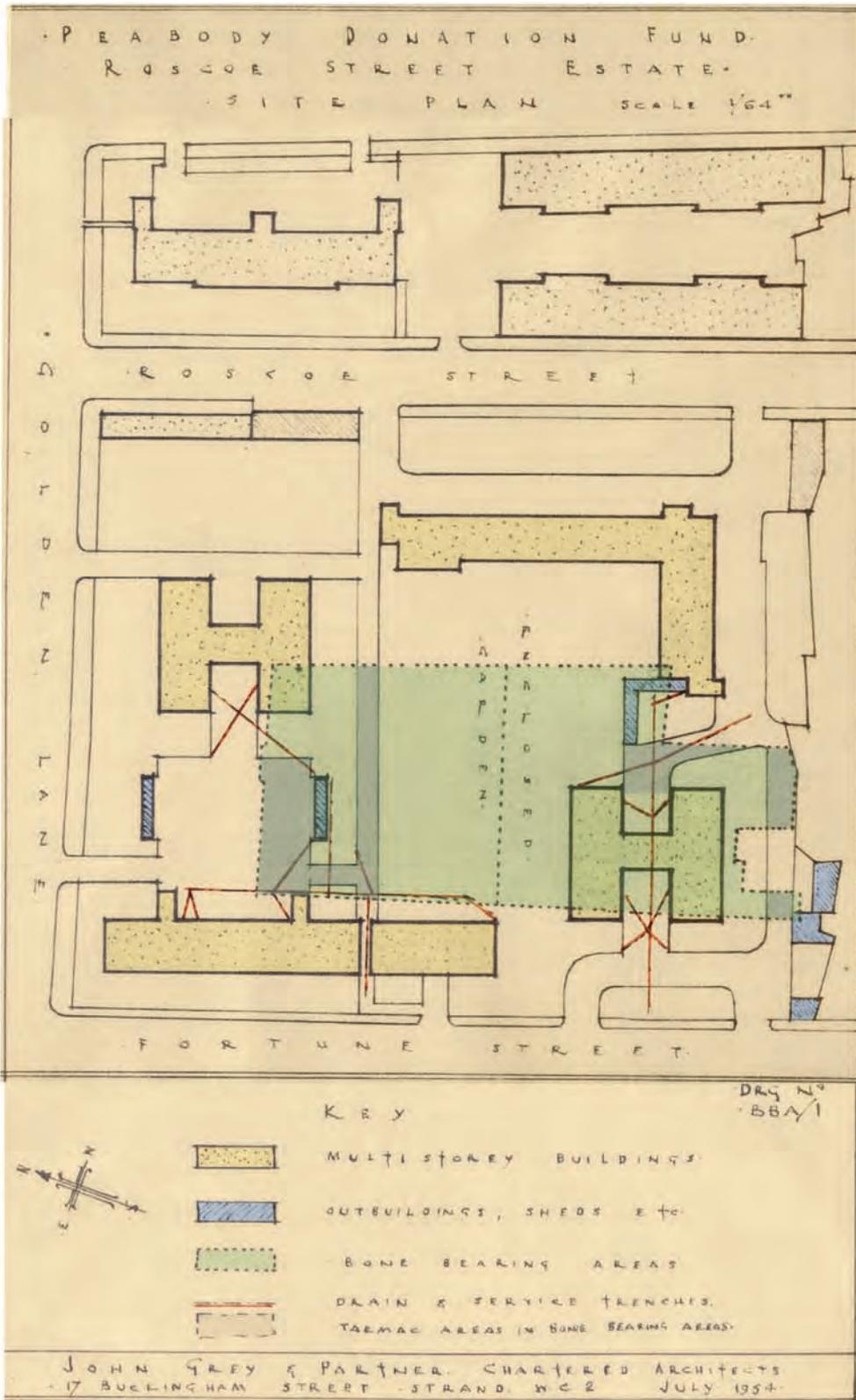
1 Anon., *The Rebuilding of London, III – Peabody Town, Bunhill Fields, Pall Mall Gazette*, Jan(?) 21st 1883, p51 (Peabody Archive).

2 Anon., *The Rebuilding of London, III – Peabody Town, Bunhill Fields, Pall Mall Gazette*, Jan(?) 21st 1883, p51 (Peabody Archive).

3 J.N. Tarn, *The Peabody Donation Fund: The Role of a Housing Society in the Nineteenth Century*, *Victorian Studies*, September 1996, pp33–34.

4 See J.N. Tarn, *Working Class Housing in Nineteenth Century Britain*, AA, London, 1971.

5 J.N. Tarn, *The Peabody Donation Fund: The Role of a Housing Society in the Nineteenth Century*, *Victorian Studies*, September 1996, pp33–34.



Left:
Architect's plan for the post-war reconstruction of the Roscoe Street estate, showing "bone bearing areas" in relation to the new blocks, July 1954 (Peabody Archive).

Opposite:
Perspective view of the proposed Roscoe Street estate, 1955 (Peabody Archive).



the original map of the Whitecross Street estate, the original blocks C, O, P, Q and W no longer exist. New blocks P and Q were built in 1956.

Of the original Roscoe Street estate, six blocks were burnt out in an air raid in December 1940, block E was damaged by a bomb in April 1941 and block F was burned out by an incendiary device in May 1941. The site of block X was sold to the London Diocesan Fund in 1957, while the remaining four Victorian blocks were demolished in the early 1970s to make way for Banner House (1972).

After the war ended there was a desire to reinvent city life. Planners, architects and politicians drew up schemes for new neighbourhoods of high

rise flats and long blocks of maisonettes sitting in open, park-like settings. Traditional streets of old and damaged buildings around Golden Lane and the Barbican were cleared to make way for the estates we see today.

In the 1950s, the Peabody Trust (established when the Peabody Donation Fund was incorporated by Act of Parliament in 1948)⁶ set out to re-build the Roscoe Street Estate along these new principles. Additional land, which had not been part of the 1883 development was incorporated into the estate. Part of this land had previously been the site of St. Mary's Church, which had been built in 1868 but was demolished after being badly damaged in the war. The remainder of the additional ground had

6 <http://www.peabody.org.uk/about-us/history.aspx>
accessed November 2010.



Above: St Mary's Tower and Fortune Court from Fortune Park, 1957 (London Metropolitan Archive, copyright Peabody).

Opposite: Banner House, 1972 (London Metropolitan Archive, copyright Peabody).



been two burial grounds. One was a private burial ground which had been in use between 1636 and 1871, the other being a church burial ground that had closed in 1853. There were no records of the burials and no memorials on the site. Before the 1950s Peabody redevelopment took place human remains were removed by a specialist contractor, presumably from the green shaded 'bone bearing areas' on the July 1954 site plan.⁷

The main phase of the post-war redevelopment of the Roscoe Street estate was completed in 1957. The architect was John Grey and Partner and the scheme consisted of a combination of two 13-storey point blocks, two six-storey blocks and a three and four storey block. When they were built, the two towers were among the tallest residential blocks in

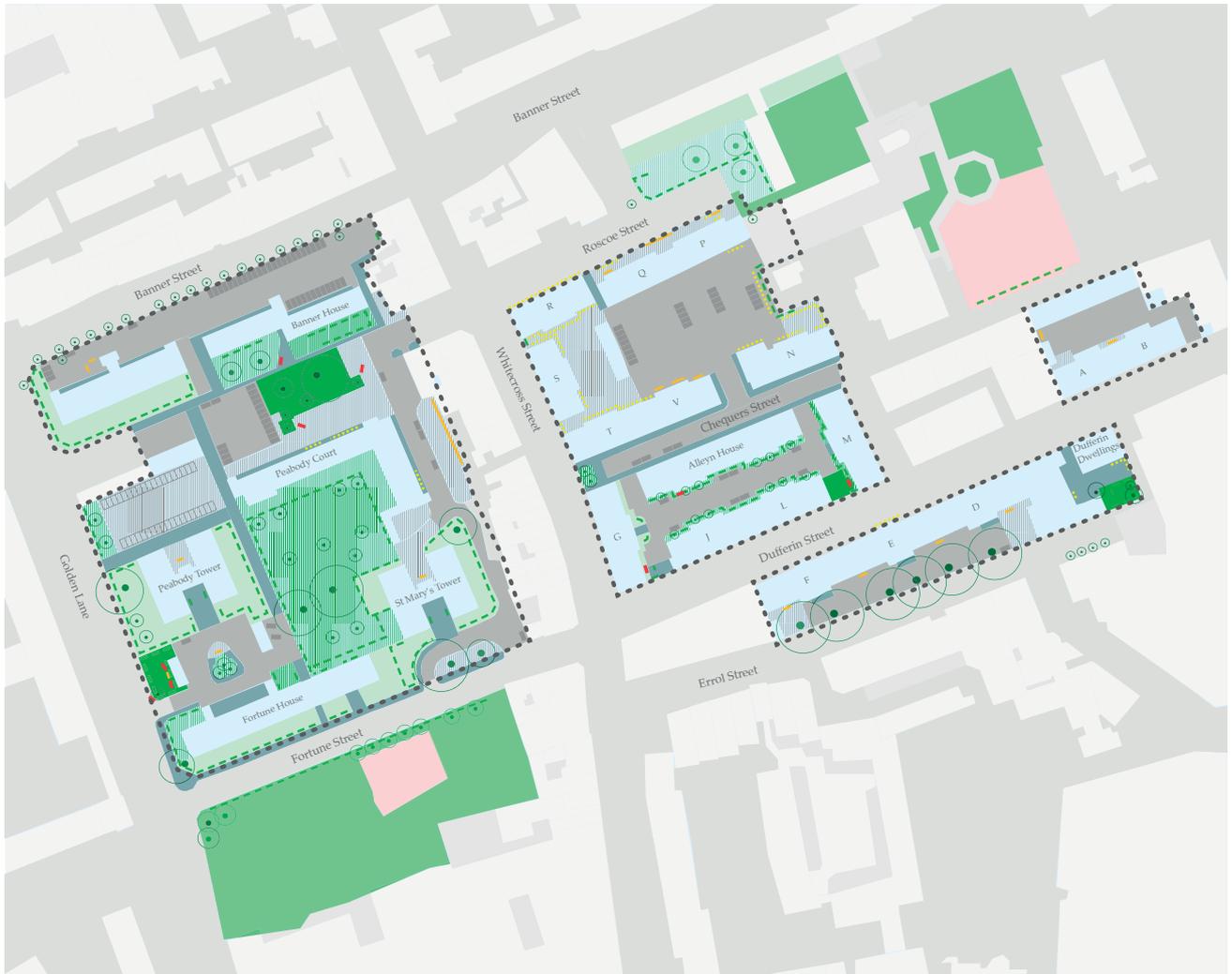
London. Banner House was added in 1972 after the remaining original blocks were demolished.⁸

Over time the older blocks on the Whitecross Street estate were also renovated, notably blocks H and K in 1993, which now provide sheltered housing for elderly people (known as Alley House, named after the former manager of the Fortune Theatre which stood nearby). Other properties, notably the Dufferin Dwellings, were taken over by Peabody. These flats had been constructed in 1898, before first passing to the London County Council (LCC), and then being acquired by Peabody in 1967.⁹

⁷ John Gray & Partner, Chartered Architects, 'Peabody Donation Fund, Roscoe Street Estate, Site Plan, July 1954' (Peabody Archive).

⁸ Information supplied by Peabody, November 2010.

⁹ *Ibid.*



KEY

-  tree
-  hedge
-  bench
-  Peabody planter
-  private planter
-  playground
-  private green area
-  public green area
-  enclosed green area
-  vehicle grey surface
-  pedestrian pathway
-  undefined grey surface
-  parking
-  Peabody estate boundary

The open spaces of the Whitecross Street estate are dominated by hard landscape – concrete, tarmac and paving – with a significant amount of non-public green space, in the form of enclosed gardens and green areas and private gardens. There is relatively little public green space.

Hard landscape is particularly dominant on the eastern side of the estate and in the areas around Roscoe Street and Banner Street on the western side. It generally falls into two types – that which is used for car parking and that which can be described as ‘undefined’: there is no clear use or access.

Car parking is spread across the estate with at least one parking space in all but two of the public areas of the estate. Parking is concentrated on Banner Street, on the former Roscoe Street outside Peabody Court and in the large courtyard on the eastern side. Despite its spatial dominance, there are relatively few parking spaces on the estate. Some of the open spaces are very large in relation to the number of parking spaces they accommodate.

The ‘undefined’ grey spaces are those hard landscaped parts of the estate with no specific use. Most notably these are the former ball court in front of Peabody Tower, the space in front of Peabody Court, the former playground and space behind St. Mary’s Tower and the part of the eastern courtyard in front of the row of sheds.

The general condition of the surfaces of these hard landscaped areas is poor, with the exception of the areas in front of Alleyn House and the courtyard by Dufferin Dwellings, both of which have benefited from recent investment. There is

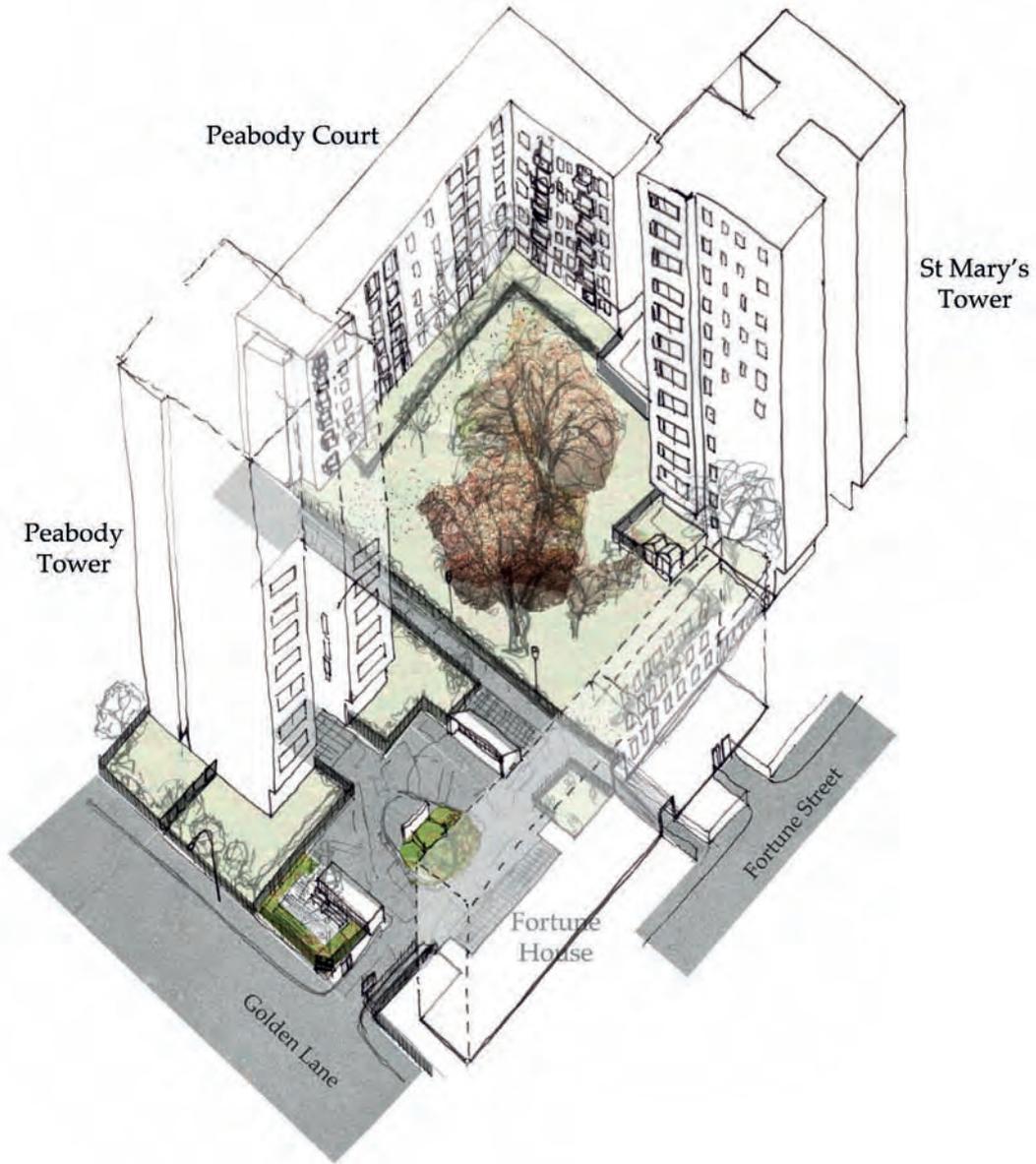
a preponderance of varied barriers, fences, bollards and gates around the estate. The space around the former Roscoe Street on the western side of the estate is notable as the most unsightly example of these features.

Maps of the estate from the 1970s show that there were two children’s play areas on the estate – to the east of Peabody Court and adjacent to the green space on Roscoe Street – and a ball court – in front of Peabody Tower.

The most notable non-public green space on the map is the enclosed garden on the western side. The areas on the Roscoe Street frontage of Banner House are also significant in this regard.

There are a number of private gardens tended by ground floor residents, particularly on the western and south-western edges of the estate. There are no private gardens on the eastern parts of the estate, however the proliferation of small scale planting in raised beds and pots, especially on the eastern part of the estate demonstrates an enthusiasm for planting and a desire on the part of some residents to make the most of the resources that are available.

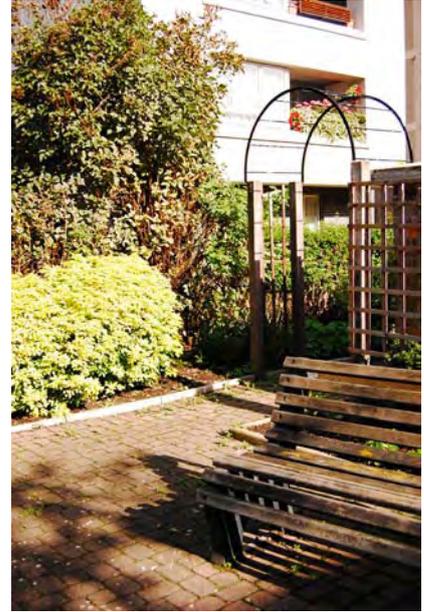
There are four defined and accessible green spaces on the estate, three of which are small pockets which combine greenery with hard landscape. The green on Roscoe Street between Peabody Court and Banner House is the main public green space. In addition the small public garden and seating area on Golden Lane to the south of Peabody Tower, the garden behind Dufferin Dwellings and the gated space on Dufferin Street between blocks L and M all offer small areas with seating.



SOUTH OF PEABODY COURT
AND PEABODY TOWER

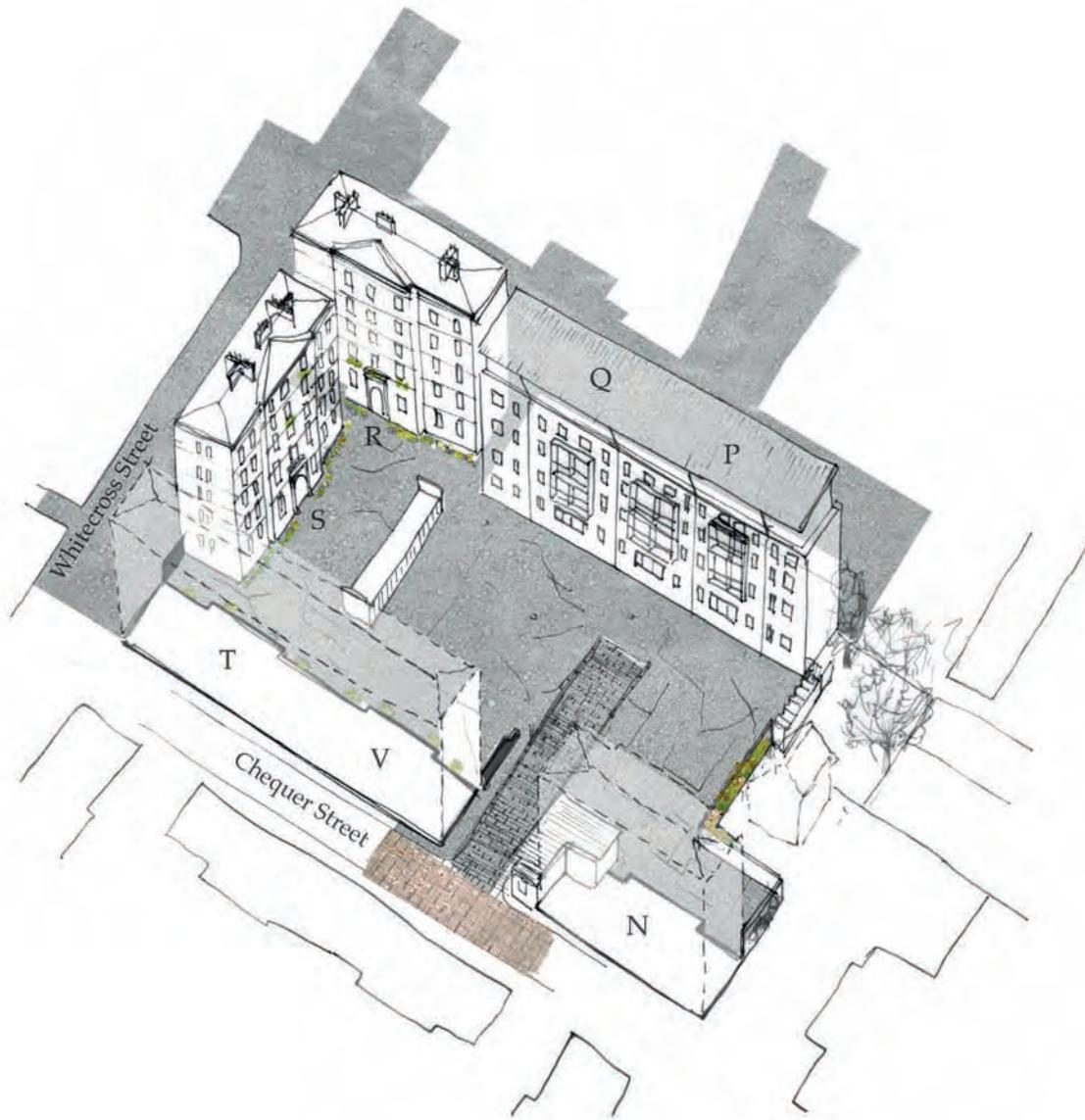
Location on the estate:





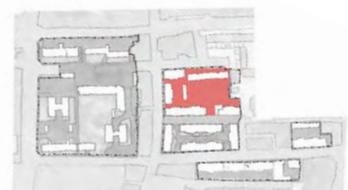
A large area of space with Golden Lane to the west, Peabody Tower and Peabody Court to the north, St Mary's Tower to the east and Fortune House to the south. A pathway that runs on a north-south axis divides the space. Lined with tall hedges, it provides a route between Roscoe Street and Fortune Street. To the east of the path is a large green space, identified as an "enclosed garden" on the original post-war plan. The garden is a large grassed area with a number of mature trees. There is no public or resident access. There are locked gates to the space on the east and west sides and there is no access from the ground floor flats of

either Peabody Court or Fortune House. The Fire Brigade has keys to these gates. There are private gardens at the bottom of St Mary's Tower which border the garden. To the west of the north-south path is a concrete area, which acts as a forecourt to Peabody Tower and Fortune House. It is centred by a planted 'island' which earlier maps show to have been a fountain or pool and which some residents recall being a children's play feature or sandpit. An enclosed planted garden with a bench borders Golden Lane to the north of the entrance to this space. There are private gardens around the ground floor of Peabody Tower and parts of Fortune House.



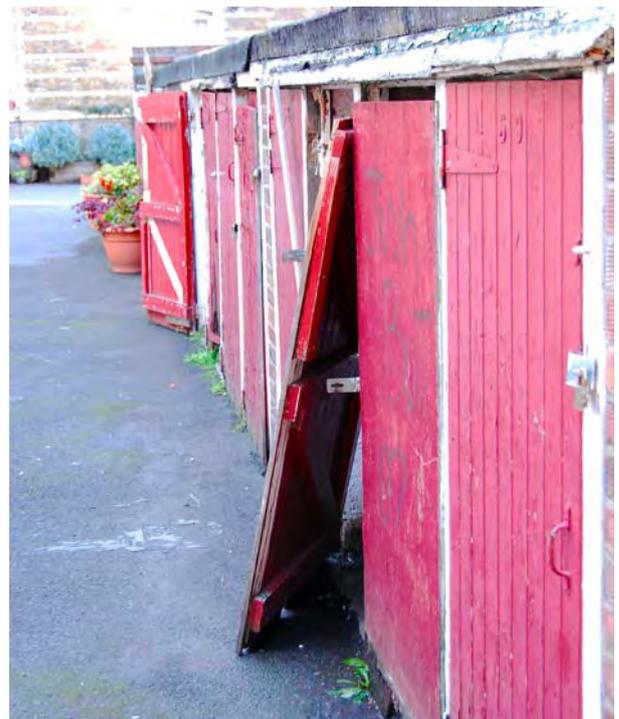
COURTYARD OF
BLOCKS RSTVQP N

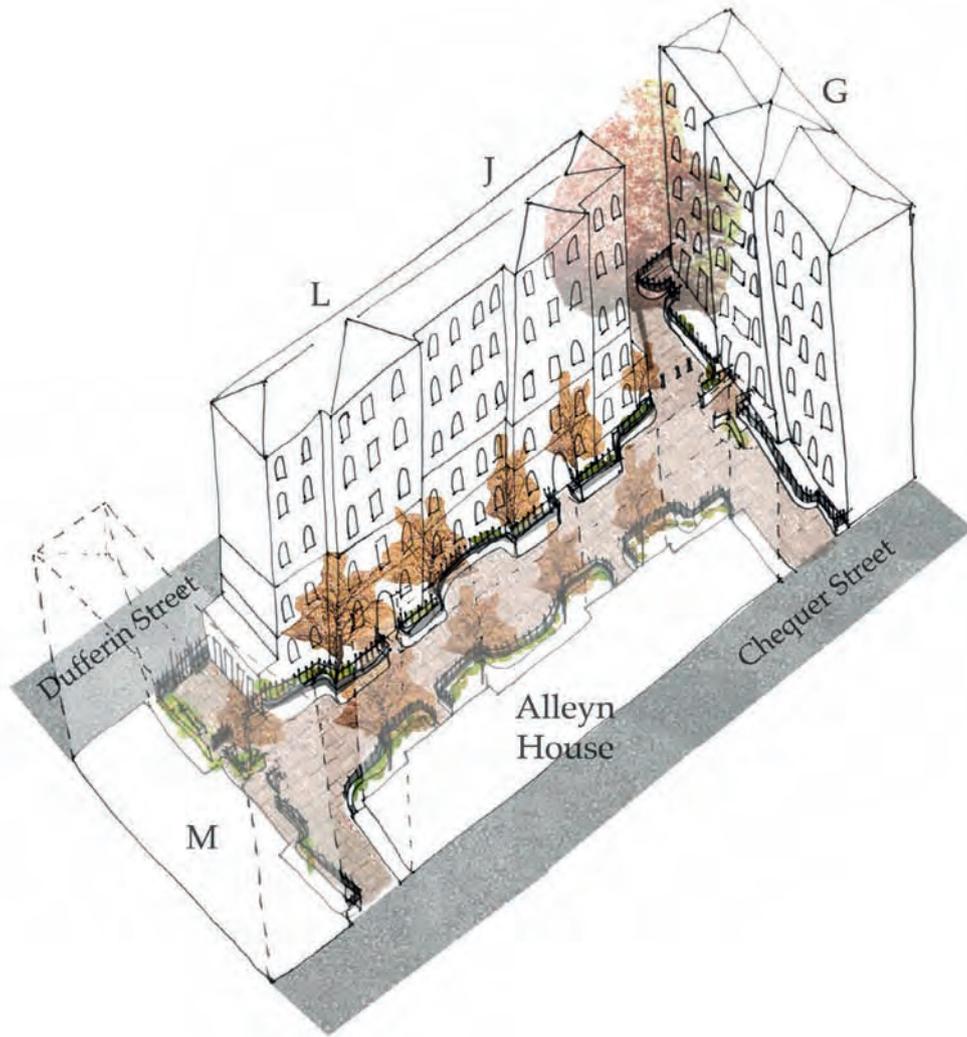
Location on the estate:





A large tarmac area, bordered on the west, north and south sides by Peabody flats and on the east by the wall of the old school. A cobbled 'road' leads into the space from Chequer Street, a clue to the fact that the space was significantly smaller before wartime bomb damage. A row of sheds, currently in a poor state of repair, runs parallel with S block. The area to the east of the sheds is used for car parking. Planting has been introduced by residents around the edges of the space, in planters to the east and in pots around the other blocks. There is some informal seating, also introduced by residents. The community centre occupies the former estate office in a modern building at the entrance from Chequer Street.





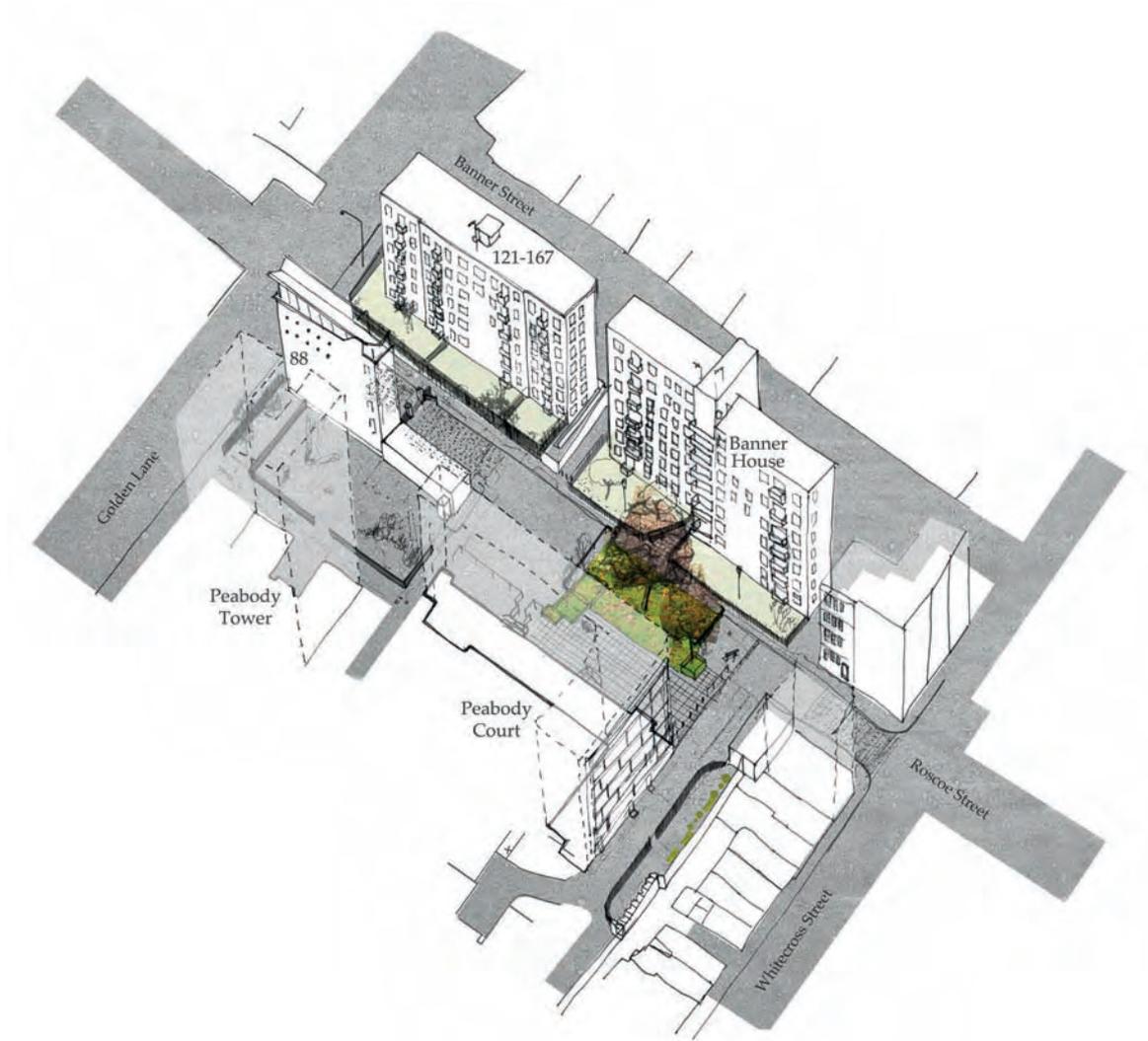
COURTYARD OF BLOCKS G-M
AND ALLEYN HOUSE

Location on the estate:





A brick-paved courtyard with mature trees in fenced planted raised borders with some provision for parking. A tree with bollards and a gated enclosure with a bench mark the entrances to Dufferin Street. This space benefitted from improvements in the 1990s.



AREA SURROUNDING PEABODY COURT:
FORMER ROSCOE STREET AND
THE FORMER BALL COURT

Location on the estate:



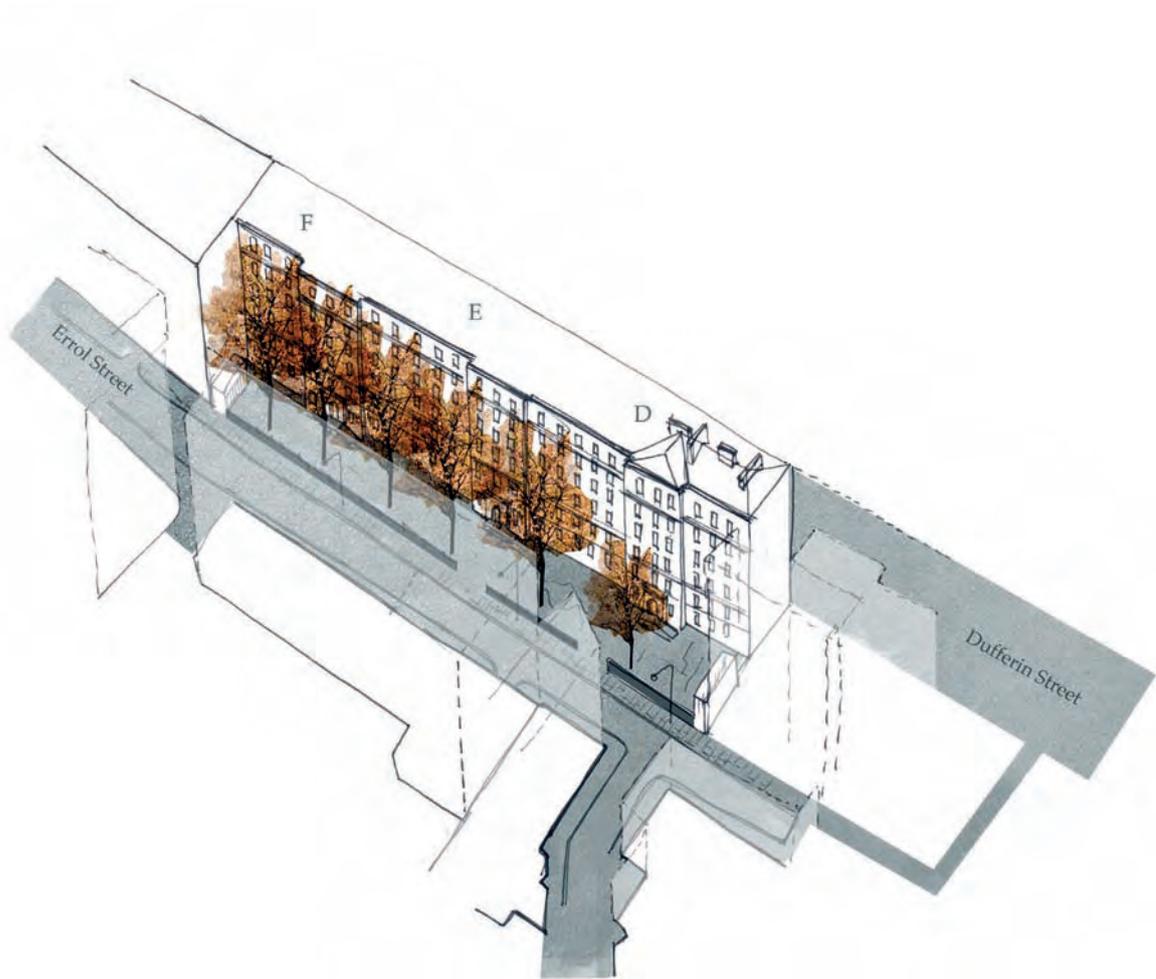


What was formerly Roscoe Street runs through the west side of the estate on an east-west axis to the north of Peabody Court. It is in four sections. At the east side an uneven concrete area hosts a range of fences and crash barriers to prevent vehicular access. Next comes a green area with mature trees and a lower hard landscaped area, which is a 'forecourt' to Peabody Court. Red benches are provided in this eastern part of the space. To the west of the green space is a concrete area accommodating car parking, which in turn leads to a road with garages on the south side that ends in an open gate leading to Golden Lane. A concrete footpath runs along the north edge, with 'slalom' gates at either end of the section above the green space.

The south-western corner of the car park leads to an open concrete space to the north of Peabody

Tower. This space, which was formerly a ball court, has a poor quality uneven surface. It is currently used on an adhoc basis by maintenance and building contractors as storage space.

The space to the east of Peabody court is hard landscaped and in poor condition. It runs on a north-south axis from Roscoe Street to Fortune Street, parallel with the rear of Whitecross Street. A low fenced area was formerly a children's playground. The play equipment has now been removed. The fenced area accommodates some raised bed planters and a row of metal storage units. There are four parking spaces in front of the low fence. A row of bollards stands across the approach to St. Mary's Tower and the gate of the enclosed garden. Recycling bins are also kept in this space.



ERROL STREET

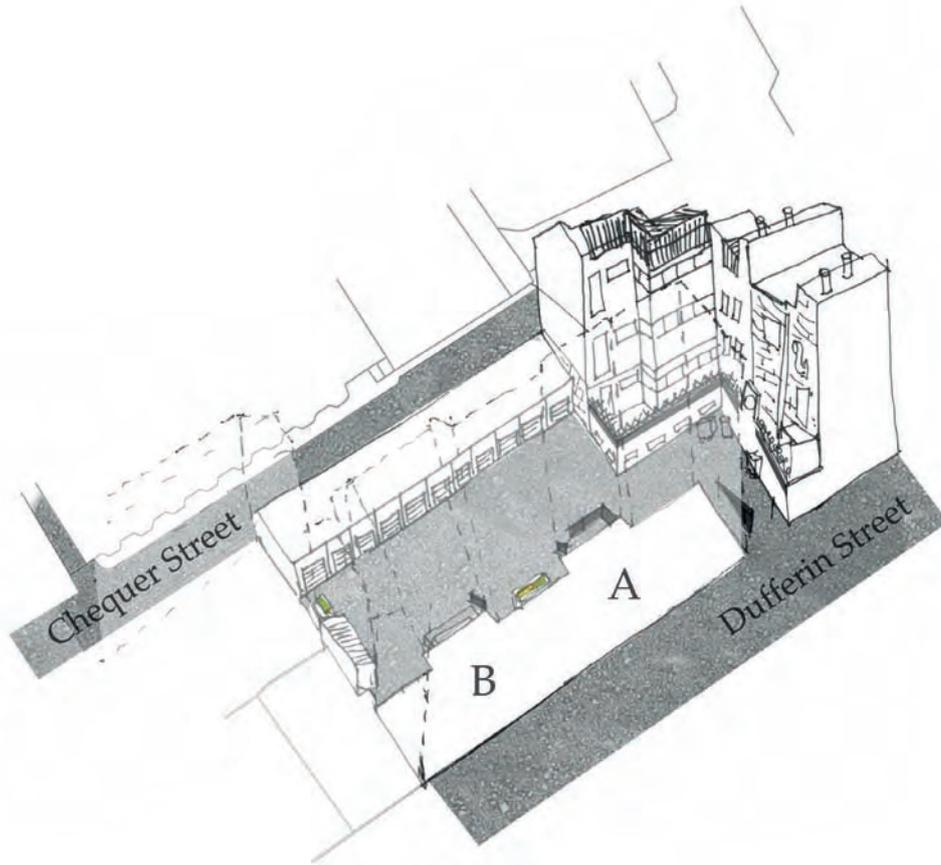
Location on the estate:





The uneven hard-landscaped forecourt to blocks D, E and F runs along Errol Street. A low wooden fence with two wide entrances marks its edge. A row of large trees runs along the space. The space is occasionally used for parking.





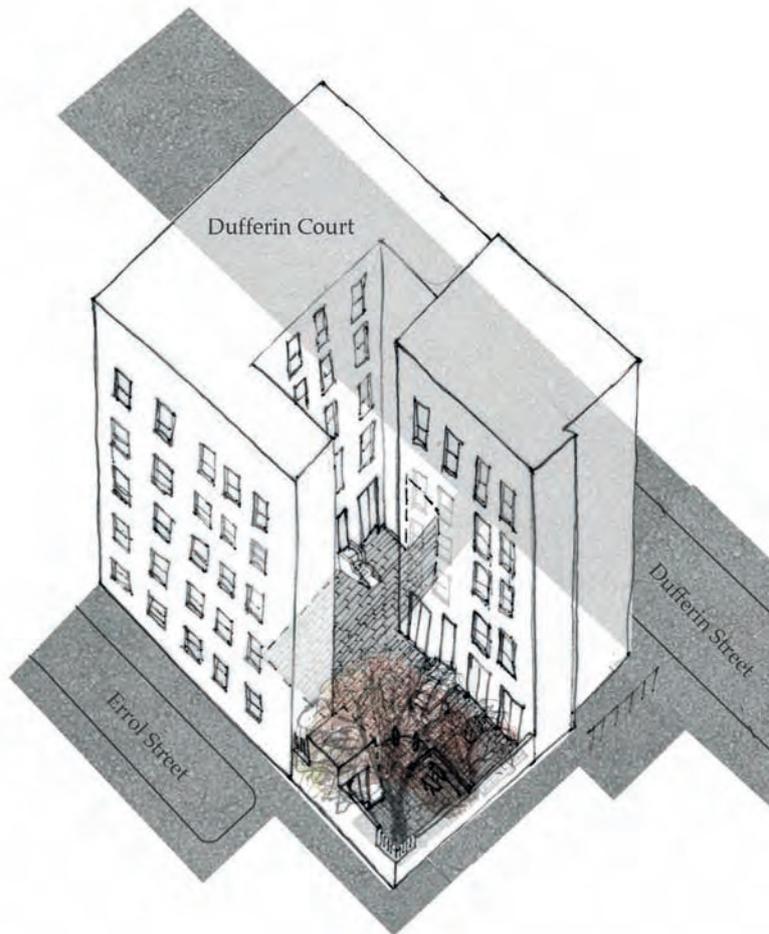
COURTYARD OF
BLOCKS A AND B

Location on the estate:





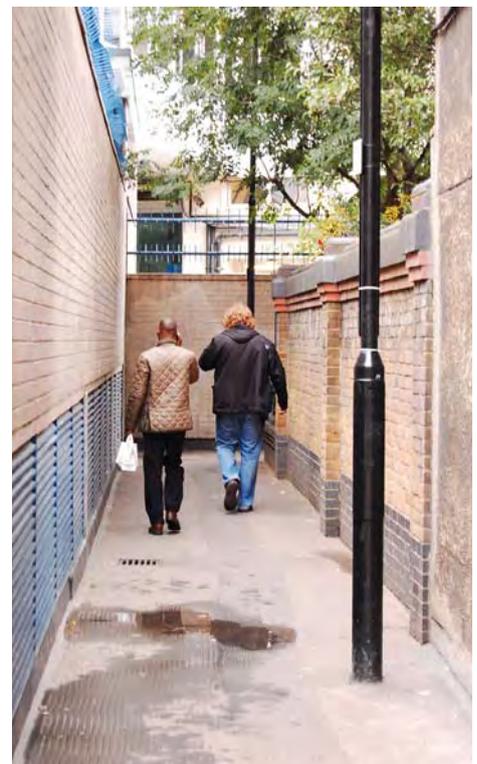
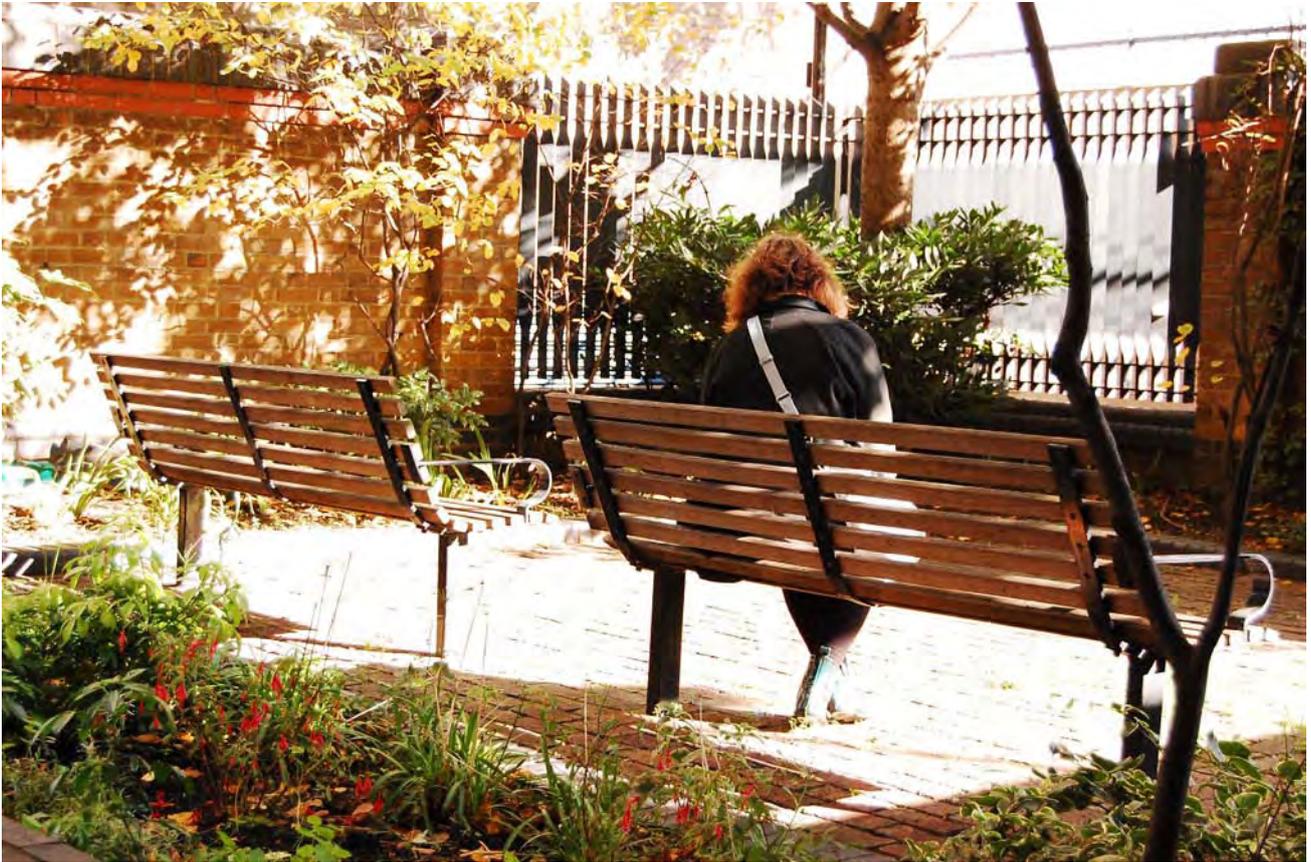
Access is via a low-gated entrance to the side of block A. This leads to a courtyard with hard surface. There are garages along the northern side of the space, with some Peabody planters around the other sides. There is no official bike storage space here, so there are often bicycles locked to the metal barriers leading to the doors. Bins are kept in the corner and are visible on entering.



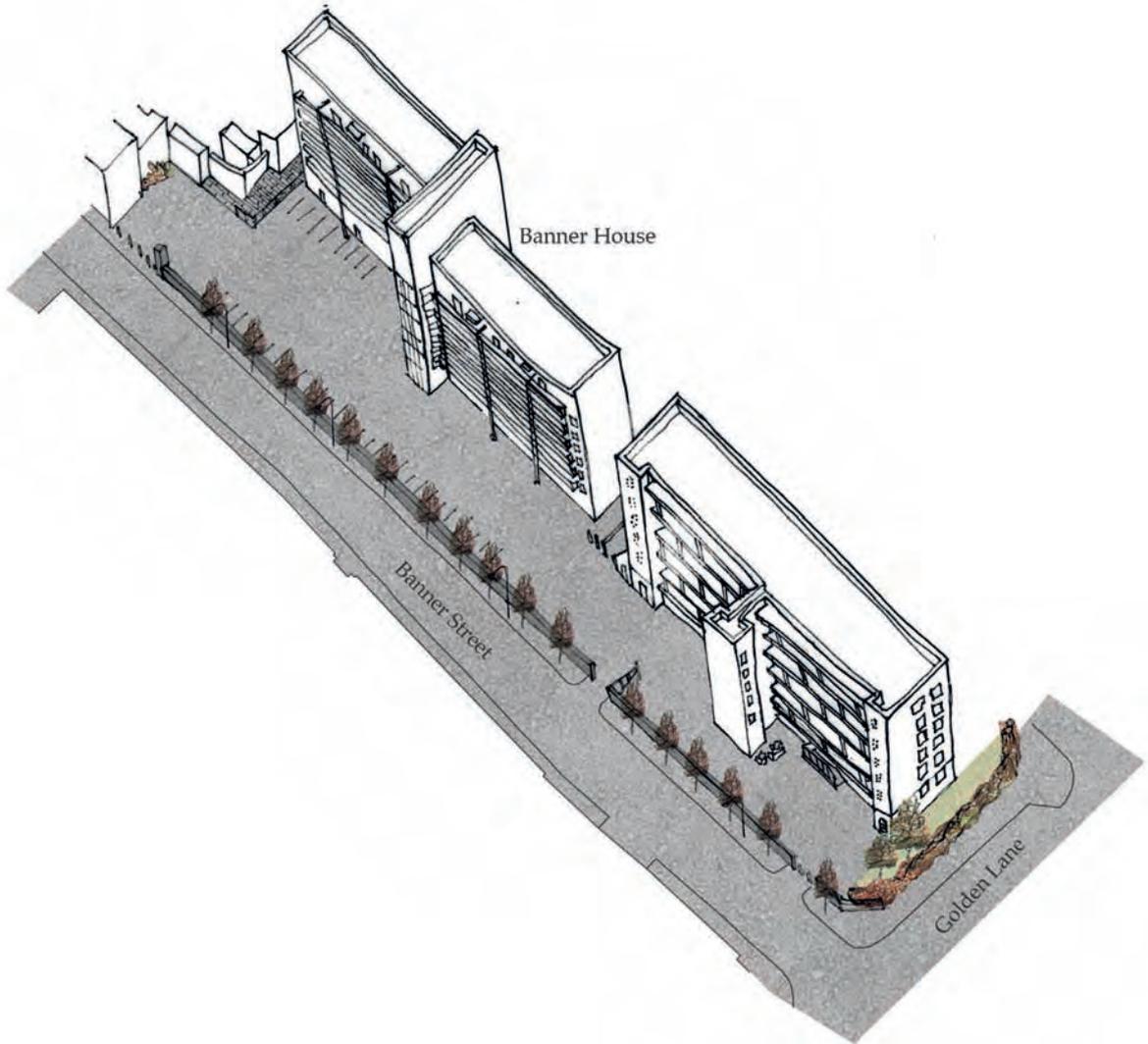
DUFFERIN COURT

Location on the estate:





This small 'pocket' space forms a gated courtyard to the flats of Dufferin Dwellings. It has been the subject of a relatively recent upgrade and is dominated by a raised paved area, with greenery, trees and two benches. A walled alleyway snakes around the south and east of this space and forms a route between Dufferin Street and Errol Street. Dufferin Court is not accessible from this alley. The alleyway is not part of the estate.



BANNER STREET

Location on the estate:





The large open space to the north of Banner House which faces Banner Street is largely hard landscape with a patched tarmac surface. The dominant use is car parking. There are large waste bins along the rear of the housing block and some Peabody planters. There is a row of young trees along the pavement of Banner Street. The eastern end of this space borders the rear of the buildings and yards of Whitecross Street.



WHITECROSS STREET

Location on the estate:



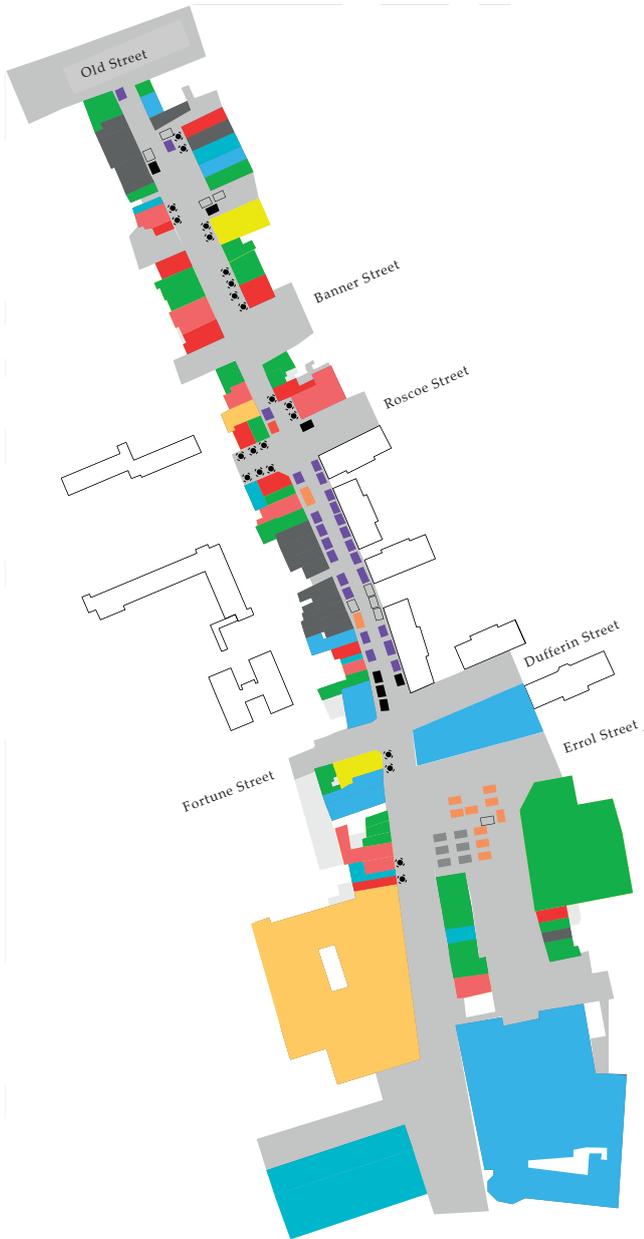


Whitecross Street is dominated by the street market, which runs from Monday to Friday. Thursday and Friday are designated as specialist food days. Nevertheless, analysis of the stalls at the beginning and end of the week shows that food dominates the market throughout the week. The market is at its busiest during the lunch period. Although the market is advertised as running from 11–4pm, most stalls pack up around 3pm.

Physical improvements were made to Whitecross Street in 2006, driven by a desire by EC1 New Deal for Communities and Islington Council to revitalise the market. The western footpath of Whitecross Street was widened to create 27 new traders' pitches, with free dedicated electric power supply. The improvements also included new street paving and resurfaced carriageways, improvements to public spaces and seating, extra trees and plants, step-free

access, reduction of street clutter, new litter bins, cycle parking and street lighting and improved drainage. The improvements were funded by EC1 New Deal for Communities, Transport for London and English Heritage. The project was developed in partnership with the Corporation of London and included a concept design for the streetscape improvements by the architectural practice, muf architecture/art.

The retail profile of Whitecross street is characterised by its mix of café/restaurant and general retail uses, however it is also dominated by a row of vacant eighteenth century shop fronts at its heart (on the western side between Roscoe Street and Fortune Street). The combination of restaurants and two pubs, together with Waitrose, means that there is an evening economy on Whitecross Street, however this is stronger in the northern section of the street.



LAND USE

- Cafe
- Restaurant
- General retail
- Offices
- Institution
- Residential
- Vacant
- Peabody Estate buildings
- Outside tables

EVENING OPENING HOURS

- Open after 7 pm
- Open after 5 pm
- Closed after 5 pm

MARKET STALLS (MON-FRI)

- Prepared food stall
- Groceries stall
- Retail stall
- Vacant stall
- Parked van (for market)
- Parked car



STALLS MON-WED



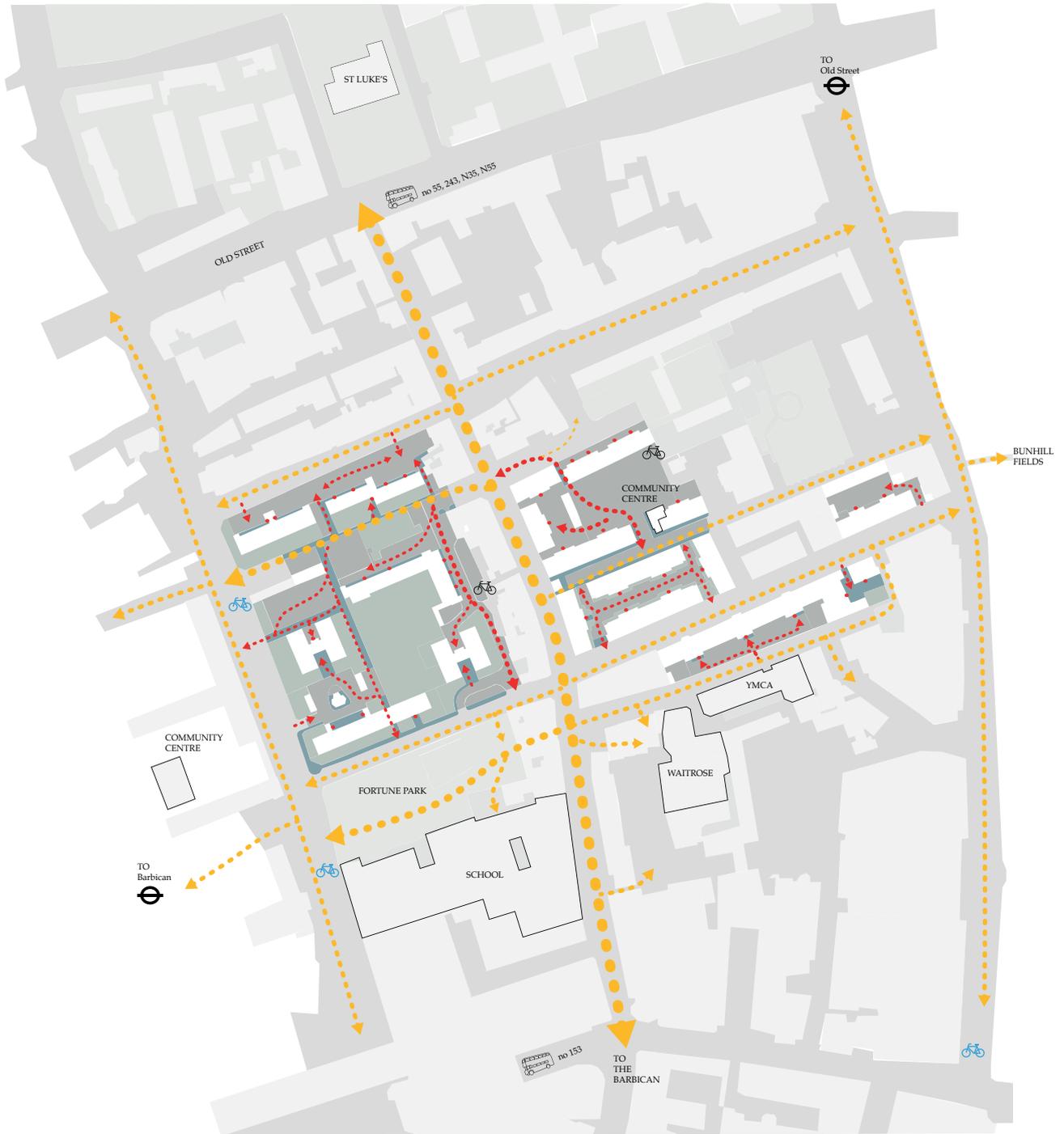
STALLS THU-FRI

REFUSE AND STALLHOLDING

There are currently pitches available to rent in the market, but not for new food stalls. According to press reports, this issue is the subject of tension between some shop/restaurant owners and market stallholders.¹ Licences to trade on the market are issued by Islington Council's Street Trading Team, which is also responsible for the management of the market. Day-to-day monitoring, including

waste management, is carried out by market inspectors. Commercial refuse is collected from the shops and market stallholders from 3–5pm daily (Monday to Sunday). It is carried out by the Commercial Waste Department of Enterprise, a contractor to Islington Council's Street Environment Services Department.

⁶ *Islington Gazette*, http://www.islingtongazette.co.uk/home/food_fight_in_whitecross_street_market_1_730291 accessed November 2010.



KEY

-  local and public pedestrian route
-  local pedestrian route
-  entrance
-  bicycle hire
-  bicycle racks
-  destination

The 26 blocks of flats that make up the Whitecross Street estate are dispersed over a 2.4 hectare area either side of Whitecross Street. They are integrated with commercial and residential properties and public roads, although some historic roads have been closed or partly blocked and incorporated into the estate. Most of the courtyards are open rather than gated meaning that the streets and paths in and around the estate are used both by the residents and the broader public. Nonetheless, there are some routes used almost solely by residents.

Whitecross Street is a major north-south public pedestrian route from Old Street to the Barbican, and has one-way traffic outside market hours. Banner Street, Dufferin Street, Fortune Street and Errol Street form key east-west routes for both pedestrians and traffic.

The closed historic roads remain strong public and resident pedestrian routes, including Chequer Street and, most significantly, the space outside Peabody Court (formerly part of Roscoe Street until the estate was built in the 1950s). The latter is a well-used public cut-through from Golden Lane to Whitecross Street market. Residents have reported problems over the years with cars, taxis, scooters and bikes trying to access from either direction, resulting in the current combination of barriers. Similarly, scooters from local businesses try and use the north-south path along the side of Peabody Court and St Mary's Tower. Barriers have been used with mixed success as the paths are also used by residents with buggies, wheelchairs and bicycles.

Residents use the two north-south paths that run adjacent from Banner Street to Peabody and St Mary's Tower. These routes are used to access the northern end of Whitecross Street, in preference to walking through the busy market. There is also an east-west route adjacent to Peabody Court and the north side of Peabody Tower. Both residents and public use Fortune Park as a route to and from Golden Lane Campus school and the southern end of Whitecross Street.

On the east side, Alleyn House courtyard is used mostly by residents rather than the public. Both public and residents use the alleyway at the east end of Errol Street. Pedestrian access to the courtyard of R, S, T and V blocks is via an alleyway to the north and Chequer Street to the south-east. Both are well-used.



WALKS, MEETINGS AND CORRESPONDENCE

At the heart of this report are the views and perspectives of the residents of the Whitecross Street estate. A number of methods were used to uncover and gather views and opinions of residents about the public spaces and amenities on the estate.

Four Walks

With the help of the tenants' association and the Estate Improvement Steering Group (EISG), four residents were identified and each led a walk around particular areas of the estate that they felt were important to them. This began a conversation around a particular theme or subject. During each walk the individual introduced other residents who joined the walks. This created an informal forum for residents of different generations and backgrounds, with different opinions, to contribute to the conversation as the walk progressed around the estate.

In total 30 people were interviewed in this way. Subjects discussed on the walks included but were not limited to: green spaces and gardening, social facilities and amenities for the elderly, play facilities for young people and teenagers, storage, waste and general maintenance, sense of community, relationships with the market on Whitecross Street and the local area. Each walk was documented with photographs and the conversations were recorded with a microphone. After each walk, the route was mapped and stopping points noted (see map on page 42). Recurring areas of concern are apparent from the composite map of these walks.

Two Meetings

Two public meetings were held in the local church hall. The meetings were advertised via posters, flyers delivered to each flat, emails to the EISG and on a blog about the project. Each meeting was attended by about 40 people. The topics for

discussion in both meetings were prompted by the material gathered from the walks. The first was an open chaired discussion and the second was a two hour drop-in session, at which residents were asked to tell us about their experience and perspectives and contribute ideas for improvement. In the second drop-in session, materials were displayed along four themes – *Getting the Basics Right* – which included issues such as storage, waste management and general maintenance, *Greening the Estate*, which included the current open spaces on the estate and examples of improvements already made to the public realm in comparable estates in London, *History/Future* which referred to historical maps and improvements that had been made over the years and current policy relevant to the future of the estate, and *What if?* where the artist Lucinda Rogers drew residents' ideas and imagined scenarios for public spaces and amenities on the estate. A selection of these drawings can be seen in on pages 56–61.

Finally, comments sent to us by email in response to the posters, flyers, blog and meetings were gathered. There were contrasting perspectives on many issues: a comment from one resident might provoke an opposing reaction from another. Conversations with the residents generated a lot of material about the problems and issues regarding the public spaces and amenities on the estate; they also contributed to a greater understanding of the history of the estate and local area, and reflected the sense of community that is felt on the estate. The quotes on pages 44–55 were gathered from the walks, meetings and email correspondence. They have been grouped by subject matter. This selection is not exhaustive but provides a representation of the range of issues and opinions put forward by residents on the estate.



KEY

- walk 1
- walk 2
- walk 3
- walk 4
- walk 5
- start
- ▶ finish
- stop

A composite map showing the routes of the five walks undertaken with residents as part of the Whitecross Street Estate Project, October–November 2010.

1 • The first walk started in a flat in Block V. The walk began with a resident who has lived on the estate for 10 years and another for 22 years, as well as some teenage residents. We talked about the open space in the centre of those blocks, the storage, car parking, stairwells, alleyway and the Gardening Club before moving on through the estate. We visited some of the residents on the west side to talk about the work the Gardening Club has been doing there, before going on to Errol Street, to talk about the issues with the area in front of that block. The walk ended at the Whitecross Community Centre where we plotted our route on a map.

2 • The resident leading this walk began at the Community Centre and we walked together to Whitecross Street to meet one of the market stall holders and talk about how the market has changed over the years. We walked through the market speaking to local residents and into Alleyn House Square. We then walked through the western side of the estate and talked about the history of some of the play areas. Then we stopped in at the Monday Lunch Club at Whitecross Community Centre. We also stopped to talk to one of the caretakers.

3 • This walk started with some young families living on the west side of the estate. We had a look at the enclosed garden between St Mary's Tower and Peabody Court, the nearby bike lock-ups, garages and fenced area, the green space on

Roscoe Street, and the tarmac area next to Peabody Tower. We visited the children's favourite play area in Fortune Park, before heading back to a flat on the ground floor of St Mary's Tower, to talk some older residents about what it's like moving around the estate for those with limited mobility. Among other things we also talked about recycling and waste management, light pollution, storage, difficulty in moving flats, sense of community and play provision.

4 • We started on the top floor of St Mary's Tower, looking down on the outdoor spaces of the estate, including the trees, private gardens and public spaces. We then looked in detail at some of the nearby paths, entranceways, connections and green spaces and talked about various decisions that have, over the years, led to the current ways the space is devised and used.

5 • In response to some residents' concerns about safety and security in the evening, we added an after-dark walk starting at 6pm. We began on Roscoe Street and walked to Peabody Court where we spoke to teenagers who used the area but did not live on the estate. They mentioned a lack of provision and meeting places for young people in the area. In other spaces, we identified inadequate lighting, and concerns about light pollution. There was constant activity on the main routes of Whitecross Street and Fortune Street, but paths known mostly to residents were mainly quiet.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE: WASTE AND RECYCLING

COURTYARD OF BLOCKS
R,S,T,V,Q,P,N

“The first thing that you get, first thing in the morning is that I would say about 98% of the residents get here is a view of the bins. It’s not too bad today, but often it’s overflowing and it’s pretty horrible. The waste management of the estate is absolutely appalling. I think with the bins there needs to be a dedicated area, and it needs to be totally re-worked, ‘cos people just dump, it’s the middle of the square!”

ERROL STREET

“It’s virtually impossible to stop people dumping outside as it simply looks like a bin yard, when in fact it’s our main entrance. My neighbours and I are endlessly throwing away furniture that’s been dumped there to stop other people doing the same thing.”

BLOCK V

“Recycling has gone from around 60% of people to 10% because the council have cut the people who used to come and collect it from your front doors, there’s now a communal place to recycle down on the square, so people aren’t incentivised to actually do recycling anymore. It’s great that food waste is collected by Islington, but why don’t we use this for compost, for the gardening club?”

OUTSIDE ST MARY’S TOWER

“Recycling is awkward anyway given that interior chutes can only handle general waste. So it needs to be clear what goes where and for there to be a defined place for it. There are open recycling bins which are overflowing by the end of the week as there’s only one collection – they attract foxes. You could put a shed over it to keep it looking better.”

DUFFERIN STREET

“The estate could be greener by generating energy from wind turbines.”

GENERAL MAINTENANCE: REPAIRS

WHITECROSS STREET

“When I started I was a multi-skilled caretaker who did all the minor repairs in tenants’ flats, but now you don’t – now there’s no need to go into tenants’ flats it’s all contractors now. I used to enjoy it when I started – that was my thing, doing repairs, doing something different everyday, it was minor electrical, plumbing, carpentry.. The tenants knew who you were, ‘cos they see you...now you just got one patch, which is your patch, whereas before you was all over the estate. Basically I’ve gone from a multi-skilled caretaker to a cleaner. It was more job satisfaction then.”

BLOCK G

“If you got locked out you didn’t have to phone a call centre and wait – you’d go into the rent office you’d see the estate manager, within 20 minutes you’d have a porter taking your lock out and putting a new lock in [...] We miss the rent office where we could put our complaints in.”

BLOCK V

“I mean some people have a real sense of pride about where they live, not everybody, but a lot of people here really do, y’know we don’t own the flat but we put a lot into them, bring up a family here y’know, so we feel like we would like to have some kind of ownership of it in terms of a say in how it gets maintained, and how our experiences are communicated to management.”

STORAGE: PRAM AND BIKE SHEDS

COURTYARD OF BLOCKS
R,S,T,V,Q,P,N

“So the pram sheds which you can see out there look absolutely disgusting. They rot, they leak, they’re unsafe. They’ve been broken into, we’ve had a bike nicked from ours, there’s no security really. There is also no system of how you get one, they’re not really renting them out anymore, so again there’s no policy. The pram sheds need to go, because not only are they impractical and unsafe, kids run along the top of it and slip, it provides a barrier for activities and bad anti-social behaviour takes place. But storage is very important, there isn’t really storage in the flat, families need it for their push-chairs, some people keep mopeds in there, they keep whatever they can’t fit in their flat, but it’s not secure, so any kind of plan needs to include new storage for families.”

ST MARY’S TOWER

“I don’t have a single cupboard in my flat. This storage is a life-line.”

FENCED AREA ON EAST SIDE OF
PEABODY COURT

“This is such a waste of space. What are these railings doing here? They just cut it off. The planters are good, but still.. There could be loads more bike sheds. I’ve got one – I was really lucky to get it, but there aren’t enough. You can only fit two bikes in it and we’ve got four. There needs to be a big bike shed, for twenty bikes or more. Storage is a huge issue for us.”

PEABODY TOWER

“There doesn’t seem to be a proper overview or organisation. There’s a waiting list, but then when I did get a pram shed, it’s really far from my flat.”

STORAGE: GARAGES

BLOCKS A AND B

“We were having a lot of problems with our vehicles getting damaged when they were parked on the street – the moped getting knocked over, the car getting bashed, you know. It cost me a lot of money in repairs. It took a long time to get a garage – my wife was on a waiting list for over 10 years. We finally got one by offering to do it up ourselves. There was a derelict one behind our house and Peabody said they didn’t have a budget for repairs, so I offered to do it at my own expense, and it cost me around £700, but I needed it so I’m not complaining about that. The rent started

as soon as the garage was repaired and we've had it for about two years now. I met a surveyor earlier this year whilst he was surveying the site for potential development, which was worrying. I still need a garage and don't want to lose it."

SAFETY AND SECURITY

ERROL STREET	"Out-of-control YMCA residents are the main big problem, then drug dealing that we keep an eye on, and scooter-riding kids using the roads as a racetrack comes a close third."
PEABODY COURT	"There are kids who hang out the front here and muck about in the street. They throw stones. I've just had to have my door repainted because they'd been throwing things at it. And I get hassle because I stand up for myself. They turn up at about quarter to six, but now the nights are drawing in they come earlier. When it rains, they all sit here outside my door and if I say anything I get abuse. I'd like to see security cameras, where else they go I don't care, but definitely on this bit, but I would love to see security cameras set up there. This has always been a problem here, ever since we have been here."
WHITECROSS COMMUNITY CENTRE	"I feel safe here, I always have. I can walk down the road and everyone will say hello."
FORTUNE STREET	"There's too much noise from kids using areas for playing, or hanging out at night – kids that don't even live on estate – years ago the porters would kick all the children playing outside off the communal parks/area by 9pm, you had to be indoors."
ENCLOSED GARDENS	"There was a history of trouble here, but, the reason there was drug dealing is because they had cover behind [the hedges]. You take the cover away – different thing."
ALLEYWAY BETWEEN BLOCKS Q AND R	"It's mainly used for people to urinate in. I've walked round many times with my kids and guys are going to the toilet here, and I've been out here with buckets of disinfectant, cleaning it because of the stench. Also there's not enough light, but we all use it as a cut-through – for the residents."
COURTYARD OF BLOCK R,S,T,V,Q,P,N	"There should be something stopping the cars coming flying in. It needs to be a bit safer so if the kids are running about a car couldn't come in and hit them."
PATH EAST OF PEABODY COURT: FORTUNE STREET TO BANNER STREET	"The gates outside St Mary's Tower are needed, and I am disappointed that they are not used enough. If they were closed they'd stop cars going up and turning around in the space. We need some signage to

show that this route or road is a dead end and a residential area. It shouldn't be used by cars – or if it has to be then there should be speed ramps. If the gates were currently used then children might be able to play more safely in this part of the estate.”

LIGHT AND SOUND POLLUTION

PEABODY COURT

“Noise is probably the worse thing about the area. It isn't that it's a particularly noisy area it's just that the flats (or at least my block) are badly constructed despite their solid look. There is practically no sound insulation whatsoever which is made somewhat worse by the many open vents on the front of each house. They absorb and transfer any little trace of sound.”

COURTYARD OF BLOCKS
R,S,T,V,Q,P,N

“There are no trees so there is no sound absorption. You can hear every conversation.”

GARAGES ON EAST SIDE OF ST
MARY'S TOWER

“These lights are so bright and they shine right into my bedroom. I have to have blackout curtains. There's no reason for them to be so bright, just to light the garages. I've complained, but nothing has happened.”

SURFACES OF PATHWAYS

WEST SIDE OF THE ESTATE

“The quality of the paving and concrete pathways are really dangerous if you are not that confident on your feet.”

PATH EAST OF PEABODY COURT,
FORTUNE ST TO BANNER ST

“The tarmac is urgently in need of repair. We need to be able to get to the market with the wheelchair, and at the moment it's very difficult.”

ERROL STREET

“I'd like to see the whole area resurfaced and levelled.”

CARS AND PARKING

COURTYARD OF BLOCKS
R,S,T,V,Q,P,N

“It's completely under-used, we're living in a car park basically. If you look out of the window, what dominates it are cars. There are about fifteen or sixteen cars and that's it. And they shouldn't have all that space.”

EAST SIDE OF THE ESTATE

“I don't drive and don't own a car yet it seems that the parking areas could be a lot more organised. I once tried to sort out parking for a visitor and found it totally disorganised. Nothing seemed very clear and you just felt that there was always plenty of space for parking even though the people organising it were leading you to believe that this was not the case.”

PLAY SPACE: HISTORY

FENCED AREA ON EAST SIDE
OF PEABODY COURT

“They used to have a big play ground over the other side, they had little holes you used to go in all the children could play – they had a monkey climb, they had a swing park, roundabout, that was right outside my window. There was a pond, a fountain and the children could paddle in it, and now they’ve just filled it with plants. The football pitch they took it away and made it a car park.”

“This was the swing park... then there was a roundabout there... then there was a see-saw over there and swing, and it was full of kids. You’re going back fifty years now. My son never had all that when he was growing up, never had anywhere to play, so it’d be good if the next generation had somewhere to play, ‘cos if they haven’t got nowhere to play then they cause havoc.”

PLAY SPACE: CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

FORMER BALL COURT / CAR
PARK ON GOLDEN LANE

“When we’re bored and we can’t think what we want to do, we just go and play football, or just kick the ball against that wall, like loners. It’s pretty unused, there are never any cars in here. I don’t see the point of it being a car park. And literally you can like lift up the tarmac, you can lift it up with your hands.”

ERROL STREET

“We’d like something for us to do around this area, something nearby instead of going far. Usually we have to go all the way to a park, but my parents don’t like us going far away from where we live, especially during winter.”

WHITECROSS STREET

“My son’s 14, he goes to the local school and the problem I’ve got with him at the moment is there’s absolutely nothing for them to do, so he’s basically just staying in, because I won’t allow him just to stand on street corners.”

FORMER BALL COURT / CAR
PARK ON GOLDEN LANE

“Regardless of what other changes happen there HAS to be provision for ball games for young people. It is impossible to live a healthy, peaceful life if you don’t have anywhere to play. It is absolutely essential. The old ball court area should be a well managed, state of the art, sound proofed and secure ball game area, and if not there it has to be provided for elsewhere on the estate. Why can’t we share local provision? Like using the ball court area on Golden Lane Campus? Why was that building which was built for community use, not able to provide after school play opportunities, like on summer evenings? We know they’d need staff, but maybe an arrangement with Finsbury Leisure Centre could be negotiated. FLC is totally oversubscribed. And Quaker Gardens isn’t enough and

doesn't welcome the young people from our estate – people get tribal and territorial."

PEABODY TOWER

"I just want to let my kids out to play somewhere close. Sometimes you just want to pop outside for a bit without having to decamp to Fortune Park."

FORTUNE PARK

"This is like our front garden. The kids come and play here all the time. It's fantastic. It's not very big but the space is used well. It's great for everyone. The only thing is that the older kids kind of out-grow it. They need a ball-park or somewhere to play football. Also it gets overcrowded, especially in summer, so more usable attractive space would be welcome, for lunchtime office workers buying from the market too."

BLOCK Q

"Kids playing football in the courtyard drives me mad – the balls banging against my walls."

PEABODY COURT

"The problem we have is that every sound can be heard. It's bad when there's kids with scooters in the evening, but even with the young kids, y'know, playing after school, they play this game with coins and it's so loud in the flats. It's not their fault, I don't want to stop them from playing, but it goes right through you, and I have health problems from noise."

THE MARKET

WHITECROSS STREET

"I've been on the market thirty plus years...and there isn't a market anymore, it used to be a market, but there's nothing left of it now. There was over 200 stalls here when I started with every different commodity under the sun. Everything would have been here for the residents – household goods, some measure of light furnishings, umbrellas, raincoats, anoraks, all manner of things. There used to be stalls both sides and people queuing up to get a casual license if anyone failed to turn up by 10am. A lot of the shops are closed now, 'cos a lot of the interest has gone. But then they had a thing called New Deal, and they got a grant to regenerate Whitecross Street, and spent the money doing the paving and giving grants for shop fronts to be re-done, and buying all these canopies for the food fair. But they didn't do anything to enhance the existing market, like get the traders back, y'know like butchers and fishmongers, and people who sell trainers and boots and shoes, but it's very hard to get that type of trader back on the ground nowadays. So the food thing seems to be flourishing quite well because there's a lot of people come out the City for lunch, but as for a everyday market, I don't think they'll ever bring it back."

I like the place – it’s just like a second home to me, I mean I spend half my life here and half my life at home so, it’s part and parcel of what I am and what I do. I like the area, I like the people. Many of my customers I would consider friends – you make friendships over the years and I’ve watched their kids grow up, you see pictures of their babies, you mourn their losses and celebrate their kids, and that’s the way life is.”

“There’s not any stalls here, and what’s there is just food. It literally stops on that corner there whereas years ago it went right the way down. It doesn’t serve the residents anymore because you have to go to other markets like Chapel Street or Leather Lane to pick up what you used to be able to pick up here, or the supermarket which is more expensive. I can’t afford to buy my lunch here. But Pete’s still here so you can always get your fruit and veg.”

“I like to hear the noise of the market. It’s happy and lively.”

“I wouldn’t mind the market if they kept it clean, had some respect that this is where we live. The street feels greasy and dirty – it’s in the market’s contract that they have to steam-clean once a week before 4pm but it’s not enough. And when they do it, sometimes it happens in the middle of the night right outside people’s bedroom windows. Chapel Market is cleaned daily – couldn’t we have that here?”

MARKET USERS

AREA BETWEEN PEABODY COURT
AND BANNER HOUSE

“In the summer people come and eat their lunch here and there’s a really good atmosphere – lots of banter. I really like it.”

CHEQUER STREET

“The mess that’s an issue, not regarding the porters ‘cos I think they do a really good job, but people dumping their rubbish everywhere.”

WHITECROSS STREET

“I enjoy it a lot and welcome the lunchtime office workers – it was so dead around there a few years ago, which everyone seems to forget. The council did a great job encouraging it to grow. But I feel they could do with some public seating areas or tents in winter where people can eat what they’ve bought – nearly every stall is ‘take-away’. The park gets so overcrowded in summer there’s literally no space to move, and the bins overflow. I think this mess is what annoys so many residents, but it’s not the office workers creating the problem – they’re hungry and they spend money in our area which is great. They just need somewhere nice to sit with their food, summer or winter, with big bins for the rubbish!”

“We need those special bins, like in Cornwall, to stop the birds and foxes ransacking the bins.”

LOCAL AMENITIES

WHITECROSS COMMUNITY
CENTRE

“Ideally I’d love it if the community centre was on Whitecross Street rather than stuck in a corner of the estate. It’d give us a presence there. Whether it was a permanent display of historical Peabody photos or the community centre itself, I feel it would be good for those visiting the area to feel they’re on ‘our’ space and that we’re proud of it.”

“Actually there’s a community hall in our square now but to be honest with you it’s not been publicised very well what they do for the youth, so I’m not actually sure what it is they do. I know they publicise the dinners for the pensioners and the aromatherapy but as for the teenagers I haven’t got a clue what they do.”

GOLDEN LANE LEISURE CENTRE

“Our nearest swimming pool/sports area over on Golden Lane estate is going to be closed for restoration at the same time as Ironmonger Row. You’d have thought the councils could have talked to each other. We need more community style things like this”

THE BARBICAN LIBRARY

“I put up notices about the Barbican Library and autumn fete on all the Peabody notice boards. I think it’s a good introduction for people – terrific facilities down there, and a lot of people wouldn’t have gone down. I don’t think that people use the Barbican much, and it certainly doesn’t advertise up here, which they should do as it’s their hinterland”

“Whitecross estate residents should have access to the Barbican Library! The Barbican’s excuse is that they’re officially City, not Islington, but a great library is just a few steps away. I can’t help feeling that Peabody could have come to some arrangement with them.”

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

ERROL STREET

“I feel a sense of community on the estate very much so. I love living here, and the long-term tenancies are the secret of that – they create good neighbours and friends who watch each other’s kids grow up. It’s generally safe and there’s a good balance of singles, families and old people.”

BLOCK G

“I loved being a kid here, but none of our children can get a flat on here. That’s the only thing I think we’ve lost now ‘cos you don’t know everybody, years ago it used to be all families, the aunts, the nans, the grandads.”

ST MARY’S TOWER

“I love living here, there’s so many positives. We’re at the heart of this amazing city, London. It’s a great community. The worst thing is that we’re so cramped. My three kids share one room and it’s not a big room either. I think there should be a system that gives priority to those

already here who need it. I mean, they'll offer you something but it will be miles away. I don't want to live in Southwark or Hornsey or wherever. Our lives and networks and friends are here – the schools, my support structure, I'm a single mother.. I'd be devastated if I had to leave"

GARDENING

"I got some money years ago from EC1 New Deal just to get some flower boxes and some earth, and together with Vicky we started off these flower boxes and I think that's what grew into the Gardening Club. On one day 20 or 30 people turned up to take part in it and those people, I met loads of people – and it's just a little thing like that has given people a sense of community, a sense of power to change their space in a small way."

"I think it's an important part of the community and sort of talking together, 'cos otherwise you just go in the block, close your door and that's it. You never speak to anybody. I lived on the estate about 30 years now, and there's a better sense of community here now that there has ever been. It makes you feel safer if you know your neighbours, there's such a big turnover with people moving in and out all the time, the people that stay here get to know the new ones that are coming in and I think that is helped by the gardening as well. Because there's some new people that are helping now too, and I think that's a big part of it and we don't want to loose that."

"You see these flowers affect people, they affect the young people, the teenagers the young people, the ones that have dropped out of school. They bash the flowers up, but then they get less bashed up as time goes on, and eventually it makes them feel better. So if you had these things of course they'd get wrecked now and then, but if there is a family with young children playing in a sandpit, some nice benches and a few trees and people sitting round reading the newspaper, those young people coming in and kicking stuff around are going to feel different."

"Last year in the summer I grew too many tomato plants, I had sixty, and a local firm, Hogan and Lovell, a law firm, come along and said 'we've got a project – we want to use your tomato plants to sell on a market stall, so that's what they did they made us over £100. Now they're still helping me, they want me to carry on with the stall. But what we need now is a greenhouse so we can fertilise the plants, so that when the next spring comes round, instead of just growing tomatoes we can grow herbs all sorts of stuff that we can sell on the market to raise more for the club."

"I think that the urgent message from the gardening club is that we need more growing space. After that we need more sheds to keep equipment.

"The gardening club hasn't been formalised, I mean it's formalised in as much as they've formed a club, but imagine if we had real money to actually create a proper garden. It could either be each block has their own communal garden, but it's up to them to do what they like with it, or we have lots of different planters, or there is a community garden section with seating and then growing space."

SPECIFIC OPEN SPACES

COURTYARD OF BLOCKS

R,S,T,V,Q,P,N

"I think we need to take ownership of this space again. At the moment it's owned by cars and rubbish trucks and anti-social behaviour, and it could be a place that people who live here use and enjoy. We need to reclaim the open spaces so they are a part of the experience of living here – a positive part."

"This should all be turned into grass, with some cherry trees, and have a sand pit"

"Alley Square is lovely, but where I live on the main courtyard it's like a bomb ruin, like a derelict place"

"You could just make it a bit more welcoming, because if you walk down here you're not going to go 'oh Peabody estate, I'll go and eat my lunch there', but if this was a bit more cheerful, or if it was painted nicely..."

"This would be a prime spot for growing and gardening."

AREA BETWEEN PEABODY COURT
AND BANNER HOUSE

"So we're coming up now to the end of Roscoe Street, and you see they've got all these weird little barriers, this is like concrete nonsense heaven isn't it? All these things for people to trip over, it should all be grass. And then the council spent all that money to paint those red chairs!"

"Well this is a mess really, I don't know what to do, it's something for an architect. I mean all those fences could be taken down. It should be more for children."

"I'd like somewhere to meet. I don't think we have any 'communal' spaces."

"It ought to be properly organised, just into a more pleasant looking area. The grass seems to be only used for dogs to foul even though that's the only rule that has been put up there. It just looks disorganised. Random benches, a tokenistic grass area and a tree surrounded by concrete, no

bicycle route, uneven tarmac giving off a distinct feeling of poverty. Too many railings alluding to an image of prison rather than openness."

"If there's any change, it has to do the same job as the barriers. We had to campaign for those to stop cars trying to get through – they would even drive up over the grass. We asked for railings but we got barriers."

"This area should be our village green!"

ENCLOSED GARDEN

"See this notice – 'No Persons Allowed on Green' – there's 1200 people on this estate and there is a notice like that and all this locked up."

"It is a beautiful space, and you can imagine how frustrating it is if you live in one of these flats perhaps in particular, seeing it and not being allowed to use it."

"The gardens should be locked because when they were open I used to get kids throwing sticks through my windows, lots of noise, and people not from the estate having barbecues and the smoke coming straight into my living room."

"Opening this space would be opening it to abuse."

"I think residents concerns over opening closed communal gardens are valid. It would be nice to keep those secluded and open up other green spaces on the estate instead, like improving the area between Peabody Court and Banner House"

"Personally I think it would be OK for residents in the surrounding block to have a key, but not all the residents on the estate."

"Ideally, we'd like to have a play space, the kids could even design it."

"If the lawn was to be opened how would it be monitored?"

"At first I wondered why this was closed but I soon came to realise that this was totally necessary to providing some kind of sanctity. [Because of bad soundproofing and the noise at the front of the building] the only chance of feeling somewhat relaxed and 'at home' in the property is when you're in the two back rooms, as the garden at the back provides a buffer between yourself and the next block. Opening it up to people would totally destroy this tranquillity."

ERROL STREET

"As a result of the wide open gateway and the lack of a boundary or any kind of defined public/private space, the area is used and abused"

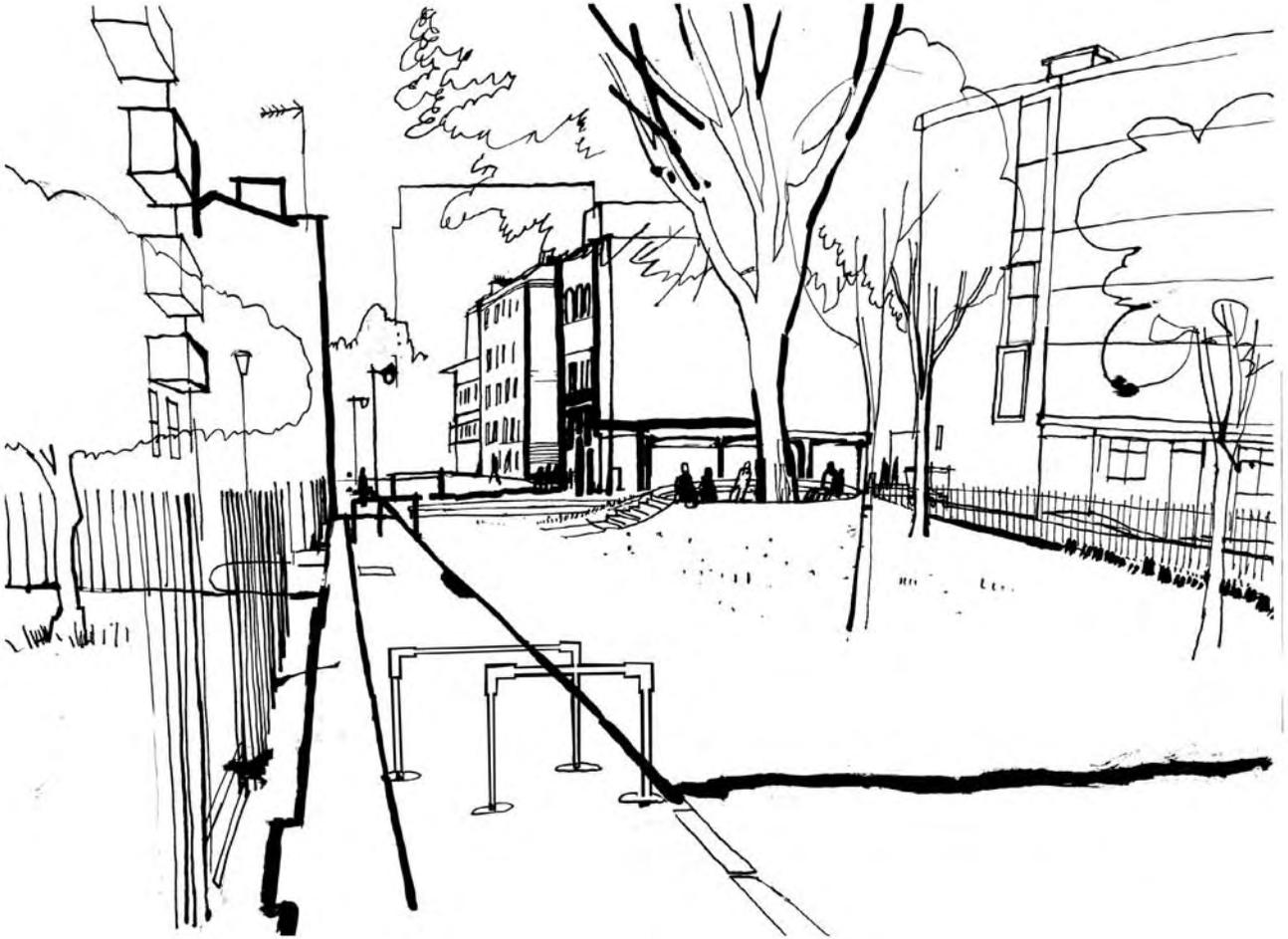
"I'd love to see Errol Street properly restored with a low wall and railings and paths to the doors and planting (all of which was promised when

I moved in 18 years ago) – so it's more our space and less the back yard of the YMCA."

"The plane trees (which are homes to squirrels, magpies and bats in summer) are getting damaged at their bases because their old concrete protection is gone. Once the leaves are gone it's quite bleak and there's no sense of the area 'belonging' to our flats. It also floods very badly in winter (a 10ft wide pool outside our door). Because it's so ill-defined and easy to get into it's used as a rubbish dump"

"I would suggest losing the wide gateway and assigning the very few parking spaces elsewhere, creating smaller gateways perhaps at either end to avoid an entrance directly opposite the YMCA entrance. It's not so obvious outside, but the three blocks are totally separate from one another inside. So we all have our community and know our neighbours – but rarely anyone from the other blocks. So I'd suggest both for the visual look but also from the point of view of getting people involved in gardening the space, it'd be great if there was some sense of it being subdivided."

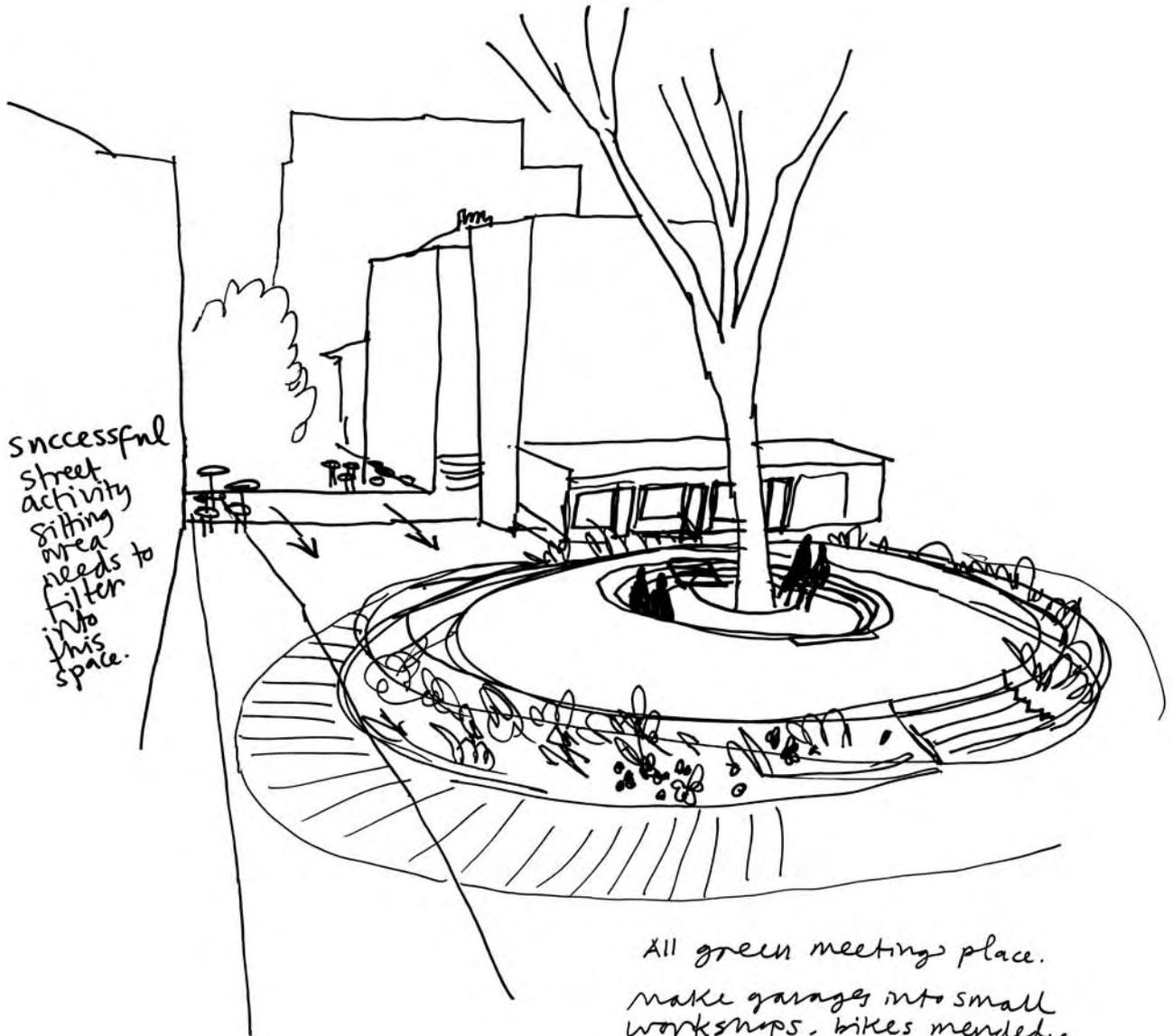
"I'd like to see it kept fairly open, benches are not a good idea, because benches attract groups of kids who sit there for hours and create the noise. I'd like to see a lot of greenery here, no public art or clutter. I think space can be appreciated for its own sake especially in a city that is becoming increasingly over-crowded."



Publica commissioned the artist Lucinda Rogers to attend the two meetings held on the estate and to draw some of the ideas that individual residents described. She sat and listened to residents and drew as they spoke. This selection of drawings represents a series of individuals' ideas for change, or in some cases, preservation of the status quo. It is not intended to suggest a consensus among residents or to foreground any of the ideas as solutions over others. The drawings were, however, part of the process of capturing residents' ideas.





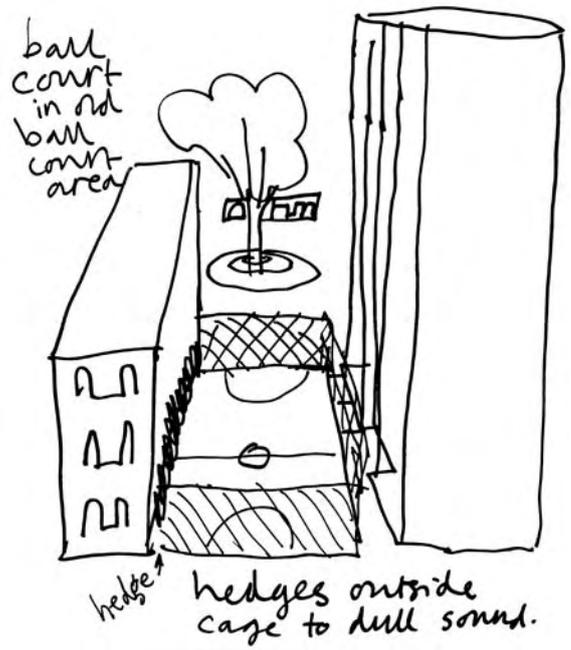
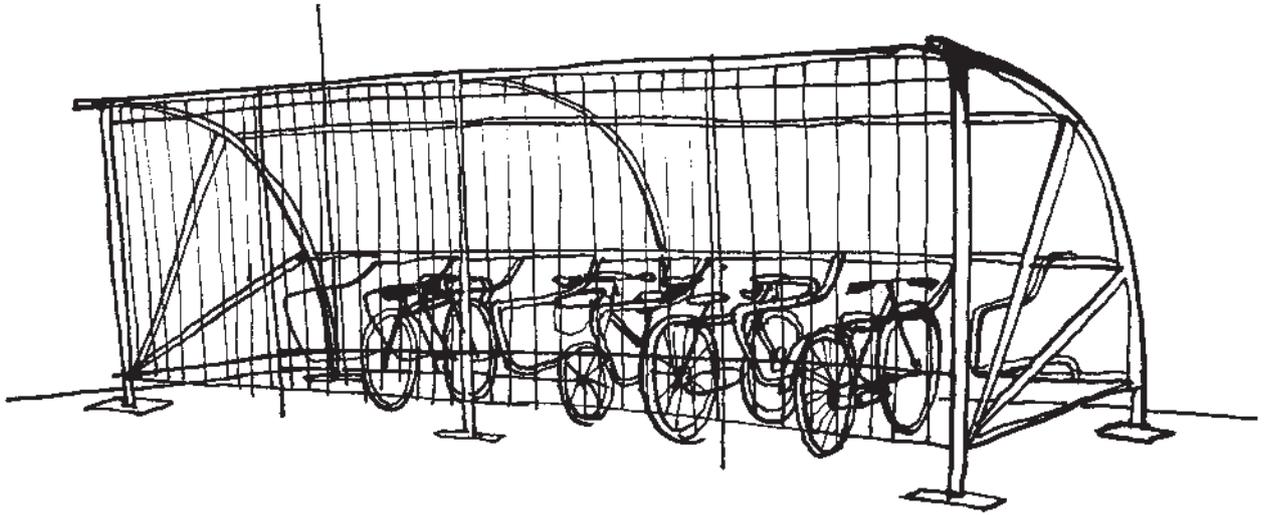


Successful
street
activity
sitting
area
needs to
filter
into
this
space.

All green meetings place.
make garages into small
workshops, bikes mended,
woodworkings etc.

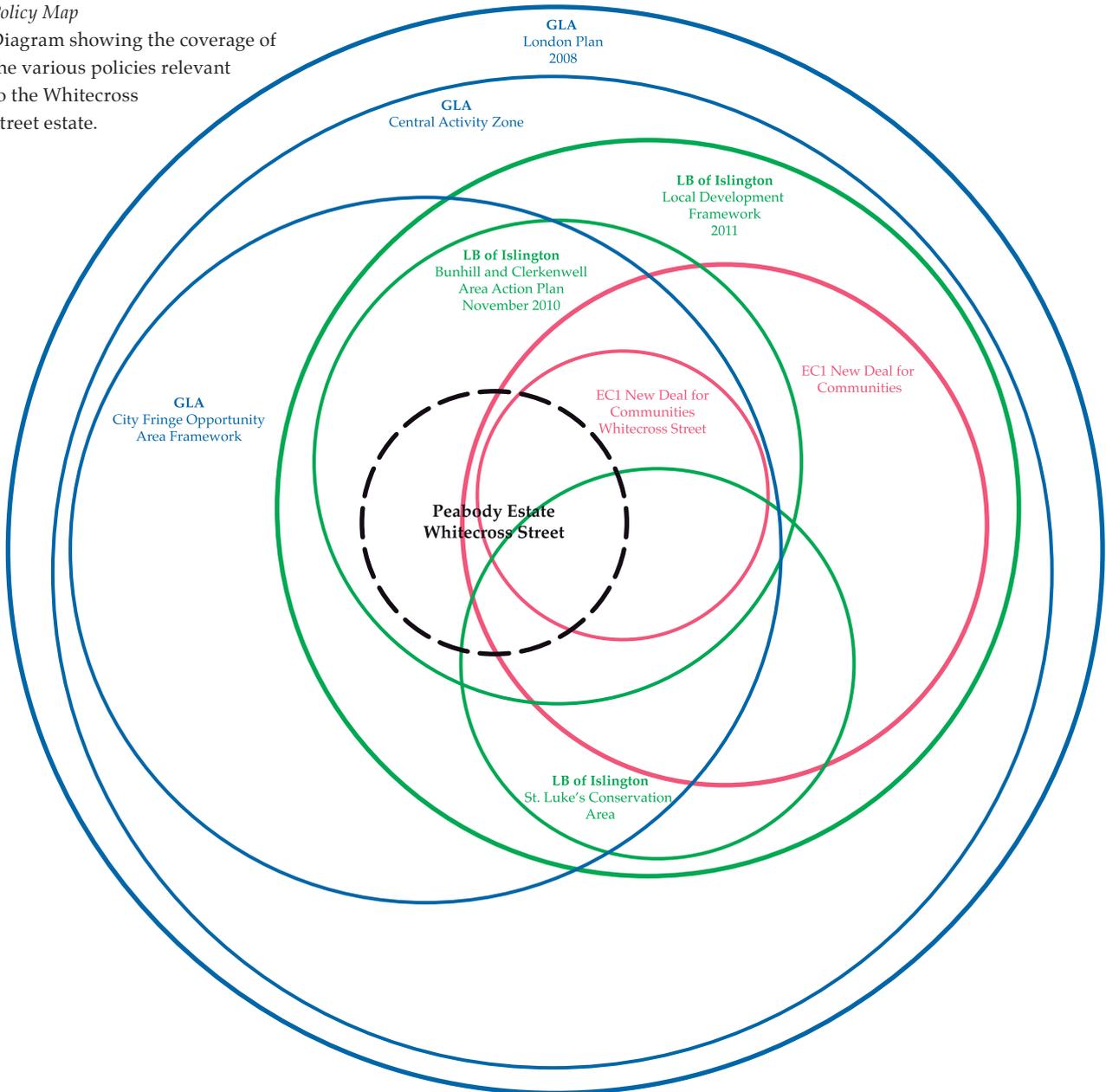
need outdoor
* sitting area *
on estate





Policy Map

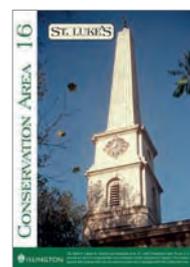
Diagram showing the coverage of the various policies relevant to the Whitecross Street estate.



The Mayor's London Plan Consolidated with alterations since 2004, February 2008.



LB Islington's Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan (AAP), to be adopted 2011.



LB Islington St. Luke's Conservation Area (designated 1975, expanded 2002).

INTRODUCTION

Local Political Representation

The Whitecross Street estate is situated in the southern corner of the London Borough of Islington. The estate is in the Islington ward of Bunhill and in the Westminster Parliamentary constituency of Islington South and Finsbury.

At the time of writing Islington Council is Labour controlled. Bunhill ward is represented by three councillors, Cllr Troy Gallagher (Labour), Cllr Robert Khan (Labour) and Cllr Claudia Webbe (Labour). All three Bunhill councillors hold surgeries on the first Thursday of the month at 6–7pm at St Luke's Centre, 90 Central Street, London, EC1V 8AJ, and on the last Tuesday of the month from 10–11am at Golden Lane Campus, Whitecross Street, EC1Y 8JA. Email and telephone details for all Islington Councillors can be found on the Council's website at:

<http://www.islington.gov.uk/Council/political/Councillors/listcouncillorname.asp>

At Westminster, South Islington and Finsbury has been represented since 2005 by Emily Thornbury MP (Labour). At the 2010 general election her majority was 3,569 (8.2% of votes cast). Emily Thornbury holds three constituency surgeries each month, details of which can be found on her website at: <http://www.emilythornberry.com/topics/2082.html>

PLANNING POLICY

There is a range of local, regional and national plans that apply to the estate. These include:

National Policy

- National Planning Policy Guidance and Statements

Regional (London) Policy

- The Mayor's London Plan, consolidated with alterations since 2004, February 2008
- The Mayor's Draft Replacement London Plan, to be adopted in 2011

Borough (Islington) Policy

- LB Islington's Local Development Framework (LDF) (to be adopted in 2011)
- LB Islington's Development Management Policies (to be adopted in 2011)
- LB Islington's Site Allocations Document (to be adopted in 2011)
- LB Islington St. Luke's Conservation Area (designated 1975, expanded 2002)

Ward (Bunhill Ward) Policy

- LB Islington's Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan (AAP) (to be adopted 2011)

The 'Policy' Appendix to this report gives further detail on specific aspects of these policies that are relevant to the Whitecross Street estate and the surrounding area. Effective engagement with the process of physical change and improvement requires a level of awareness and understanding of policy; it is intended that this appendix will provide a starting point for residents who would like to gain an understanding of the local policy context.

Of all of the documents listed above, the most locally specific is the emerging Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan (AAP). This document forms part of Islington's Local Development Framework (LDF) and is a 15-year plan that will be used by the Council and its partners to make decisions about future development and investment in the area. Local site allocations for potential future development are also set out within this document. These sites include two on the estate and one nearby.

The Bunhill and Clerkenwell AAP is currently in draft form and is open for public consultation until the end of January 2011. The Islington planning officer responsible is Paul Selby (paul.selby@islington.gov.uk). Contact has been made with this officer by Publica on behalf of the PTAWS.



KEY

-  parking space (113)
-  garage (26)
-  pram/buggy shed (91)
-  bicycle storage (18)
-  bins

-  playground
-  private green area
-  public green area
-  enclosed green area

-  vehicle grey surface
-  pedestrian pathway
-  undefined grey surface

Footnotes:

- 1 Interview with the Whitecross Estate Neighbourhood Manager, November 2010.
- 2 In addition to the parking provided in and around the estate, there is a *Streetcar* car club bay on Golden Lane, at the corner of Banner Street.
- 3 Interview with the Whitecross Estate Neighbourhood Manager, November 2010.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 *Ibid.*

EXISTING OPEN SPACES: CAR PARKING AND STORAGE

Peabody's Neighbourhood Manager is responsible for the management and maintenance of open spaces on the estate, including car parking. Peabody's website states that the role of the neighbourhood manager is *"to deal with any local issues that come up concerning residents, the community or the estate itself."* The manager carries out a programme of estate inspections/walkabouts, with the aim of ensuring that the estate is being maintained and cleaned to the required standard.

The quality of landscaping, pedestrian environment and site conditions are managed by Peabody. For these purposes, the borders of the estate are defined by the kerbs of all the pavements bordering the estate (except for Golden Lane, which is the responsibility of the City of London Corporation).

Peabody's gardeners are responsible for all the Peabody planting and green areas on the estate, including the *'enclosed garden'*. Peabody operates this function centrally.

Among Peabody's other responsibilities are the designation of parking bays and the allocation of bays to residents. The enforcement of tax registration and valid parking permits and removal of abandoned vehicles is carried out by the London Parking Control Ltd (LPC). LPC also manage the system of visitor parking. Residents can purchase visitor tokens, for which parking is limited to 12 designated visitor bays around the estate.¹

There are 113 permit parking spaces around the estate, which are located primarily in the large courtyard on the eastern side, on Banner Street and outside Peabody Court. Approximately two-thirds of these are in use, which means there is a significant amount of open, unused tarmac space on the estate.²

Many residents prefer to park their vehicles on the surrounding streets because it is significantly cheaper to do so. Peabody parking permits cost

residents £8.50 per week (£408 per year), whereas London Borough of Islington permits for the local Controlled Parking Zone cost £90 per year. As a result, Peabody's Whitecross Street Neighbourhood Manager does not have a waiting list for parking bays. However, there is a long waiting list for the 26 garages (13 people at the time of writing) and the 91 pram/buggy storage sheds (68 people)³ as well as the 18 bicycle storage sheds, which are in high demand. Storage, like parking, is dealt with outside of tenancy agreements; the Neighbourhood Manager is responsible for waiting lists for all these facilities.

Refuse collection and recycling on the estate is the responsibility of Islington Council. Doorstep recycling was trialled but stopped at the request of Peabody due to concerns about fire risk, obstruction, and rubbish in communal areas.⁴ Peabody is responsible for the location of rubbish and recycling bins on the estate.⁵

Policies regarding tenancies and housing

Analysis of housing, letting, transfers and decant policies are not within the scope of this study, nevertheless, there is a brief summary of some key issues concerning the delivery of new homes which may prove relevant to the PTAWS in the 'Peabody' section of this report. In addition, the following Peabody Policies are available by emailing:

policy.helpline@peabody.org.uk

- Lettings Policy (Effective from November 2007, last amended November 2009, next review date November 2012)
- Mutual Exchange Policy (Effective from September 2009, next review date September 2014)
- Decants and Buyouts Policy (Effective from April 2009, next review date April 2014)

It should be noted that the issue of housing transfers within the estate and its relationship to the problems of overcrowding, lack of storage, and sense of community, has been raised by a number of residents in the course of this study.

PEABODY'S ASPIRATIONS FOR THE WHITECROSS STREET ESTATE

"In the summer of 2010 initial discussions were held between Peabody and the Peabody Tenants' Association Whitecross Street (PTAWS) regarding the potential for improvements to the open spaces and additional new homes. As a result of these discussions, it was agreed that an independent consultative exercise would be carried out to help establish a resident vision for the future of the estate as well as develop the capacity of residents to respond to and influence proposals for regenerating the estate.

We would like to take this opportunity to explain the rationale for open space improvements and the development of new homes, and the process by which these could be achieved.

Open Space Improvement

Peabody is committed to providing great services and quality homes for residents and has a programme called *Improve* that delivers environmental and infrastructure improvements to the outdoor spaces on Peabody estates. The *Improve* programme creates and enhances open spaces for the neighbourhood, areas that residents can enjoy and where they feel safe. Peabody believes that well-designed and successfully delivered open spaces can be catalysts for social cohesion, strengthening community spirit and adapting to climate change.

The programme benefits residents by;

- Improving access to high-quality open spaces
- Strengthening community spirit and engagement
- Enhancing biodiversity in urban areas
- Discouraging anti-social behaviour by further developing pride and ownership
- Providing safe places for play where it is relevant and required
- Raising awareness of the health and well-being benefits of open spaces
- Engaging the community through employment, training and volunteering opportunities
- Helping to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Peabody believes in the value of engaging communities during the design, planning, implementation and on-going management of the open spaces. As well as being an integral part of the design and planning phase of the project, Peabody would be seeking resident representatives to take part in selecting

Written by Peabody for this report, December 2010

a contractor and taking part in the delivery of the project.

Developing New Homes

It is widely recognised that there is a shortage of affordable housing both in the borough of Islington and throughout the capital. Peabody is committed to building good quality, affordable homes and developing new sites but we also wish to explore the potential for developing new homes on our existing estates (for example we are building 56 new homes at Peabody Avenue in Pimlico). At Whitecross this would not involve replacing existing homes but could potentially involve building on under-utilised land or garage sites.

New homes may have facilities such as lifts and adapted kitchens or bathrooms that existing Peabody residents may find desirable. This might encourage, for example, a single person living in a three-bed property to move into a new one or two-bedroom property that is built on the estate, thus making it possible for a family currently living in overcrowded accommodation to move into the 3-bedroom property. It is important to stress that no one would be forced to move if they did not want to.

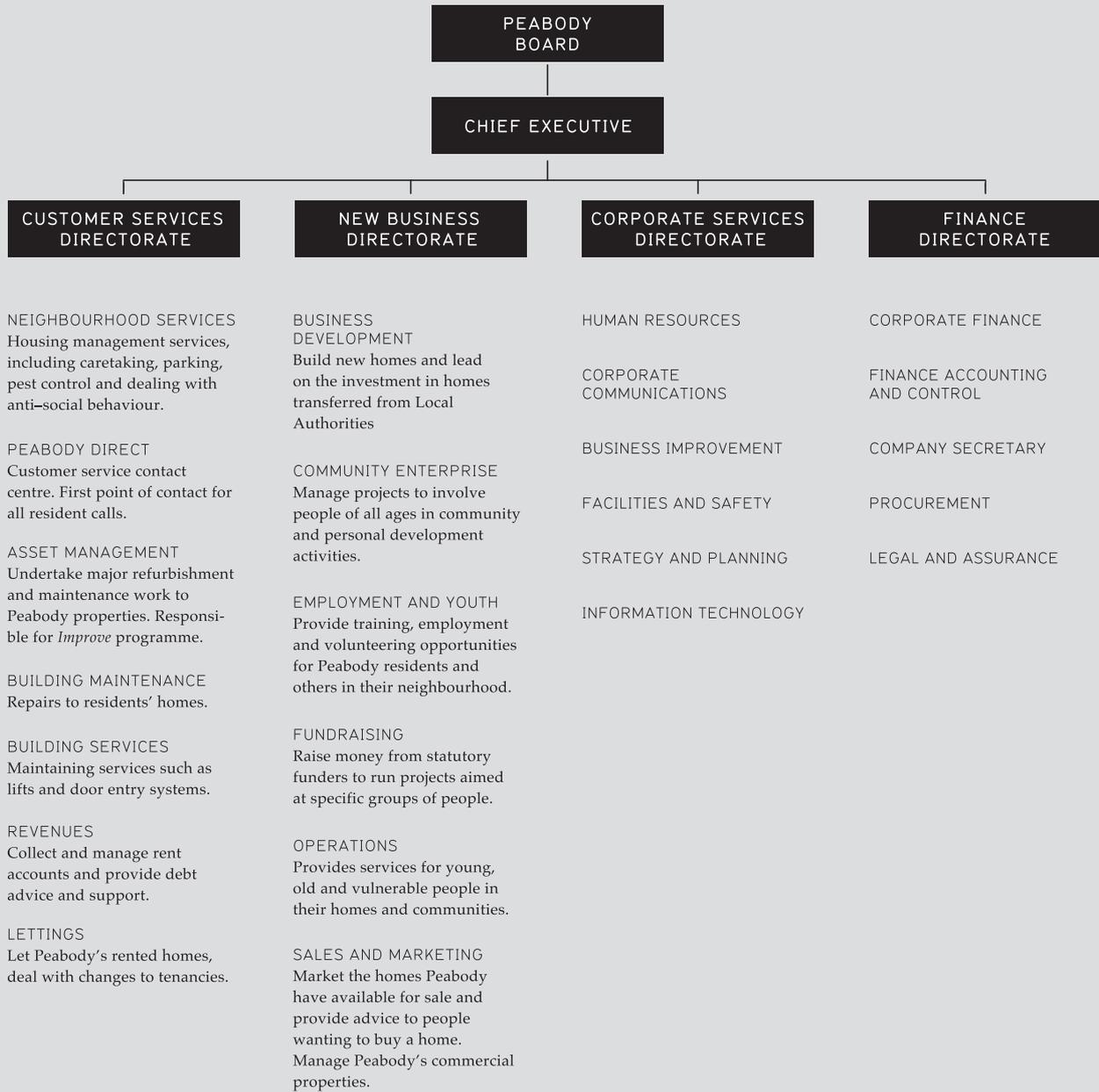
Another benefit of developing new homes is that it can generate additional revenue, which could potentially be a key source of funding for the open space improvement described above.

Peabody develops new homes in partnership with local authorities and the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA). New developments are mainly funded by Peabody but also often attract grant funding from the HCA. A number of homes in new developments may also be rented at levels higher than social rent but below the market rate. Often referred to as intermediate rents, they are let at 70 to 80% of market rents to help fund the development.

Any proposals to build new homes will be joined up with the potential open space improvements and will be examined with residents and in the context of this report."

Peabody, December 2010

PEABODY ORGANISATIONAL DIAGRAM



Publica has drawn the above organisational diagram. Please note this is not a Peabody document; it has been compiled by Publica to assist in understanding Peabody's structure.

PEABODY:

Background, Organisation and Implementation

The following brief overview of Peabody has been prepared by Publica with reference to material available on Peabody's website, information supplied by Peabody staff and an interview with the Neighbourhood Manager responsible for the Whitecross Street estate.

Background¹

Peabody is a housing association and registered general charity, founded in 1862 by the American banker, diplomat and philanthropist George Peabody. Peabody's stated charitable aims and objectives are,

"To provide housing to Londoners in severe housing need and to work with other organisations to help Londoners faced with the consequences of poverty; to introduce a wide range of initiatives to improve the living conditions and economic prosperity of Londoners."

The Peabody Group now owns and manages more than 19,000 homes across the capital. Peabody only operates in London and manages a range of tenures, including social housing, intermediate and market rented properties, shared ownership and commercial units.

Peabody also provides a range of programmes for residents and the wider community including employment and training programmes; health and well-being initiatives; activities for younger and older people; welfare benefits advice and financial inclusion and family support programmes.

Peabody's stated mission is,

"to make London a city of opportunity for all by ensuring as many people as possible have:

- *A good home...a place that is safe, warm, clean, light, well-maintained and evokes personal pride.*
- *A real sense of purpose...this means regular endeavour – whether that be work, learning, caring*

for others, personal development or volunteering – that people look forward to because it makes them feel valued.

- *A strong feeling of belonging...that grows from active involvement in the neighbourhood and the spirit of togetherness and friendliness that goes with that."*

As a strategy to achieve this Peabody has four key aims, which are to:

- *provide great services and quality homes*
- *build thriving communities*
- *achieve influential growth*
- *achieve business excellence*

Peabody's business plan states as its two fundamental principles:

- *the belief that customers are at the heart of all Peabody does*
- *Peabody's financial strength must be sustained and used to improve services and grow.*

Peabody's business plan for 2010–13 is available to download from its website at: <http://www.peabody.org.uk/about-us.aspx>

Peabody's Organisational Structure

Peabody is overseen by 10 board members. It is intended that they bring a broad range of expertise and experience to Peabody, in fields ranging from customer service, finance and property, to the governance and management of housing associations. Up to two board members can be residents and there is currently one resident board member. The board meets formally six times a year.

The day-to-day management of Peabody is delegated by the board members to the chief executive and the executive team. The organisation is divided into four directorates, each with its own Executive Director reporting to the Chief Executive. An outline of Peabody's Organisational Structure, prepared by Publica, is illustrated on page 68.

¹ The background section of this chapter is based on Peabody's summary of its mission and aims as stated on the 'about us' section of its website at: <http://www.peabody.org.uk/about-us.aspx>, accessed November 2010.

Headline details of Peabody's current finances are available at: <http://www.charitiesdirect.com/charities/peabody-trust-206061.html>

Operational Implementation

In terms of maintenance and improvement to the Whitecross Street estate, the three key departments within Peabody are Neighbourhood Services and Asset Management, which fall within the Customer Services directorate and the Business Development team, which sits within the New Business directorate.

Neighbourhood Services

Neighbourhood Services provide housing management services, including issues relevant to the use and condition of the public realm on a day-to-day level. Services include caretaking, parking, pest control and dealing with anti-social behaviour. A Neighbourhood Manager is responsible for these aspects of the estate. His core duties cover five areas of work: tenancy audits, addressing low-level anti-social behaviour, complaints and correspondence, estate walkabouts and tenants engagement (working with the TA).

The Neighbourhood Manager conducts a walk-around of the communal areas and grounds of the estate on the first Wednesday of every month and a Surgery in the Community Centre on the second Thursday of every month.²

The Neighbourhood Manager is responsible for two other Peabody estates in Islington and is based on the Pembury estate in Hackney. This system replaced the Estate Office system in 2005.³

Asset Management

Peabody's Asset Management team sits within the Customer Services Directorate and is responsible for undertaking major refurbishment programmes to Peabody properties. Within Asset Management there are two further teams, Building Maintenance and Building Services who are responsible for day

to day repairs and maintenance.

Peabody plans to spend around £400 million on its properties between 2008 and 2017 on three major estate improvement programmes:

- *Decent* – internal improvements to bring homes up to the Decent Homes standard
- *Sound* – a planned programme of repairs and redecoration to the outside of our buildings and internal communal areas
- *Improve* – improving open spaces and upgrading door entry systems

Decent

Decent is Peabody's scheme to implement the government's target for all social landlords to bring their properties up to the government's Decent Homes standard by the end of 2010. By this date, all homes should meet a basic standard, be in a good state of repair with reasonably modern facilities, and be weatherproof and warm. The cost of this programme is around £140 million. No government grant is provided for this work, it is all funded from Peabody's reserves and borrowing.

Sound

Sound is Peabody's programme of repairs and redecoration to the external fabric and internal communal areas of its properties. This includes planned maintenance work, major repairs and replacement of roofs, windows and doors. Sound began in 2006 and Peabody anticipates that all its properties will have some work carried out in the seven years of the programme.

Improve

In 2007 Peabody launched a 10-year programme of major improvements to the open spaces on around 40 estates, including the Whitecross Street estate. As outlined in Peabody's statement above, the aim

² The Neighbourhood Manager is not directly responsible for repairs to flats on the estate, however the Whitecross Neighbourhood Manager reports that 90% of residents that contact of him do so about repairs to flats. In this instance he contacts Peabody Direct (the freephone service for residents) on behalf of residents (*interview with Neighbourhood Manager, November 2010*).

³ The Estate Office was situated in what is now the Community Centre. It was staffed by around five people and functioned as a "one stop shop" for all aspects of Peabody's services and activities (*interview with Neighbourhood Manager, November 2010*).

of Improve is to address residents' concerns over

- *access*
- *security and safety*
- *issues that can be improved or exacerbated by estate design*
- *environmental challenges such as waste management, climate change and biodiversity*

Works are determined in consultation with residents on each estate, but might include soft and hard landscaping, lighting, play areas and recycling facilities. There will be an extensive period of consultation, design and development before any work starts on site. IMPROVE projects are funded by a combination of Peabody and external funding (for example Lottery or Section 106 funding).

Business Development⁴

The Business Development team at Peabody is responsible for building new homes and investing in homes transferred from local authorities and other housing providers.

New rented homes provided by Peabody are normally covered by a 'nominations agreement' that legally obliges Peabody to offer a certain amount of the homes to the local authority waiting list. This can be as much as 100% of initial lets, and a large percentage of subsequent lets. Typically, it is 75%. Islington Council's policy on who it nominates is based on its points-based housing register, details of which are available online at: <http://www.islington.gov.uk/housing/findingahome/housingregister/points.asp>

Peabody's preference is to build affordable homes. Historically, these were funded through a combination of borrowing and grant funding from local and central government. Peabody would borrow around 30% of the cost of building a home, with the rent received from the tenant then going

to pay off that borrowing. The remaining 70% of the cost would come to Peabody as a grant from the government. More recently, the level of grant available has reduced substantially so that Peabody would now expect to get 50% to 60% of the cost from government. Peabody would still borrow 30% of the cost against rental, the net effect being a 10% to 20% funding gap on new housing development. To plug that gap, Peabody needs to incorporate other tenure types along side general needs ('social') rented homes – shared ownership, intermediate rent, market rent or outright sale.

The type of tenure chosen for new developments is governed by a number of factors, most often the planning environment of the borough (local authorities often stipulate tenures that must be provided in new developments), but also the economic

environment. For instance in a high value area, Peabody might be able to offer 10% of new properties at market rent and create enough surplus to subsidise 90% general needs (or 'social') housing. In a lower value area, though, Peabody would need to develop a higher percentage of market rent to subsidise general needs. Nevertheless, Peabody always tries to maximise the amount of general needs and look to the most effective and suitable means of subsidising it.

⁴ Information in the following section has been provided by Adam Preece of Peabody's Business Development team, October 2010.

A VISION FOR THE WHITECROSS STREET ESTATE

INVOLVE EVERYONE

There is strong desire and willingness among residents to be involved in decision-making on the estate. Capitalising on this appetite for engagement requires support in organising, governance, and continued engagement by and among residents. Good communication, responsiveness and transparency between the residents, Peabody and other stakeholders is important.

GET THE BASICS RIGHT

The experience of living on the estate is framed by the quality of a number of basic issues: the management and maintenance of public spaces and facilities, the management of rubbish and recycling, the mitigation of sound disturbance and solutions to anti-social behaviour. Getting these basics right is the bedrock upon which physical and social investment in the estate should be built.

UPGRADE THE ESTATE

There are a range of improvements and positive physical changes to be made to the estate: greening the estate, rationalising open spaces, improving and increasing storage provision, and improving surfaces, signage and lighting to enhance routes around the estate.

DEVELOP AMENITY AND IDENTITY

Support and encouragement for activities in open spaces such as gardening, the provision for children's play and for young people and the growth of the community centre as a resource for all residents, represents an investment in the community that should mirror physical improvements on the estate. By investing in people as well as the physical place, improvements to the estate can be sustained over the long term.

PRINCIPLES FOR THE FUTURE

- 1 • INVOLVE EVERYONE
- 2 • IMPROVE WASTE AND RECYCLING MANAGEMENT
- 3 • CONSIDER SOUND MITIGATION
- 4 • CONSIDER CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE
- 5 • GREEN THE ESTATE
- 6 • MAINTAIN AND PROTECT EXISTING GREENERY AND TREES
- 7 • RATIONALISE OPEN SPACES
- 8 • IMPROVE AND EXPAND STORAGE PROVISION
- 9 • RETAIN AND IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN ROUTES
- 10 • RE-INTRODUCE PLAY PROVISION TO THE ESTATE
- 11 • PROVIDE PROVISION FOR TEENAGERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE
- 12 • ENCOURAGE ACTIVITIES IN PUBLIC PLACES
- 13 • GIVE THE ESTATE A CLEAR SENSE OF IDENTITY
- 14 • MAKE THE ESTATE SOMEWHERE TO BE PROUD OF
- 15 • INVOLVE PEOPLE FROM OUTSIDE THE ESTATE

PRINCIPLES FOR THE FUTURE: *Further Narrative*

- 1 • *Involve everyone.* There is a strong level of interest, opinion and willingness to be involved in the future of the estate, both within and beyond the PTAWS. There is a desire to establish a broad based Estate Improvement Group of residents. This enthusiasm should be harnessed to continue to engage residents in decision making on the estate. A broad range of people of varying ages and backgrounds took part in this study, however there were some 'hard to reach' people whose opinions were not uncovered in eight weeks. Further work is required to bring these people into the process.
- 2 • *Green the estate.* Most public open spaces on the estate are car parks, roads or other hard grey surfaces. As a result, many spaces are underused and residents do not feel a sense of ownership or involvement. There is a significant desire among residents to see a greener estate.
- 3 • *Maintain and protect existing greenery and trees.* The existing green spaces and trees are valued by residents, including those that are not accessible.
- 4 • *Rationalise open spaces.* Many open spaces on the estate are not well organised. Car parking is dispersed and uses available space inefficiently. Some storage facilities prevent other uses or landscaping. There is enough space on the estate to accommodate a wide range of uses if the use of space is planned and thought through strategically.
- 5 • *Retain and improve storage provision.* There is a severe shortage of storage provision – for example for bikes and prams/buggies – across the estate, with a sizable waiting list for both. Some existing storage is in poor condition and insecure. There is an opportunity to rationalise, improve and expand storage facilities, which would be a great benefit to residents.
- 6 • *Retain and improve pedestrian routes.* The network of informal pedestrian routes around the estate is valued and well used by residents. However many routes suffer from poor surfaces, lack of lighting, and a messy array of barriers which are often ineffective for their designed purpose. Some contribute to perceptions of an unsafe environment. Addressing these issues would also contribute to fulfilling principles 13 and 14.
- 7 • *Improve waste and recycling management.* There is dissatisfaction with waste management across the estate. A combination of material and operational changes such as more recycling bins, housing for bins, more frequent collections and better waste management with regard to the market and market visitors would all make a significant improvement to quality of life and would make a significant contribution to 14.

- 8 • *Re-introduce play provision to the estate.*** There are no play spaces for younger children on the estate. Play spaces that were originally designed into the western side of the estate have been incrementally removed and not replaced. There is a desire among parents and children on the estate for play provision to be returned.
- 9 • *Provide provision for teenagers and young people.*** There is a lack of youth provision on the estate and a desire among young people for facilities. Nearby facilities are either too expensive or have 'territorial' issues.
- 10 • *Consider sound mitigation.*** Sound disturbance from neighbours and people outside is acute, particularly in the twentieth century blocks. Even apparently innocuous behaviour can cause significant disturbance in the environs of the estate and exasperates concern over anti-social behaviour. In certain parts of the estate design considerations such as surfaces, acoustics and addressing informal seating could mitigate sound disturbance.
- 11 • *Consider cleaning and maintenance.*** Cleaning and maintenance of common areas is critical to the future success of any improvements to the estate. The care and maintenance of green spaces works well, however residents are concerned that there is not a comparable holistic and consistent maintenance of the non-green spaces, but rather an ad-hoc approach with a number of long-term unresolved issues.
- 12 • *Encourage activities in public places.*** The Gardening Club is a thriving and positive example of organised community activity in the estate's open spaces. Help in terms of fundraising and dissemination of ideas for other activities could assist residents to promote positive community-based uses of the estate's open spaces.
- 13 • *Give the estate a clear sense of identity.*** The historic division of the estate and the previous ad hoc approach to the public realm has contributed to a lack of identity on the estate. Rationalisation of signage, street furniture, surfaces, lighting and the use of space would all serve to create a positive identity for the estate and improve it as a place to live.
- 14 • *Make the estate somewhere to be proud of.*** A number of residents have reported that, at present, they are embarrassed to bring visitors or guests to the estate. By adopting these principles for future improvements a fundamental step change in the quality of life on the estate could be achieved.
- 15 • *Involve people outside the estate.*** There are a wide range of potential partners and interested parties outside the estate that could be involved in its future: local or national charitable trusts, local businesses, service providers, societies and other local organisations could collectively contribute greatly to life on and around the estate.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX I: Policy



KEY

-  Peabody Estate
-  St. Lukes Conservation Area
-  Shopping Parade
-  Bunhill Ward -LB of Islington
-  City of London

There is a range of local, regional and national plans that apply to the estate. These include:

National Policy

- National Planning Policy Guidance and Statements

Regional (London) Policy

- The Mayor's London Plan, (consolidated with alterations since 2004, February 2008)
- The Mayor's Draft Replacement London Plan, (to be adopted in 2011)

Borough (Islington) Policy

- LB Islington's Local Development Framework (LDF), (to be adopted in 2011)
- LB Islington's Development Management Policies (to be adopted in 2011)
- LB Islington's Site Allocations Document (to be adopted in 2011)
- LB Islington St. Luke's Conservation Area (designated 1975, expanded 2002)

Ward (Bunhill Ward) Policy

- LB Islington's Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan (AAP) (to be adopted 2011)

This appendix gives further detail on specific aspects of these policies that are relevant to the Whitecross Street estate and the surrounding area.

National Policy

National Policy is reflected in local and regional plans and policy, so for the purposes of this report a brief overview of London-wide, Borough level and ward-level policies relevant to the estate will be outlined.

Regional (London) Policy

The London Plan: Whitecross Street within the London Policy Context

The London Plan is the spatial development plan for London. It was recently reviewed in public and the replacement version is coming out early 2011. The London Plan sets the policy framework for the boroughs across a range of issues, including traffic and transport, the environment and sustainable development, London's waterways, London's

employment and workplaces. The London Plan also sets targets for new homes and affordable housing. Several supplementary planning guidance documents expand on particular policy areas within the London Plan, for example the Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance, sets out in more detail the design standards and the numbers of units the Mayor expects.

The London Plan defines a number of spatial policy areas across London. South Islington, including Whitecross Street falls into two of these areas: The Central Activities Zone and the City Fringe Opportunity Area Planning Framework. These are strategic plans to focus development, business growth and intensification.

Whitecross Street itself has been identified as an employment growth area in the London Plan, but the residential areas either side have not been included.

Borough (Islington) Policy

Islington's Local Development Framework (LDF)

Each borough produces its own Local Development Framework, a set of planning documents that reflect the policies of the London Plan but that go into more detail about particular areas of the borough and specific development sites. The LDF also has supplementary guidance that covers details such as conservation area guidance, the design of shop fronts and signage, and the borough's own detailed guidance on housing design.

Islington's LDF, which is set to be adopted in 2011, will guide development in Islington over the next 15 years. Islington's Draft Core Strategy (due to be adopted in 2011) is the Borough's key plan within the LDF. Within the Core Strategy, Whitecross Street is to be designated as a Local Shopping Parade. As such it is covered by the borough's policy S16 which states that:

"The Council will designate protected local shopping centres, as shown on the Proposals Map, where the Council will seek to maintain and promote local retail uses."

The reason that the council designates these local shopping areas is that, *“It is considered essential that a range of local shops, providing for day-to-day needs, is available to all residents within reasonable walking distance. A grouping of local shops is more convenient and beneficial than a scatter of shops, as this allows local needs to be satisfied in one journey. This is particularly important for older people and parents with young children, who may be unable to walk very far or to carry shopping any distance. The shops also derive mutual benefit from being grouped.”*

Conservation Area Policy: St Luke’s Conservation Area
Some of the area occupied by the Whitecross Street estate is subject to Conservation Area Policy as it is situated within the St. Luke’s Conservation Area. A conservation area is *“an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”*¹ Conservation areas are identified and designated by the Council. The special character of these areas does not come from the quality of their buildings alone. The area as a whole, including historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries; characteristic building and paving materials; a particular ‘mix’ of building uses; landscape and tree cover in public and private spaces all make up the familiar local scene.

Conservation area designation is a way of protecting these special parts of the borough and ensuring that any new development is sensitive to their historic character.

This means that in a conservation area there are additional restrictions as to what can be built and on interventions and works that might affect the quality of the public realm. The St Luke’s Conservation Area Audit sets out the specific local characteristic that the council wishes to preserve and enhance. These include:

- *Owners are urged to look after trees on their land.*
- *Owners are encouraged to plant new trees in order to ensure a continuing stock of mature trees in the area for future generations.*
- *The Council will not permit changes of use which would*

harm this character [of the area]. The Council will protect the local shopping centre in Whitecross Street.

- *Whitecross Street is ... [the] home of London’s oldest surviving street market and fronted by a number of domestic scale properties from the 18th and 19th Century. Either side, the narrow side streets contain a wide range of 19th Century commercial buildings and one of the largest late 19th Century Peabody housing estates.*
- *The Council wishes to retain all 18th and 19th Century buildings in the area, together with those later buildings which contribute positively to the area. St. Luke’s contains a wide variety of architectural styles with distinctive detailing. The Council will seek to preserve special features, such as historic shop and pub fronts, warehouse cranes and gantries, entrance doors and railings. Redevelopment will be considered only where this improves the appearance of the area.*
- *Many historic shopfronts survive which contribute to the character and appearance of the area. They should be kept. New shops where permitted need to reflect traditional designs and materials such as painted timber, iron and render/stucco. Natural aluminium is not acceptable. Full guidance is given in the Council’s Shopfront Design Guide.*

The local landmarks policy is as follows:

D18 The Council will protect views of well known local landmarks and will exercise stringent controls over the height, location and design of any building which blocks or detracts from important or potentially important views.

Full details of the St. Luke’s conservation area, including maps, design guidelines and a summary of policy implications is available on Islington Council’s website at: http://www.islington.gov.uk/Environment/Planning/planninginisl/plan_conserve/documents_and_guidance/conservation_area_guidance/ca16_st_lukes.asp

Ward Policy

The Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan
Within Islington’s LDF there are a number of documents relevant to the Whitecross Street

Area, including Site Allocations, Development Management Policies and the Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan.

These documents are site-specific, and explain the parameters of localities within the Borough in more detail as well as providing guidance on design of development and sites for change. Any development in the area must take regard of these plans and the policies they set out.

Most notably, the Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan (AAP) forms part of Islington's LDF and is a 15 year plan that will be used by the Council and its partners to make decisions about future development and investment in the area. Local site allocations are also set out within this document. The Bunhill and Clerkenwell AAP is currently in draft form and is open for public consultation until the end of January 2011. The Islington planning officer responsible is Paul Selby (paul.selby@islington.gov.uk). Contact has been made with this officer by Publica on behalf of the PTAWS.

Existing social context and character

The Draft Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan (AAP) sets out a more detailed context of the area as a whole. It notes that:

- *The population of Bunhill and Clerkenwell is likely to increase substantially over the next few years.*
- *Since 2001, the number of residents within the area has grown by well over 25%, to around 23,000 people. and that The Greater London Authority estimates that this growth will continue, with the population of Bunhill ward increasing by 4,375 residents, between 2008 and 2020.*
- *The area is a mixed residential and commercial area that has a strong sense of identity and community.*
- *The area borders the City of London and the London Boroughs of Hackney and Camden... and that there is a stronger sense of separation between neighbouring locations.*
- *Among the area's population, there is high dependence on benefits, and a high incidence of worklessness, particularly on larger estates. Despite attempts to tackle*

disadvantage, there has been little change in employment rates.

- *That more positively, very few of the area's 16 year olds are not in education, employment or training, and there are a greater-than-average number of people of working age. The potential therefore exists to create an extremely vibrant and creative local economy with opportunities for more local residents to enter work.*
- *The area has many successful local shopping areas and markets, such as those at Exmouth Market and Whitecross Street (which has improved significantly following recent investment from the public sector). Potential exists for these markets to grow.*
- *A large number of households in the area experience considerable poverty. This particularly affects children and older people, who are more likely to live in social housing. The area's high land values increase the cost of living and place some services and resources out of the reach of many residents and their families, which has an impact on the quality of life of many.*
- *Many parts of the area have a high concentration of social housing. Households within these areas have extremely low savings rates and lower than average incomes, making it extremely hard for those residents who wish to move into home ownership to do so (including shared ownership). High concentrations of social housing in some areas conflicts with the government's objective of creating sustainable, mixed communities.*

LB Islington's plan for the area

The Draft Bunhill and Clerkenwell AAP identifies a number of key issues for the area over the next 15 years:

- *Social polarisation, with few employment opportunities for local residents, particularly the most disadvantaged*
- *High levels of poverty, particularly among children and older people*
- *Matching the supply of smaller, affordable work spaces suitable for start-ups, specialist industries and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)*

with demand

- *Loss of employment floorspace to residential and other uses, particularly in the north of the area*
- *Lack of public space and biodiversity, both in terms of quantity and quality*
- *An under-capitalised visitor economy and poor access to cultural and historic assets*
- *Lack of diversity in new housing, and ongoing need for affordable units*
- *Ageing community facilities that require investment to prevent obsolescence*
- *Conflicting uses in some locations, particularly between housing and licensed premises*
- *The threat that insensitive development could impact negatively on the special character and amenity of the area, and jeopardise long term conservation objectives for historic places, buildings and structures*
- *Over-dominance of vehicular traffic, particularly at gyratories and along main routes, with resultant high pollution levels*
- *Increasing fuel poverty due to residents' energy demands and costs, with an associated need for investment in energy efficiency and decentralised energy*
- *High dependence on the carbon economy, and disproportionate effects from climate change, including urban heating and flooding.*

Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan: Site Allocations

As part of its spatial plan, the Draft Bunhill and Clerkenwell AAP identifies sites for change, development and improvement. Three sites are referred to that have specific relevance to the estate, two are on the estate and one nearby.

Site BC34:

Car park at 11 Shire House, Whitbread Centre, Lamb's Passage, EC1Y 8TE.

Suggested allocation:

Redevelopment to provide retail at ground floor, with small scale business uses and residential above, along with open space.

Constraints and justification:

Development will need to be compatible with and respect the surrounding residential area and should respect the character of St Luke's / Chiswell Street Conservation Areas. There are vaults under the southern part of the site. Any development will require a complete and proper survey of them. Proposals should respect and if possible make use of the vaults. This is an accessible site close to boundary of City of London, with the opportunity to improve the frontage to Lamb's Passage, support the retail offer of the area and increase access to small-scale business floorspace in this important location within the CAZ.

Site BC35:

Peabody Estate (Banner Street)

Suggested allocation, constraints and justification:

Public open space and improved private space adjacent to ground floor residential units. The design should incorporate private space for ground floor residential units to better define the public realm, alongside improved amenity space for public use, improved east/west pedestrian access, and reduced visual clutter. There is an opportunity to formalise this site as a public space, with attendant public realm improvements.

Site BC36:

Site adjacent to 88 Golden Lane, Peabody Whitecross Estate

Suggested allocation, constraints and justification:

Development of the site to provide housing and/or amenity space. The site could potentially incorporate new housing subject to design constraints being satisfactorily addressed, including overlooking from the adjacent residential building. The site is opposite the Grade II listed Golden Lane Estate. The site is within the ownership of Peabody and, subject to design constraints being addressed, could provide new housing, preferably for families.

One of these sites, BC35, is also included as one of 31 Public Space Priority Projects within the

AAP. Project 18 is described as “Peabody Estate Gardens and link space to Whitecross Street”. The AAP states that: “A masterplan for the site is required to maximize the full potential of the space, developing the size and function of this pocket park and resolving the relationship between the residential and public interfaces. Design principles should include the following:

- Consideration is needed to the quality and sense of enclosure of the space.
- Redesign and rationalise parking areas to improve appearance and reduce dominance on space.
- Replace traffic engineered barriers with a more sympathetic solution, integrated with the garden design
- New paved surfaces: pedestrian routes following streetscape standards and potential for unique, character hard landscaping within garden boundary.
- Improved seating areas with litter bins to support Whitecross Street market.
- Consideration of maintenance and cleansing requirements supporting increased use from people visiting the market.
- Lighting strategy to improve feeling of safety and surveillance through evening and mark the pedestrian route.”

New open spaces and landscape designs in and around the Peabody Estate should take account of The Mayor’s Supplementary Planning Guidance ‘Accessible London; achieving an inclusive environment’ and LB Islington’s ‘Inclusive Landscape Design SPD’.

EC1 – Background and Legacy

EC1 New Deal for communities (NDC) is an unincorporated, community-led partnership of residents, public service providers and voluntary and community organizations. It is one of 39 NDC partnership that received government funding over a 10 year period (2001–2011) to “kick start the turn around of multiply deprived neighbourhoods.”²

EC1 was awarded £52.9m for the period 1 April 2001 to 31 March 2011. The eastern side of the Whitecross Street estate fell within EC1 NDC’s boundary. The western side of the estate was

outside its boundary. It is understood that at least the streets intersecting with Whitecross Street received streetscape upgrade works, including accessibility kerb treatments, paving and landscaping improvements as part of EC1 NDC Open Spaces strategy.

EC1 NDC produced a final evaluation document in October 2010 outlining “changes, achievements and lessons learnt” during its 10 years of operation. This document is available to download from EC1’s website at: www.yourec1.com. EC1’s evaluation document highlights four areas where it feels greater focus is required over the next 10 years:

- Getting the model of neighbourhood working right
- A focus on skills development
- Continuing the physical regeneration of the area
- Maximising the benefits of the location

However the report notes that “the funding climate is much more challenging than anticipated and this has been compounded by the lack of independent income stream from NDC assets.” Furthermore “the EC1 area is unlikely to benefit from equivalent levels of additional public sector resources in the foreseeable future.”³

With regard to the ‘Continuing physical regeneration of the area’, the EC1 report notes that:

“Although there has been a marked improvement in the quality of the public realm, some of the more structural problems of the area were not addressed in the lifetime of the NDC programme... Over the coming years, the Bunhill and Clerkenwell area Action Plan (AAP) will provide a framework for tackling these, and should create ways for the local area to better benefit from commercial development.”⁴

1 http://www.islington.gov.uk/Environment/Planning/planninginis/plan_conserve/documents_and_guidance/conservation_area_guidance/ca16_st_lukes.asp, accessed November 2010.

2 EC1 New Deal for Communities 2001–2011: Final Evaluation, October 2010, p1.

3 EC1 New Deal for Communities 2001–2011: Final Evaluation, October 2010, p9.

4 *Ibid.*

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