

Politecnico di Torino - University of East London
Dipartimento di Architettura e Design
Laurea Magistrale in Architettura Costruzione Città
2026



**Politecnico
di Torino**



**University of
East London**

Master's Degree Thesis

Invisible Integration:

Designing a Tenure-Blind Social Housing to Address
Housing Stigma on a Small Infill Site in Newham,
London

Relatore:
Prof. Davide Rolfo
Prof. Luana Parisi

Hossein Khalatabad-S327977

Abstract

Keywords

Tenure-blind housing; Social Housing; Housing Stigma; Architectural Stigma; Small-site Infill Development; Contextual Integration; Inclusive Urban Design; Resident Perception; Newham, London; Housing Equality.

Social housing plays a fundamental role in addressing housing inequality, yet it is often associated with visible architectural markers that reinforce housing stigma and social exclusion. While housing stigma has been widely discussed in relation to policy, socio-economic conditions, and territorial reputation, comparatively limited attention has been given to the role of architectural design in shaping these perceptions. As a result, the physical environment can unintentionally communicate social hierarchy and distinction through its form, materials, and spatial organisation. This thesis investigates the relationship between architectural design and housing stigma through the concept of tenure-blind social housing, exploring how design can contribute to more inclusive and equitable urban environments.

The study focuses on the London Borough of Newham, one of the areas experiencing significant housing pressure and an increasing demand for affordable housing. At the same time, its urban fabric contains numerous opportunities for small-site infill development that can contribute to housing supply while strengthening existing neighbourhoods. Rather than treating social housing as a distinct architectural typology, the research examines how infill development can become seamlessly integrated into its surrounding context, ensuring that tenure is not visibly expressed through the built environment.

This research analyses the relationship between housing stigma, contextual integration, and architectural design through a design-led methodology. The methodology combines a literature review on housing stigma and tenure-blind design with comparative borough analysis, small-site infill investigation, architectural case study analysis, contextual site analysis, and a perception-based questionnaire. The findings from these complementary stages were synthesised into a comprehensive design framework that informed the development of a final architectural proposal for a small infill site in Newham.

The results reveal that tenure-blind integration cannot be achieved through a single architectural intervention but through the coordinated application of multiple design strategies. Context-sensitive massing, equal entrances, high-quality materials, articulated façade rhythms, architectural individuality without hierarchy, and well-designed communal green spaces collectively reduce visible markers of housing stigma while strengthening the relationship between new development and its surrounding neighbourhood. The research further demonstrates that architecture influences not only the physical quality of housing but also the way housing and its residents are perceived by the wider community.

Rather than proposing architecture as a solution to the broader structural causes of housing inequality, this thesis demonstrates how architectural design can reduce the visible expression of inequality within the built environment. By translating theories of housing stigma into practical design strategies, the research establishes a framework for tenure-blind social housing that can support architects, planners, and policymakers in creating more inclusive residential environments. More broadly, it argues that social housing should not be recognised by the tenure of its residents, but by the quality of its architecture and its contribution to the city.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Prof. Luana Parisi and Prof. Davide Rolfo, for their continuous guidance, support, and encouragement throughout this research. Their valuable feedback, insight, and patience were essential to the development of this thesis, and without them, this work would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank my sister, Sepideh, for her constant support, encouragement, and belief in me throughout this journey. Her presence and support gave me strength during difficult moments and helped me continue forward.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to people living in poverty and those affected by housing inequality and social exclusion. Their experiences, struggles, and resilience remain at the heart of this research and its intentions.

Abstract	5	2.5.4 Architectural Stigma in Housing Policy and Regeneration Contexts	32
Acknowledgement	7	2.5.5 Dignity, Inclusion, and Anti-Stigma Design	32
Index	8	2.5.6 Synthesis: Architectural marker as a Multi-Dimensional Design Condition	32
01 Introduction	15	2.6 International Social Housing Models and Implications for Stigma and Tenure Perception	34
1.1 Background and Motivation	16	2.6.1 Vienna: Social Housing as a Normalised Urban Housing Sector	34
1.2 Research Problem and Objectives	17	2.6.2 Finland: Targeted Social Housing and the Risk of Specialisation	34
1.3 Research Question	18	2.6.3 State–Market Balance and Stigma Formation	34
1.4 Structure of the Thesis	19	2.6.4 Implications for Tenure-Blind Housing Design	35
2.0 Literature Review	21	2.7 Tenure-Blind Design in Mixed-Tenure Housing: Definition, Evidence, and Design Implications	36
2.1 Urbanisation, Urban Sprawl, and the Restructuring of Urban Housing	22	2.7.1 Defining tenure-blindness and distinguishing it from spatial “mix”	36
2.1.1 Urbanisation as a Socio-Spatial Process	22	2.7.2 What the evidence suggests tenure-blind design can achieve	36
2.1.2 Global Urban Expansion and Housing Pressure	22	2.7.3 Why “blending in” matters: stigma and the semiotics of materials and appearance	36
2.1.3 Urban Sprawl: Causes and Consequences	22	2.7.4 Limits of tenure-blindness: interaction, governance, and the “mixing” assumption	36
2.1.4 Compact City and Densification as Policy Responses	23	2.7.5 Strategic critiques and structural limits	37
2.1.5 Social and Spatial Implications of Urban Growth	23	2.7.6 Design criteria to carry forward into the thesis framework	37
2.1.6 Synthesis: Urbanisation and the Context for Housing Inequality	23	2.7.7 Synthesis	37
2.2 UK Social Housing Policy and the Production of Inequality	24	2.8 Integrated Research Position	38
2.2.1 From Welfare State Housing to Neoliberal Reform	24	3.0 Methodology	41
2.2.2 Right to Buy and the Depletion of Social Housing Stock	24	3.1 Research Approach and Framework	42
2.2.3 Residualisation of Social Housing	24	3.2 Research Scope and Case Study Selection	42
2.2.4 Regeneration, Mixed Tenure, and Gentrification	24	3.3 Data Collection Methods	43
2.2.5 Financialisation and Developer-Led Housing Delivery	25	3.3.1 Literature Review	43
2.2.6 Austerity, Affordable Rent, and Housing Precarity	25	3.3.2 Architectural Case Study Analysis	43
2.2.7 Moralisation, Deservingness, and Stigma	25	3.3.3 Questionnaire Survey	43
2.2.8 Policy Trajectories and the Institutionalisation of Inequality	25	3.3.4 Site Investigation and Context Analysis	43
2.3 Social Stigma: Concepts Relevant to Housing and Architecture	27	3.4 Analytical Framework	44
2.3.1 Classical Foundations of Stigma Theory	27	3.5 Design Translation Process	44
2.3.2 Stigma as a Multi-Level Social Process	27	3.6 Use of Artificial Intelligence for Language Refinement	44
2.3.3 Power, Classification, and Symbolic Inequality	27	3.7 Limitations	44
2.3.4 Community-Based and Spatial Dimensions of Stigma	28	4.0 Context and Empirical Basis	47
2.3.5 Identity Management and the Negotiation of Stigma	28	4.1 Borough Selection	49
2.3.6 Architecture and the Materialisation of Stigma	28	4.1.1 Context and Empirical Analysis	50
2.3.7 Synthesis: Stigma as a Socio-Spatial Process	28	4.1.1.1 The Role of Boroughs and the City of London	50
2.4 Territorial and Spatial Stigma	29	4.1.1.2 Rationale for the Selection of Newham, Lewisham, and Ealing	50
2.4.1 Territorial Stigma as Symbolic and Spatial Classification	29	4.1.1.3 Rationale for Comparing Newham, Lewisham, and Ealing	52
2.4.2 Residualisation, Policy, and the Concentration of Stigma	29	4.1.2 Borough Comparison; History	54
2.4.3 Media, Discourse, and the Production of Stigmatised Places	29	4.1.2.1 Urban Development in Ealing: A Historical Timeline and Urban Transformation	54
2.4.4 Territorial Stigma and the Legitimation of Urban Intervention	29	4.1.2.2 Spatial Land Development in Ealing	54
2.4.5 Synthesis: Territorial Stigma as a Socio-Political Spatial Process	30	4.1.2.3 Urban Development in Newham: A Historical Timeline and Urban Transformation	56
2.5 Architectural Stigma: How Inequality Becomes Visible Through Design	31	4.1.2.4 Spatial Land Development in Newham	56
2.5.1 Architecture as Spatial Governance and Mechanism of Exclusion	31		
2.5.2 Architecture as Symbolic Communication of Social Value	31		
2.5.3 Visual and Material Markers of Architecture	31		

4.1.2.5 Urban Development in Lewisham: A Historical Timeline and Urban Transformation	58
4.1.2.6 Spatial Land Development in Lewisham	58
4.1.2.7 Analytical Interpretation of Historical Context	60
4.1.3 Borough Comparison;Policy	62
4.1.3.1 Strategic Planning Philosophy	62
4.1.3.2 Growth Mechanisms & Scale	62
4.1.3.3 Density, Form & Envelope Control	64
4.1.3.4 Design Governance	64
4.1.3.5 Analytical Interpretation of Planning Policy and Infill Strategy	66
4.1.4 Borough Comparison; Socio-Demographic and Housing Context	68
4.1.4.1 Comparative Socio-Demographic Profile of the Case Study Boroughs	68
4.1.4.2 Housing and Socio-Economic Conditions in Newham, Ealing, and Lewisham	70
4.1.4.3 Analytical Interpretation of Socio-Demographic and Housing Conditions	72
4.1.5 Borough Comparison; Final Borough Selection	73
4.1.5.1 Analytical Interpretation of Comparative Data Informing Borough Selection	73
4.2 Infill Site Typologies	75
4.2.1 Small Site Infill Framework	76
4.2.1.1 Purpose of the Framework	76
4.2.1.2 Reasons for Selection	76
4.2.1.3 Orientation of the Guidance	76
4.2.1.4 Typological Approach	76
4.2.1.5 Design Parameters as Spatial Method	78
4.2.1.6 Application in This Thesis	78
4.2.1.7 Tenure-Blind Extension	78
4.2.1.8 Role Within the Thesis Structure	78
4.2.2 Infill Site Typologies	79
4.2.2.1 What defines a small site and where are they found in Newham?	79
4.2.2.2 Infill Site Typologies in Newham	79
4.2.2.3 Street facing: residential	79
4.2.2.4 Street facing: high street	81
4.2.2.5 Backland	82
4.2.2.6 Freeform	83
4.2.2.7 Conclusion: Infill Site Typologies in Newham	84
4.3 Site Identification	87
4.3.1 Brownfield Infill Site Identification	88
4.3.1.1 Brownfield Register Status	88
4.3.1.2 Final Site Selection	90
4.4 Case Studies	93
4.4.1 Selection of Infill Social Housing Case Studies	94
4.4.1.1 Relevance to the Thesis Topic	94
4.4.1.2 Focus on Infill Social Housing	94
4.4.1.3 Comparative Analysis Through Two Case Studies	94
4.4.1.4 Analytical Criteria and Research Focus	94
4.4.2 Case Study 01	96

4.4.2.1 Plot Division and Building Footprint	100
4.4.2.2 Accessibility and Hierarchy	103
4.4.2.3 Materials Analysis	106
4.4.2.4 Existing Elements: Entrance and Window Rhythm	108
4.4.2.5 Material Comparison	112
4.4.3 Case Study 02	114
4.4.3.1 Plot Division and Building Footprint	118
4.4.3.2 Parking	120
4.4.3.3 Accessibility and Hierarchy	121
4.4.3.4 Materials Analysis	124
4.4.3.5 Existing Elements: Entrance and Window Rhythm	126
4.4.3.6 Façade, Rhythm, and Symbolic Translation	128
4.4.3.7 Material Comparison	130
4.4.4 Key Case-Study Findings	132
4.5 Questionnaire Survey	135
4.5.1 Questionnaire Overview	136
4.5.2 Recruitment and Sampling	136
4.5.3 Data Collection Period	137
4.5.4 Informed Consent and Data Protection	137
4.5.5 Analysis	137
4.5.6 Target Sample Size and Limitations	137
4.5.7 Survey Results: Thematic Analysis of Resident Perceptions	138
4.5.7.1 Theme 1: Visible Care as Social Value	138
4.5.7.2 Theme 2: Visual Integration as Belonging	139
4.5.7.3 Theme 3: Materiality as Class Language	140
4.5.7.4 Theme 4: Thresholds of Inclusion	141
4.5.8 Application to the Research	142
4.6 Development of the Final Design Framework	145
4.6.1 Methodology for Developing the Final Design Framework	146
4.6.2 Final Design Framework	148
4.6.2.1 Openings (Windows)	148
4.6.2.2 Material & Construction Quality	148
4.6.2.3 Urban Form (Scale & Massing)	148
4.6.2.4 Access & Spatial Organisation	150
4.6.2.5 Ground & Landscape Interface	150
4.6.2.6 Maintenance & Long-Term Condition	150
	152
5.0 Design Proposal	153
5.1 Site Analysis	155
5.1.1 Site Frontage and Streetscape Analysis	156

5.1.2 Axonometric View and Site Dimensions	158	A.Questionnaire Sheet	208
5.2 Design Development	161	B. Organisation Consent Sheet	211
5.2.1 Final Design Framework	162		
5.2.2 Bay Window Typologies and Streetscape Character	164		
5.2.3 Development of the Bay Window and Building Form	166		
5.2.4 Materials Selection	168		
5.2.4.1 Existing Materials	168		
5.2.4.2 Main Wall Façade Materials	169		
5.2.4.3 Entrance Materials	170		
5.2.4.4 Window Materials	170		
5.2.4.5 Boundary Wall Materials	170		
5.2.4.6 Roof Materials	171		
5.2.4.7 Paving Surfaces	171		
5.2.4.8 Material Design Palette	172		
5.3 Final Architectural Proposal	177		
5.3.1 Floor Plans	178		
5.3.1.1 Ground Floor	178		
5.3.1.2 First Floor	179		
5.3.2 Roof Plan	180		
5.3.3 Resident Perceptions and Architectural Responses	182		
5.3.4 Sections	184		
5.3.4.1 Section A-A	184		
5.3.4.2 Section B-B	184		
5.3.5 Elevation	186		
5.3.6 Architectural Visualizations	188		
6.0 Conclusion	193		
6.1 Findings and Discussion	194		
6.1.1 Answer to the Research Question	194		
6.1.2 Key Contribution	195		
6.2 Critical Reflection	196		
6.2.1 Limitations	196		
6.2.2 Design Process	196		
6.2.3 Future Research	197		
6.3 Closing Statement	198		
Reference List	201		
BIBLIOGRAPHY	202		
Appendices	207		

01 | Introduction

Aim:

This chapter introduces the research background and establishes the context for the study. It presents the research problem, aim, objectives, and questions, and outlines the overall structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background and Motivation

Housing has long been understood as one of the fundamental components of urban life. Beyond providing shelter, housing influences social relationships, daily routines, and the way people experience and understand the city around them. The places where people live often shape their sense of belonging, identity, and connection to their communities. As a result, housing plays an important role not only in meeting practical needs but also in influencing broader social experiences.

At the same time, housing has become one of the most significant challenges facing contemporary cities. Growing populations, rising land values, and increasing pressure on urban infrastructure have intensified the demand for housing across many metropolitan areas. In response, cities have increasingly sought ways to accommodate growth within their existing boundaries, often through redevelopment, densification, and infill development.

Within the United Kingdom, discussions surrounding housing are closely connected to questions of inequality. Over time, social housing has undergone substantial transformation, moving from a broadly accessible form of public provision towards a more residual tenure associated with lower-income households. These changes have influenced not only access to housing but also the way social housing is perceived within society.

As these perceptions developed, social housing increasingly became associated with stigma. Certain neighbourhoods, housing estates, and residential environments came to be viewed through negative assumptions linked to poverty, exclusion, and social disadvantage. While these perceptions are often discussed in political and social terms, they can also become visible through the physical environment itself.

The built environment plays an important role in shaping how places are perceived. Materials, building forms, entrances, spatial organisation, and relationships with surrounding streets all contribute to the way housing is understood and experienced. Architecture therefore participates in the communication of social meaning, influencing how residents are perceived and how residential environments are valued within the wider city.

An interest in these relationships gradually led to a broader consideration of the role architecture might play in either reinforcing or challenging housing stigma. If social differences can become visible through the built environment, then architectural design may also have the capacity to reduce those distinctions and support more inclusive residential environments.

Within London, the Borough of Newham emerged as a particularly relevant context through which to explore these issues. Characterised by rapid urban change, significant housing pressures, ongoing regeneration, and a diverse population, Newham provides a setting in which questions of housing, identity, and urban transformation are highly visible. These conditions created an opportunity to examine the relationship between housing stigma, architectural representation, and contemporary housing development within an existing urban neighbourhood.

1.2 Research Problem and Objectives

Housing inequality within the United Kingdom is not only expressed through differences in access to housing, but also through the way housing is represented and perceived within the built environment. Decades of housing policy reform, privatisation, and residualisation have contributed to the concentration of social housing among lower-income and more vulnerable households, increasing its association with poverty and social disadvantage. As a result, social housing has frequently become subject to stigma, affecting both the perception of places and the experiences of residents.

Existing research has extensively examined the social, political, and economic dimensions of housing stigma. Studies have explored the role of housing policy, territorial stigma, media representation, and social perception in shaping negative attitudes towards social housing and its residents. At the same time, a growing body of literature has shown that architecture can contribute to the visibility of social difference through design decisions related to access, spatial organisation, façade treatment, and material expression.

Despite these contributions, relatively limited attention has been given to how architectural design can actively respond to housing stigma at the scale of contemporary residential development. While the causes of housing stigma are widely discussed, fewer studies investigate how architectural strategies can reduce the visibility of tenure difference and support more inclusive residential environments. This is particularly relevant in the context of small-site infill development, where new social housing must be integrated within established neighbourhoods while avoiding visible markers of social distinction.

The concept of tenure-blind design offers a potential response to this challenge. By minimising architectural differences between housing tenures, tenure-blind approaches seek to reduce visible indicators of inequality and support greater social inclusion. However, the architectural conditions required to achieve tenure blindness remain insufficiently explored, particularly within the context of small urban infill sites.

Aim

The aim of this research is to investigate how small-site social housing infill in Newham can be designed to reduce visible architectural stigma and support tenure-blind integration within the existing urban fabric.

Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between housing policy, residualisation, stigma, and the built environment through a review of relevant literature.
2. To identify architectural conditions that contribute to the visibility or reduction of housing stigma through the analysis of theoretical and empirical case studies.
3. To compare selected London boroughs and identify an appropriate context for investigating tenure-blind social housing development.
4. To analyse local infill housing precedents and site conditions within the selected borough.
5. To develop a design framework informed by literature, case studies, and perception-based findings.
6. To apply this framework through the design of a tenure-blind social housing proposal on a small infill site in Newham.

1.3 Research Question

The literature reviewed in this study suggests that housing stigma is not only produced through policy, social perception, and territorial narratives, but can also become visible through architectural design. In residualised housing systems such as the United Kingdom, differences in tenure may be communicated through the built environment, influencing how housing and its residents are perceived. This raises questions about the role architecture can play in reducing visible markers of inequality and supporting more inclusive residential environments.

The main research question is:

How can social housing infill in Newham be designed to eliminate architectural stigma markers and achieve tenure-blind integration within the existing urban fabric through the development of a standard design framework?

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into six chapters that progressively develop the theoretical, contextual, methodological, and design dimensions of the research.

- Chapter 1 introduces the background and motivation of the study, defines the research problem, and presents the research question and objectives.
- Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to housing policy, residualisation, social stigma, territorial stigma, architectural stigma, and tenure-blind housing. The chapter establishes the theoretical framework through which the relationship between housing inequality and architectural design is understood.
- Chapter 3 outlines the methodological framework adopted for the study. It explains the research approach, case study selection process, questionnaire-based perception research, site investigation methods, and the analytical framework used throughout the research.
- Chapter 4 presents the contextual and empirical analysis. Through a comparative examination of selected London boroughs, the chapter identifies an appropriate context for the study and provides an understanding of the historical, demographic, spatial, and policy conditions relevant to the research.
- Chapter 5 presents the architectural design proposal. Drawing upon the findings of the literature review, contextual analysis, case studies, questionnaire survey, and site investigation, the chapter develops a tenure-blind social housing proposal for a small infill site and demonstrates how the identified design principles are translated into architectural form.
- Chapter 6 concludes the research by reflecting on the main findings of the study and evaluating the contribution of tenure-blind design as a strategy for reducing visible housing stigma. The chapter also discusses the limitations of the research and identifies potential directions for future investigation.

2.0 | Literature Review

Aim:

The aim of this literature review is to understand how housing stigma is created and how it becomes visible in the built environment. It explores the relationship between policy, place, social perception, and architectural design in order to identify how tenure difference can become materially legible. This provides the theoretical foundation for developing a tenure-blind architectural response at the scale of small-site infill housing.

This section reviews key concepts related to housing stigma, residualisation, and urban design, with particular attention to small-site infill within existing neighbourhoods.

2.1 Urbanisation, Urban Sprawl, and the Restructuring of Urban Housing

2.1.1 Urbanisation as a Socio-Spatial Process

Urbanisation has been understood not only as people moving to cities, but as a deeper transformation of society (Borja, 2023). Lefebvre begins *The Urban Revolution* with the idea that “society has been completely urbanized.” He describes urban society as the result of a long historical process of full urbanisation, rather than something fixed or already finished (Lefebvre, 2003)

Lefebvre argues that the term “urban society” should not be used loosely to describe all types of cities throughout history, because this hides the different social relations and economic systems behind each type. Instead, urban society is better understood as a direction or tendency that developed with industrialisation and global economic change. In this view, urbanisation is not just about cities growing bigger. It is about urban ways of living spreading into the countryside through what Lefebvre calls the “urban fabric,” which includes things like highways, supermarkets, and suburban areas, showing how city life becomes dominant over rural life. (Lefebvre, 2003)

This idea presents urbanisation as a social and spatial process, not just a physical one. Castells places urbanisation within larger political and economic changes, arguing that modern society has reached a stage where the “urban problem” is central to understanding how society is organised and how production works (Castells, 1977). In this sense, urbanisation shows a combined restructuring of space, the economy, and social life, rather than being a neutral or purely technical process.

2.1.2 Global Urban Expansion and Housing Pressure

At the global scale, urbanisation has been linked to fast spatial expansion (Seto et al., 2012). Angel, Shepard, and Civco show that urban land is growing faster than the urban population because average densities are decreasing in many parts of the world (Angel et al., 2005). Their long-term analysis suggests that if density trends continue, the built-up area of cities will grow dramatically, putting more pressure on land, infrastructure, and housing systems. This shows that urban growth is not about more people living in cities, but about major changes in how urban space is spread and organised.

Evidence from the World Cities Report 2022 shows that most of the world’s population now lives in urban areas, and that urban population growth is still mainly driven by migration and demographic change (UN-Habitat, 2022). The report also explains that rapid urbanisation creates challenges when housing supply and infrastructure do not grow at the same speed. This can lead to overcrowding, lack of services, and spatial inequality.

2.1.3 Urban Sprawl: Causes and Consequences

One important spatial result of urban growth is urban sprawl. Nechyba and Walsh describe sprawl as the tendency for population density to decrease as cities expand outward (Nechyba & Walsh, 2004). They explain that this process is mainly driven by lower transportation costs and residential self-sorting, along with market forces that often encourage development on the edges of cities.

Urban expansion has been linked to environmental impacts such as higher car use, more air pollution, and the loss of open space. It is also connected to social effects, including lower levels of social interaction, greater social fragmentation, and increased segregation (Angel et al., 2005). Karakayaci also connects urban sprawl to increasing demand for low-density housing and decreasing demand for housing in city centres. This leads to both steady outward expansion and leapfrog development patterns, where new development appears in separate patches rather than in a continuous urban edge (Karakayaci, 2016). Market forces and land price differences also strengthen these spatial trends, since higher costs in central areas and lower costs in peripheral areas create financial incentives for development to move toward cheaper urban land (Jäger, 2020).

2.1.4 Compact City and Densification as Policy Responses

As a response to sprawl and land consumption, the compact city has become a major planning approach (Burton et al., 1996). Jenks, Burton, and Williams describe the compact city using ideas such as density, proximity, accessibility, and mixed land use, presenting it as a strategy to reduce land use and support sustainability (Burton et al., 1996). Compact city policies focus on intensifying and densifying existing urban areas instead of expanding outward. However, they also note that densification can create local social and spatial impacts that are experienced differently across neighbourhoods and can lead to resistance, often related to lifestyle changes, environmental quality, and social equity.

Bornschlegl describes urban densification as making better use of already developed land and infrastructure, instead of expanding into undeveloped greenfield areas. He distinguishes between “soft densification,” which includes small and gradual changes like infill, subdivision, and extensions, and “hard densification,” which includes large-scale redevelopment or demolition-and-replacement projects (Bornschlegl & Kropp, 2025). Importantly, densification is not seen as a neutral technical solution, but as a politically contested process shaped by governance systems, market forces, and social actors, which can lead to both sustainable and unsustainable results (Bornschlegl & Kropp, 2025). In this sense, density is not only a spatial measure, but also a socio-political condition connected to wider urban restructuring.

2.1.5 Social and Spatial Implications of Urban Growth

Frank’s analysis shows that increasing urban density changes neighbourhood cohesion and patterns of social interaction. It can encourage diversity and innovation, but at the same time it can weaken traditional community ties and increase feelings of social isolation (Frank, 2025). These findings show that urban growth changes not only the physical form of cities, but also their social structure.

Harvey places these processes within the political economy of urban development, arguing that spatial forms cannot be separated from social processes, and that urban growth is shaped by capitalist market forces that create uneven spatial outcomes (Harvey, 1973). He shows that housing and land distribution reflect wider structures of inequality, produced through investment patterns, commodification, and unequal access to urban resources. Urbanisation therefore creates different types of urban environments rather than uniform development, reinforcing socio-spatial inequalities.

2.1.6 Synthesis: Urbanisation and the Context for Housing Inequality

urbanisation works as a multi-dimensional and multi-level process that includes population change, spatial expansion, planning and governance systems, and socio-economic restructuring. Urban growth is shaped by connected forces such as migration, demographic change, land markets, infrastructure development, and policy decisions, which together reshape urban form over time (Angel et al., 2005; Burton, 2002; Nechyba & Walsh, 2004).

Within this wider context, urban sprawl and compact city strategies can be understood as different spatial responses to similar structural pressures, such as population growth, land scarcity, market forces, and planning systems. While sprawl is usually linked to outward low-density expansion, compact city approaches try to manage growth through higher density, mixed-use development, and better accessibility (Angel et al., 2005; Burton, 2002; Nechyba & Walsh, 2004).

Recent urban densification practices strengthen this shift by focusing development inside the existing urban fabric rather than expanding at the edges of cities. This usually happens through infill development, redevelopment of brownfield sites, subdivision, and small-scale plot intensification, showing a strategic move toward more contained and infrastructure-efficient urban growth (Bornschlegl & Kropp, 2025).

2.2 UK Social Housing Policy and the Production of Inequality

2.2.1 From Welfare State Housing to Neoliberal Reform

After World War II, UK housing policy was based on a welfare-state model, where council housing was designed as a universal public service that provided secure and affordable homes for large parts of the population (Kemp, 2025). A major change happened with the election of the Conservative government led by Margaret Thatcher in 1979, which marked a shift toward neoliberal housing policies focused on privatisation, deregulation, and less state intervention (Dianati, 2022).

This ideological shift changed housing from being seen as a collective social good to being viewed as an individual asset and personal responsibility. As the state reduced its role in directly providing housing, local authorities became less able to build and manage social housing. At the same time, housing delivery became more influenced by market forces and private developers (Colenutt, 2020). This period can also be seen as the start of a long-term restructuring of the housing system, moving away from public housing provision and toward homeownership and market-based housing systems (Bowie, 2017).

2.2.2 Right to Buy and the Depletion of Social Housing Stock

The Housing Act 1980 introduced the Right to Buy policy, allowing council tenants to buy their homes at large discounts. It became the largest privatisation of public housing in British history and fundamentally changed the structure of the housing system. Although it was presented as a policy promoting aspiration and choice, Right to Buy led to the permanent loss of large amounts of social rented housing (Disney, 2015). It has also been described as the largest privatisation of public housing in British history and a major turning point in the housing system (Dianati, 2022).

The policy did not replace sold homes with new social housing at the same rate, leading to a long-term decline in social housing stock (Bowie, 2017). Homes sold in high-value areas like London were rarely replaced in the same locations, creating a gap between where housing was needed and where it was available (Colenutt, 2020). This uneven loss of housing increased inequality between areas and placed more pressure on the remaining social housing supply.

2.2.3 Residualisation of Social Housing

A central idea in the literature is residualisation; the process through which social housing moved from being a widely accessible tenure to a marginalised sector mainly housing low-income and vulnerable groups. This shift happened partly because large amounts of stock were lost through Right to Buy, and because policy increasingly restricted access to those considered most in need (Bowie, 2017).

Regeneration and redevelopment strategies made this process stronger by concentrating poverty into fewer remaining social housing units, while higher-income households were more likely to move into private housing. Over time, this turned social housing into a tenure of last resort, changing both who lived there and how it was perceived socially (Colenutt, 2020).

Residualisation can also be understood in moral and political terms. Housing policy increasingly portrayed social tenants as dependent and less deserving of long-term security. In this sense, residualisation is not only about losing housing numbers, but also about changing the social status of social housing, reinforcing stigma and embedding inequality (Nowicki, 2023).

2.2.4 Regeneration, Mixed Tenure, and Gentrification

Under New Labour governments (1997–2010), housing policy did not reverse privatisation but instead reshaped social housing through regeneration and mixed-tenure development. Many large council estates were redeveloped through partnerships with private developers and housing associations, often replacing mainly social housing with schemes dominated by private and intermediate housing (Colenutt, 2020).

These regeneration programmes were presented as ways to tackle deprivation and urban decline, but they often led to a net loss of social rented homes. At the same time, housing was increasingly treated as an investment asset, especially in London, where speculative development and global investment contributed to rising house prices and displacement (Beswick et al., 2016).

Crisis narratives were often used to justify this development-led model, prioritising housing delivery and market stability over social outcomes (Brill & Raco, 2021). In this way, regeneration worked as a way of transferring public land into private ownership, reinforcing inequalities in housing tenure and access.

2.2.5 Financialisation and Developer-Led Housing Delivery

A further dimension of housing inequality is the financialisation of housing and the growing dominance of developer-led delivery. In London, the housing system has increasingly been shaped by speculative investment and asset-based logics rather than social need, with housing becoming tied to global financial markets and contributing to price volatility and affordability problems (Beswick et al., 2016).

Planning obligations and viability assessments have allowed developers to negotiate down affordable housing requirements, leading to consistently low delivery of social rented homes (Colenutt, 2020). At the same time, state policy has supported real estate markets through demand-side measures such as Help to Buy, embedding financialisation within housing governance (Brill & Raco, 2021).

Overall, this has created a system in which the UK has become structurally dependent on speculative private development, reducing the state’s ability to steer housing outcomes toward social goals (Kiberd & O’Connor, 2024).

2.2.6 Austerity, Affordable Rent, and Housing Precarity

Following the 2008 financial crisis, housing policy under the Coalition and later Conservative governments was heavily shaped by austerity. Cuts to public funding, limits on local authority borrowing, and welfare reforms made it much harder for councils to build and manage social housing (Colenutt, 2020).

The introduction of the Affordable Rent model, which allowed rents up to 80% of market levels, moved provision away from truly affordable social rent and increased reliance on Housing Benefit. Fixed-term tenancies and stricter welfare rules also reduced the long-term security that social housing had traditionally provided (Bowie, 2017).

Together, these changes created what has been described as a condition of housing precarity, where displacement and instability became normal parts of life for many low-income households (Nowicki, 2023).

2.2.7 Moralisation, Deservingness, and Stigma

Beyond its material impacts, housing policy also reshaped the moral meanings attached to different housing tenures. Austerity contributed to a narrative of “deserving” and “undeserving” households, which helped justify the weakening of tenant protections and welfare support. As a result, social housing became more strongly associated with dependency and failure rather than collective social provision (Nowicki, 2023).

This moral framing reinforced stigma and helped justify unequal treatment of different social groups. In this way, residualisation and housing precarity worked not only through economic change, but also through cultural and political narratives that normalised inequality and insecurity. (Hancock & Mooney, 2013)

2.2.8 Policy Trajectories and the Institutionalisation of Inequality

Taken together, this literature shows that inequality in UK housing is not random, but has been produced through different political phases: privatisation during Thatcherism, market-based approaches during New Labour regeneration, and austerity policies that increased dependence on developer-led housing delivery (Bowie, 2017; Brill & Raco, 2021; Colenutt, 2020; Dianati, 2022; Nowicki, 2023).

These processes broke up tenure systems, reduced the supply of truly affordable social housing, and normalised unequal standards of housing provision. Social housing moved from being a universal public service to a more residual and often stigmatised form of housing, while private housing became the main form of urban development.

This policy history is important for understanding architectural stigma and tenure-blind design. Housing inequality is not only economic, but also spatial, appearing through differences in building quality, separation of tenures, and visible signs of value. UK housing policy has therefore shaped not only who can access housing, but also how inequality is physically expressed in the built environment.

2.3 Social Stigma: Concepts Relevant to Housing and Architecture

2.3.1 Classical Foundations of Stigma Theory

The main sociological explanation of stigma comes from Goffman, who defines stigma as an attribute that is “deeply discrediting” and that changes a person from “a whole and usual person” into someone who is seen as tainted or reduced (Goffman, 1963). Importantly, stigma is not part of the attribute itself. It develops through social interaction and social categorisation. Society creates expectations about what is considered normal, and stigma appears when individuals or groups do not fit these expectations (Goffman, 1963).

Goffman also distinguishes between the discredited, whose stigma is visible, and the discreditable, whose stigma can be hidden. He shows that visibility strongly shapes how stigma is experienced and managed (Goffman, 2009). This idea is especially relevant for spatial and architectural analysis, because visibility and legibility are also key qualities of the built environment.

Building on Goffman, Link and Phelan describe stigma as a structural social process rather than just an individual attitude. They define stigma as the combination of labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination, all working within systems of unequal power (Link & Phelan, 2003). This approach directly connects stigma to social inequality and shows that stigma works as a mechanism of social stratification, influencing access to resources such as housing, jobs, and social participation (Link & Phelan, 2003).

2.3.2 Stigma as a Multi-Level Social Process

Recent research builds on classical theory by highlighting that stigma works across multiple levels and systems. Pescosolido and Martin introduce the idea of the “stigma complex,” describing stigma as a connected set of processes that operate at the individual, interpersonal, institutional, and cultural levels at the same time (Pescosolido & Martin, 2015). They argue that stigma shapes not only relationships between people, but also institutional responses and public narratives, which can create long-lasting inequalities in areas such as health, housing, and neighbourhood identity (Pescosolido & Martin, 2015).

Stigma also creates both psychological and structural effects, including social exclusion, fewer opportunities, and long-term stress (Frost, 2011). Frost shows that stigma is shaped by wider social and historical contexts, and that its effects build up over time across people’s lives and within communities (Frost, 2011).

These perspectives move stigma from being seen as a fixed label to being understood as a dynamic process that connects meaning, power, and material outcomes.

2.3.3 Power, Classification, and Symbolic Inequality

Tyler and Slater criticise stigma research that mainly focuses on small-scale social interactions. Instead, they argue that stigma should be understood as a form of political and symbolic power that is built into systems of governance (Tyler & Slater, 2018). They suggest that stigma works as a way of classifying people, where poverty and marginalisation are presented as moral failure rather than as the result of structural inequality (Tyler & Slater, 2018). In this way, stigma can act as a tool that justifies inequality and helps regulate social differences.

This idea connects with Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic power and distinction. Although Bourdieu does not directly focus on stigma, his work on taste and social classification shows how social hierarchies are reproduced through everyday ideas of what is legitimate and valuable (Bourdieu, 2002). Cultural preferences and spatial environments can act as markers of social status, reinforcing boundaries between groups through symbolic judgment (Bourdieu, 2002).

Using Bourdieu’s ideas about distinction and classification (2002), stigma can be understood as working through systems of judgment and categorisation that are built into social structures and power relations, rather than existing only as individual attitudes.

2.3.4 Community-Based and Spatial Dimensions of Stigma

Stigma does not only apply to individuals, but can also be attached to communities and places. Bresnahan and Zhuang show that stigma can become linked to social groups and neighbourhoods, shaping how these areas are viewed and treated (Bresnahan & Zhuang, 2016). Their research on community-based stigma explains that negative stereotypes spread through narratives, media representation, and public discourse, turning entire places into symbolic signs of danger, failure, or deprivation (Bresnahan & Zhuang, 2016).

Stigma can also reshape social relationships by weakening community cohesion and limiting participation, creating cycles of marginalisation that are both social and spatial (Frost, 2011). These processes show how stigma can move from being linked to individual identity to becoming part of collective identity, creating the basis for territorial and architectural forms of stigma.

2.3.5 Identity Management and the Negotiation of Stigma

Ashforth and Kreiner’s study of “dirty work” helps explain how stigmatised identities are formed and managed (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). Although their research focuses on job-related stigma rather than housing, it is conceptually important because it shows that stigma is actively managed through strategies such as reframing, social comparison, and rebuilding identity (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999).

Their work shows that stigma is not only imposed from above, but is constantly negotiated through the interaction between dominant social classifications and local meaning-making practices. This idea is useful for housing contexts, where residents of stigmatised neighbourhoods often develop their own strategies to challenge negative views about their homes and communities.

Stigma therefore works through both external labeling and internal negotiation of meaning (Link & Phelan, 2003).

2.3.6 Architecture and the Materialisation of Stigma

Robinson and Thompson directly link stigma to the built environment, arguing that architecture can act as a symbolic marker of social status and exclusion (Robinson & Thompson, 1999). Their research shows that environments designed specifically for marginalised groups can reinforce separation from mainstream society by making differences visible through building form, materials, and spatial layout (Robinson & Thompson, 1999).

They argue that stigma is created not only through social attitudes, but also through physical environments that communicate low value, dependence, and social otherness. In this way, architectural form plays a role in building stigma by shaping how residents are seen by others and how they see themselves (Robinson & Thompson, 1999).

2.3.7 Synthesis: Stigma as a Socio-Spatial Process

Across this literature, stigma emerges as a socially constructed process rooted in classification, power, and symbolic meaning rather than individual defect (Goffman, 2009; Link & Phelan, 2003; Tyler & Slater, 2018). It operates through interconnected levels of identity, community, and institutional practice (Frost, 2011; Pescosolido & Martin, 2015).

Stigma attaches not only to persons but also to places and architectural forms, transforming environments into visible markers of social hierarchy (Bresnahan & Zhuang, 2016; Robinson & Thompson, 1999). Processes of cultural judgment and distinction further reinforce these boundaries through everyday perception (Bourdieu, 2002).

This theoretical framework establishes the conceptual foundation for analysing how housing and architectural design participate in the production or mitigation of stigma. By framing stigma as a socio-spatial process embedded in power relations, this literature enables an examination of how design decisions influence social perception, belonging, and inequality.

2.4 Territorial and Spatial Stigma

2.4.1 Territorial Stigma as Symbolic and Spatial Classification

Territorial stigma is understood as a process in which certain neighbourhoods become symbolically labelled as places of danger, failure, and social inferiority. Wacquant describes this as the creation of a “blemish of place,” where both the area and the people who live there become discredited (Wacquant, 2007). This idea highlights the symbolic aspect of stigma, showing how places themselves can carry moral judgment and social exclusion.

Stigma works not only through location, but also through housing form and tenure (Horgan, 2020). While Wacquant mainly focuses on neighbourhoods and urban marginality, Horgan shows that housing itself can become socially judged, linking territorial stigma to architectural design and tenure differences.

Sisson expands this argument by placing territorial stigma within political economy, arguing that stigma is not only cultural but also built into housing policy and market restructuring (Sisson, 2022). In this view, territorial stigma is created through the interaction between public narratives and institutional change, rather than naturally coming from the conditions of neighbourhoods.

2.4.2 Residualisation, Policy, and the Concentration of Stigma

A key theme in the literature is the role of residualisation in increasing territorial stigma. Sisson argues that when public housing is reduced and targeted only toward the most disadvantaged groups, poverty becomes concentrated in specific areas. This turns housing estates into places strongly associated with poverty and dependency (Sisson, 2022). Over time, this also strengthens public narratives that present public housing as naturally problematic.

Wacquant makes a similar argument through the idea of advanced marginality. He explains how cuts to welfare systems and changes in labour markets can create spatially isolated areas of exclusion (Wacquant, 2007). Both authors stress that stigma is not a natural reaction to neighbourhood decline, but is produced through political and economic decisions that reshape urban space.

2.4.3 Media, Discourse, and the Production of Stigmatised Places

The literature consistently shows that representation plays an important role in creating territorial stigma. Denedo and Ejiogu show that stigma experienced by social housing tenants in England is strongly linked to political language and media narratives that present social housing as inferior or problematic (Denedo & Ejiogu, 2022). These narratives spread widely and shape how the public sees housing estates and the people who live there.

Watt’s research on the Aylesbury Estate provides real examples of how these representations work in practice. He shows that the label of the “sink estate” became a dominant way of describing the area for policymakers and the public, helping to justify demolition and redevelopment (Watt, 2020). At the same time, Watt challenges Wacquant’s idea that stigma weakens people’s attachment to place, showing that many residents still feel strong connections to their neighbourhoods despite outside stigma.

2.4.4 Territorial Stigma and the Legitimation of Urban Intervention

Several authors argue that territorial stigma is often used to justify spatial intervention. Wacquant argues that stigma helps legitimise increased surveillance and stronger state intervention in marginalised neighbourhoods (Wacquant, 2007). Sisson makes a similar point, suggesting that stigma supports redevelopment and demolition by presenting public housing as socially and economically outdated (Sisson, 2022).

Watt provides real-world evidence for this argument by showing how negative portrayals of the Aylesbury Estate were used to justify regeneration policies that displaced existing communities (Watt, 2020). Slater’s critique adds that these interventions are often presented as responses to neighbourhood problems, rather than as political decisions shaped by housing markets and land values (Slater, 2013). Together, these arguments suggest that territorial stigma is not only a cultural issue, but also a governance tool that allows urban restructuring to happen under the language of improvement and renewal.

2.4.5 Synthesis: Territorial Stigma as a Socio-Political Spatial Process

Across this literature, territorial stigma is understood as a socio-political process created through the interaction of discourse, policy, and spatial change (Horgan, 2020; Sisson, 2022; Wacquant, 2007). It is reinforced by media and political narratives that present certain neighbourhoods as places of failure (Denedo & Ejiogu, 2022; Watt, 2020), and by housing policies that concentrate disadvantage in specific areas through residualisation (Sisson, 2022).

At the same time, critical perspectives challenge the tendency to blame neighbourhoods themselves, and instead locate stigma within wider political and economic systems (Slater, 2013). In this way, territorial stigma works as a mechanism that makes inequality appear natural by turning structural disadvantage into spatial blame.

This framework creates the basis for studying how architectural form and design contribute to the visibility and reproduction of stigma. Territorial stigma therefore acts as a conceptual link between theories of social stigma (Section 2.3) and architectural stigma markers (Section 2.5).

2.5 Architectural Stigma: How Inequality Becomes Visible Through Design

2.5.1 Architecture as Spatial Governance and Mechanism of Exclusion

Architecture can shape who can access resources, services, and opportunities by influencing how spaces are designed and used. The built environment guides how people move, what they can reach, and how they behave in space, often without needing laws or rules to enforce it. Once these decisions are built into physical space, they can create long-lasting patterns of exclusion that are very hard to change (Schindler, 2015).

Architectural exclusion is often overlooked compared to policy discrimination because design is usually seen as neutral or purely technical. But choices like where infrastructure is placed, how circulation is organised, and who can access certain areas can slowly reinforce social and economic inequality over time (Schindler, 2015).

In housing, exclusion often happens through things like separate entrances, different circulation routes, or unequal access to shared amenities. Even in developments that are officially “mixed” or integrated, these spatial differences can quietly create strong social divisions.

Research also shows that architecture shapes both behaviour and how people see themselves and others. Spaces that feel institutional are often linked to lower independence and worse social outcomes, while spaces that feel like home tend to support independence and wellbeing (Robinson & Thompson, 1999). The quality of architecture also signals social status, affecting how residents are viewed by others and how they view themselves (Robinson & Thompson, 1999).

2.5.2 Architecture as Symbolic Communication of Social Value

Architecture communicates social meaning through visual and spatial language. Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour argue that architecture functions as a system of communication in which buildings, symbols, and signs convey social meaning and cultural values beyond purely functional requirements (Venturi et al., 1977). Housing design can signal class position, tenure status, and perceived social worth through design features such as façade treatment, material selection, and spatial hierarchy (Robinson & Thompson, 1999).

Research on mixed-income housing shows that visual integration does not automatically create social integration. Mixed-tenure developments can still reproduce social hierarchy through subtle design differentiation, including separate entrances, different circulation routes, and unequal access to shared amenities (McFarlane, 2019). These forms of differentiation operate symbolically by making social differences visible, even within developments that are formally integrated.

Planning research also shows that spatial design can influence dignity and social recognition. Planning decisions that create unequal treatment or make some residents feel second-class can undermine dignity, even when technical housing standards are met (Davy, 2020). The “poor door” debate shows how separate entrances can be experienced as socially humiliating, even when they are introduced within housing systems intended to be socially fair (Davy, 2020).

2.5.3 Visual and Material Markers of Architecture

Empirical research identifies specific architectural features that influence how stigma is perceived. Façade articulation, window size, balcony presence, greenery integration, and façade detailing all shape how people judge housing quality, safety, and social value (Ramzanpour et al., 2023).

Experimental studies show that façade protrusion, balcony presence, greenery, and window size have the strongest impact on stigma perception, while façade material has a smaller influence and is mainly linked to perceptions of safety and value (Ramzanpour et al., 2023). Larger windows, visible balconies, and integrated greenery are generally linked to lower stigma and lower perceived social distance (Ramzanpour et al., 2023).

These findings support the idea that façade design works as a form of social signalling. Architectural details such as façade complexity, openings, and natural elements can shape how observers interpret residents’ socio-economic status and how housing is socially valued (Ramzanpour et al., 2023).

The physical condition of housing also affects perception. Research on social housing performance shows that poor construction quality, low thermal efficiency, and material deterioration can reinforce negative perceptions by signalling neglect and marginalisation (Romero-Pérez et al., 2017).

2.5.4 Architectural Stigma in Housing Policy and Regeneration Contexts

Historical housing research shows that architectural form is closely linked to housing reputation. Post-war social housing types, especially high-rise developments, became associated with social failure and policy crisis, shaping long-term public perceptions of social housing architecture (TIM, 2021).

Research on regeneration shows that large social housing estates have historically been linked to spatial and social problems that were addressed through redevelopment and policy intervention. However, regeneration can unintentionally reproduce stigma if design differences continue to signal tenure or social status (SoHoLab research team, 2020).

These studies show that architectural stigma is not only a design issue, but also a historical and policy-driven condition that develops over time.

2.5.5 Dignity, Inclusion, and Anti-Stigma Design

Recent planning and design research reframes architecture as a tool for supporting dignity and social recognition. Planning that supports dignity recognises that spatial environments shape social identity and how people are treated socially (Davy, 2020).

Private homes and public spaces are essential for human wellbeing, and planning should support equal access to environments that allow people to live with dignity (Davy, 2020). This approach shifts housing design away from purely functional provision toward supporting social recognition and symbolic equality.

Research on social housing design also highlights integrated community design, access to shared public space, and inclusive neighbourhood environments as key factors that support long-term social cohesion (Liu & Leng, 2019).

2.5.6 Synthesis: Architectural marker as a Multi-Dimensional Design Condition

Across the reviewed literature, architectural stigma can be understood as a multi-dimensional condition shaped by spatial design, symbolic meaning, and social perception. While stigma is often discussed at neighbourhood scale, building-scale design decisions play a major role in making social difference visible and socially legible. By combining research from planning, housing studies, and environmental behaviour, three connected architectural dimensions can be identified through which inequality becomes physically visible in housing environments.

The first dimension is connectivity and permeability, which describe how housing developments connect to the surrounding city. Research on spatial inequality shows that the built environment can function as a form of spatial governance by shaping movement, accessibility, and access to opportunities (Schindler, 2015). Although this research is not focused specifically on housing stigma at façade level, it provides a theoretical basis for understanding how spatial barriers, circulation routes, and infrastructure placement can create long-term patterns of inclusion or exclusion. Regeneration research also suggests that relationships between housing estates and surrounding public space influence social outcomes, particularly when redevelopment aims to improve integration with the wider urban fabric (SoHoLab, 2020). In housing contexts, spatial disconnection can therefore reinforce social difference at a structural level.

The second dimension is entrance and access equality, which operates at the boundary between public and private space and directly influences dignity and perceived social status. Planning research shows that spatial arrangements can undermine dignity when they create unequal treatment, even if technical housing standards are met (Davy, 2020). The well-known “poor door” controversy shows how separate entrances for different income groups can create perceptions of second-class status, even in developments designed to be socially inclusive (Davy, 2020). Research on mixed-income housing also shows that spatial integration does not automatically lead to social integration. Design and management decisions can maintain socio-economic separation through circulation systems, entrance hierarchy, and unequal access to shared spaces (McFarlane, 2019).

The third dimension is façade signals of status, which operate through visual and material architectural language. Empirical research strongly shows that façade design directly influences public perceptions of housing stigma. Studies show that façade articulation, balcony presence, greenery integration, and window size all shape perceptions of safety, desirability, and social value in low-income housing (Ramzanpour et al., 2023). In particular, façade protrusion, balconies, and greenery are strongly linked to lower stigma perception, while larger window sizes are linked to higher perceived value and lower perceived social distance (Ramzanpour et al., 2023). These findings align with broader research showing that architecture communicates social value through physical form, shaping both how housing is perceived by others and how residents see themselves (Robinson & Thompson, 1999). Façade design therefore functions as a visible social signal through which housing inequality becomes socially legible. Brusasco also emphasises that urban identity often emerges through variation in small residential buildings, where differences in façade rhythm, articulation, and typological diversity contribute to the visual richness and legibility of the city (Brusasco, 1994).

Overall, these three dimensions show that architectural stigma is produced through the interaction of spatial organisation, symbolic design language, and long-term environmental quality. This framework helps explain how housing inequality becomes visible through design decisions at both building and urban scale. Importantly, these dimensions provide a theoretical foundation for tenure-blind housing strategies, which aim to remove visible markers of inequality by aligning design quality, access conditions, and symbolic representation across different housing tenures.

2.6 International Social Housing Models and Implications for Stigma and Tenure Perception

2.6.1 Vienna: Social Housing as a Normalised Urban Housing Sector

Vienna is often mentioned in housing research as a city where social housing is not separate from the main housing system, but built into it. The city has stayed involved in providing housing for a long time. At the same time, limited-profit housing associations also play an important role. Together, this has created a large rental sector that is not driven purely by the market (Förster, 2013; Marquardt & Glaser, 2023).

The Viennese model is based on continuous public involvement, not short-term housing programs. Social and limited-profit housing are permanent parts of the city’s housing stock. Because of this, social housing is less linked to ideas of poverty or social exclusion (Förster, 2013; Hatipoglu, 2020). Social housing is also planned as part of the wider city. It is usually well connected to transport, services, and public amenities, rather than being isolated in separate areas (Förster, 2013).

Another important point is that social housing in Vienna is available to many income groups, not only the poorest households. Because of this, it carries less stigma. Marquardt and Glaser (2023) compare this universal approach with more “residual” systems, where social housing is only for the most disadvantaged. They argue that wider access helps people accept social housing and also helps stabilise the housing market.

More general descriptions of Vienna’s housing system also emphasise that social housing is seen as “normal housing,” not emergency housing. This helps strengthen its social acceptance and legitimacy (Kadi & Lilius, 2024).

2.6.2 Finland: Targeted Social Housing and the Risk of Specialisation

In contrast to Vienna’s universal approach, Finland’s social housing system has gradually become more targeted. Research shows that social rental housing in Finland is now more focused on specific groups, such as low-income households and vulnerable residents (Hyötyläinen, 2020).

Hyötyläinen (2020) describes this change as the specialisation of social rental housing. This means social housing has moved away from serving a wide range of people and is now more like a safety net for those most in need. This shift is linked to wider changes in the welfare state and housing markets, not only to design or planning decisions (Hyötyläinen, 2020).

Policy studies of Helsinki’s housing system describe it as a mixed model. It combines market housing, social rental housing, and housing allowances, with municipalities coordinating the system (Ronkainen & Eskelä, 2020). While this model has helped support affordability and maintain housing supply, it has also made the differences between housing tenures more visible and defined (Ronkainen & Eskelä, 2020).

The Finnish case shows how targeted policies and the language used in housing policy can increase the symbolic separation between social housing and market housing. This can increase the risk that social housing becomes linked to social marginality (Hyötyläinen, 2020).

2.6.3 State–Market Balance and Stigma Formation

Comparative housing research shows that housing stigma is not created only by architecture or building design, but also by how housing is positioned within institutions and policy systems. Marquardt and Glaser (2023) argue that housing systems with strong and long-term public involvement usually create more stable and socially accepted forms of non-market housing. In contrast, systems that depend heavily on market mechanisms and targeted subsidies can push social housing toward a residual role.

Evidence from Finland supports this idea. It shows how increasing specialisation can narrow the social meaning of social housing, making it more strongly linked to need and vulnerability (Hyötyläinen, 2020). On the other hand, the Viennese model shows how large-scale and permanent social housing provision can normalise non-market housing and reduce symbolic differences between housing tenures (Förster, 2013; Marquardt & Glaser, 2023).

2.6.4 Implications for Tenure-Blind Housing Design

These international examples show that tenure stigma is mainly shaped at the housing system level, before it appears in architecture. When social housing is structurally normalised, there is less need for design strategies that hide tenure differences. But when social housing is targeted and residual, design becomes very important for controlling visibility and reducing stigma.

For this thesis, the international literature does not give direct design solutions for tenure-blind housing. Instead, it explains why tenure-blind design is especially important in places like the UK, where social housing is limited, targeted, and symbolically separated from market housing.

Vienna and Finland are therefore not models to copy directly. Instead, they act as contrasting examples that support the architectural focus of this research: when housing policy cannot remove stigma, architectural design must help stop stigma from becoming visible.

2.7 Tenure-Blind Design in Mixed-Tenure Housing: Definition, Evidence, and Design Implications

2.7.1 Defining tenure-blindness and distinguishing it from spatial “mix”

Although tenure-blind design is often mentioned together with spatial integration approaches like pepper-potting or clustering, research clearly separates spatial layout from architectural appearance. Evidence from the UK shows that tenure blindness can be applied in different spatial arrangements, because its main focus is on whether tenure differences are visible through architecture, not on how homes are physically distributed across a site (NHBC Foundation, 2015).

In the same way, research from Ireland and other countries suggests there is no single “correct” way to spatially distribute tenures. However, tenure-blind design is still widely supported as a key principle, regardless of which distribution model is used (Norris et al., 2021).

2.7.2 What the evidence suggests tenure-blind design can achieve

Across UK, Irish, and international research, tenure-blind design is linked to lower awareness of tenure differences and more positive resident experiences, especially when it is combined with high-quality and varied housing design. Studies show that in developments where tenure-blind design is carefully applied, residents are less likely to notice tenure differences and are more likely to report positive relationships with neighbours (NHBC Foundation, 2015; Norris et al., 2021). On the other hand, research consistently shows that stronger social divisions and negative perceptions are more likely to appear where architectural differences between tenures are clearly visible (NHBC Foundation, 2015).

However, the literature also stresses that achieving tenure-blind design in reality is difficult. Differences in procurement methods, budget limits, and specification priorities between private developers and social housing providers can create visible differences, even in projects designed to be integrated. For example, private housing may include extra features or higher-quality finishes that social housing cannot always match due to cost limits (NHBC Foundation, 2015). Because of this, tenure-blind design should be seen as something negotiated in practice, shaped by delivery and funding structures as much as by design intentions.

2.7.3 Why “blending in” matters: stigma and the semiotics of materials and appearance

Recent research shows that the symbolic meaning of materials and architectural appearance plays an important role in shaping housing stigma. Studies on modular and rapid-build housing in Dublin show that materials, façade design, and even naming can influence how housing is socially perceived, affecting both public opinion and how residents see themselves (Brickell et al., 2023). This suggests that tenure-blind design is not only about matching technical specifications, but also about making housing look socially “normal” and not marked as a specific tenure type.

From a design point of view, this means tenure-blind design needs to respond to local housing types, material traditions, and visual expectations. Otherwise, buildings may unintentionally signal tenure differences through aesthetic details.

2.7.4 Limits of tenure-blindness: interaction, governance, and the “mixing” assumption

A common finding in mixed-income housing research is that simply living close to people with different incomes does not automatically lead to strong social interaction or economic improvement. Studies show that interaction between income groups in mixed-income housing is usually limited and often superficial, with most friendships and social networks forming between people with similar socioeconomic backgrounds (Levy et al., 2010). More generally, research suggests that many of the positive outcomes linked to mixed-income housing come from better housing quality, improved neighbourhood conditions, and good management, rather than from direct social interaction between residents (Levy et al., 2010).

This is important because it helps clarify what tenure-blind design can realistically achieve. While reducing visible tenure differences can support dignity, lower the risk of stigma, and improve perceptions of fairness, it

Social integration depends much more on governance systems, management quality, and the availability of social infrastructure.

2.7.5 Strategic critiques and structural limits

Strategic and practice-focused research also points to wider limits of mixed-tenure housing. Some studies suggest that mixed-tenure developments can sometimes act as a form of spatial reorganisation, without really addressing the deeper structural causes of inequality. At the same time, mixed-tenure housing is often still seen as better than large areas of single-tenure deprivation, as long as projects are carefully designed and delivered (Georgina Lamble, 2022).

Overall, research supports a cautious view. Tenure-blind design is mainly justified as a way to reduce stigma through design, while bigger claims about improving social mobility or creating strong socioeconomic integration depend heavily on context and other external factors.

2.7.6 Design criteria to carry forward into the thesis framework

Across the literature, three design conditions consistently emerge as central to tenure-blind delivery:

External indistinguishability

Tenure should not be identifiable through façade design, specification, or external finishing standards (NHBC Foundation, 2015; Norris et al., 2021).

Equalised access as a dignity condition

Separate entrances, access hierarchies, or visibly differentiated circulation systems risk reinforcing symbolic inequality and undermining tenure-blind objectives (Norris et al., 2021).

Attention to the public meaning of materials

Material selection must consider local cultural associations and stigma symbolism, not only technical performance (Brickell et al., 2023).

2.7.7 Synthesis

These criteria directly support the architectural stigma framework developed earlier in this thesis, particularly in relation to entrance equality, façade signalling, and spatial connectivity. They also establish a foundation for the central research question: how small-site infill housing in London can deliver tenure-blind housing that avoids legible stigma markers while operating within real development and procurement constraints.

2.8 Integrated Research Position

This research argues that in residualised housing systems, tenure stigma is often reproduced through spatial visibility rather than tenure allocation alone. In these contexts, architectural design becomes a key site for the reproduction or mitigation of stigma, shaping how housing and its residents are perceived in everyday urban experience.

The literature reviewed in this chapter shows that housing stigma emerges through the interaction of housing policy, territorial concentration, social perception, and architectural representation. While housing policy and institutional systems shape the structural conditions of inequality, the built environment plays an important role in making these differences visible. Architectural elements such as façade articulation, entrances, spatial integration, and material expression can signal social hierarchy and reinforce symbolic distinctions between housing tenures.

This thesis therefore approaches tenure-blind design not only as a spatial or planning strategy, but as a question of architectural representation and social perception. Rather than focusing solely on housing allocation or tenure distribution, the research investigates how architectural design influences the visibility of tenure difference and the perception of social housing within the urban environment.

To explore this relationship, the research combines architectural case study analysis with a perception-based questionnaire. Case studies are examined to understand how design decisions translate social housing into the urban fabric, while questionnaire responses provide insight into how different architectural conditions are perceived by residents and observers. Through this combined approach, the study aims to identify architectural conditions that reduce visible stigma and support more socially integrated housing environments.

3.0| Methodology

Aim:

The chapter explains the methods used to collect, analyse, and interpret theoretical, empirical, and perception-based data, and describes how findings from the literature review, case study analysis, questionnaire survey, and site investigation are translated into the development of an architectural design proposal for a small infill site in Newham.

3.1 Research Approach and Framework

This research adopts a qualitative and design-based methodology centred on the relationship between housing stigma and architectural representation. The study is structured around three interconnected stages: theoretical investigation, empirical analysis, and design translation.

The first stage establishes the theoretical foundation of the research through a review of literature related to housing policy, residualisation, social stigma, territorial stigma, architectural stigma, and tenure-blind housing. This stage identifies the key concepts and theoretical relationships that inform the analytical framework.

The second stage focuses on empirical investigation. Through borough comparison, case study analysis, and questionnaire-based research, the study examines how housing stigma becomes visible within the built environment and how architectural design influences perceptions of social housing.

The final stage translates these findings into architectural design. The insights generated through the literature review, case studies, questionnaire responses, and site analysis are synthesised into a design framework that informs the development of a tenure-blind social housing proposal on a small infill site in Newham.

These stages are not treated as isolated exercises but as interconnected components of a continuous research process in which theoretical knowledge, empirical evidence, and design development inform one another.

3.2 Research Scope and Case Study Selection

The research focuses on the London Borough of Newham, selected following a comparative analysis of Newham, Lewisham, and Ealing. The comparison considered historical development, demographic conditions, housing pressures, planning policies, and opportunities for urban intensification.

The architectural investigation concentrates on two small-scale infill housing case studies located within Newham. The projects were selected because they represent different approaches to contextual integration and provide direct relevance to the borough selected for the study.

Case studies were selected according to the following criteria:

Location within the London Borough of Newham.

Small-site infill development within an established residential context.

Availability of architectural documentation and visual information.

Relevance to housing integration and contextual design.

Potential contribution to the development of tenure-blind design principles.

The selected projects are analysed through a common framework derived from the literature review, enabling comparison between architectural strategies and their potential relationship to housing stigma and tenure-blind integration.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

The research combines multiple methods of data collection in order to capture both theoretical and empirical dimensions of housing stigma and architectural design.

3.3.1 Literature Review

The first stage of data collection consists of an extensive review of academic literature, policy documents, housing reports, and planning guidance. The literature review investigates the historical development of UK housing policy, processes of residualisation, theories of social and territorial stigma, architectural stigma markers, and the concept of tenure-blind housing.

The purpose of the literature review is to establish a theoretical framework capable of explaining how housing inequality becomes visible within the built environment and to identify architectural conditions associated with stigma reduction.

3.3.2 Architectural Case Study Analysis

The second stage consists of architectural case study analysis. Selected projects are examined using an analytical framework derived from the literature review.

The analysis focuses on five dimensions:

- Entrance and access equality.
- Material and façade treatment.
- Façade rhythm and scale.
- Connectivity and permeability.
- Amenity quality, privacy, and overlooking conditions.

The purpose of this analysis is to identify recurring architectural strategies that support integration and reduce visible markers of tenure difference.

3.3.3 Questionnaire Survey

To complement the architectural analysis, a questionnaire survey was conducted with residents and individuals familiar with Newham. The survey investigated perceptions of social housing, architectural appearance, neighbourhood identity, housing quality, and factors that influence the perception of stigma within residential environments. Participants were asked to identify architectural characteristics associated with positive or negative perceptions, and reflect on their views regarding social housing and neighbourhood quality.

The questionnaire was distributed through local community groups, online platforms, social networks, and organisations operating within Newham. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and all respondents provided informed consent prior to participation. A total of 14 responses were collected. Although the sample size is limited, the survey provides valuable qualitative insight into how architectural conditions are interpreted and perceived by residents and observers. Rather than being treated as statistically representative, the questionnaire is used as an exploratory tool that complements the literature review and case study analysis by introducing a perception-based dimension into the research.

3.3.4 Site Investigation and Context Analysis

Site investigation was conducted through the analysis of planning documents, borough policy reports, mapping exercises, aerial imagery, and field observations. Candidate sites were identified through the Newham Brownfield Register and evaluated according to accessibility, urban context, development potential, and suitability for small-site infill housing.

This process enabled the selection of an appropriate site for testing the architectural principles developed throughout the research.

3.4 Analytical Framework

The analytical framework combines theoretical findings, architectural analysis, and perception-based evidence into a single evaluative structure.

Entrance and access equality.

Façade signals of status.

These themes form the basis of the analytical framework and are tested through case study analysis, questionnaire findings, and site investigation.

The purpose of the framework is to identify relationships between architectural design and the visibility of housing stigma, while also establishing a set of design principles capable of supporting tenure-blind housing.

3.5 Design Translation Process

The final analytical stage consists of design translation. Findings from the literature review, case studies, questionnaire survey, and site investigation are synthesised into a set of architectural design principles.

Rather than directly copying existing projects, the research extracts broader lessons related to architectural representation, social perception, access equality, and contextual integration. These principles are subsequently applied within the design proposal, allowing the project to function as a test of the research findings. The final proposal therefore represents both an architectural project and a research outcome, demonstrating how tenure-blind design principles can be implemented within a small-site infill housing context.

3.6 Use of Artificial Intelligence for Language Refinement

In the preparation and drafting of this thesis, an advanced generative artificial intelligence tool (ChatGPT) was utilized exclusively for language refinement, grammatical correction, and readability enhancement. The AI was employed as a technical editing resource to improve prose clarity and ensure academic English alignment across the theoretical and empirical text. Its use was limited to linguistic refinement and did not contribute to the intellectual content of the research.

The AI was not used for idea generation, research design, literature analysis, data collection, data generation, data analysis, thematic analysis, interpretation of findings, architectural design development, or the formulation of conclusions. All research questions, the conceptual framework, literature review, methodological design, architectural evaluation of the Newham case studies, interpretation of the questionnaire responses, and the development of the final tenure-blind design proposal are entirely the original intellectual and creative work of the author.

3.7 Limitations

This research is exploratory in nature and presents several limitations. The questionnaire survey is based on a relatively small sample of respondents and therefore cannot be considered representative of the wider population of Newham.

The study also focuses on a single borough and two case studies, limiting the geographical scope of the investigation. Finally, the proposed design remains a speculative architectural project and has not been constructed or evaluated through post-occupancy analysis.

4.0 | Context and Empirical Basis

Aim:

This chapter explores the context, site, and research findings that underpin the design proposal. The results are synthesised into a design framework.

4.1 | Borough Selection

Aim:

This section explains how three boroughs, Newham, Lewisham, and Ealing , were selected and compared to determine the most appropriate context for the design investigation. Through analysis of their historical development, planning strategies, and housing pressures, the study identifies the borough that provides the most relevant setting for testing tenure-blind infill housing.

4.1.1 Context and Empirical Analysis

4.1.1.1 The Role of Boroughs and the City of London

London is the capital of the United Kingdom and a city shaped by long-term historical, social and institutional development. As one of the world’s largest metropolitan regions, its size and complexity require a structured system of local governance in order to manage urban services, planning and community needs effectively (Travers, 2004).

Within Greater London, this governance structure is organised around 32 London boroughs, which form the main units of local administration. Together with the Greater London Authority and the City of London, the boroughs operate within a two-tier system of metropolitan governance (Travers, 2004). The boroughs are responsible for most local service provision, including planning, social care, environmental services, public health, transport infrastructure and aspects of social housing (Travers, 2004). Through these responsibilities, they play a central role in shaping everyday urban life at the community level.

Alongside the boroughs, the City of London functions as a separate and historically distinct administrative area within Greater London. Its institutional structure predates the modern borough system and continues to operate as an autonomous local authority with unique governance arrangements (Travers, 2018). Together, the London boroughs and the City of London provide the core framework through which local governance in London is organised and implemented.

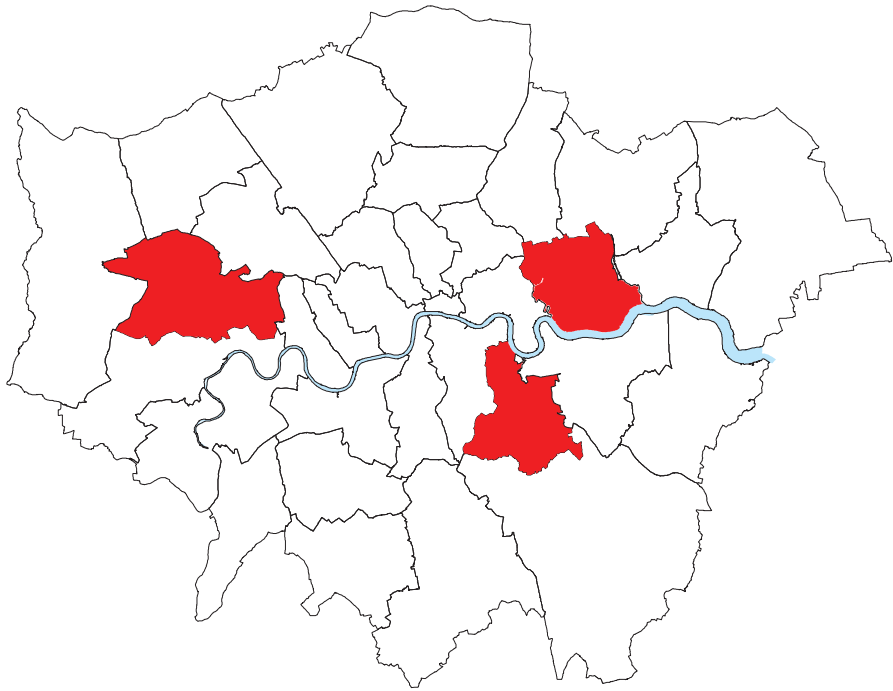


Figure 4.2 Map of the three selected London boroughs (Author’s drawing).

Newham (East London)

Newham represents an East London borough shaped by industrial heritage, large-scale deindustrialisation, and extensive regeneration. Historically associated with docks, manufacturing, and infrastructure, the borough has undergone significant transformation following the decline of traditional industries and the redevelopment of areas such as the Royal Docks and the Olympic Legacy zone (London Borough of Newham, 2024). Today, Newham faces intense growth pressure, with major housing and employment targets linked to Opportunity Areas and large regeneration frameworks.

Newham is also characterised by high levels of social diversity and socio-economic vulnerability, combined with rapid physical change. This makes it a critical case for examining how regeneration, densification, and neighbourhood restructuring are managed within a context of strong development pressure and social sensitivity. The borough therefore provides insight into how large-scale urban transformation interacts with everyday residential environments and community needs.

Lewisham (South London)

Lewisham represents a South London borough with a more incremental pattern of urban change, shaped by historic town centres, suburban neighbourhoods, and strong local identities. Unlike regeneration-led areas such as Newham, Lewisham’s development is strongly influenced by neighbourhood character, conservation areas, and varied urban typologies (Allies and Morrison, 2019). The borough contains a wide range of urban forms, from historic village centres to post-war estates and interwar suburbs, resulting in a complex and layered urban fabric.

Lewisham also faces significant housing pressure, but its approach to growth is closely linked to understanding and managing local character. This makes Lewisham particularly relevant for analysing how urban infill is negotiated within established neighbourhoods, where questions of identity, heritage, and community continuity play a central role. The borough therefore offers an important perspective on how growth can be accommodated through a place-based and context-sensitive approach.



Figure 4.1 Administrative map of the 32 Greater London boroughs and the City of London (Map produced by the GLA City Intelligence Unit).

4.1.1.2 Rationale for the Selection of Newham, Lewisham, and Ealing

To reflect the diversity of Greater London and enable a meaningful comparison of how local context shapes urban development, this study selects three boroughs from different parts of the city ; East, West, and South London. The selection is not only geographical; it is also evidence-led, based on the fact that each borough has (in different ways) a documented relationship between urban character, growth pressures, and policy approaches, which supports comparative analysis.

Ealing (West London)

Ealing represents a West London borough shaped largely by suburban expansion and transport-led development. Growth historically followed major routes and railway infrastructure, producing a predominantly suburban urban structure with strong town centres and established residential neighbourhoods (Ealing Council / TfL, n.d.). Compared to Newham and Lewisham, Ealing displays a more consistent suburban character, with lower-density housing, garden suburbs, and strong local high streets.

At the same time, Ealing is experiencing increasing redevelopment pressure linked to town-centre regeneration and major transport investments such as Crossrail. This places the borough at the intersection of suburban stability and urban intensification. Ealing therefore provides a valuable case for examining how infill and redevelopment are introduced into long-established suburban contexts without undermining local identity and residential character.

4.1.1.3 Rationale for Comparing Newham, Lewisham, and Ealing

This study compares Newham, Lewisham, and Ealing because they represent three distinct urban contexts within the same metropolitan and institutional planning framework. As all three boroughs operate under the governance of Greater London and the same London Plan, differences in their urban development patterns cannot be attributed to national policy variation, but instead reflect the influence of local historical, spatial, and socio-economic conditions. This provides a controlled comparative setting in which the role of local context in shaping urban change can be critically examined. Through this comparison, the research moves beyond a generalised understanding of London as a single urban condition and instead highlights the internal diversity of the city.

Each of the selected boroughs is analysed in terms of its historical development, demographic profile, and urban infill policies, with particular attention given to their overall urban characteristics. Examining historical context helps to explain how past patterns of growth, industry, and housing have shaped the present urban form of each borough.

Demographic analysis provides insight into population structure, diversity, and socio-economic conditions, while a focused assessment of urban infill strategies explores how local planning frameworks manage development pressure, land availability, and housing demand within established urban areas.

Together, these dimensions enable a comprehensive understanding of how each borough’s specific context influences its approach to urban development and change.

4.1.2 Borough Comparison; History

4.1.2.1 Urban Development in Ealing: A Historical Timeline and Urban Transformation

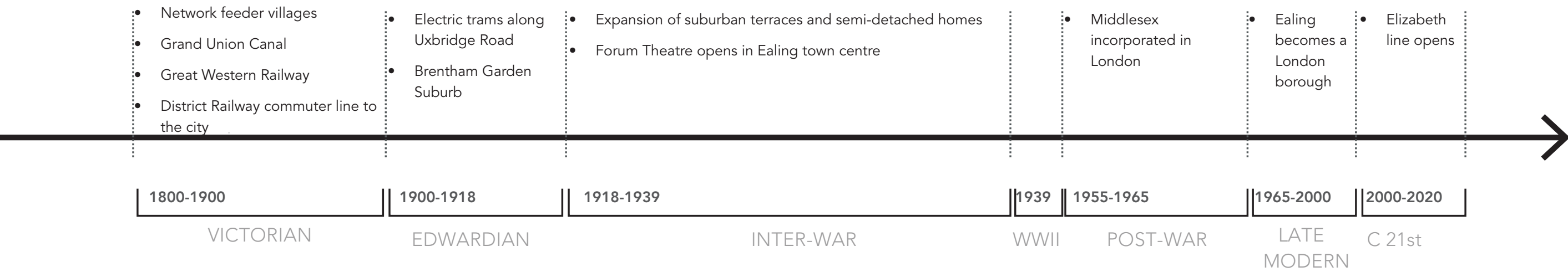


Figure 4.3 Historical timeline of spatial and infrastructural development in Ealing (1800–2020) (Author’s drawing).

Ealing’s development has been strongly shaped by transport and suburban growth. In the Victorian period (1800–1900), it functioned as a network of feeder villages supported by the Grand Union Canal, the Great Western Railway, and early commuter rail connections.

During the Edwardian era (1900–1918), electric trams along Uxbridge Road and planned communities such as Brentham Garden Suburb strengthened Ealing’s suburban identity

The inter-war period (1918–1939) saw the largest expansion of terraced and semi-detached housing, alongside cultural growth marked by the opening of the Forum Theatre. (Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners, 2022)

After World War II, Middlesex was incorporated into Greater London, and Ealing officially became a London borough, leading to major reconstruction and redevelopment.

From 1965 onwards, growth shifted toward consolidation and modernisation. In the 21st century, the Elizabeth Line has redefined Ealing’s connectivity, supporting inward intensification and positioning the borough as a key part of London’s transit-led urban future. (Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners, 2022)

4.1.2.2 Spatial Land Development in Ealing

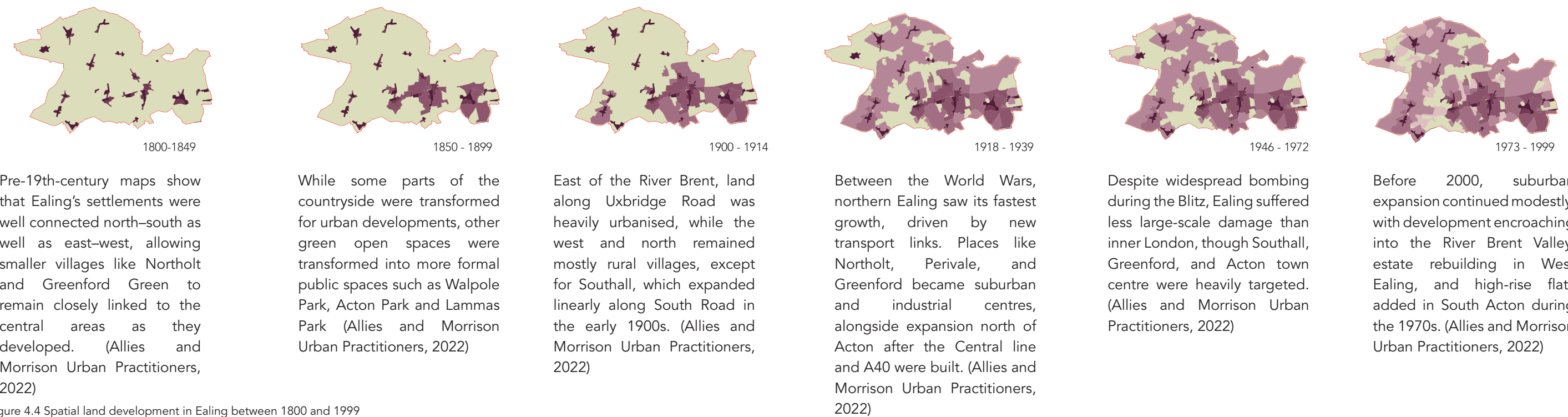


Figure 4.4 Spatial land development in Ealing between 1800 and 1999

4.1.2.3 Urban Development in Newham: A Historical Timeline and Urban Transformation

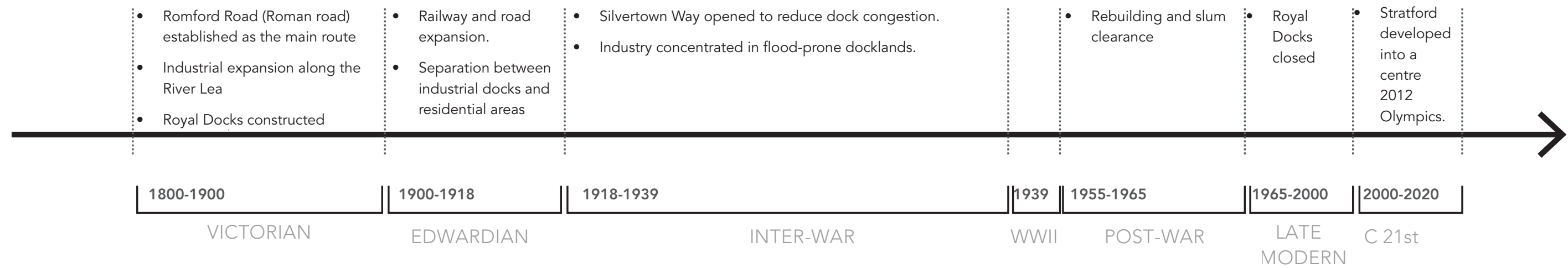


Figure 4.5 Historical timeline of spatial and infrastructural development in Newham (1800–2020) (Author’s drawing).

Newham’s historic urban evolution reveals a borough shaped by infrastructure, industry, and repeated reinvention. Early development followed the Roman alignment of Romford Road, while All Saints’ Church anchored a village pattern beside rivers and wetlands. From the late nineteenth century, docks, gas works, and Bazalgette’s sewer network drove rapid industrial growth, supported by railways that structured distinct industrial and residential zones. Between 1900 and 1939, housing expanded along transport corridors, reinforcing separation between living and working landscapes. (With New Practice, Avison Young, & GHPA, 2024)

The Second World War caused severe destruction, especially around the Royal Docks, triggering extensive post-war clearance and modernist rebuilding focused on car access. After 1981, dock closure transformed Newham’s identity, replacing rail infrastructure with major roads, suburban housing, and retail landscapes. Since 2000, redevelopment has accelerated, particularly in Stratford and Canning Town, where high-density residential and commercial forms now dominate. Today, Newham embodies layered histories where routes, legacies, and regeneration coexist in an evolving fabric. (With New Practice et al., 2024)

4.1.2.4 Spatial Land Development in Newham

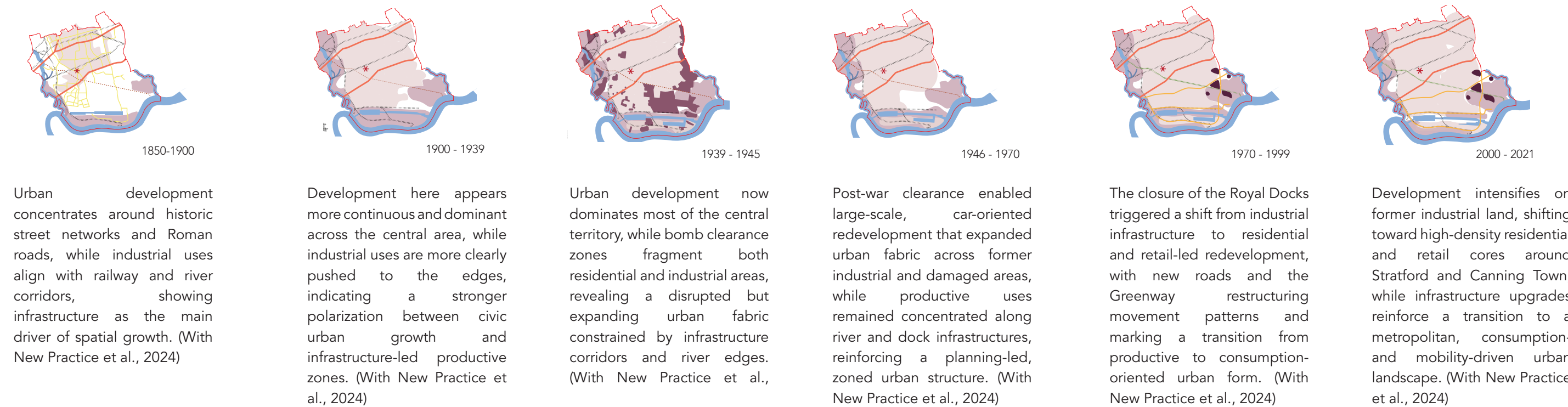


Figure 4.6 Spatial land development in Newham between 1800 and 1999

4.1.2.5 Urban Development in Lewisham: A Historical Timeline and Urban Transformation

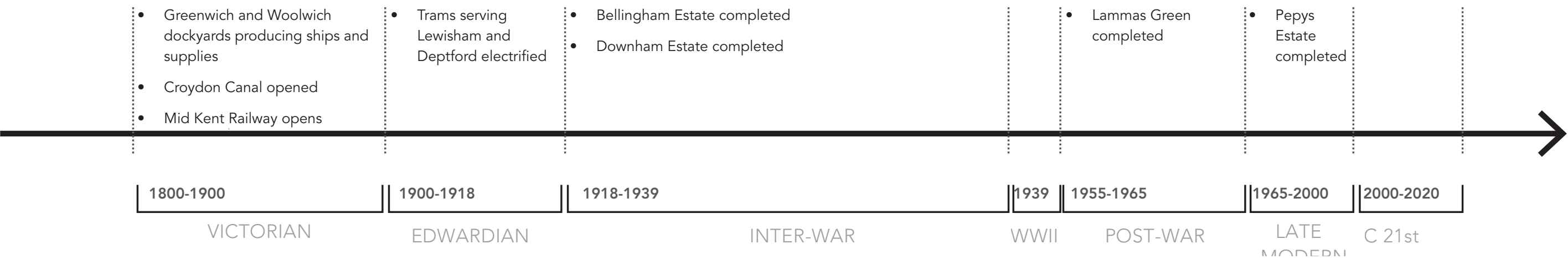


Figure 4.7 Historical timeline of spatial and infrastructural development in Lewisham (1800–2020) (Author’s drawing).

Lewisham’s history reflects London’s wider transformation from rural hinterland to diverse metropolitan borough. Before the 1700s, Lewisham was dominated by farmland, woodland, and small villages, while Deptford thrived as a maritime and shipbuilding centre linked to the Royal Dockyard. During the 18th and early 19th centuries, canals and improved roads supported industry and trade. The arrival of railways in the 1830s and 1850s unlocked the south, rapidly turning Lewisham into a landscape of Victorian and Edwardian commuter suburbs. (Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners, 2019)

In the interwar period, major council housing estates such as Bellingham and Downham reshaped the borough, responding to overcrowding in inner London. World War II caused severe damage, leading to extensive post-war rebuilding and modernist housing experiments. From the 1960s onward, migration brought strong cultural diversity, alongside social and political change. Today, Lewisham combines historic villages, post-war estates, and contemporary regeneration, forming a layered urban identity shaped by transport, housing policy, and community resilience. (Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners, 2019)

4.1.2.6 Spatial Land Development in Lewish-

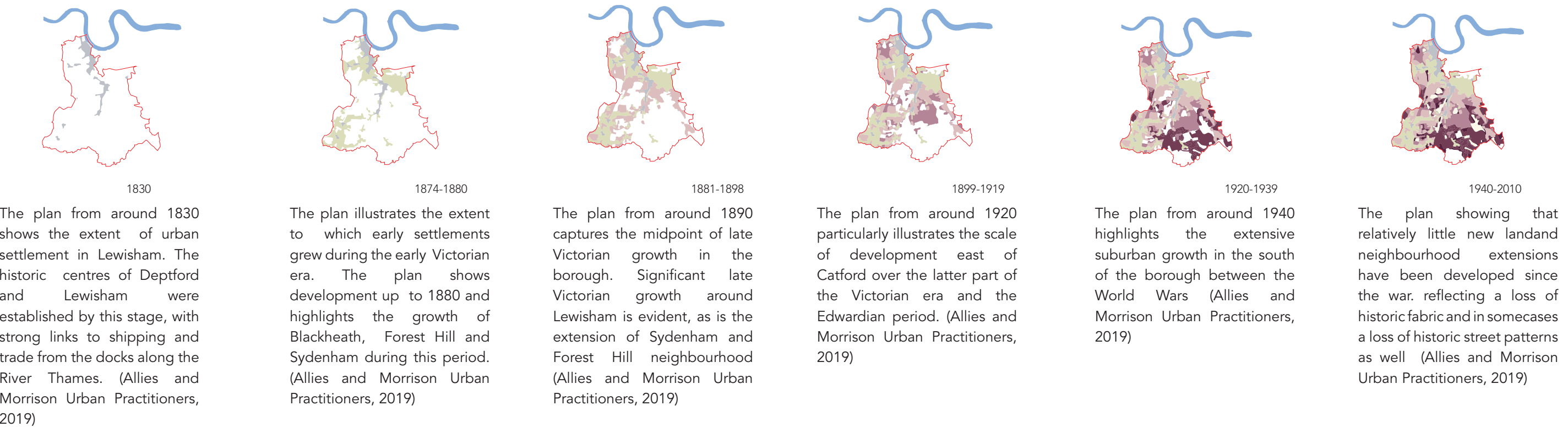


Figure 4.8 Spatial land development in Lewisham between 1800 and 1999

4.1.2.7 Analytical Interpretation of Historical Context

The preceding sections have outlined the historical development of Ealing, Lewisham, and Newham in relation to transport infrastructure, industrialisation, post-war reconstruction, and contemporary regeneration. Beyond documenting these trajectories, it is necessary to interpret how different patterns of urban development have shaped the social and symbolic positioning of housing within each borough. The following section therefore provides an analytical interpretation of the historical comparison in relation to stigma and architectural meaning.

The historical comparison reveals that each borough has been shaped by distinct trajectories of urbanisation that continue to influence how social housing is perceived and spatially embedded. These trajectories are not neutral backgrounds but active producers of social meaning, shaping how architecture is read in relation to poverty, regeneration, and belonging.

Newham's development has been driven by infrastructure, industrialisation, wartime destruction, and successive waves of state-led regeneration. From the Royal Docks and railway corridors to post-war clearance and Olympic-led redevelopment, housing has consistently been associated with moments of disruption and transformation. This has produced a fragmented urban fabric in which social housing is historically linked to narratives of decline, intervention, and renewal. In this context, stigma is not only social but also territorial and historically accumulated, embedded in both the physical morphology of the borough and its socio-political history.

Lewisham exhibits a more layered and continuous pattern of growth, combining historic village centres, interwar council estates, and post-war redevelopment. State intervention has occurred alongside longer-standing residential neighbourhoods and local identities. As a result, social housing is more spatially integrated into the everyday urban fabric, producing a condition in which stigma is present but moderated through continuity, community memory, and place-based identity rather than imposed through large-scale rupture.

Ealing's historical development, by contrast, is characterised by suburban expansion, transport-led growth, and relative morphological stability. Garden suburbs, terraced housing, and established high streets dominate its urban identity, with limited concentration of clearance or regeneration. Social housing is therefore more easily absorbed into prevailing residential typologies, reducing its visual and symbolic separation from market housing.

This comparison demonstrates that stigma is not solely a contemporary social condition but is historically shaped through patterns of urban development, clearance, and regeneration. Newham thus represents the most exposed historical context in which architectural form is likely to be read through inherited narratives of deprivation and state intervention. This makes it a critical setting for testing whether tenure-blind infill housing can reframe these narratives through architectural design.

4.1.3 Borough Comparison;Policy

4.1.3.1 Strategic Planning Philosophy

Policy Dimension	Ealing	Lewisham	Newham
Overall planning approach	Character-led and conservation-focused. Growth is accepted but carefully managed to protect established neighbourhood identity. (London Borough of Ealing, 2023)	Housing-need driven with a strong emphasis on delivery. Growth is expected and shaped through design quality. (London Borough of Lewisham, 2020)	Growth- and regeneration-led. Ongoing change and transformation are recognised as part of the borough’s spatial strategy. (London Borough of Newham, 2018)
Policy attitude to intensification	Cautious. Intensification is supported where it responds sensitively to context and does not undermine character. (London Borough of Ealing, 2023)	Pro-active but managed. Intensification is supported, particularly in accessible locations, subject to design quality. (London Borough of Lewisham, 2020)	Strongly supportive of intensification. Increased density is planned for in appropriate locations as part of growth strategy. (London Borough of Newham, 2018)
Critical policy logic	Protect character while allowing gradual housing growth. (London Borough of Ealing , 2023)	Meet housing need through managed intensification. (London Borough of Lewisham, 2020)	Accommodate growth through regeneration and transformation. (London Borough of Newham, 2018)

Figure 4.9 Comparative analysis of borough planning policy approaches to small-site and infill development in Ealing, Lewisham, and Newham

This table shows that Ealing, Lewisham, and Newham follow very different planning philosophies for small-site and infill development. Ealing takes a cautious and conservation-focused approach. Growth is allowed, but only when it protects existing neighbourhood character. Intensification is carefully controlled, and the main goal is to allow gradual change without harming local identity.

Lewisham focuses more strongly on meeting housing need. Growth is expected and encouraged, especially in accessible locations. However, it is managed through design quality, so development must still respond well to its surroundings. The main priority is delivering housing while keeping neighbourhoods liveable.

Newham follows the most growth-oriented approach. Planning policy is strongly linked to regeneration and transformation. Higher density and intensification are seen as necessary for long-term change and renewal.

Overall, the table shows how different boroughs interpret growth in very different ways, even within the same city.

4.1.3.2 Growth Mechanisms & Scale

Policy Dimension	Ealing	Lewisham	Newham
Role of small sites	Small sites are supported due to limited availability of large sites. Their role is incremental, contributing housing while reinforcing existing urban form. (London Borough of Ealing, 2023)	Small sites are expected to make a significant contribution to housing delivery and are treated as a normal form of development across the borough. (London Borough of Lewisham, 2020)	Small sites are actively promoted as a means of unlocking additional housing capacity and supporting wider regeneration objectives. (London Borough of Newham, 2018)
Relationship to estate regeneration	Clearly separated. Estate regeneration delivers larger-scale change, while small sites provide incremental additions. (London Borough of Ealing, 2023)	Parallel and complementary. Both estate regeneration and small sites contribute to housing delivery. (London Borough of Lewisham, 2020)	Integrated. Small sites support and extend the effects of large-scale regeneration and redevelopment. (London Borough of Newham, 2018)
Expected scale of change from small sites	Limited and incremental. Small sites are not expected to alter neighbourhood structure (London Borough of Ealing, 2023)	Moderate. Small sites contribute meaningfully to housing numbers across the borough. (London Borough of Lewisham, 2020)	Potentially substantial. Small sites form part of wider urban restructuring. (London Borough of Newham, 2018)

Figure 4.10 Comparative roles of small sites and regeneration in borough housing delivery strategies.

This table shows how Ealing, Lewisham, and Newham use small sites and estate regeneration in different ways. In Ealing, small sites have a limited role. They add small amounts of housing and are not expected to change neighbourhood structure. Big changes mainly come from estate regeneration.

In Lewisham, small sites are more important. They are treated as a normal way of building housing and make a meaningful contribution to overall housing numbers. Estate regeneration and small sites work alongside each other.

In Newham, small sites are closely linked to regeneration. They are part of wider redevelopment and are expected to support larger urban change. Because of this, small sites can have a much bigger impact on neighbourhood transformation.

Overall, the table shows that small sites are not the same everywhere. Their role depends on each borough’s growth strategy and regeneration priorities.

4.1.3.3 Density, Form & Envelope Control

Policy Dimension	Ealing	Lewisham	Newham
Density control method	Form-based and contextual. Density is influenced by height, massing, and typology rather than numerical targets. (London Borough of Ealing, 2023)	Design-led and flexible. Density can increase where supported by accessibility, infrastructure, and design quality. (London Borough of Lewisham, 2020)	Strategic and planned. Density is analysed and directed to support growth areas and regeneration locations. (London Borough of Newham, 2018)
Building envelope	Largely shaped by surrounding context. Height and massing are expected to align with prevailing character. (London Borough of Ealing, 2023)	More flexible. Context informs envelope, but does not strictly limit height or massing. (London Borough of Lewisham, 2020)	Shaped by strategic growth objectives as well as local context, allowing greater variation in height and scale. (London Borough of Newham, 2018)
Approach to height	Generally low- to mid-rise outside designated areas. Taller buildings are tightly managed. (London Borough of Ealing, 2023)	Greater tolerance for height, particularly near town centres and transport nodes. (London Borough of Lewisham, 2020)	Tall buildings are an accepted and planned component in suitable locations. (London Borough of Newham, 2018)

Figure 4.11 Comparative approaches to density, form, and building envelope regulation across boroughs.

his table shows how Ealing, Lewisham, and Newham control building size, shape, and height in different ways. Ealing uses a strongly contextual approach. Density is not set by numbers but by how well a building fits its surroundings. Height and massing are carefully limited so new development matches existing character, and tall buildings are tightly controlled.

Lewisham applies a more flexible system. Density can increase where transport access, infrastructure, and design quality are good. Context still matters, but it does not strictly limit height or massing. This allows more design freedom while still protecting liveability.

Newham follows a strategic and planned approach. Density and building form are guided by growth and regeneration goals. Height and scale can vary more widely, and tall buildings are accepted in suitable locations as part of planned transformation.

Overall, the table shows a clear shift from strict contextual control in Ealing, to managed flexibility in Lewisham, and to strategic height-led growth in Newham.

4.1.3.4 Design Governance

Policy Dimension	Ealing	Lewisham	Newham
Role of design	Design acts as a filter to ensure contextual fit and protect character. (London Borough of Ealing, 2023)	Design manages growth and balances density with liveability. (London Borough of Lewisham, 2020)	Design supports growth and facilitates transformation. (London Borough of Newham, 2018)
Implications for small-site design	Highly constrained; strong contextual and heritage sensitivity required. (London Borough of Ealing, 2023)	Balanced; allows greater design flexibility with strong justification. (London Borough of Lewisham, 2020)	More permissive; emphasis on capacity, regeneration, and strategic fit. (London Borough of Newham, 2018)

Figure 4.12 Comparison of design-led governance frameworks for small-site and infill development.

This table shows how Ealing, Lewisham, and Newham use small sites and estate regeneration in different ways. In Ealing, small sites have a limited role. They add small amounts of housing and are not expected to change neighbourhood structure. Big changes mainly come from estate regeneration.

In Lewisham, small sites are more important. They are treated as a normal way of building housing and make a meaningful contribution to overall housing numbers. Estate regeneration and small sites work alongside each other.

In Newham, small sites are closely linked to regeneration. They are part of wider redevelopment and are expected to support larger urban change. Because of this, small sites can have a much bigger impact on neighbourhood transformation.

Overall, the table shows that small sites are not the same everywhere. Their role depends on each borough’s growth strategy and regeneration priorities.

4.1.3.5 Analytical Interpretation of Planning Policy and Infill Strategy

The comparative tables presented in the previous section demonstrate clear differences in how Ealing, Lewisham, and Newham approach small-site and infill development. To move beyond policy description, this section interprets how these planning frameworks shape the architectural conditions under which stigma may be reproduced or resisted.

The comparison of planning policy frameworks highlights how institutional logics structure the role and meaning of small-site and infill development, producing different levels of exposure to architectural stigma. Planning policy does not merely regulate building form but establishes the conditions under which housing becomes visually differentiated or socially integrated.

In Ealing, the conservation-led and character-based approach positions small sites as incremental additions whose primary function is to reinforce existing urban form. Design operates largely as a mechanism of control, ensuring close alignment with surrounding typologies and scale. While this reduces the risk of visual differentiation, it also constrains the capacity of architecture to challenge socio-spatial hierarchies. Tenure-blindness in this context is achieved primarily through similarity and visual continuity rather than through critical architectural intervention.

Lewisham adopts a more flexible, design-led framework in which small sites are normalised as part of everyday housing delivery. Intensification is accepted where justified through design quality, accessibility, and liveability. In this context, architecture mediates between policy objectives and social perception. Stigma is neither fully avoided nor structurally imposed but becomes contingent on how successfully buildings negotiate scale, materiality, and integration with surrounding neighbourhoods. Architectural decisions therefore acquire heightened symbolic significance.

Newham's growth- and regeneration-led policy stance integrates small sites into a broader strategy of urban transformation and intensification. Although this enables higher housing output, it also exposes small sites to pressures of standardisation, value engineering, and compressed delivery timescales. These pressures risk reproducing architectural stigma through simplified form, reduced material quality, and visible differentiation from surrounding housing stock.

Crucially, in Newham, tenure-blindness is not secured through policy but must be actively produced through architectural design. Design therefore becomes a defensive and critical practice, tasked with resisting the reduction of social housing to a visible marker of urgency or economic compromise. This positions small-site infill in Newham as a highly exposed architectural condition in which the relationship between policy, form, and stigma can be examined most clearly.

4.1.4 Borough Comparison; Socio-Demographic and Housing Context

4.1.4.1 Comparative Socio-Demographic Profile of the Case Study Boroughs

This section outlines the key demographic characteristics of the three selected London boroughs Newham, Ealing, and Lewisham to provide context for the study. The figures compare population size, land area, age structure, and ethnic composition, highlighting both similarities and differences between the boroughs.

Looking first at overall population, Newham has the largest number of residents, with just over 374,000 people, closely followed by Ealing at around 367,000. Lewisham has a smaller population in comparison, with approximately 301,000 residents.

When land area is considered, clearer contrasts emerge. Ealing is the largest borough geographically, covering 55.52 km², while Newham and Lewisham are much more compact, at 36.24 km² and 35.15 km² respectively. This means that Newham, in particular, accommodates a large population within a relatively small area, suggesting higher population density and greater pressure on housing, transport, and public services.

The age structure of the boroughs shows a broadly similar pattern. In all three areas, the majority of residents fall within the working-age group (16–64). Overall, this indicates a relatively young population profile, especially in Newham and Lewisham.

In terms of ethnic composition, all three boroughs are highly diverse. The White ethnic group forms a significant proportion of the population in each area, particularly in Lewisham. However, Newham and Ealing show strong representation from Asian ethnic groups, with Newham having the highest Asian population among the three. Black ethnic groups are also an important part of the population, especially in Lewisham. Smaller but notable proportions of Mixed, Arab, and Other ethnic groups further underline the multicultural nature of these boroughs.

In summary, while Newham, Ealing, and Lewisham differ in size and population structure, they share key characteristics, including high ethnic diversity and a predominantly working-age population. These demographic features provide an important foundation for the analysis presented in the following.



Figure 4.13 Comparison of land area (km²) across the three selected boroughs (Data source: CityPopulation, citypopulation.de).

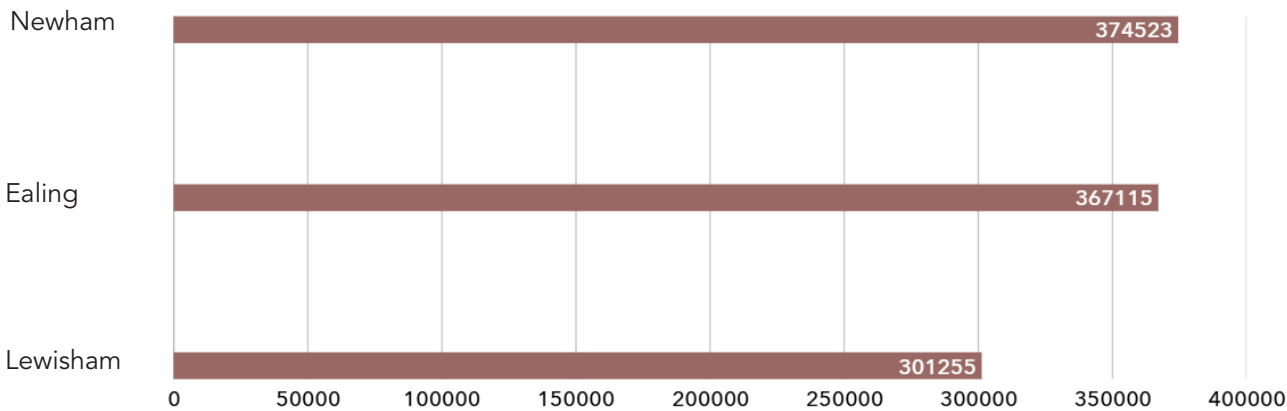


Figure 4.14 Comparison of total population across the three selected boroughs (Data source: UK Office for National Statistics).

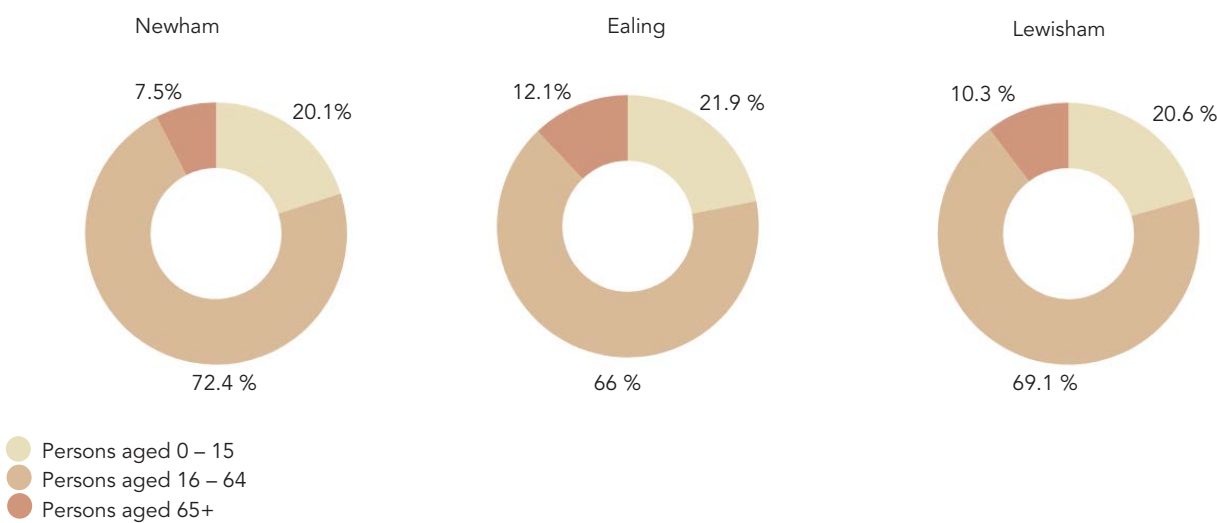


Figure 4.15 Comparison of population across different age groups in the three selected boroughs (Data source: UK Office for National Statistics).

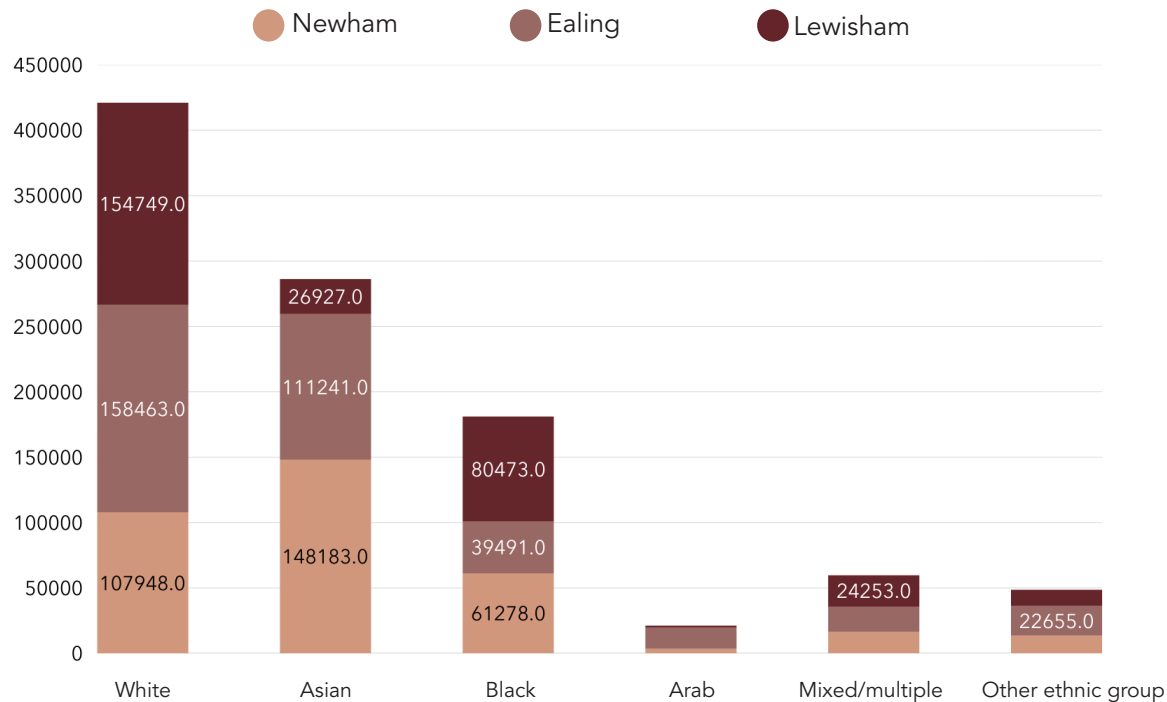


Figure 4.16 Comparison of ethnic group distribution across the three selected boroughs (Data source: UK Office for National Statistics).

4.1.4.2 Housing and Socio-Economic Conditions in Newham, Ealing, and Lewisham

This section explores key housing and socio-economic conditions across the three selected boroughs : Newham, Ealing, and Lewisham ; focusing on temporary accommodation, housing tenure, poverty, and housing affordability. Together, these indicators help illustrate levels of housing pressure and inequality within each borough.

The proportion of households living in temporary accommodation varies notably between the boroughs. Newham stands out with a significantly higher rate per 1,000 households compared to both Ealing and Lewisham, and well above the averages for Greater London and England. This suggests particularly acute housing instability in Newham. These differences highlight uneven exposure to housing insecurity across the boroughs.

Patterns of housing tenure further highlight differences between the boroughs. In Newham, renting from private landlords is the most common form of tenure, indicating the highest reliance on the private rented sector among the three boroughs. Ealing shows a more balanced tenure profile, with relatively high numbers of households buying with a mortgage . Across all three boroughs, outright home ownership is the least common tenure, reflecting wider barriers to accessing property ownership in London.

The charts on poverty levels show that a substantial proportion of people living in poverty are part of working households, particularly in Newham and Lewisham. This indicates the presence of in-work poverty, where employment does not necessarily protect households from financial hardship. Ealing shows a lower overall proportion of people in poverty compared to the other two boroughs, but working poverty remains a significant issue there as well. Non-working households in poverty account for a smaller share in all three boroughs, reinforcing the idea that low pay and high living costs are key drivers of poverty.

Housing affordability is further illustrated by the rent-to-income ratio for a one-bedroom dwelling. In all three boroughs, rent accounts for a high percentage of gross income, exceeding the England median and, in some cases, approaching or surpassing the London median. Newham shows the highest proportion, indicating the greatest affordability pressure, followed by Ealing and then Lewisham. These figures suggest that renting places a substantial financial burden on residents, particularly in lower-income households.

Overall, the charts demonstrate that while all three boroughs experience housing pressure, Newham faces the most severe challenges, including high reliance on temporary accommodation, strong dependence on the private rental market, and significant affordability issues. Ealing occupies a more mixed position, while Lewisham shows relatively lower housing instability but higher dependence on social renting.

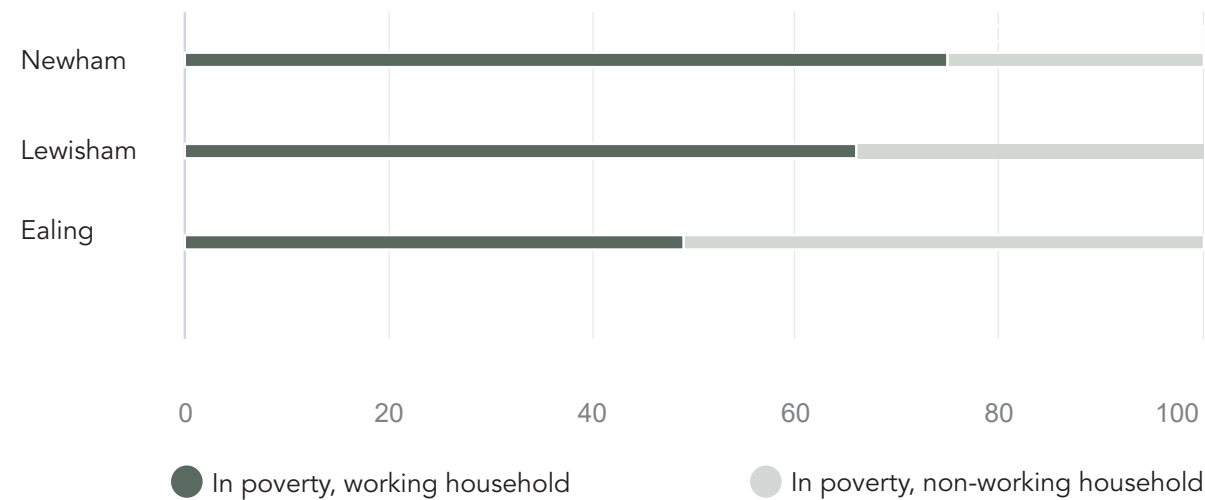


Figure 4.17 Comparison of the proportion of people living in poverty in working and non-working families across the three selected boroughs (Data source: Trust for London).

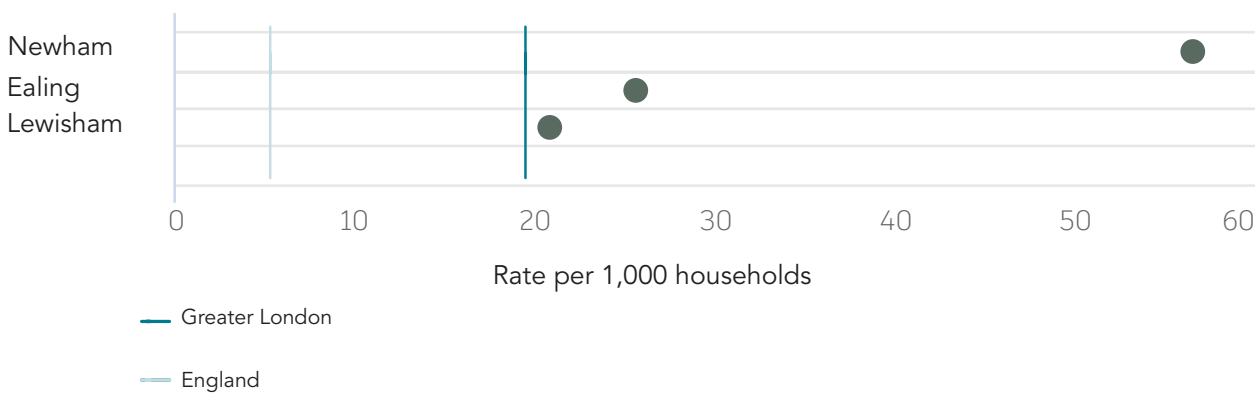


Figure 4.18 Comparison of the proportion of households in temporary accommodation across the three selected boroughs (Data source: Trust for London).

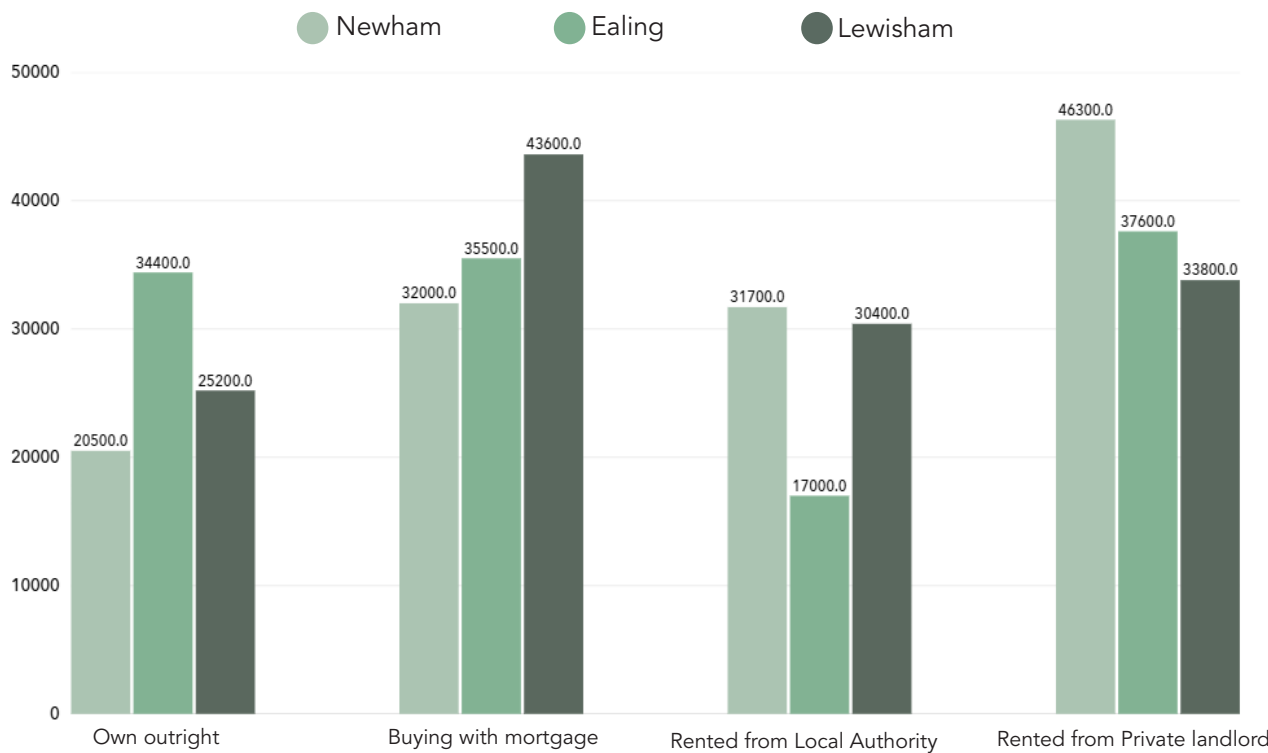


Figure 4.19 Comparison of households by housing tenure category across the three selected boroughs (Data source: London Data-store, data.london.gov.uk).

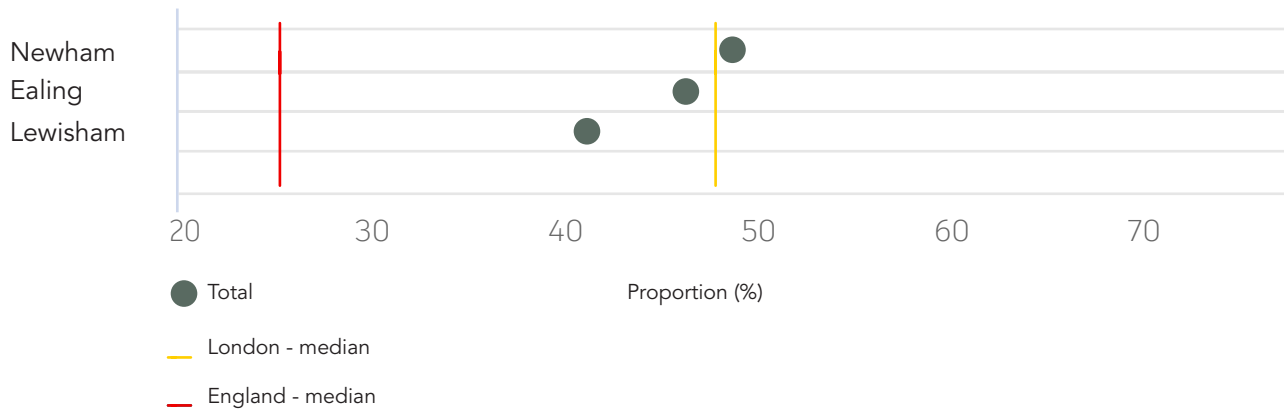


Figure 4.20 Rent for a one bedroom dwelling as a percentage of gross by three London boroughs. Data source: Trust for London.

4.1.4.3 Analytical Interpretation of Socio-Demographic and Housing Conditions

While the previous section has presented key socio-demographic and housing indicators across the three boroughs, these figures require interpretation in order to understand their implications for stigma and the social reading of housing. This section synthesises the demographic comparison in relation to architectural perception and tenure-blind design.

The socio-demographic and housing analysis demonstrates that although Newham, Lewisham, and Ealing all experience housing pressure and demographic diversity, the intensity and spatial visibility of inequality differ substantially. These differences shape how social housing is perceived and how architectural form is socially interpreted.

Newham combines high population density, high ethnic diversity, and the greatest reliance on temporary accommodation and private renting. These indicators reveal acute housing insecurity and sustained socio-economic vulnerability. In such contexts, social housing becomes highly politicised and symbolically charged, often perceived as a scarce and contested resource. Architectural form is therefore subject to heightened scrutiny and is more likely to be interpreted as a sign of neglect, hierarchy, or prioritisation. Features such as façade articulation, access hierarchy, and material quality become critical in determining whether housing is read as inclusive or socially differentiated.

Lewisham also exhibits high diversity and housing need but with a stronger presence of social renting and lower levels of temporary accommodation. This suggests a more stabilised relationship between public housing and local communities, where stigma exists but is moderated by longer-term settlement patterns and neighbourhood continuity. Architectural stigma in this context is more dependent on design execution and local context than on structural crisis.

Ealing presents comparatively lower poverty rates and a stronger presence of owner-occupation and mortgage-based tenure. Although the borough is ethnically diverse, inequality is less spatially concentrated and housing insecurity less visible in the everyday urban landscape. This produces a socio-spatial environment in which social housing is less strongly marked as ‘other’ and where architectural stigma is correspondingly reduced.

These contrasts indicate that stigma intensifies where housing insecurity, demographic vulnerability, and regeneration pressure converge. Newham therefore represents the most demanding socio-spatial context in which tenure-blind architectural strategies can be tested. In this borough, architecture cannot rely on neutrality or assimilation alone but must actively counter deeply embedded perceptions of inequality through design.

4.1.5 Borough Comparison; Final Borough Selection
4.1.5.1 Analytical Interpretation of Comparative Data Informing Borough Selection

Criterion	Newham	Lewisham	Ealing
Historical development and relevance to stigma	Industrialisation, post-war clearance, and regeneration repeated state intervention and territorially embedded stigma.	Transport-led growth and estates mixed residential identity, moderate stigma.	Suburban expansion and continuity stable character, low stigma visibility.
Housing need	Extreme – highest temporary accommodation and affordability pressure	High	Moderate
Role of small sites	Essential capacity tool	Normalised delivery	Incremental only
Risk of architectural stigma	Very high	Moderate	Low
Policy stance	Growth- and regeneration-led	Managed, design-led growth	Conservation-led

Figure 4.21 Comparative analytical summary of historical, policy, and housing conditions informing borough selection.

Taken together, the historical, policy, and socio-demographic interpretations demonstrate that Newham represents the most exposed context in which architectural stigma is produced and reproduced. Unlike Lewisham and Ealing, Newham combines a legacy of large-scale regeneration, a growth-oriented planning framework, and acute housing insecurity within a dense and diverse population.

Newham is therefore selected not because it offers favourable conditions for tenure-blind social housing, but precisely because it represents the most challenging environment in which such an approach can be tested. This positions the borough as a critical case study for examining whether architectural design can resist or mitigate stigma under conditions of intense structural pressure

4.2 | Infill Site Typologies

Aim:

This section classifies small infill site typologies in Newham to establish the spatial contexts for the design investigation. By analysing recurring urban conditions , including street-facing, high street, backland, and estate infill , it identifies the key environments in which tenure-blind housing can be tested within the existing urban fabric.

4.2.1 Small Site Infill Framework

4.2.1.1 Purpose of the Framework

The Newham Small Sites Intensification Guidance (2024) is adopted in this thesis as the primary reference framework for the analysis and design of small infill housing sites in the London Borough of Newham. The guidance identifies small sites as a significant and largely underutilised opportunity for housing delivery within established residential neighbourhoods.

Small sites are frequently embedded within fine-grain urban fabrics characterised by terraced, semi-detached, and detached housing forms. In such contexts, conventional large-scale redevelopment models are neither feasible nor desirable. The guidance therefore positions small-site intensification as a strategic and spatially sensitive approach to urban densification, requiring careful integration with existing streetscapes, building rhythms, and residential patterns.

Rather than treating small sites as accidental or residual conditions, the guidance frames them as a systematic component of urban intensification. This perspective is particularly relevant to Newham, where fragmented plots, garages, gardens, and corner conditions form a dispersed yet substantial land resource capable of contributing to housing supply when approached through a coherent design methodology.

4.2.1.2 Reasons for Selection

This guidance is selected as the principal reference framework for three interrelated reasons.

First, it is borough-specific and directly aligned with Newham’s Characterisation Study and emerging planning strategy. This ensures that the framework reflects local urban morphology, policy priorities, and spatial sensitivities, rather than applying generic London-wide assumptions.

Second, the guidance operates at the same spatial scale as this thesis: the scale of individual plots and micro-infill conditions within existing residential fabrics. This correspondence of scale allows the guidance to be used not only as a policy reference, but as a practical design instrument capable of informing architectural decisions.

Third, the guidance provides a design methodology rather than only policy advice. It translates planning ambitions for intensification into spatial principles and parameters that can be directly tested through architectural drawing, modelling, and iteration. This design-led character makes it particularly suitable for use within an architectural research thesis.

4.2.1.3 Orientation of the Guidance

The Newham Small Sites Intensification Guidance adopts a design-led, typological, and context-responsive orientation. Rather than functioning as a prescriptive regulatory code, it supports architectural interpretation through spatial envelopes and design parameters. Its morphological reading of small sites prioritises integration with existing urban form, building rhythms, and residential patterns. Positioned between planning policy and architectural design practice, the guidance operates as an intermediary tool that translates policy objectives into spatial design logic.

4.2.1.4 Typological Approach

A central contribution of the guidance is its typological classification of small sites. Small sites are first organised into four main spatial contexts: street-facing residential, street-facing high street, backland, and free-form. Each context reflects a different relationship between the site and the surrounding urban fabric. Within these contexts, the guidance identifies recurring site types. These types are not defined merely by plot geometry, but by their spatial, morphological, and access characteristics.

In the context of this thesis, the typological approach provides a structured basis for selecting representative sites and for testing how similar spatial conditions can accommodate different design responses.

Crucially, the small infill site intensifies these pressures rather than softening them. Unlike large regeneration schemes, small sites in Newham sit directly within existing neighbourhoods and are immediately legible to surrounding residents. They cannot rely on scale, branding, or masterplanning to dilute stigma. Any failure in access strategy, façade treatment, or material consistency becomes instantly visible. This makes the small site the most exposed architectural condition within an already extreme borough.

From a methodological perspective, choosing Newham is therefore a deliberate and critical decision. The thesis does not assume that architecture can fully overcome structural inequality. Instead, it asks whether architectural design can resist the reproduction of stigma under the most constrained and pressured conditions of contemporary London housing delivery.

4.2.1.5 Design Parameters as Spatial Method

Beyond classification, the guidance introduces a design-parameter approach that establishes a theoretical development envelope for each site type. These parameters address key spatial relationships, including building line, shoulder height, access hierarchy, defensible space, massing transitions, and daylight and sunlight protection.

The purpose of these parameters is not to prescribe a single architectural solution, but to define a spatial field within which multiple design options can be explored. They translate planning objectives into spatial rules that can be tested, adjusted, and negotiated through design iteration.

In this sense, the guidance operates as a bridge between planning policy and architectural design. It ensures that intensification is not driven solely by numerical density targets, but by spatial performance, urban integration, and residential quality.

4.2.1.6 Application in This Thesis

In this thesis, the guidance is used as both an analytical and generative framework.

Analytically, it is used to classify infill sites in Newham according to their spatial context and typological condition. This classification supports a systematic mapping of opportunities and reveals patterns of underutilised land within the borough.

Generatively, the guidance’s design-parameter logic is used to generate initial massing envelopes and to test alternative access, frontage, and volume configurations. This allows different design options to be evaluated using consistent spatial criteria rather than subjective preference.

Comparatively, the framework enables different sites and proposals to be assessed against a shared methodological baseline, supporting coherence across the thesis project.

4.2.1.7 Tenure-Blind Extension

While the guidance provides a morphological and design-quality framework, it does not explicitly address issues of tenure, stigma, or social perception. Housing tenure is treated implicitly rather than as a spatial and urban concern.

This thesis therefore extends the guidance through a tenure-blind design approach. It investigates how consistent architectural quality, urban presence, and spatial performance can reduce visual and spatial markers of tenure difference across infill developments.

By applying the same design standards and typological logic to housing regardless of tenure, the thesis explores how small-site intensification can contribute to housing quantity, asd social integration and urban equality.

4.2.1.8 Role Within the Thesis Structure

This framework provides the analytical and methodological foundation for the infill typologies, site mappings, and design studies presented on the following pages.

The following pages illustrate how this framework is translated into typological diagrams and applied to specific infill conditions in Newham.

4.2.2 Infill Site Typologies

4.2.2.1 What defines a small site and where are they found in Newham?

A small site is defined as any site below 0.25 hectares in size (GLA, 2021). Infill opportunities are often found in residential Neighbourhoods made up of terraced, semi-detached, and detached homes. These areas usually have a fine-grained urban structure, with loosely arranged plots and buildings that naturally leave behind small, underused spaces. Many of these small-site conditions appear in places like Beckton, Canning Town, Upton, East Ham, West Ham, and Plaistow. (With New Practice, Avison Young and GHPA, 2024)

4.2.2.2 Infill Site Typologies in Newham

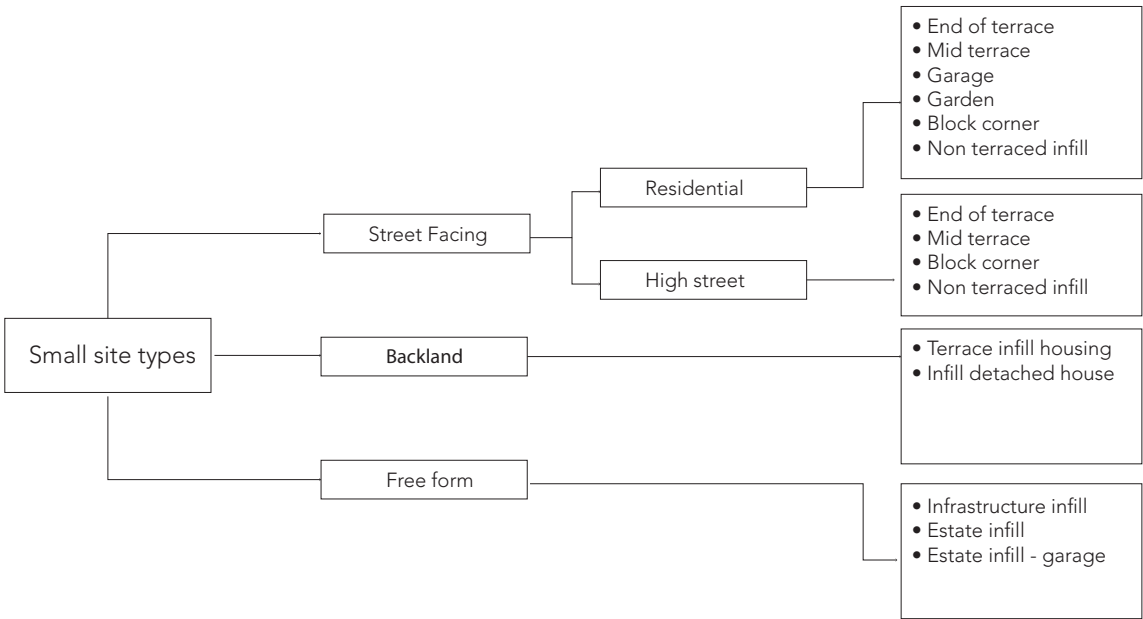


Figure 4.22 Classification of infill site typologies in Newham (Author’s drawing).

4.2.2.3 Street facing: residential

They usually have a clear edge made up of houses facing the street — with front doors, windows, fences, or walls creating a continuous line.

These areas are typical of Newham’s older suburban streets, where houses are arranged close together in neat rows. But street-facing plots can also appear in places that aren’t traditional terraces. Because the layout is so regular and repeated, these streets often create good opportunities for small infill developments.

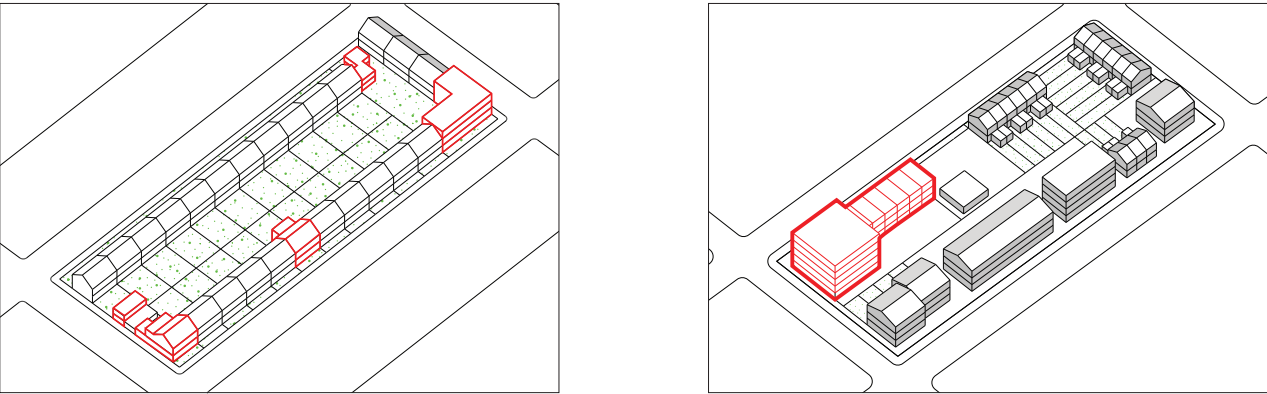


Figure 4.23 Street-facing residential typology in Newham, showing continuous street edges and opportunities for small-scale infill development within regular urban plots (Source: The Small Site Intensification Guidance (2022), edited by the author).

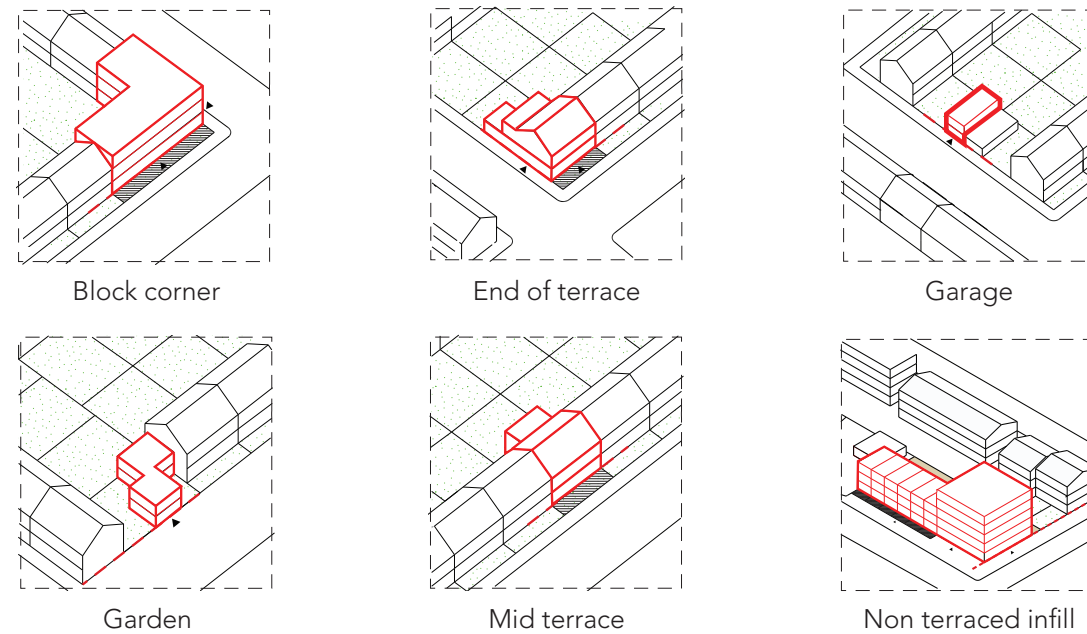


Figure 4.24 Common small-site infill typologies in Newham, including block corners, end-of-terrace sites, garages, gardens, mid-terrace gaps, and non-terraced infill sites (Source: The Small Site Intensification Guidance (2022), edited by the author).

Street facing: residential	Description	Typologies
End of Terrace	Sites at the end of a terrace block with dual frontage; often used for off-street parking.	Compact individual dwellings completing the terrace.
Mid-Terrace	Gap in a terrace or poor-quality infill; narrow and deep plot with two adjoining flank walls.	Houses, multiple units, mews at rear; basement possible.
Garage	Small single/twin garages on short block edges; edges formed by rear gardens with blank boundaries.	Detached single dwelling
Garden	Large corner gardens of detached/semi-detached houses; orthogonal, deep, in same ownership as host house.	Detached single dwelling
Block Corner	Corner sites with two street edges; often occupied by low-density buildings like garages/MOT centers.	Small apartment buildings
Non-terraced Infill	Sites with two or more street edges NOT in a terraced block; typically larger plots.	Apartment blocks or mix of houses + flats.

Figure 4.25 Characteristics and development typologies of Street facing: residential sites in Newham

4.2.2.4 Street facing: high street

These types of blocks are common across Newham’s high streets, shopping areas, and town centres. They create a strong, continuous edge between public and private space because the buildings—shops, cafés, homes—line the street without gaps.

Even though many of these blocks are part of busy high streets, street-facing plots also appear in places that aren’t traditional terraces. Like residential streets, these areas offer good opportunities for small infill developments.

The main difference is that buildings here are usually taller (around 3–5 storeys) and often have shops or other non-residential uses on the ground floor.

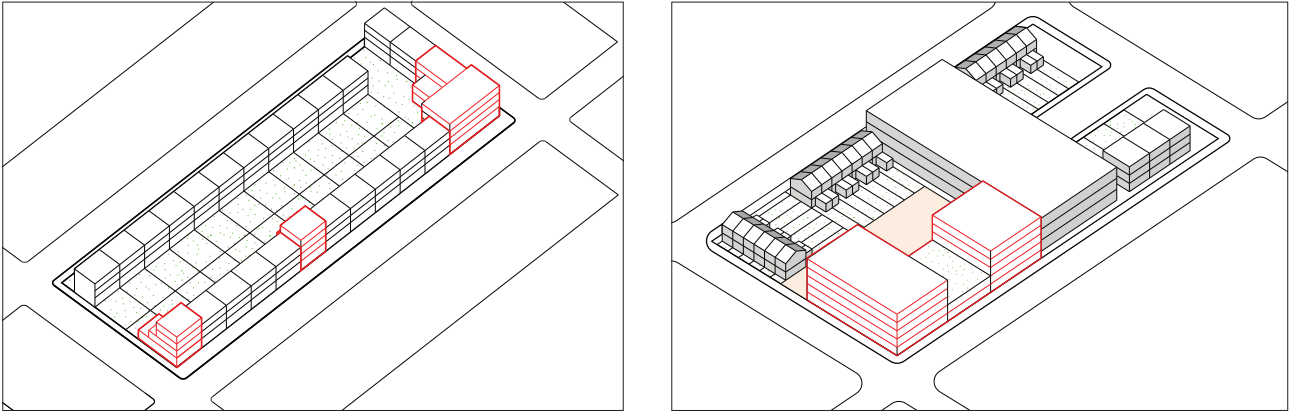


Figure 4.26 Street-facing high street typology in Newham, showing continuous mixed-use urban edges and opportunities for small-scale infill within taller commercial-residential blocks (Source: The Small Site Intensification Guidance (2022), edited by the author).

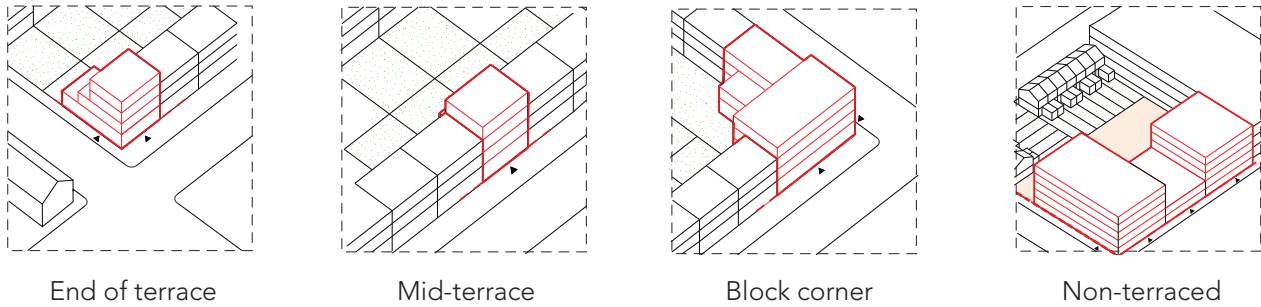


Figure 4.27 Common high street infill typologies in Newham, including end-of-terrace, mid-terrace, block corner, and non-terraced sites (Source: The Small Site Intensification Guidance (2022), edited by the author).

Street facing: High Street	Description	Typologies
End of Terrace	End of high-street parade; poor-quality 1–2 storey buildings.	Mixed-use: commercial at ground floor, residential above.
Mid-Terrace	Low building interrupting a high-street terrace; gap in the commercial frontage	Mixed-use; full-height building envelope; rear mews possible.
Block Corner	Highly visible mixed-use corner sites; underused commercial buildings	Mixed-use apartments over commercial ground floor.
Non-Terraced Infill	Larger multi-frontage high street sites, often vacant/underused.	Apartment blocks with commercial/community GF; podium gardens.

Figure 4.28 Characteristics and development typologies of Street facing: High street in Newham

4.2.2.5 Backland

These sites are usually located behind existing buildings with no direct street frontage. They're often small pieces of vacant land or old garage areas behind houses, accessed only by a narrow lane from the main street.

Even though their shapes and sizes can be irregular, they still offer strong potential for small infill developments and improvements to the surrounding public spaces. Because each site is unique, they require a tailored, site-specific design approach.

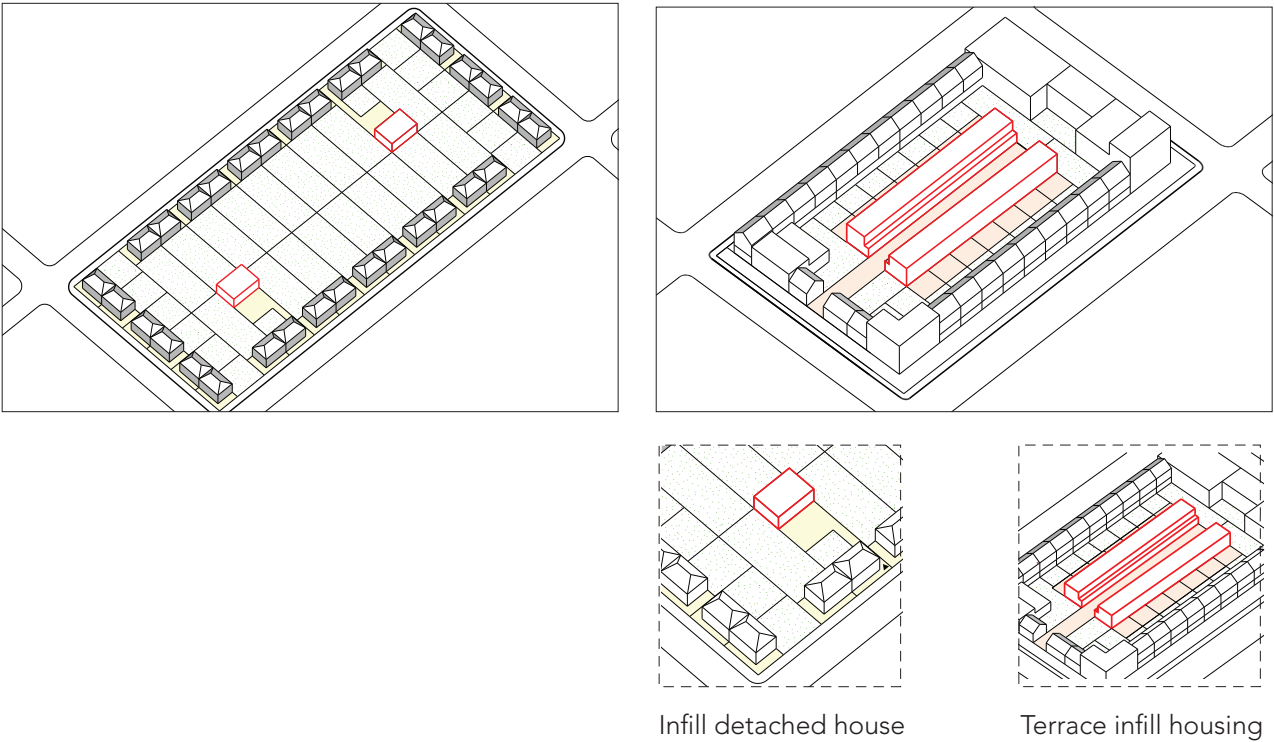


Figure 4.29 Freeform small-site infill typologies in Newham, including backland, estate infill, and infill garage developments located behind existing street-facing buildings (Source: The Small Site Intensification Guidance (2022), edited by the author).

Backland	Description	Typologies
Terrace infill housing	Landlocked interior block spaces; accessed by narrow lanes; sometimes multiple garages or yards.	Mews houses; small clusters; small apartment blocks.
Infill detached house	Rear part of a single garden plot; regular geometry; single ownership.	One detached home

Figure 4.30 Characteristics and development typologies of backland in Newham

4.2.2.6 Freeform

These sites are usually located behind existing buildings with no direct street frontage. They're often small pieces of vacant land or old garage areas behind houses, accessed only by a narrow lane from the main street.

Even though their shapes and sizes can be irregular, they still offer strong potential for small infill developments and improvements to the surrounding public spaces. Because each site is unique, they require a tailored, site-specific design approach.

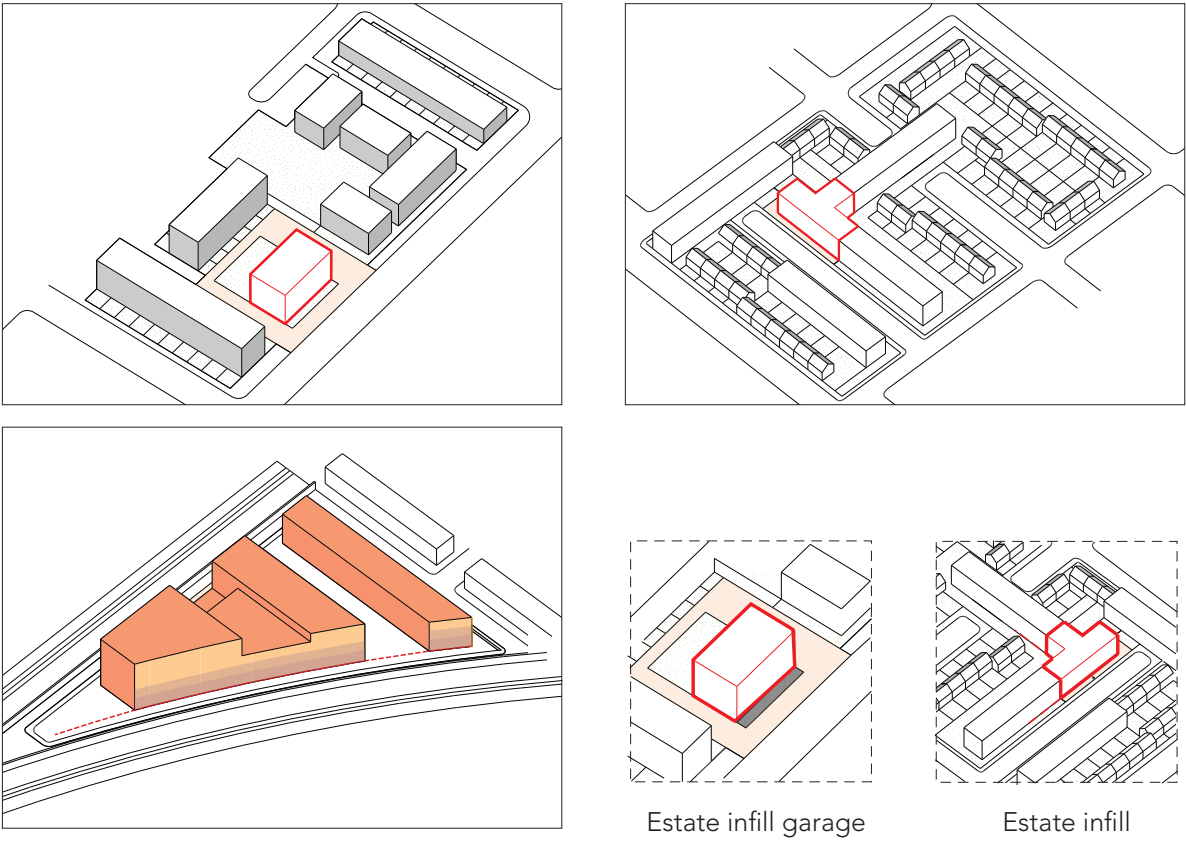


Figure 4.31 Freeform small-site infill typologies in Newham, including backland, estate infill, and infill garage developments located behind existing street-facing buildings (Source: The Small Site Intensification Guidance (2022), edited by the author).

Free-form	Description	Typologies
Infrastructure Infill	Adjacent to rail, highways, industrial edges; irregular geometry; noise/air impacts likely.	Residential or mixed-use depending on local plan.
Estate Infill	Leftover estate spaces: lawns, parking courts, underused areas.	Houses, terraces, or apartment blocks.
Estate Infill – Garage	Rows/clusters of disused estate garages; typically regular-shaped.	Terraces, houses, or compact apartment blocks.

Figure 4.32 Characteristics and development typologies of free form in Newham

4.2.2.7 Conclusion: Infill Site Typologies in Newham

The typologies discussed in this chapter illustrate the different spatial conditions in which small-site infill development occurs across the London Borough of Newham. Many of these sites emerge from the fine-grained structure of the borough’s residential neighbourhoods, where small parcels of land such as corner plots, former garages, garden plots, and other underused spaces appear within the existing urban fabric. Rather than being isolated or accidental spaces, these small sites represent a dispersed but important opportunity for introducing new housing within established neighbourhoods.

The classification of street-facing residential sites, high street sites, backland sites, and free-form sites highlights the variety of relationships that infill development can have with the surrounding urban context. Street-facing sites generally allow new buildings to integrate directly with the existing streetscape and reinforce the rhythm of neighbouring houses. In contrast, backland sites and interior block spaces often require more careful and site-specific design responses due to their limited visibility and constrained access. Free-form sites, which are often located near infrastructure or within estate environments, present different spatial challenges but also open possibilities for new forms of architectural intervention.

Understanding these typological conditions provides an important foundation for the design investigation developed in this thesis. By examining how different infill situations relate to the street, the block, and the surrounding neighbourhood, this chapter establishes the spatial context within which new housing can be inserted into existing urban environments.

The following chapter therefore moves from this broader typological reading toward the selection of a specific site in Newham. Through this site, the thesis explores how principles of tenure-blind housing can be translated into architectural design while maintaining continuity with the existing urban fabric.

4.3 | Site Identification

Aim:

To identify and select a final project area by evaluating listed infill sites within Newham's designated development areas, ensuring the chosen site aligns with local planning priorities and realistic delivery conditions.

4.3.1 Brownfield Infill Site Identification

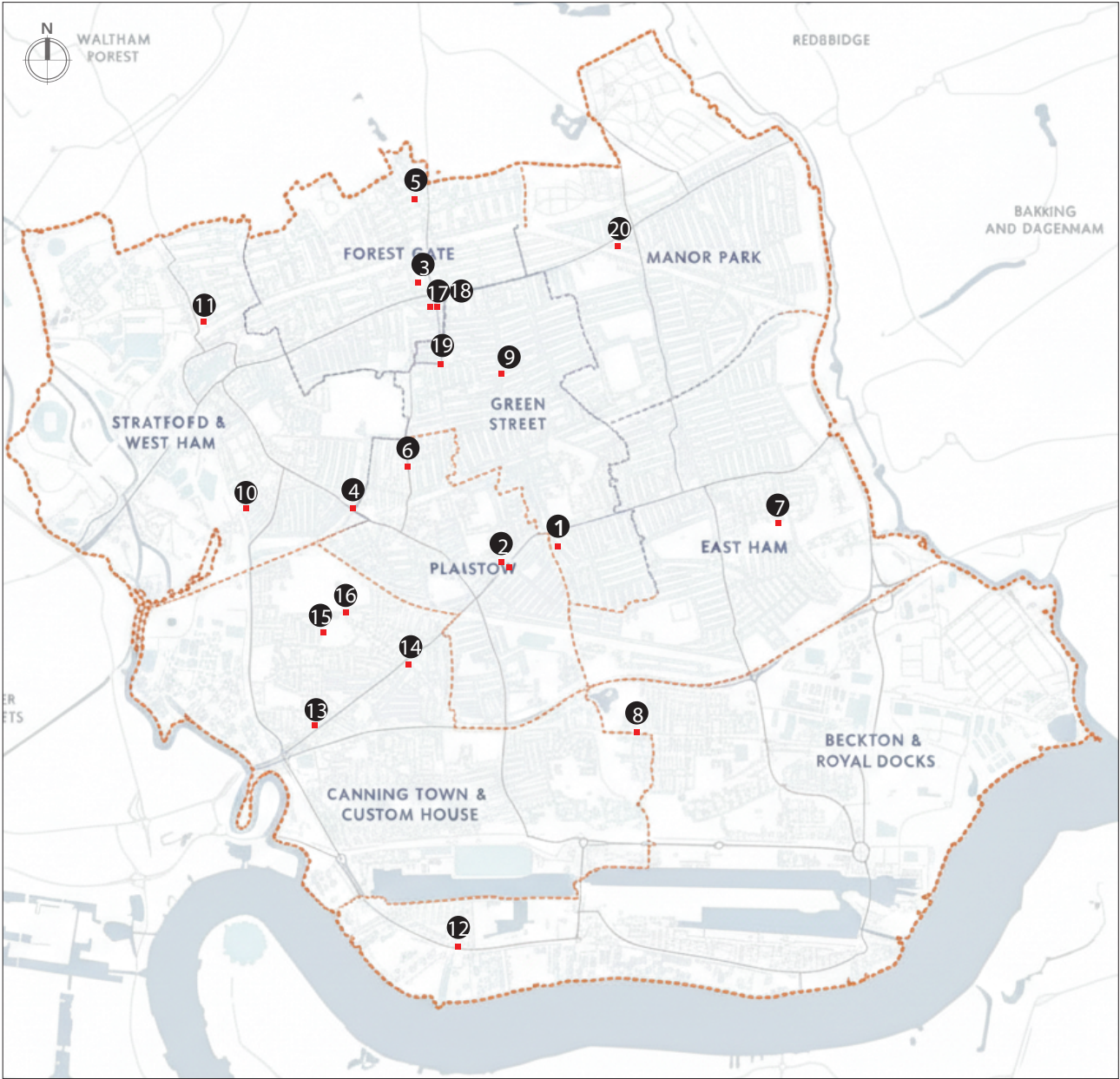


Figure 4.33 Distribution of registered brownfield sites in Newham (December 2025) (Source: Newham Brownfield Register, Newham Council, 2025; author's drawing).

4.3.1.1 Brownfield Register Status

All sites shown in this study are listed within Part 1 of the Newham Brownfield Register (December 2025). Inclusion within Part 1 indicates that the sites have been assessed by the Council as suitable, available and achievable for development.

In many cases, the sites already have planning permission. Existing planning permission shows the Council's position that the site is considered suitable for development and has a realistic prospect of delivery.

The selection focuses on small-scale brownfield plots embedded within existing urban fabric, showing the spatial conditions typical of infill development.

Most selected sites have an area of less than 0.25 hectares, aligning with the definition of small sites outlined in the Infill Design Requirements guidance. This scale supports the investigation of micro-scale residential insertion and allows testing of socially integrated housing within established neighbourhood contexts.

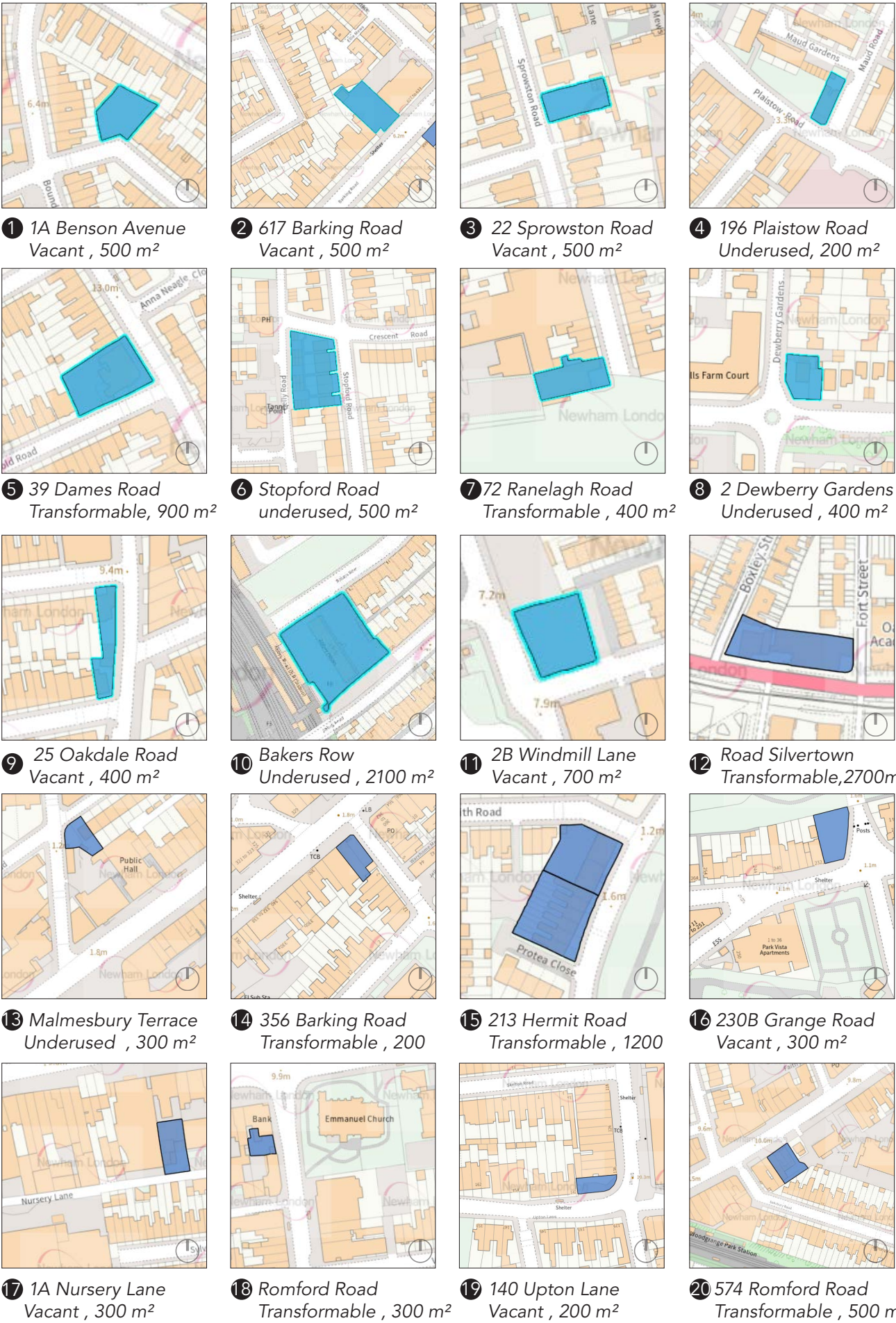


Figure 4.34 Distribution of registered brownfield sites in Newham (Source: Adapted from the Newham Brownfield Register, London Borough of Newham, 2025).

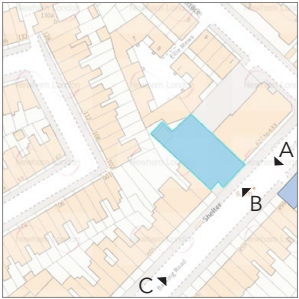
4.3.1.2 Final Site Selection

The final site selection focused on identifying a site that best represents the type of urban condition needed to test tenure-blind housing in a realistic setting.

Site 02 (617 Barking Road) was chosen because it is located along an active street and is surrounded by existing residential and mixed-use buildings. This means that any new housing introduced on the site must integrate naturally with the surrounding urban fabric, rather than appearing as a separate or identifiable development.

This site was selected over other shortlisted brownfield plots because it most clearly represents the typical urban condition in which small-scale tenure-blind infill housing must operate in Newham. Unlike larger or more isolated sites, this plot is tightly embedded within an established residential street, making any new development highly visible to surrounding residents and therefore particularly sensitive to issues of visual stigma and tenure legibility. This condition provides a strong testing ground for evaluating how architectural design can mitigate stigma through spatial integration and visual normalisation.

Its small scale, street-facing exposure, and mixed surrounding building types allow for direct assessment of how design strategies influence perception, legibility of tenure, and neighbourhood acceptance in real infill conditions typical of London social housing delivery.



② Chosen Site

Address:
617 Barking Road, Plaistow, London, E13 9EZ

Site Type:
Infill and Vacant Site

Land Use Zone:
Residential, Medium Density

Site Area:
488.33 m²

Method of Access:
Car
Bus
Train
Foot

Surrounding Building Types:
two-storey dwellings
Mixed-use buildings

Property Description / History:

Planning permission has been granted for redevelopment, including the removal of the existing structure and construction of residential building.



Figure 4.35 (Source: Adapted from Google Earth imagery, Google, 2024).



Figure 4.36 Adapted from Google Earth imagery, by Google, 2024 (<https://earth.google.com/web/>), (edited by the author)

4.4 | Case Studies

Aim:

This chapter examines 2 small-site infill housing case studies across Newham. Rather than presenting them as social housing models, the section analyses them as examples of locally accepted residential architecture. The aim is to understand the spatial and visual characteristics that define “normal” housing in this context.

4.4.1 Selection of Infill Social Housing Case Studies

4.4.1.1 Relevance to the Thesis Topic

The two case studies were selected because they directly relate to the main focus of this thesis: tenure-blind social housing within small-scale infill developments in the London Borough of Newham. Both projects are affordable housing schemes inserted into existing residential neighbourhoods and therefore provide relevant examples of how new social housing can be integrated into a sensitive urban context without appearing visually isolated or institutionally distinct.

4.4.1.2 Focus on Infill Social Housing

Another important reason for selecting these case studies is that they demonstrate different approaches to contextual integration while still working within similar urban and social conditions. Rather than analysing large housing estates or high-rise developments, the thesis focuses specifically on infill housing because smaller interventions are more closely related to the scale, rhythm, and everyday character of the surrounding neighbourhood. The projects therefore offered an opportunity to examine how architectural decisions at the level of façade, entrances, materials, thresholds, and urban configuration can influence the perception of equality, continuity, and social integration.

4.4.1.3 Comparative Analysis Through Two Case Studies

Two case studies were chosen in order to allow comparison rather than relying on a single example. Although both projects are social housing developments in Newham, they respond differently to site constraints, access conditions, and surrounding urban fabric. Analysing two projects made it possible to identify recurring architectural strategies and distinguish between site-specific decisions and broader principles relevant to tenure-blind housing design. This comparative approach strengthened the reliability of the research findings and helped develop a clearer design framework for the thesis proposal.

4.4.1.4 Analytical Criteria and Research Focus

The projects were analysed through several architectural and urban criteria that were considered directly relevant to the research question. These included material treatment and façade language, entrance quality and threshold hierarchy, window and frontage rhythm, accessibility and movement sequence, and the wider urban configuration of plots, footprints, and building massing. Particular attention was given to how these elements contribute to the visibility or invisibility of social difference within the built environment. The analysis therefore examined not only the visual appearance of the buildings, but also how architectural organisation, material continuity, and spatial hierarchy shape the everyday reading of housing as either ordinary and integrated or socially distinct.

4.4.2 Case Study 01



Figure 4.37 Front façade of the Newham Housing development, illustrating the street-facing residential elevation (Source: Panter Hudspith Architects). 51°31'39"N, 0°03'44"E

Location :	London Borough of Newham, Darwell Close
Architect/Designer :	Panter Hudspith Architect
Date :	2017
Housing /Support :	Affordable housing
Site Context/Type :	Residential
Site/Building Area	Unit size : 64.54 m² Semi-private outdoor space : 27.29 m² private outdoor space : 46.74 m² A three-bedroom, six-person home, on two storeys. The houses are rectangular in plan to ensure construction cost-effectiveness and room layouts are designed to be flexible and can be ‘flipped’ to respond to a site’s orientation.



Figure 4.38 Street view of the Newham Housing development, illustrating its integration within the surrounding urban context (Source: Panter Hudspith Architects).



Figure 4.39 Corner view of the Newham Housing development, illustrating the building massing, façade articulation, and integration within the surrounding streetscape (Source: Panter Hudspith Architects).



Figure 4.40 Location of the Newham Housing case study within its surrounding urban context (Source: Adapted from Google Earth imagery, Google, 2024; edited by the author).

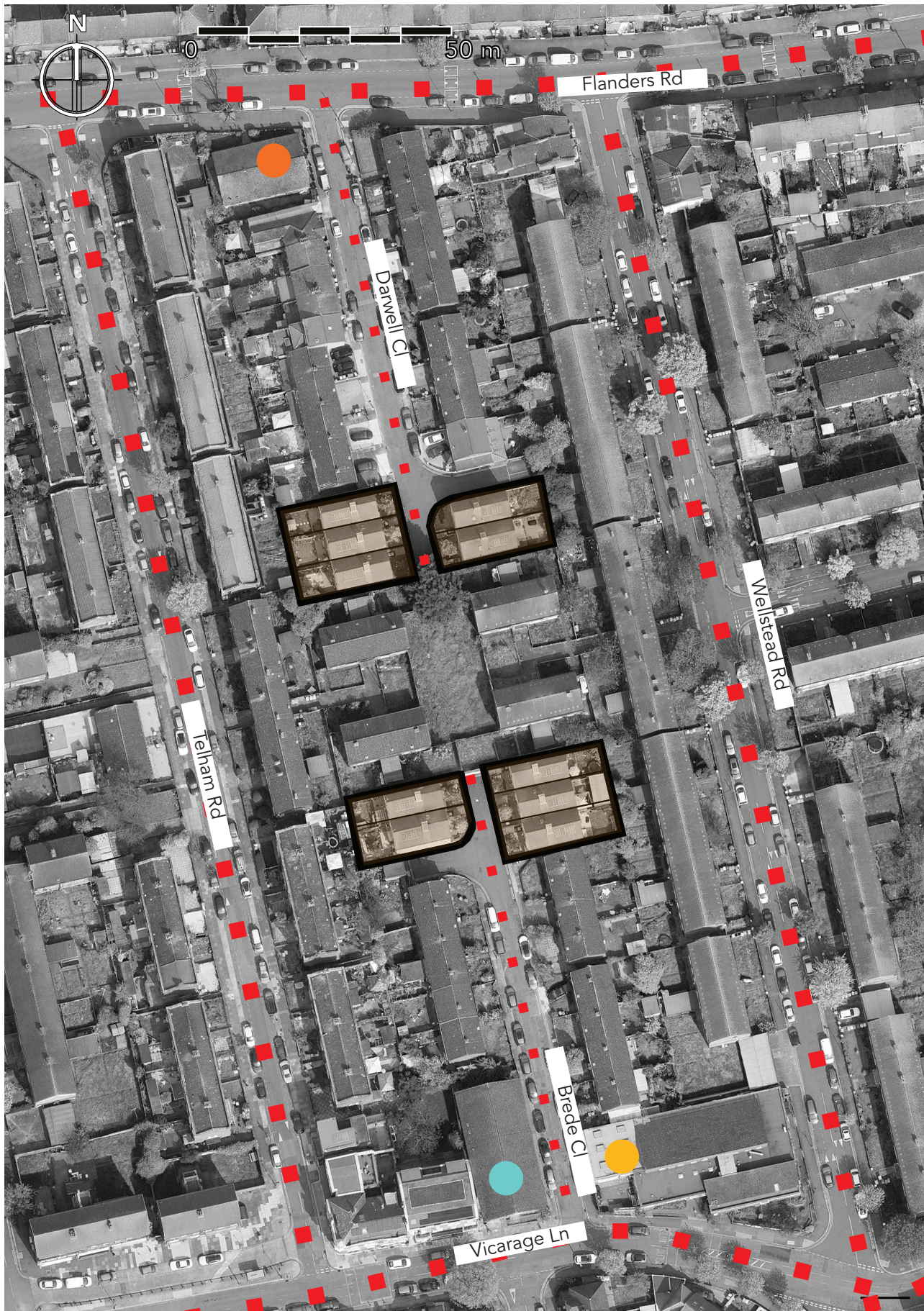


Figure 4.41 Urban context and surrounding amenities of the Newham Housing case study, highlighting the study area and nearby community facilities (Source: Adapted from Google Earth imagery, Google, 2024; edited by the author).

Figure 4.41 Urban context and surrounding amenities of the Newham Housing case study, highlighting the study area and nearby community facilities (Source: Adapted from Google Earth imagery, Google, 2024; edited by the author).

4.4.2.1 Plot Division and Building Footprint

The analysis of the land division shows that the site is structured through a system of narrow and repetitive plots, forming a consistent and fine-grain subdivision pattern. Rather than operating as a single, unified development parcel, the site is already fragmented into smaller units that establish a clear spatial order. This subdivision is not incidental; it defines how buildings relate to the street, to each other, and to the overall urban fabric. The case study engages directly with this condition by working within the existing parcel structure rather than overriding it. The intervention does not consolidate multiple plots into a larger footprint, but instead aligns with the established rhythm of subdivision. In doing so, it preserves the proportional relationships, orientations, and alignments that characterize the surrounding context. The project therefore emerges as part of the same underlying system, maintaining continuity at the level of land Organisation.

This approach becomes more evident in the building footprint analysis. The surrounding urban fabric is composed of small-scale, repeated building units that correspond closely to the parcel structure. Instead of introducing a single continuous mass, the case study translates its larger program into a series of smaller volumes. These volumes reflect the dimensions and spacing of neighboring buildings, allowing the development to operate within the same scale and rhythm.



Figure 4.42 Plot divisions of Darwell Close, Newham, London (Author's drawing).

The intervention does not replicate the context directly, but it adopts its logic of repetition and distribution. Larger capacity is accommodated through the multiplication of smaller units, rather than through expansion into a dominant form. As a result, the project maintains the existing pattern of solids and voids, as well as the visual continuity of the street frontage.

Taken together, the two analyses demonstrate that the strength of the case study lies in its ability to work simultaneously at the level of land and building. The subdivision structure provides a stable and consistent framework, while the building strategy reinforces this framework through repetition, alignment, and controlled fragmentation. The project therefore avoids introducing new hierarchies or visual discontinuities, and instead becomes embedded within the existing urban logic.

This has direct implications for the research question. By maintaining consistency in parcel use, building scale, and spatial Organisation, the development reduces the possibility of internal differentiation becoming visible in the urban fabric. The absence of large, singular building masses and the reliance on repeated units make it difficult to distinguish between different parts of the project. In this way, the architectural strategy supports a condition where distinction is minimized and continuity is prioritized, aligning with the objective of producing a visually coherent and socially neutral housing environment.

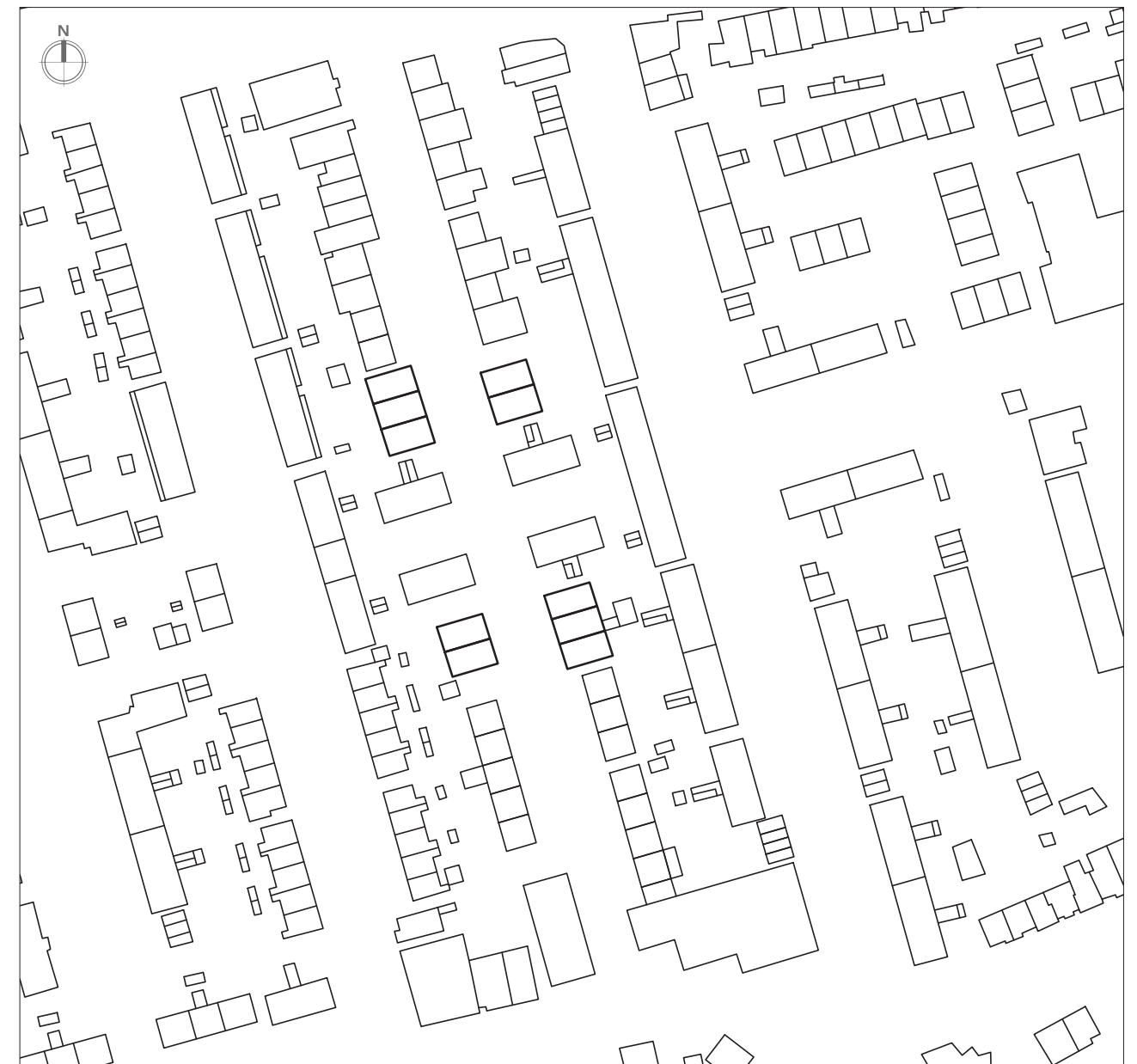


Figure 4.43 Building footprints of Darwell Close, Newham, London (Author's drawing).

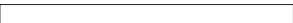
4.4.2.2 Accessibility and Hierarchy

The analysis shows that both the neighbouring buildings and the case study follow the same basic hierarchy of access: public street, semi-private path, and private entrance. The hierarchy itself therefore remains similar. The main difference lies in how the street realm is formed and how this affects the reading of access.

In the neighbouring condition, the semi-private layer remains closely tied to the street edge, so the transition to the dwelling is more exposed and directly visible. In the case study, this condition is affected by the location of the site at the end of a dead-end alley. Because the street does not continue beyond the site, it loses the character of a simple movement corridor and begins to form a more enclosed realm between the two groups of buildings. In this sense, the street becomes a space in itself rather than only a route.

This changes how the hierarchy is perceived. The semi-private layer is still present, but it is now supported by a street space that is quieter, more contained, and more closely related to the buildings it serves. The transition from public to private therefore becomes less abrupt, not because the hierarchy changes, but because the spatial condition of the street is redefined. Rather than functioning only as external access, it acts as an intermediate shared environment between the buildings.

This is important because it shows that hierarchy is shaped not only by entrances and paths, but also by the wider spatial structure in which they are placed. Here, the enclosed position of the site and the limited movement of the dead-end street create a more protected and locally defined access condition, allowing the case study to work through the existing hierarchy while giving it a stronger spatial character.

	Street
	On foot , Path
	Pedestrian, Entrance to Semi-Private
	vehicular Entracne
	Pedestrian, Entrance to Private
	Pavement
	Continuous wall façade

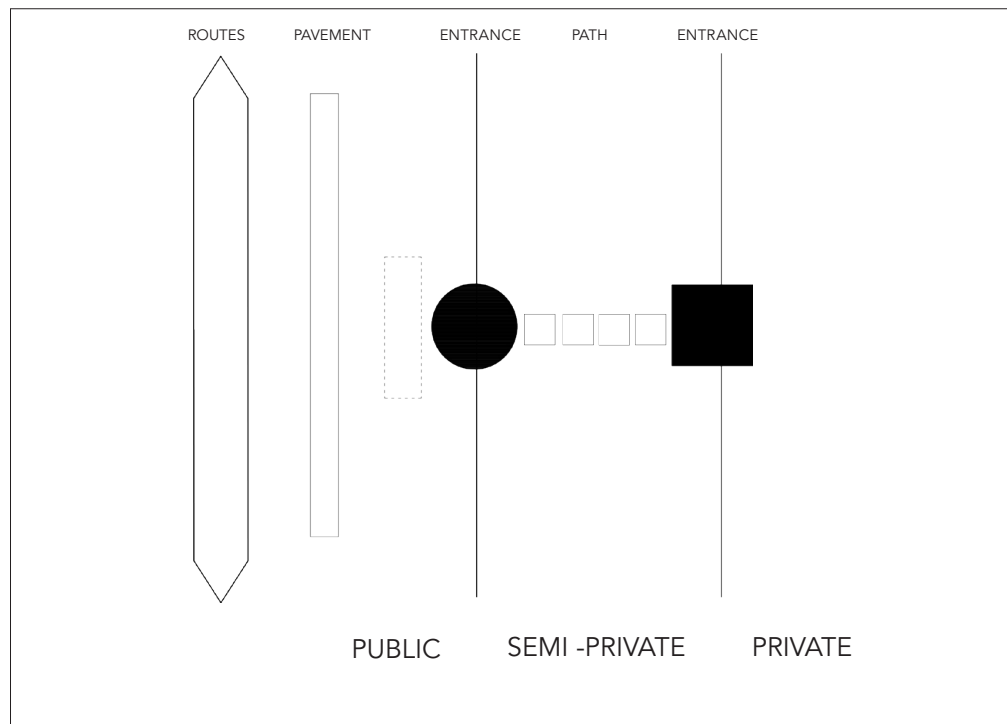
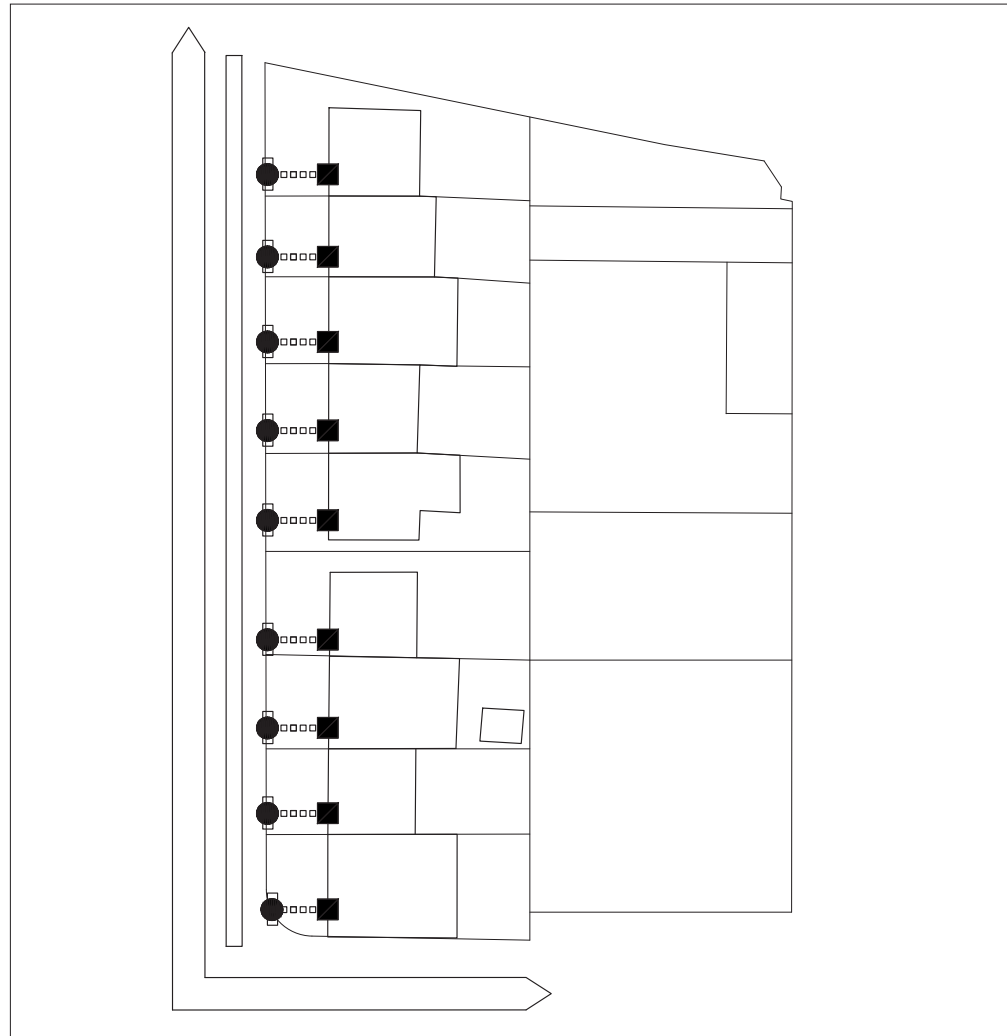


Figure 4.44 Accessibility and hierarchy of neighbouring buildings, Darwell Close, Newham, London (Author's drawing).

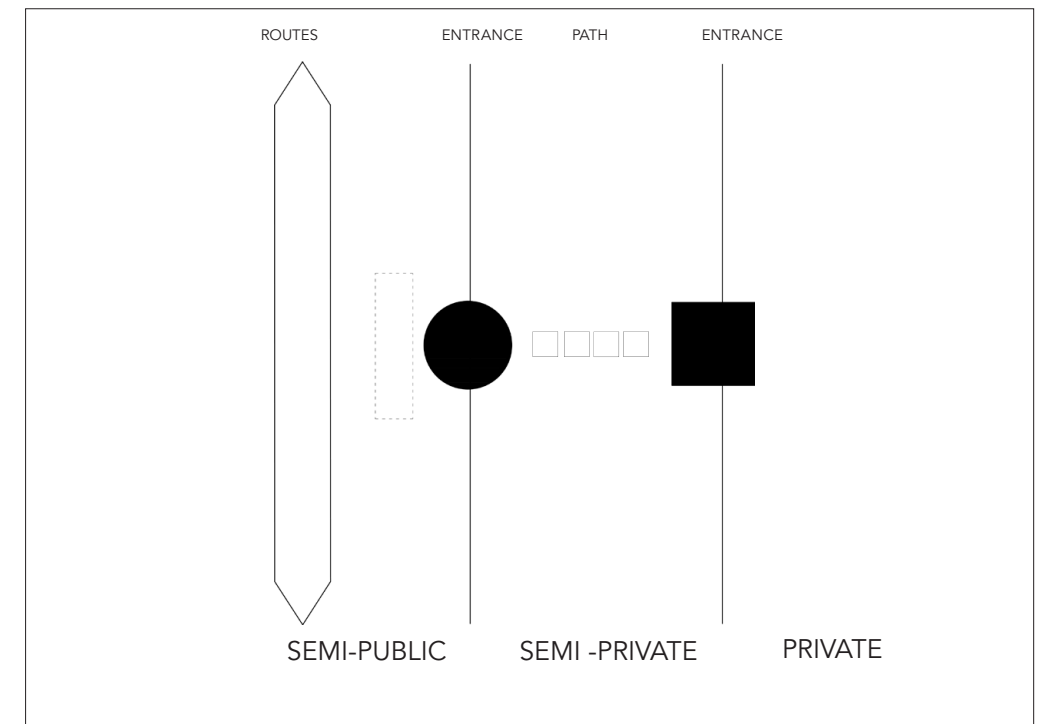
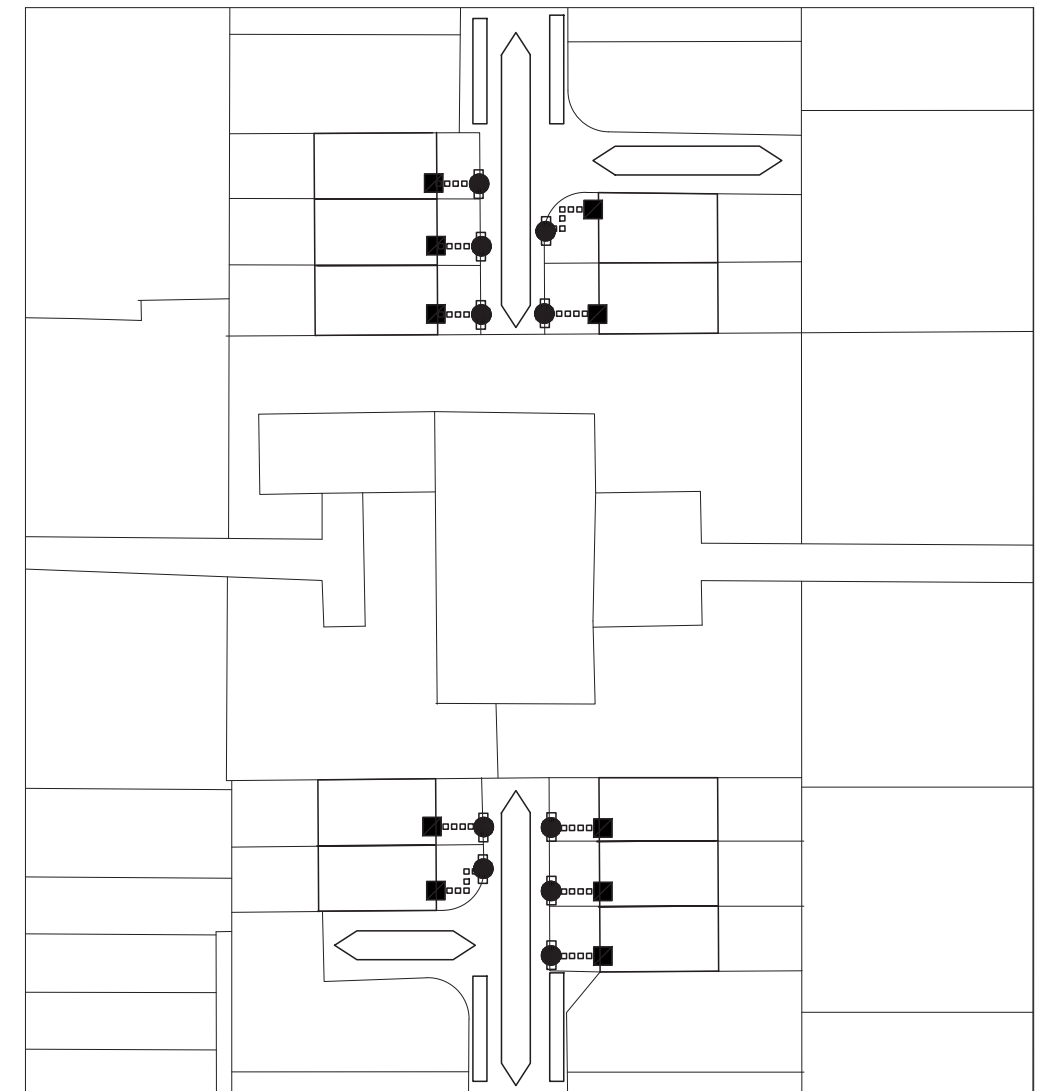


Figure 4.45 Accessibility and hierarchy of the case study, Darwell Close, Newham, London (Author's drawing).

4.4.2.3 Materials Analysis

The material analysis shows that the site is organised through a clear but subtle contrast between asphalt, cobbled paving, and greenery. Asphalt is mainly used for the larger access routes and movement spaces, giving these areas a more infrastructural and street-like character. In contrast, cobbled paving appears in smaller areas close to the buildings, especially at points of entry and transition. Greenery fills most of the remaining open space, softening the overall environment and giving the site a more domestic and residential quality.

What matters here is not only the use of different materials, but the way they help structure the experience of the site. The asphalt reads as the surface of movement and access, while the cobbles mark places where movement slows down and where the relationship between building and ground becomes more intimate. These paved threshold areas help define the entrance zones without relying on strong physical boundaries. At the same time, the greenery reduces the hardness of the open space and creates a calmer setting between the buildings.

What is significant is that the case study follows the same basic material logic already present in the surrounding context. It does not introduce a completely different ground treatment, but works with the existing pattern in which hard materials are used for access and transition, while softer green areas shape the residential setting. In this sense, the project responds to the material language of its surroundings rather than breaking away from it. This helps the development sit more naturally within the existing fabric and strengthens continuity between the case study and its context.

This makes the ground plane an important part of how the site is organised. The hierarchy is not created only by the buildings themselves, but also by the way materials are used to distinguish between circulation, threshold, and residential open space. Rather than creating sharp separations, the site works through small shifts in texture and surface, allowing different zones to be recognised in a quieter and more continuous way.

In relation to the thesis, this is important because the materials help define space without making difference too explicit. By using the same general logic as the surrounding area, the case study avoids standing out through an obviously different surface treatment. Instead, it creates a more gradual transition from access space to dwelling space while remaining visually connected to the context. As a result, the material strategy supports a residential environment that is organised and legible, but not overly divided or visually harsh.

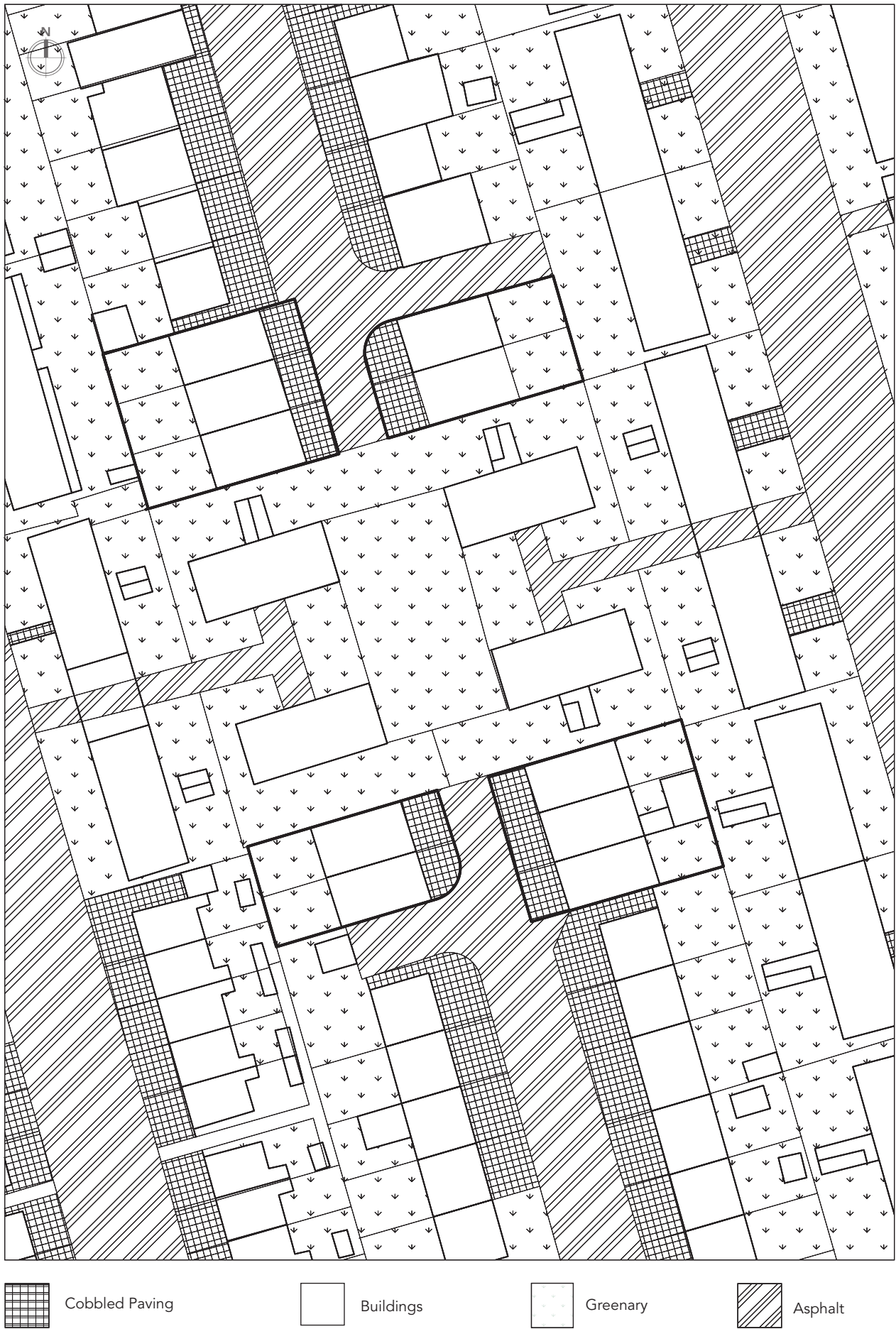


Figure 4.46 Material analysis of the surrounding urban fabric, Darwell Close, Newham, London (Author’s drawing).

4.4.2.4 Existing Elements: Entrance and Window Rhythm

The existing neighbourhood is shaped by a clear logic of repetition, but this repetition is not completely uniform. The entrances follow a relatively consistent pattern along the street, with each dwelling marked by its own direct point of access. This creates a strong sense of individual units placed side by side, where the entrance becomes one of the main elements through which each house is identified. At the same time, small differences in door design, colour, frame, canopy, and threshold treatment introduce variation within this repeated structure. The result is a streetscape that is ordered, yet not monotonous.

A similar condition can be seen in the windows. Their rhythm is generally based on the repeated spacing of the housing units, which gives the façade a recognisable structure. However, this rhythm is not fully regular. Window sizes, proportions, frame types, and subdivisions vary from one dwelling to another, and some openings have been altered over time. Because of this, the façade does not read as a rigidly standardised composition, but as a repeated framework that has been gradually adapted by individual households. This creates a balance between continuity and difference, where the street maintains an overall visual order while still allowing signs of domestic individuality.

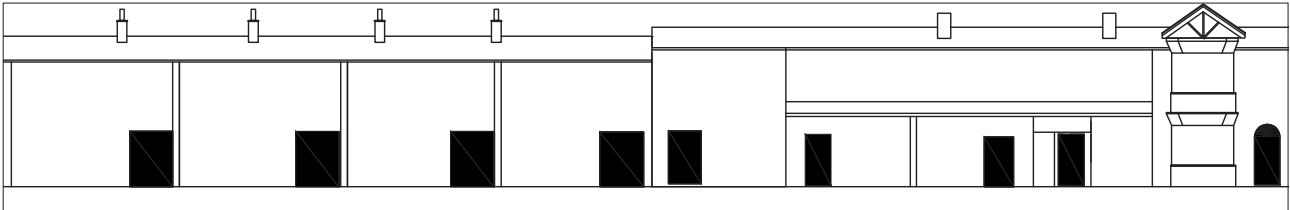


Figure 4.47 Position and rhythm of the entrances, Darwell Close, Newham, London (Author’s drawing).

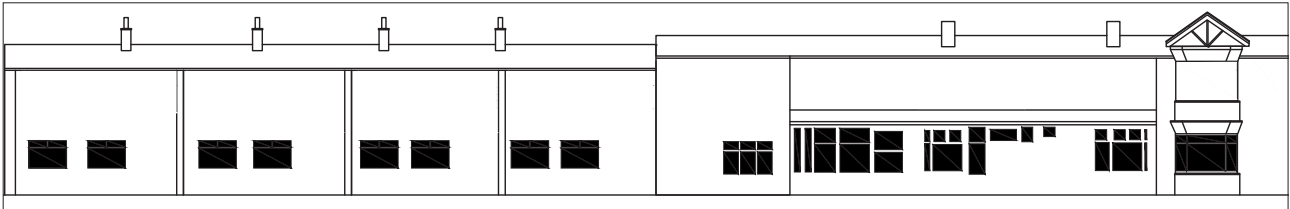


Figure 4.48 Position and rhythm of the windows, Darwell Close, Newham, London (Author’s drawing).



Figure 4.49 Façade analysis of the neighbouring buildings, Darwell Close, Newham, London (Author’s drawing).



Figure 4.50 Entrance door typologies of the neighbouring buildings, Darwell Close, Newham, London (Source: Adapted from Google Earth imagery, Google, 2024; edited by the author).



Figure 4.51 Window typologies of the neighbouring buildings, Darwell Close, Newham, London (Source: Adapted from Google Earth imagery, Google, 2024; edited by the author).

The case study draws directly from the existing neighbourhood by adopting its basic rhythm of entrances, windows, and repeated dwelling units. Rather than introducing a completely different façade language, the project takes the simple and familiar structure of the surrounding houses as its starting point. The neighbouring buildings are organised as a series of repeated units, each with its own entrance and a consistent arrangement of openings. The case study follows this same principle and translates it into its own design.

The openings are arranged in a repeated and balanced way across the façade, following the same general logic found in the neighbouring context. The windows are not identical copies of those around them, but they keep the same sense of spacing, vertical alignment, and relation to each dwelling unit. This gives the façade a familiar order and prevents it from appearing unrelated to its surroundings.

What makes this strategy strong is that the case study does not copy the neighbourhood literally. Instead, it uses its underlying rules: repetition of units, regular spacing of entrances and windows, and a simple domestic roofline. In this way, the project works with the existing fabric rather than against it. The building becomes contemporary in detail, but familiar in structure.



Figure 4.54 Front façade elevation of the case study buildings, Darwell Close, Newham, London (Author's drawing).

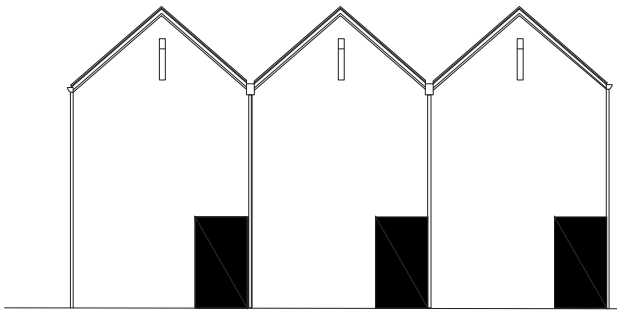


Figure 4.52 Position and rhythm of the entrances, Pitchford Street, Newham, London (Author's drawing).

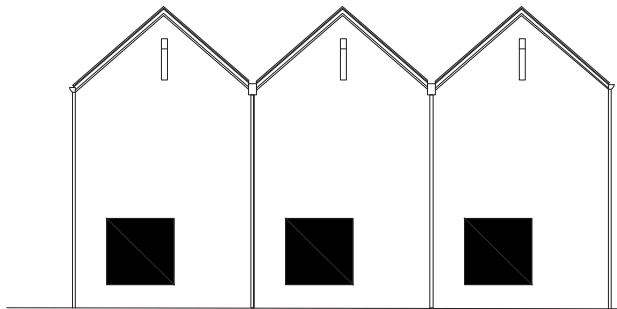
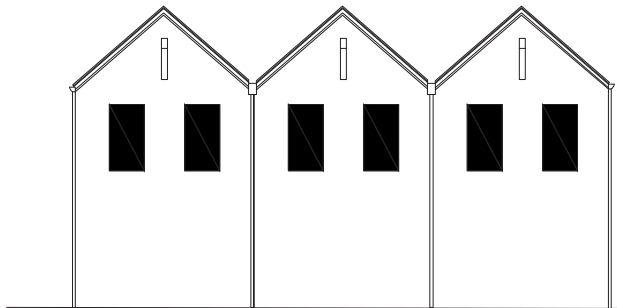


Figure 4.53 Position and rhythm of the windows, Darwell Close, Newham, London (Author's drawing).



Figure 4.55 Window and door typologies of the case-study building, Darwell Close, Newham, London (Source: Adapted from Google Earth imagery, Google, 2024; edited by the author).

4.4.2.5 Material Comparison

The comparison between the case study and the surrounding neighbourhood shows that the project does not copy the existing material character directly, but it clearly works from its main logic. In the neighbourhood, the dominant material is brick, combined with tiled roofs, white window frames, rendered surfaces in some houses, and small variations in door and window detailing. Although the houses are not identical, they share a common domestic material language based on masonry, repetition, and small-scale variation. This gives the street a sense of continuity even where individual dwellings have been altered over time.

The case study keeps this same basic approach by also using brick as the main material, which allows it to remain visually connected to the surrounding fabric. This is important because the project does not introduce a material that would make it appear completely separate from its context. Instead, it stays within the existing neighbourhood vocabulary of masonry construction and pitched roof housing. In this sense, the project follows the same underlying rule as the surrounding buildings: a repeated domestic form held together by a shared material base.

At the same time, the case study reinterprets this material language in a more controlled and simplified way. The brick is lighter and more uniform, the detailing is sharper, and the doors and window frames are darker and more minimal. Compared with the neighbourhood, where materials have accumulated gradually through extensions, repairs, and replacements, the case study appears more consistent and deliberately composed. So the relationship is not one of imitation, but of translation. The project takes the familiar material identity of the street and reworks it into a cleaner and more contemporary architectural expression.

This can also be seen in how the case study handles contrast. In the surrounding neighbourhood, contrast often comes from different brick tones, rendered façades, roof tiles, porch additions, and mixed window types. In the case study, contrast is reduced and carefully controlled: brick remains dominant, while darker frames and recessed openings create depth without breaking the overall unity of the façade. This makes the building feel new, but still related to the material character of the area.

From the perspective of the thesis, this is important because the project shows how continuity does not require exact copying. What matters is that the new development recognises the material logic of the existing fabric and works within it. By using brick as the main surface, keeping the domestic scale of masonry housing, and avoiding overly expressive or alien materials, the case study reduces the visual distance between itself and the neighbourhood. This helps the building sit more naturally within its context and supports a more integrated and less visibly separate architectural identity.



Figure 4.56 Materials used in the case study buildings, Darwell Close, Newham, London (Author's drawing).



Figure 4.57 Materials of the existing neighbourhood buildings, Darwell Close, Newham, London (Author's drawing).

4.4.3 Case Study 02



51° 32' 18.00" N, 0° 00' 12.76" E

Figure 4.58 View of the Newham Housing case study, illustrating the architectural form, façade composition, and entrance sequence (Source: Bell Phillips Architects).



Figure 4.59 View from the Newham Housing case study towards the surrounding urban skyline, illustrating its relationship with the wider city context (Source: Bell Phillips Architects).

Location :	London Borough of Newham
Architect/Designer :	Bellphillips
Date :	2017
Housing /Support :	Affordable housing Residential
Site Context/Type :	1,178.21 m²
Site/Building Area	6 A Designs for 3-bed 6-person terraced houses



Figure 4.60 Detail view of the Newham Housing case study, illustrating the façade materials, window composition, and roof profile (Source: Bell Phillips Architects).

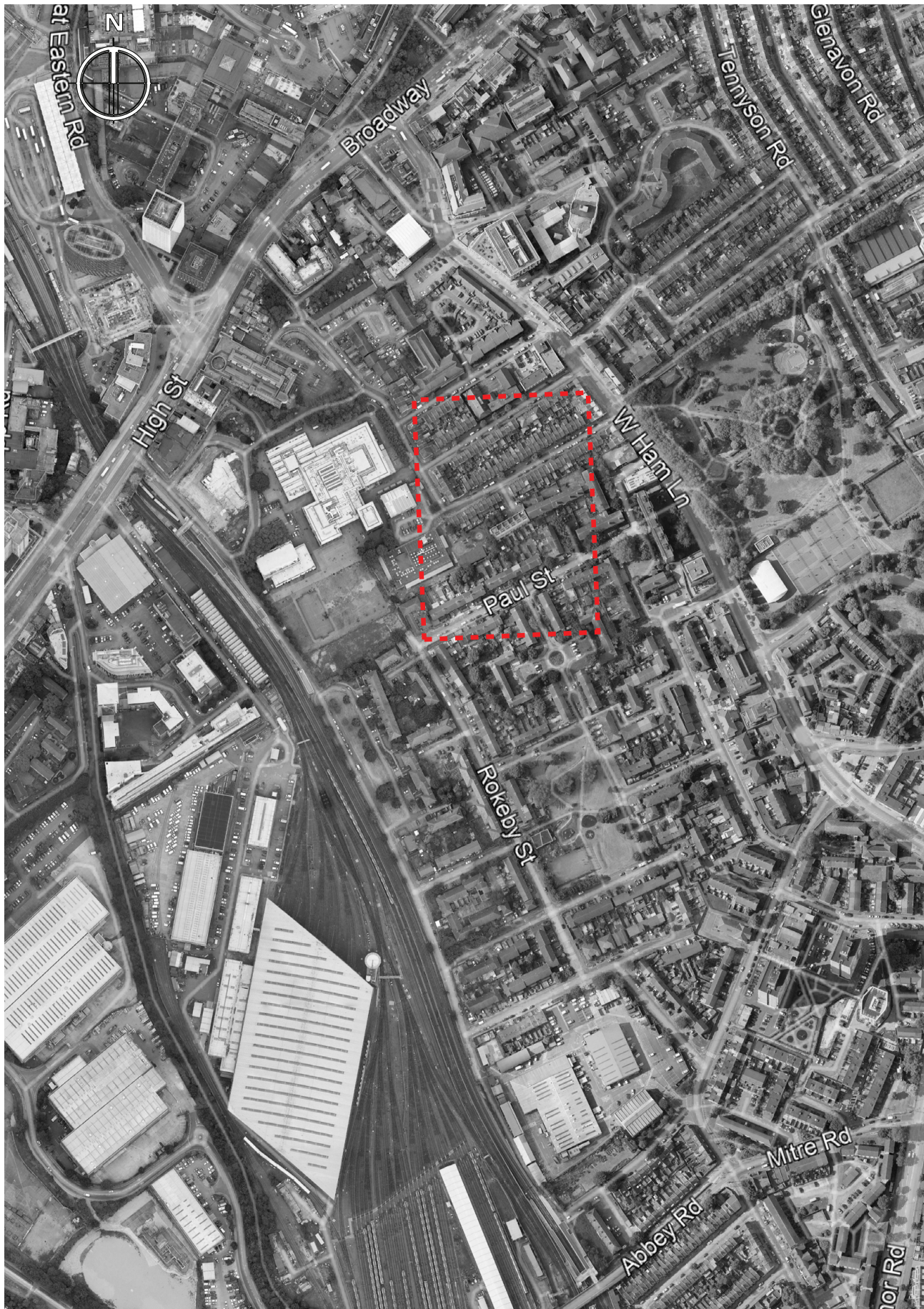


Figure 4.61 Location of the Pitchford Street case study within its surrounding urban context (Source: Adapted from Google Earth imagery, Google, 2024; edited by the author).



Figure 4.62 Urban context and immediate surroundings of the Pitchford Street case study, highlighting the study area and its relationship to the surrounding street network (Source: Adapted from Google Earth imagery, Google, 2024; edited by the author).

4.4.3.1 Plot Division and Building Footprint

The analysis shows that the case study begins from a larger plot, but instead of treating it as one undivided development parcel, it is organised into smaller, repeated housing units. This creates a clear internal order and allows the project to work with a more domestic scale. The plot is therefore not used as a single abstract piece of land, but as a structure that can be broken down to guide the arrangement of the housing.

This becomes even clearer in the building footprint. The surrounding context is made up of small residential footprints with a regular and repeated pattern. The case study responds to this condition by avoiding one continuous building mass and instead translating the larger site into smaller repeated built forms. In this way, the project does not copy the surroundings exactly, but it takes their logic of repetition, rhythm, and unit definition and reworks it within a larger development area.

Taken together, these two analyses show that the strength of the case study lies in how it handles scale. Although it is built on a larger site, it avoids reading as a single oversized object. Through subdivision and

repeated footprints, it creates a form that feels closer to the surrounding residential grain.

For this thesis, this is important because it suggests a useful framework for infill housing: a larger site can still be designed in a way that reflects the smaller scale of its context, helping the project feel more integrated, more familiar, and less visually detached from the neighbourhood.

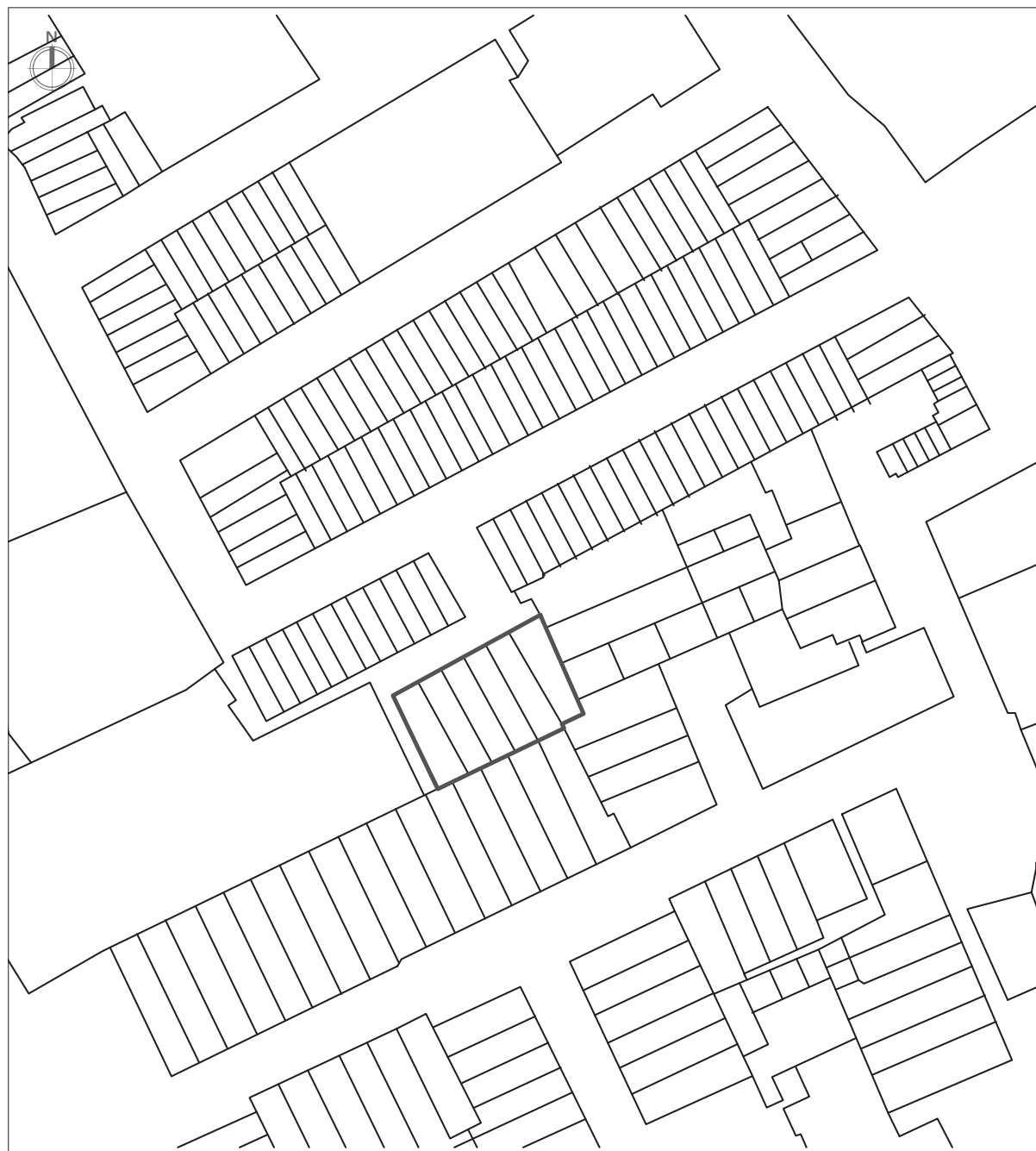


Figure 4.63 Plot divisions, Pitchford Street, Newham, London (Author's drawing).

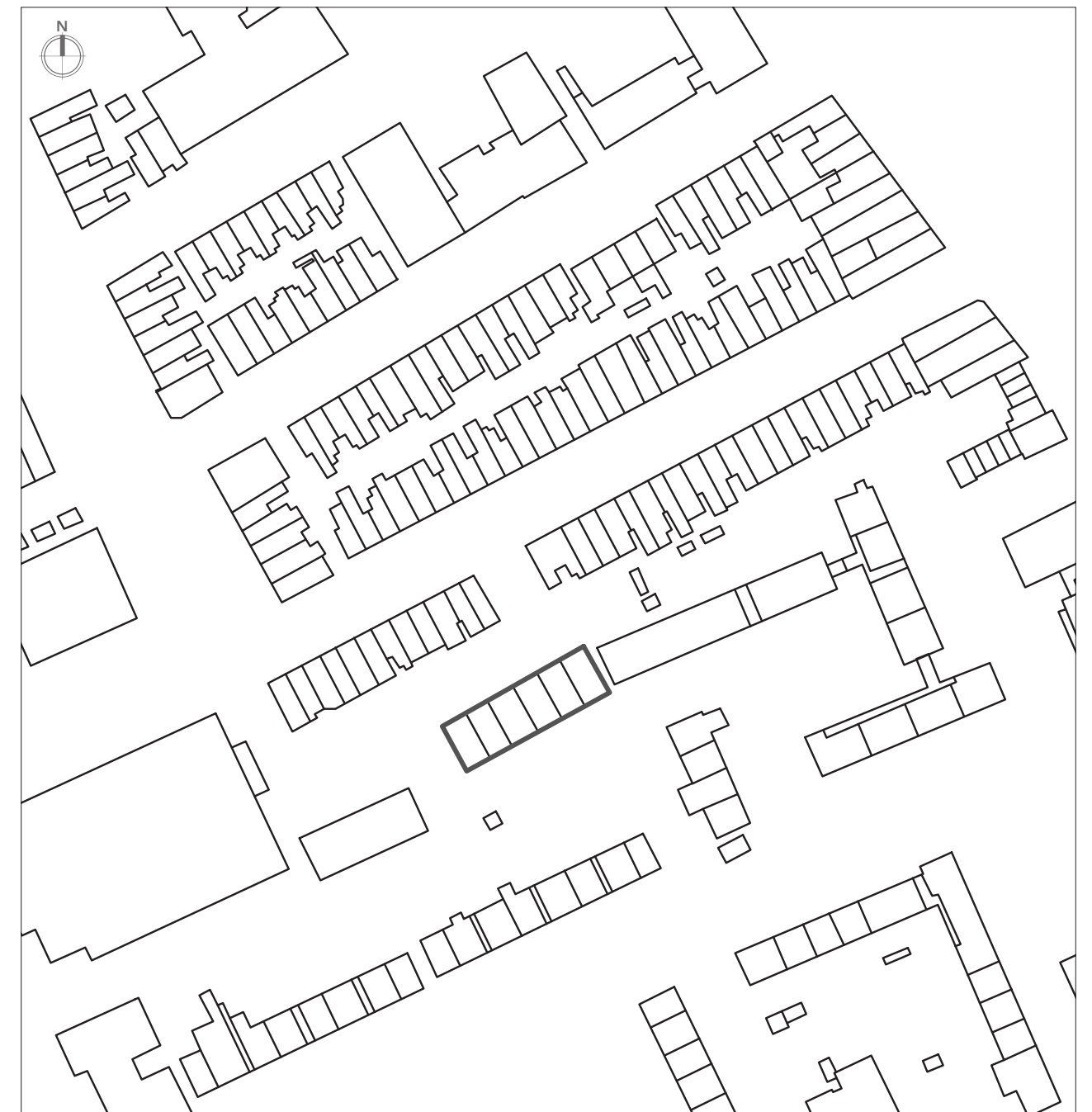


Figure 4.64 Building footprints, Pitchford Street, Newham, London (Author's drawing).

4.4.3.2 Parking

The parking analysis shows a clear difference between the case study and its surroundings. In the surrounding fabric, parking is mostly accommodated on the street, which allows the plots themselves to remain more directly shaped by housing and open space. In the case study, by contrast, parking is brought inside the site and becomes part of the project layout.

This difference is important, but it cannot be understood as automatically positive or negative. Its value depends on the effect it has on the overall spatial quality of the scheme. In relation to tenure-blind housing, the key issue is whether internal parking supports a coherent and dignified residential environment, or whether it reduces the quality of open space and makes the layout feel more technical and constrained.

For this thesis, the case study is useful because it shows that parking is not only a functional requirement but also part of the spatial framework of the project. The placement of parking influences how the site is organised, how domestic the housing feels, and how the scheme is socially read. This means that, within a tenure-blind approach, parking should be assessed not simply by its location, but by whether it helps preserve an ordinary residential character without creating a compromised or visibly lower-quality living environment.



Figure 4.65 Parking areas, Pitchford Street, Newham, London (Author’s drawing).

 Parkings

4.4.3.3 Accessibility and Hierarchy

The comparison shows that the surrounding buildings generally follow a direct sequence from public street to pavement to entrance and then into the dwelling. The threshold is relatively simple, and the transition from public to private happens quickly. In the case study, this sequence becomes more layered. Access moves through additional paths and intermediate spaces before reaching the private units, creating a deeper hierarchy between the street and the home.

This difference should not be read only as a design choice, but also as a result of the site constraints. Because the case study is set within a larger and more internally organised plot, the project cannot rely on the same direct street-to-door relationship found in the neighbouring houses. The more articulated sequence is therefore partly a response to the physical condition of the site. Rather than copying the surrounding access pattern exactly, the case study translates it into a form that works within its own constraints.

For the thesis, this is important because the question is not whether the case study matches the surrounding hierarchy in a literal way, but whether it preserves the same sense of clarity, dignity, and residential quality. In a tenure-blind framework, a deeper access sequence can still work if it remains legible, shared, and equal for all residents. It becomes problematic only when hierarchy turns into visible difference, secondary access, or a lower-quality arrival experience for some units.

The case shows that contextual integration does not always mean direct repetition. In constrained sites, the existing spatial logic may need to be reinterpreted rather than copied. What matters is that the transition from public to private still supports an ordinary domestic character and does not introduce spatial signals of inequality. In that sense, the hierarchy of the case study can be understood as an adaptation of the surrounding pattern to site constraints, while still aiming to maintain a coherent and dignified residential sequence.

	vehicular (car access)
	Street
	On foot , Path
	Pedestrian, Entrance to Semi-Private
	vehicular Entracne
	Pedestrian, Entrance to Private
	Pavement
	Continuous wall façade

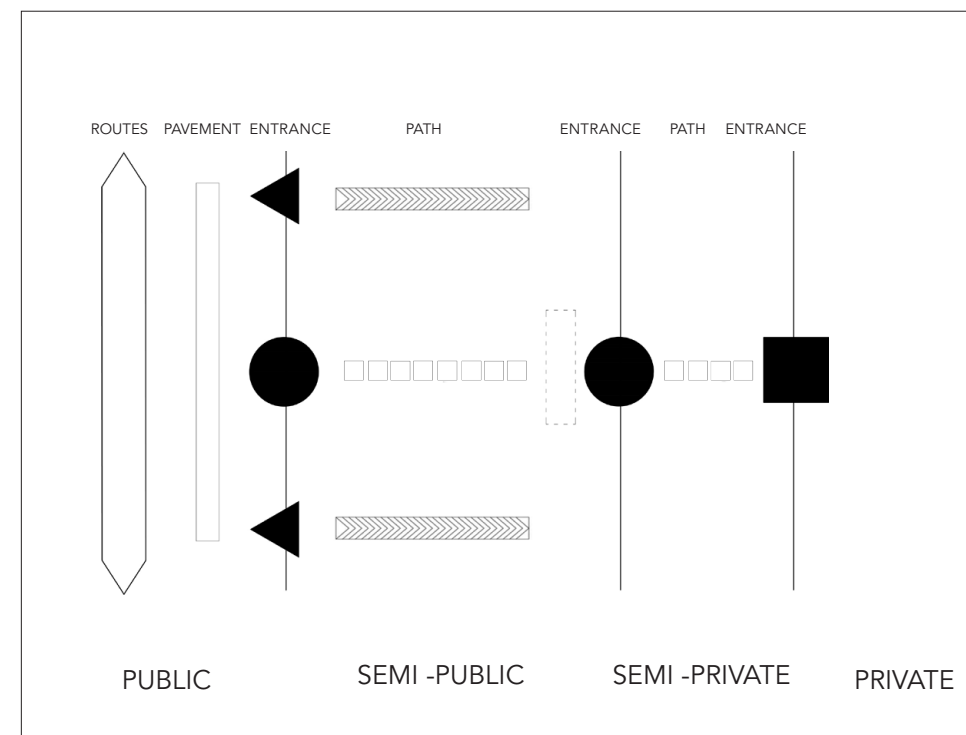
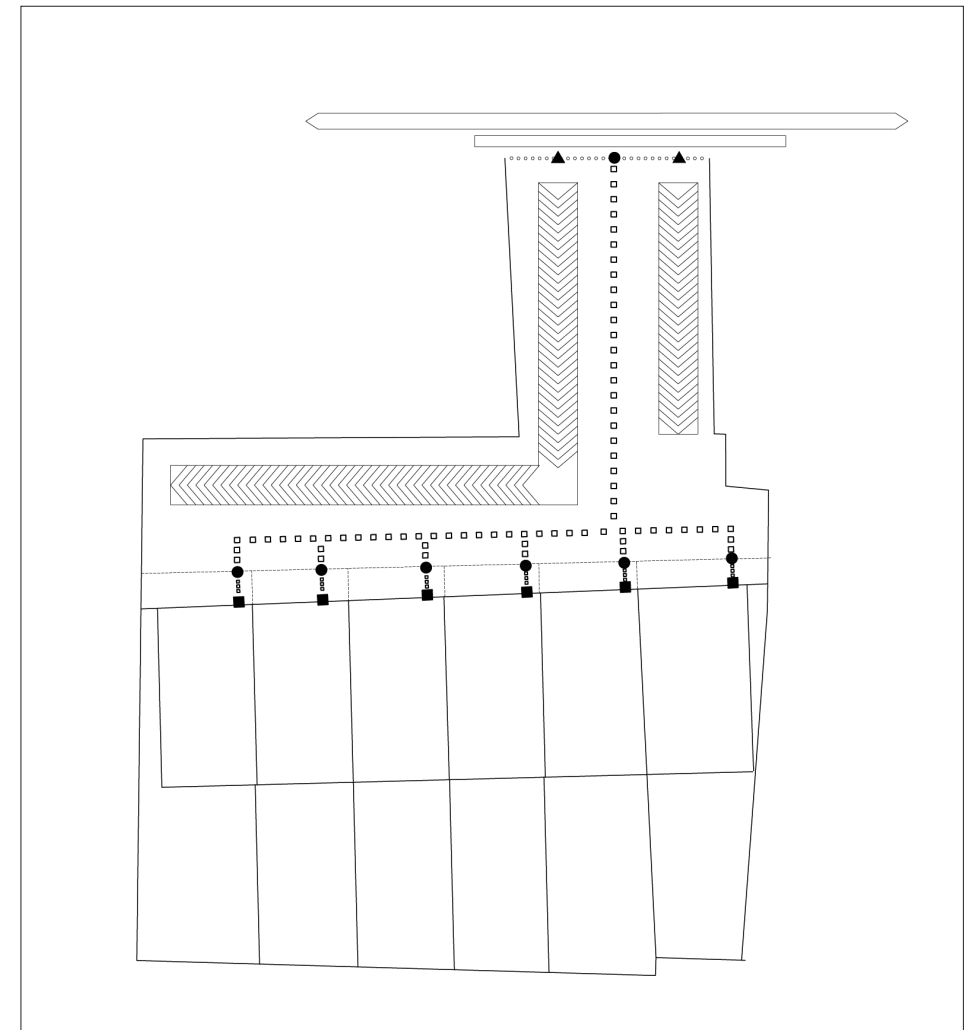
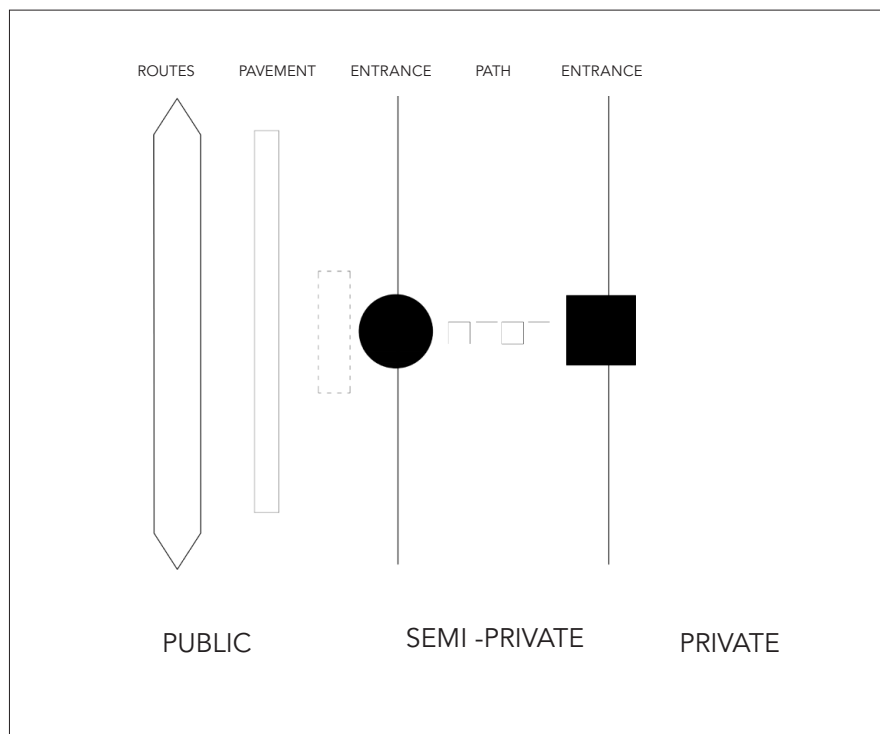
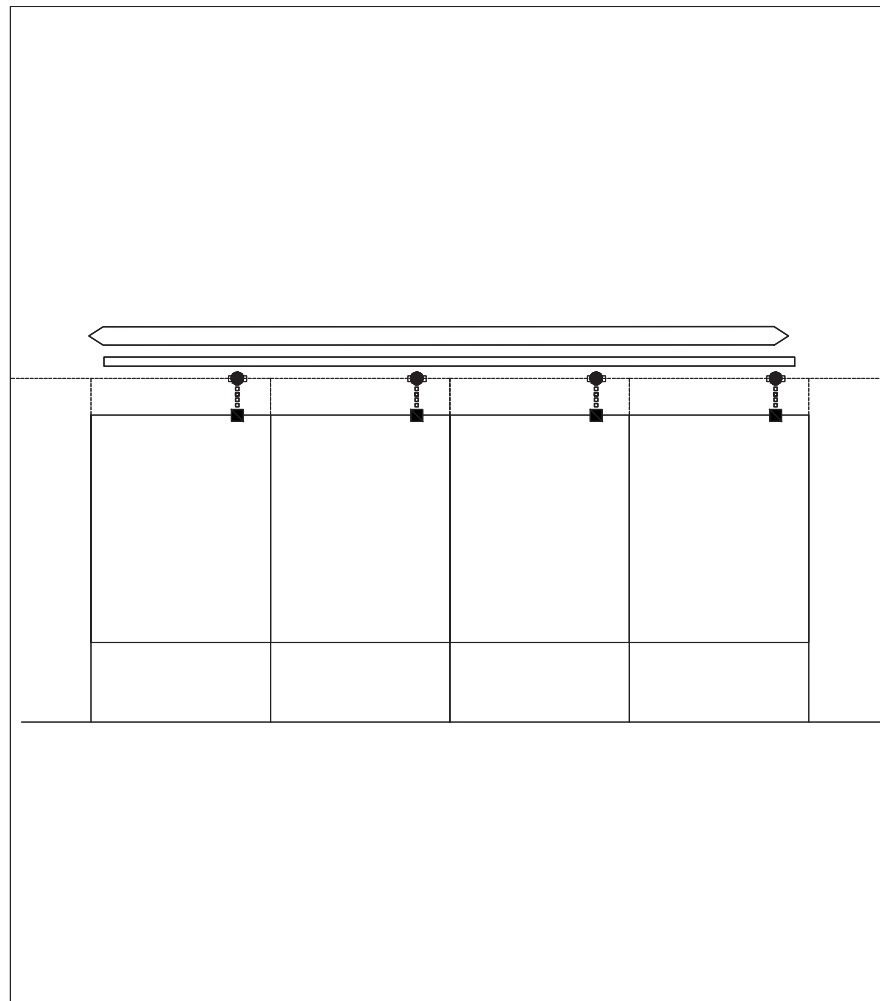


Figure 4.66 Accessibility and hierarchy of neighbouring buildings, Pitchford Street, Newham, London (Author's drawing).

Figure 4.67 Accessibility and hierarchy of the case study, Pitchford Street, Newham, London (Author's drawing).

4.4.3.4 Materials Analysis

The materials plan of Pitchford Street shows a clear but subtle spatial hierarchy through a limited palette of asphalt, clay brick pavers, cobbled paving, and enclosed greenery. This is important to the question of tenure blindness, because the hierarchy of spaces is made legible through material changes rather than through socially visible separation.

Asphalt defines the main street edge and connects the scheme to the wider urban fabric, reinforcing the public character of the outer realm. Clay brick pavers mark access and threshold areas, creating a transition from the public street into a more local and semi-shared residential domain. Cobbled paving introduces a finer and more textured surface, suggesting slower movement and a more intimate communal character. Together, these materials produce a gradual sequence from public street to shared threshold to enclosed residential space.

The greenery is located within enclosed internal yards and is not visible from the outside. It therefore belongs to the private domestic realm rather than contributing to the public image of the street. This strengthens privacy and inward residential enclosure, but it does not help create a shared visible identity in the public realm.

Overall, the case study shows that hierarchy can be expressed through surface articulation rather than explicit segregation. This makes it relevant to tenure-blind housing, because different degrees of privacy and access are readable without being stigmatizing. At the same time, the strategy depends on whether these subtle distinctions are clear enough in everyday use.

Final conclusion: the material strategy of Pitchford Street supports tenure blindness by creating a legible transition from public to private space through subtle material variation, while avoiding socially coded or visibly unequal spatial division.

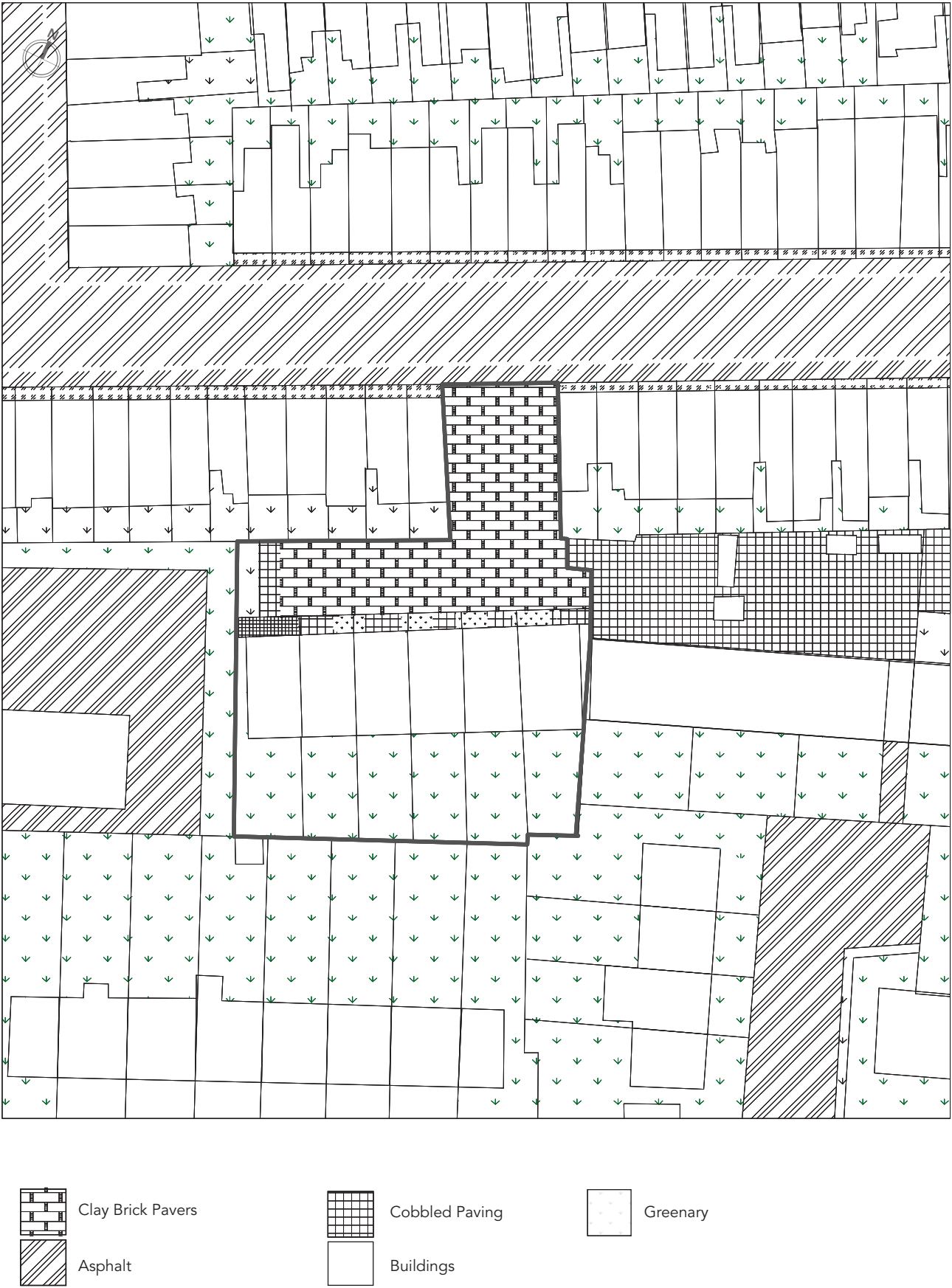


Figure 4.68 Material analysis of the surrounding urban fabric, Pitchford Street, Newham, London (Author’s drawing).

4.4.3.5 Existing Elements: Entrance and Window Rhythm

The existing façade of Pitchford Street is defined by the repeated position of entrances and windows, creating a clear and consistent street rhythm. This repetition reflects the narrow parcel structure of the terrace and makes each dwelling legible within the continuous frontage. Entrances mark the individual domestic units at ground level, while windows extend this order vertically and reinforce the overall balance of the façade.

At the same time, small variations in the details of doors and windows introduce individuality without disrupting the coherence of the street. In this sense, the street works through a balance of repetition and difference, where ordinary recurring elements produce a strong collective identity. This can also be read through Robert Venturi’s idea that meaning in everyday architecture is often carried by familiar elements rather than by dramatic form. Here, the entrance and window become symbolic features: they give each house recognition and address, while still belonging to the shared order of the terrace.

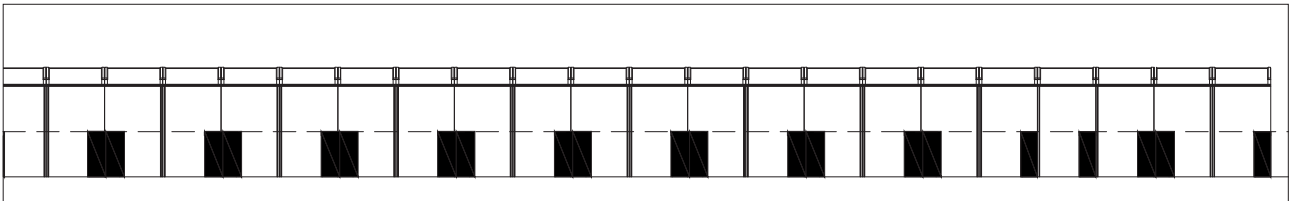


Figure 4.69 Position and rhythm of the entrances, Pitchford Street, Newham, London (Author’s drawing).

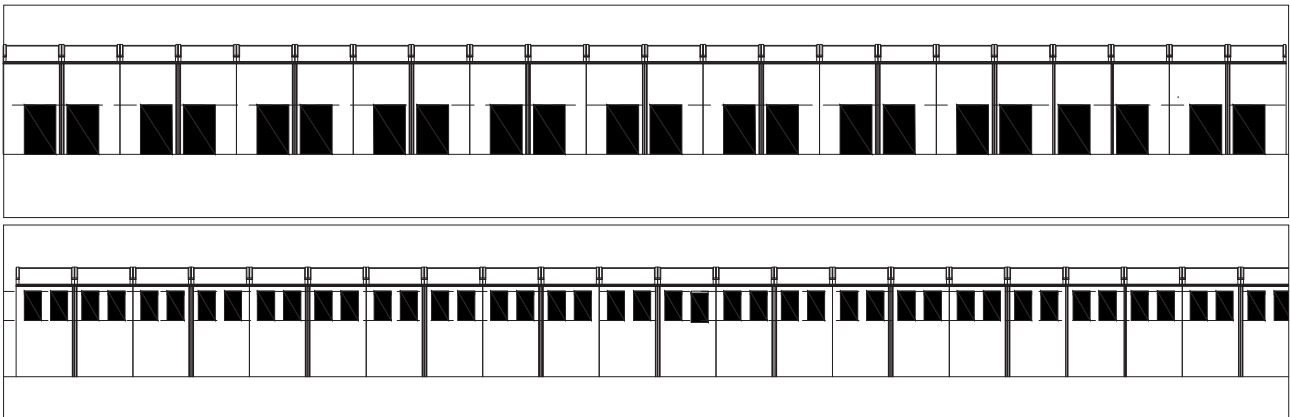


Figure 4.70 Position and rhythm of the windows, Pitchford Street, Newham, London (Author’s drawing).



Figure 4.71 Façade of the neighbouring Buildings , Pitchford Street , Newham, London (Author’s drawing)



Figure 4.72 Entrance door typologies of the neighbouring buildings, Pitchford Street, Newham, London (Source: Adapted from Google Earth imagery, Google, 2024; edited by the author).



Figure 4.73 Window typologies of the neighbouring buildings, Pitchford Street, Newham, London (Source: Adapted from Google Earth imagery, Google, 2024; edited by the author).

4.4.3.6 Façade, Rhythm, and Symbolic Translation

The existing street façade is shaped by a clear rhythm of repeated doors and windows. This gives each house its own identity, while still making the terrace read as one continuous whole. What makes the street work is this balance between sameness and small difference: the houses belong together, but each one is still recognisable as a home.

The case study translates this condition rather than copying it directly. It keeps the repeated rhythm of entrances and windows and still allows the frontage to be read as a series of individual dwellings. At the same time, it simplifies the expression through a more contemporary façade language, with less ornament and a flatter overall composition. In this way, the project reflects the structure of the existing street without imitating its older details.

This is important because it shows how symbolism can work through ordinary architectural elements. In the existing context, doors, windows, and thresholds are not just functional; they are part of what makes the housing feel familiar, domestic, and socially legible. The case study keeps that symbolic logic, but reinterprets it in a more equal and controlled way. Instead of using decorative variation to create identity, it uses repetition, proportion, and clear unit definition.

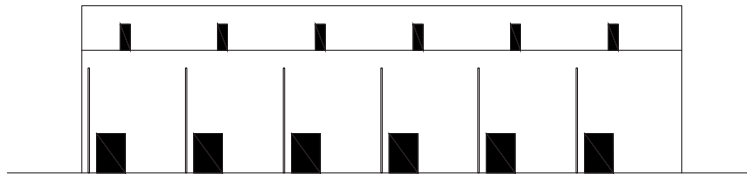


Figure 4.74 Position and rhythm of the entrances, Pitchford Street, Newham, London (Author’s drawing).

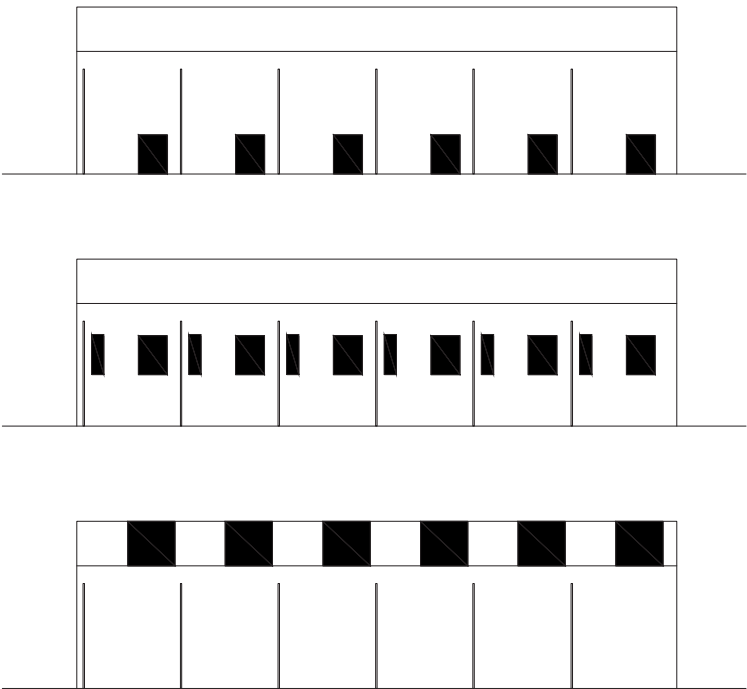


Figure 4.75 Position and rhythm of the windows, Pitchford Street, Newham, London (Author’s drawing).



Figure 4.76 Front façade elevation of the case study buildings, Pitchford Street, Newham, London (Author’s drawing).



Figure 4.77 Architectural details of the Pitchford Street case study, illustrating façade materials, windows, entrances, and balcony elements (Source: Adapted from Google Earth imagery, Google, 2024; edited by the author).

4.4.3.7 Material Comparison

The façades are made up of a mix of painted render, exposed brick, and small decorative finishes, which together create a visually rich but uneven streetscape. Each house appears slightly different, not only because of its design but because of how its materials have been maintained over time. Some surfaces look fresh and cared for, while others show signs of ageing or repair. As a result, materials begin to communicate more than just construction they quietly signal care, attention, and sometimes difference between dwellings.

The case study approaches this condition in a more controlled way. Instead of repeating the same variety of finishes, it focuses almost entirely on brick as a shared material across the whole building. This choice is not accidental. Brick is already familiar in the neighbourhood, so the project remains connected to its context. However, the way it is used is different. The brick is applied consistently, with very little variation, creating a façade that feels more unified and calm.

What changes here is not the material itself, but how it is used. In the neighbourhood, materials vary from house to house, and this variation can make differences more visible. In the case study, the consistent use of brick reduces these contrasts. The façade no longer draws attention to individual units, but instead reads as a continuous surface. This creates a stronger sense of equality between the dwellings.

This becomes especially important when thinking about architectural stigma. In the existing street, differences in materials whether through colour, condition, or finish—can shape how buildings are perceived. In contrast, the case study avoids these signals by using a single, durable material in a consistent way, limiting the possibility that one unit appears more valuable or more neglected than another.

In this sense, the project does not try to copy the neighbourhood exactly. Instead, it takes one of its most recognisable elements brick and uses it in a more careful and balanced way. The result is a building that still feels part of its context, but expresses a more equal and neutral material identity, supporting the idea of tenure-blind design.



Figure 4.78 Materials used in the Pitchford Street case study, Newham, London (Author’s drawing).



Figure 4.79 Materials of the surrounding neighbourhood buildings, Pitchford Street, Newham, London (Author’s drawing).

4.4.4 Key Case-Study Findings

Table X brings together the main lessons from the case study analysis and turns them into a design framework for tenure-blind infill social housing. Instead of using the case studies only as examples, the table shows how their main architectural qualities can be translated into practical design considerations for the thesis project. In this way, the framework connects the analytical part of the research to the design proposal. It identifies the elements that mattered most in the case studies and explains how they can guide the development of a housing scheme in which tenure difference is not easily read through architecture.

The table shows that tenure-blind design does not depend on one single design move. It is produced through the careful coordination of many smaller decisions, including the way the site is subdivided, how the building mass is arranged, how the frontage is composed, how entrances are positioned, how access moves from public to private space, and how materials, windows, and landscape are handled. What becomes clear from the case studies is that stigma is often not created by one obvious feature, but by the accumulation of smaller differences in status, quality, visibility, and treatment. For that reason, the framework focuses on the architectural elements through which these differences can become visible.

One of the main points that emerges from the table is that the relationship between a new housing scheme and its surroundings should not be based on direct copying. The case studies show that successful projects do not simply reproduce the existing neighbourhood, but work with its underlying logic. This includes the scale of plots, the rhythm of openings, the domestic character of the street frontage, and the familiarity of the material palette. By following these deeper patterns rather than imitating surface appearance, the projects remain connected to their context while still allowing for a contemporary architectural expression. This is important for tenure-blind housing, because a building that appears too detached from its setting can easily be read as socially different.

The framework also highlights the importance of entrances, thresholds, and access sequences. In the case studies, equality is not achieved by making every route exactly the same, but by ensuring that all dwellings are approached in a way that feels equally clear, careful, and dignified. What matters is not only access in a technical sense, but the message that access conditions send. If some entrances are hidden, secondary, or visibly compromised, architectural difference can quickly become social difference. For this reason, the framework emphasises the need for a clear and gradual movement from public to semi-private to private space, supported by consistent threshold treatment across the scheme.

Another important lesson from the table is the role of façade design, especially windows, materials, and detailing. The case studies suggest that windows do much more than organise light and ventilation. They help establish rhythm, reinforce the identity of each dwelling, and communicate a sense of care and permanence. Materials work in a similar way. They shape the visual appearance of the project, also influence how continuity, durability, and equality are perceived. A shared material language, together with consistent detailing and opening treatment, can reduce the risk that some parts of the scheme appear more valuable, more finished, or more permanent than others. In this sense, the façade becomes an important part of how the social meaning of the project is constructed.

The table also shows that the ground plane and landscape should be treated as active design elements rather than secondary additions. In the case studies, changes in paving, texture, and greenery help organise the transition from street to dwelling in a subtle but important way. Different surface materials can mark degrees of movement, access, and privacy without creating hard separation. In the same way, planting helps soften the environment, support enclosure, and strengthen the residential character of the scheme. These elements are important because they shape how the space is experienced in everyday use. They help define hierarchy without making it feel harsh or exclusionary.

Overall, The table therefore works both as a summary of the analysis and as a practical guide for the design stage that follows.

Design Decision	What Should Be Done
1. Subdivide the site	Organise the site as a series of smaller dwelling-related parts rather than one large development parcel. Use repeated unit logic in plan and frontage.
2. Control building mass	Break the footprint and volume into smaller repeated forms or articulated segments. Avoid a deep, continuous block that erases the scale of individual homes.
3. Keep frontage rhythm	Organise the elevation through repeated dwelling-width intervals. The façade should read as a continuous composition, but also as a sequence of homes.
4. Make each dwelling legible	Ensure each unit has a readable place in the façade through entrance position, window order, and frontage division.
5. Equal entrance dignity	Place entrances in visible and intentional positions. Use consistent threshold treatment, door prominence, and access quality across all units.
6. Gradual access hierarchy	Move from public to semi-private to private through path sequence, threshold depth, paving, and spatial enclosure. Avoid abrupt transitions and secondary routes.
7. Windows for order, not hierarchy	Arrange windows in a repeated and balanced pattern tied to the underlying dwelling units. Keep spacing, vertical alignment, and proportions disciplined.
8. Consistent window detailing	Use similar frame depth, reveal treatment, sill logic, opening proportions, and edge definition across the whole scheme. Avoid giving some units richer detailing than others.
9. Shared façade material language	Work with a limited palette, especially durable materials belonging to the local domestic context, such as brick. Keep the main material continuous across all dwellings.
10. Control contrast through detail	If contrast is used, keep it at the level of frames, reveals, recesses, or subtle tonal variation rather than changing the whole material identity of parts of the scheme.
11. Ground plane hierarchy	Organise the site through a clear sequence of surface materials. Let more public movement areas read differently from threshold areas and more intimate residential zones.
12. Specific ground materials	Use asphalt for larger public routes; brick pavers at entrances and threshold zones; smaller-scale textured paving where movement should slow; avoid sudden hard changes.
13. Landscape for enclosure	Place greenery where it strengthens residential character, softens hard surfaces, and helps define semi-private space. Use planting to support threshold depth.
14. Avoid coded greenery	Do not reserve visibly better planting, softer frontages, or greener outlook only for some parts of the scheme. Landscape quality should be shared across the project.
15. Shared external space	Shared space should feel intentional, enclosed enough, and scaled to everyday use. It should not read as circulation leftover or empty buffer space between blocks.
16. Parking secondary	Place parking so it does not dominate the frontage, threshold sequence, or main visual identity of the project.
17. Translate context	Reuse the local logic of plot rhythm, repeated openings, masonry character, threshold sequence, and domestic scale but reinterpret it in a contemporary way.
18. Check overall coherence	Test whether massing, windows, entrances, materials, ground surfaces, planting, and shared space all work together to produce one calm and equal residential reading.

Figure 4.80 Design framework for tenure-blind infill social housing, summarising the key architectural principles derived from the case study analysis to inform the final design proposal (Author’s drawing).

4.5 | Questionnaire Survey

Aim:

This section discusses the questionnaire-based survey and its results .

4.5.1 Questionnaire Overview

The study focuses on a small infill site within a London borough of Newham, where new housing is inserted into an existing residential environment. Such sites offer opportunities for sensitive densification but also carry a high risk of visual and social differentiation if design quality is inconsistent. The project aims to understand how local residents interpret the appearance of housing and which architectural elements they associate with stigma, quality, or visual integration.

The goal of the project are:

To identify which architectural features local people associate with social housing or stigma. To examine how residents perceive new infill developments in the selected borough, with a particular focus on whether these buildings appear visually integrated or noticeably different from the surrounding neighbourhood.

To use these insights to inform a tenure-blind design proposal that avoids visible differentiation between housing tenures. The project links public perception with architectural design strategies. This study provides design-focused insight that can directly inform how small-site housing can be made visually inclusive and socially integrated.

4.5.2 Recruitment and Sampling

Participants are recruited through online distribution of the survey link via intermediary organisations and community networks within the London Borough of Newham.

A structured contact list of relevant stakeholders has been developed, including:

- Ward councillors and resident engagement teams within Newham Council
- Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs)
- Housing associations operating in the borough
- Local housing, welfare, and community support organisations
- Online neighbourhood forums and community platforms

Intermediary organisations will be contacted via email and invited to circulate a resident-facing message containing the survey link. The researcher will not directly approach individual residents and will not collect or access any personal contact details.

Participation is: Voluntary and Anonymous , Open to residents aged 18 and over

The study targets two participant groups:

- Primary group: Residents living near the proposed infill site in Newham
- Secondary group: Social housing residents within the borough

This sampling strategy allows the research to capture both neighbourhood-level perceptions and lived experiences of social housing environments.

Ethical approval for the project has been granted by the University of East London Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee (EISC). All procedures comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR under the University’s lawful basis of “public task” (GDPR Article 6(1)(e)).

4.5.3 Data Collection Period

The online questionnaire remained open for a period of eight weeks. During this time, intermediary organisations were able to circulate the survey link through their communication channels. After the eight-week period, the survey was closed and responses were exported for analysis.

4.5.4 Informed Consent and Data Protection

Participants are provided with a Participant Information Sheet outlining:

- The purpose of the research
- The voluntary nature of participation
- Confidentiality and anonymity procedures
- Data storage and dissemination processes

No personal or identifying information is collected. All data will be anonymised prior to analysis and publication. Anonymised excerpts may be included in the thesis.

Findings may be disseminated through the Master’s thesis and academic publications and may be deposited in an open-access repository in accordance with University policy.

4.5.5 Analysis

Survey responses are exported from Microsoft Forms and analysed using inductive thematic analysis.

The analysis will follow a structured qualitative process:

- Familiarisation with the dataset through repeated reading
- Generation of initial codes derived directly from participants’ language
- Grouping of related codes into broader patterns
- Development and refinement of themes grounded in the data

No pre-existing coding framework will be imposed. Themes will emerge organically from participants’ descriptions and perceptions of housing design, neighbourhood character, and visual integration.

The aim of the analysis is to understand how residents interpret architectural features and how these interpretations relate to perceptions of fairness, distinction, belonging, and stigma.

The resulting themes will inform the development of tenure-blind design strategies in the architectural proposal phase of the thesis.

4.5.6 Target Sample Size and Limitations

The questionnaire collected responses from 15 participants and was designed as a small qualitative perception study rather than a large-scale quantitative survey. The recruitment strategy relied on voluntary participation through intermediary organisations and community networks rather than random sampling. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as indicative qualitative insights rather than statistically representative evidence of the wider Newham population.

4.5.7 Survey Results: Thematic Analysis of Resident Perceptions

4.5.7.1 Theme 1: Visible Care as Social Value

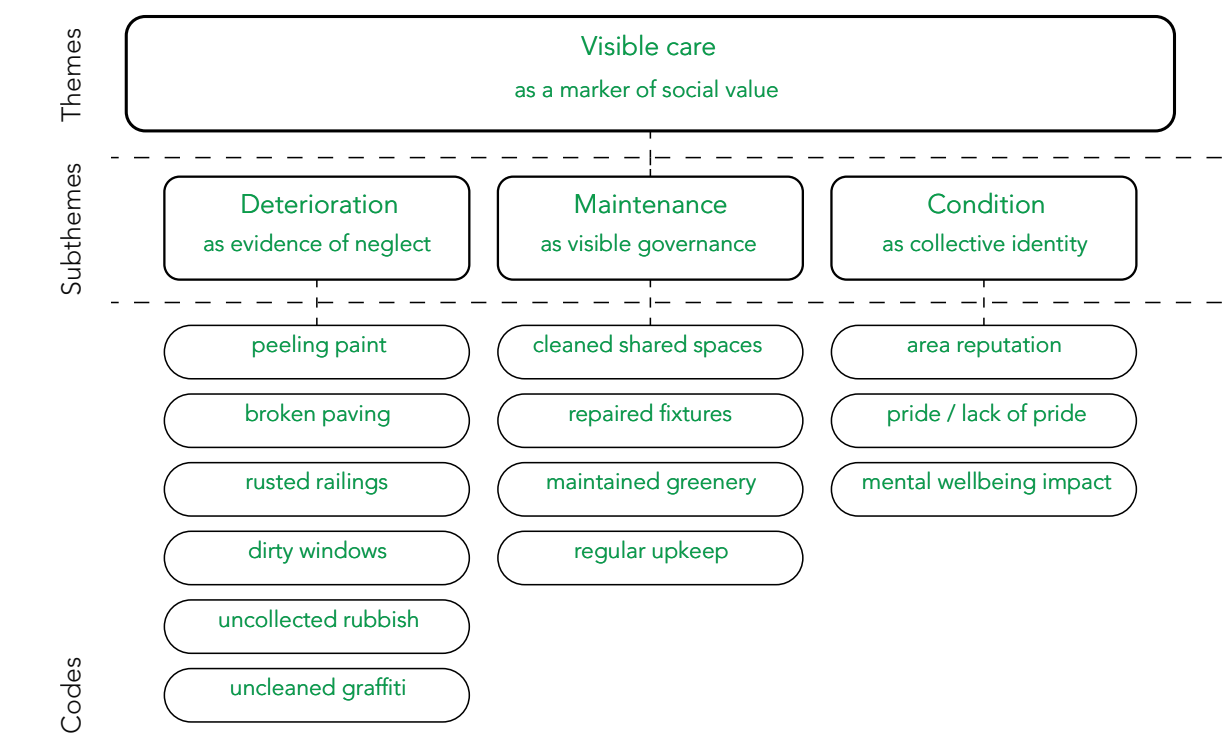


Figure 4.81 Thematic coding structure for Theme 1, demonstrating how visible signs of care, maintenance, and deterioration shape perceptions of social value and collective identity in housing environments. (Author’s drawing)

Illustrative Quotes from Participants Supporting Theme 1

“If a building is not maintained it will not attract people... flooring swept, windows cleaned regularly... no broken paving, windows, locks or cracks in the walls... If the up keep is not done, I do not want to enter as it could be unsafe for me as I am disabled.” (Participant 8)

“Things like stains on walls, broken paving, graffiti that isn’t cleaned, rust on railings, or empty plant areas make buildings look neglected.” (Participant1 0)

“Well kept front homes people dont put any rubbish. A unkempt front garden, passers by have less respect for the property.” (Participant 6)

“Block of flats not kept well and paint fading, tell security.” (Participant 5)

“Not kept well, feeling unloved (the area and neighbourhood). Run down, no pride in where you live, not getting basic right of area and pride of being maintained. This effort family life, mental health, pride and bring in the wrong people such as robbery, drugs houses. Anti-social behaviour.” (Participant 5)

4.5.7.2 Theme 2: Visual Integration as Belonging

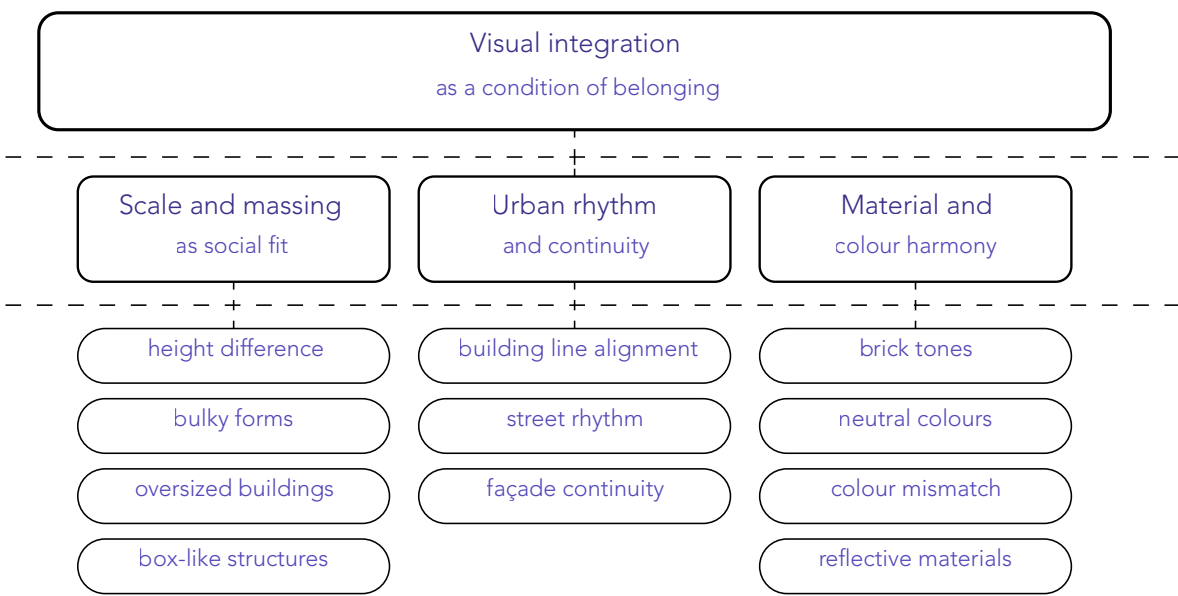


Figure 4.82 Thematic coding structure for Theme 2, demonstrating how scale, urban continuity, and material expression influence perceptions of belonging and visual integration in housing environments. (Author’s drawing)

Illustrative Quotes from Participants Supporting Theme 2

“Buildings feel like they belong when they follow the same height, proportions, and rhythm as neighbouring buildings. Consistency in materials and window alignment also helps. Buildings feel out of place when they are too bulky or have design elements that don’t relate to their surroundings.” (Participant15)

“Dont like the high saturation collors.” (Participant 14)

“Colour is nice and uplifting the spirit (depends on the Colour and surrounding). It makes positive impact, help with your mental health and makes you feel better because your environment is looking after your health, mental health.” (Participant 15)

“This depends on the overall look. If all buildings have the same height or shape then they will all blend in.” (Participant 12)

4.5.7.3 Theme 3: Materiality as Class Language

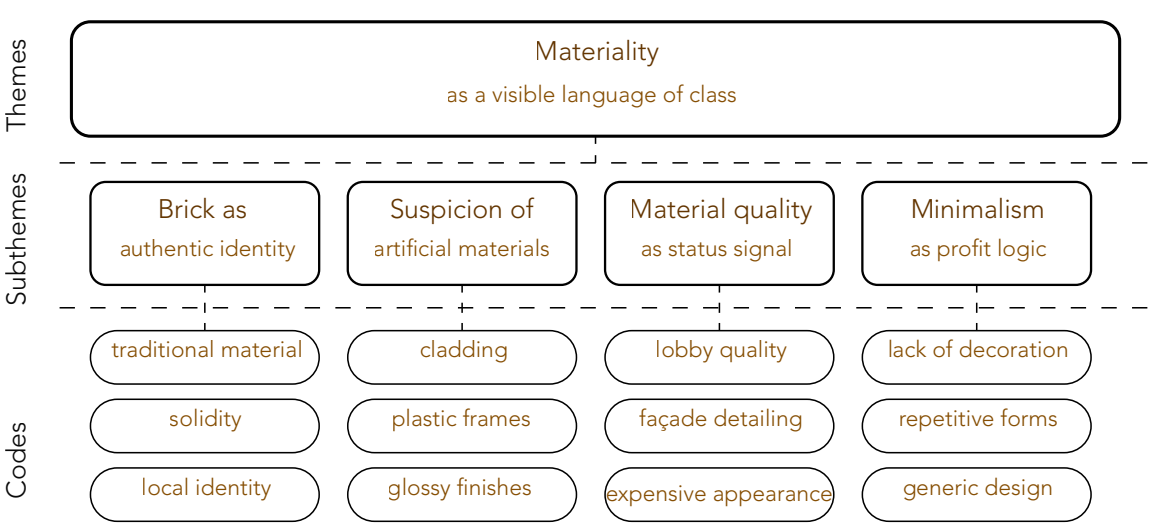


Figure 4.83 Thematic coding structure for Theme 3, demonstrating how material choices, façade detailing, and architectural expression communicate class identity and perceptions of housing value. (Author’s drawing)

Illustrative Quotes from Participants Supporting Theme 3

“If a building is brick I would prefer to see it remain as brick... I wish there were bylaws that would stop people from painting the original bricks. I think it is best use colours that blend in with what is already there.” (Participant 7)

“Yes, brick tends to feel more established and in keeping with London streets. Render or light-coloured cladding can look fresh but sometimes feels less durable. Timber detailing can make a building feel warmer and more residential rather than commercial.”(Participant 15)

“Differences in materials and height make buildings stand out. Newer developments sometimes use lighter brick or metal cladding, which makes them look more contemporary compared to older terraced houses. Sometimes buildings look different because of how the entrances are arranged or whether there is private space in front.” (Participant 15)

“New building are to boring they have no carracter no decoration or uniq character they look like optimized surface garbage just a big rectangle.” (Participant 14)

4.5.7.4 Theme 4: Thresholds of Inclusion

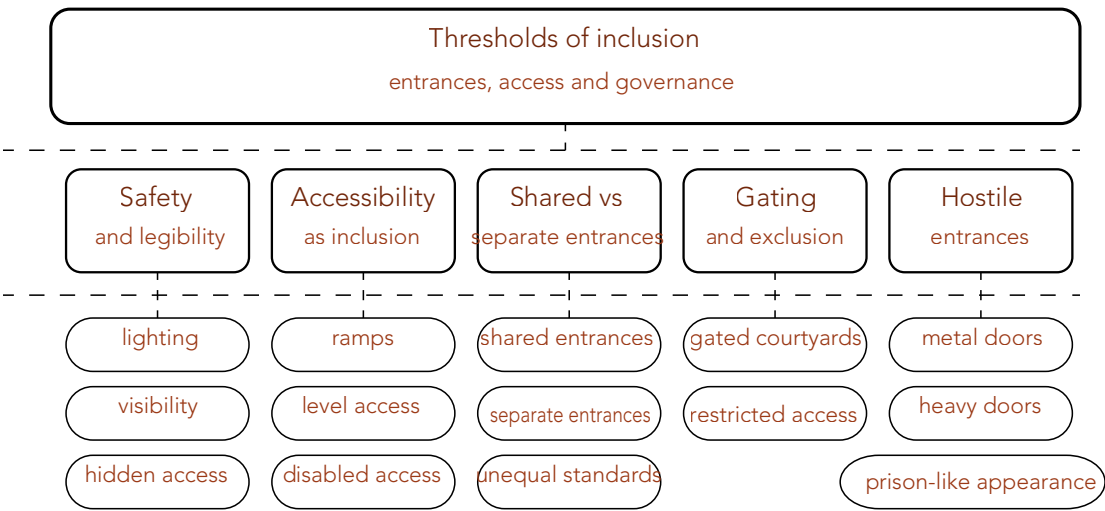


Figure 4.84 Thematic coding structure for Theme 4, demonstrating how entrances, access conditions, and spatial boundaries influence perceptions of inclusion, exclusion, and social equality in housing environments. (Author’s drawing)

Illustrative Quotes from Participants Supporting Theme 4

“For a house the front door should be welcoming. A doorbell, a knocker and a letterbox. For a building, it must be accessible for all. It should have sliding door so we don’t have to pull it open. It should level entrance and no step or it should have a ramp and steps, an intercom to call reception. It should be clearly marked as to what the purpose of the building is.” (Participant 8)

“I notice how visible and accessible the entrance is. A clearly marked, well-designed entrance with good lighting makes a building feel welcoming and safe. If entrances look hidden or poorly maintained, it can give the impression that the building is not well looked after.” (Participant 11)

“Colour, how fancy it looks. Most doors look like regular doors but if it looks expensive with nice paint, cool door knob etc it probably looks more distinctive.” (Participant 9)

“If the entrance is clean, well-lit, and clearly visible, it feels safer. If doors look heavy, scratched, or poorly maintained, it can feel less welcoming. I also notice whether entrances are shared or separated, sometimes separate entrances can make buildings feel divided.” (Participant 13)

“The entrance of my block is a metal door that resembles that of a prison. The entrance to my flat is a balcony door which was cheaper than a proper door. Again, depressing and very cold. Feel like residents have been forgotten here.” (Participant 12)

4.5.8 Application to the Research

This thesis asks how architectural design can reduce stigma and support belonging through visual integration in tenure-blind infill housing. The findings from the questionnaire provide a clear answer: residents do not experience housing as neutral space, but as a set of visible signals through which social meanings are constructed. Architecture is read, interpreted, and judged. As a result, stigma and belonging are not abstract conditions; they are produced through everyday visual and spatial cues.

A key insight is that tenure distinction becomes visible even when it is not explicitly stated. Residents identify differences through signs such as uneven maintenance, changes in material quality, separate entrances, and disruptions in scale or form. These elements act as indicators of hierarchy. This means that social difference is spatialised: it is embedded in the physical environment and becomes legible through design. Therefore, the research question cannot be addressed only through housing policy or tenure distribution. It must be addressed through the control of what is visible.

The findings show that visual integration operates as the main mechanism through which stigma can be reduced. When buildings align with their context through consistent scale, façade rhythm, material palette, and spatial organisation—they are perceived as part of a unified environment. This reduces the likelihood that residents will identify differences between groups. In contrast, when buildings appear fragmented, oversized, materially inconsistent, or spatially separated, they are read as “other,” reinforcing perceptions of exclusion.

This establishes a direct relationship between visual coherence and social perception. Coherence does not simply produce aesthetic harmony; it produces social continuity. It allows residents to read the environment as shared rather than divided. In this sense, visual integration becomes a tool for shaping how people understand their place within the built environment.

At the same time, the findings demonstrate that inconsistency generates stigma. Differences in care, materials, or access are interpreted as differences in value. For example, neglected surfaces signal abandonment, while higher-quality finishes signal privilege. Separate entrances or gated areas make social division explicit. These visible contrasts create a hierarchy that residents can immediately recognise. As a result, stigma is not only experienced socially but reinforced spatially through design.

Within this framework, tenure-blind design can be understood as the deliberate removal of legible difference. It is not enough to mix tenures within a development if those tenures remain visually distinguishable. True tenure blindness requires that all residents experience the same architectural language. This includes consistent materials, unified façades, equal access conditions, and shared spatial systems. The goal is not uniformity for its own sake, but the elimination of cues that allow social categorisation.

The four themes identified in the analysis structure this relationship:

Care and condition reveal that maintenance is read as a sign of value. Uneven care produces visible inequality, while consistent upkeep supports dignity and collective identity. Form and integration show that spatial misalignment through differences in height, massing, or rhythm creates a sense of separation, while alignment supports belonging. Materiality demonstrates that materials function as markers of class, where contrasts in quality or finish generate hierarchy. Thresholds highlight that entrances and access systems are critical points where inclusion or exclusion becomes immediately visible.

Together, these themes confirm that architecture actively produces social meaning through visibility. What can be seen becomes what is understood. This has direct implications for infill housing, where new developments are inserted into existing urban contexts and are immediately compared to their surroundings.

In this context, infill design becomes a critical site for either reinforcing or reducing stigma. If new housing appears disconnected, lower in quality, or spatially separated, it risks being identified as socially distinct. However, if it is carefully integrated both with the existing fabric and within itself it can support a shared reading of the environment.

4.6 | Development of the Final Design Framework

Aim:

To translate the shared findings from the case studies and questionnaire into a final set of design criteria for the thesis project.

4.6.1 Methodology for Developing the Final Design Framework

The final design framework was developed through the combination of two strands of research: first, the architectural analysis of selected case studies, and second, the thematic analysis of questionnaire responses collected from residents. These two strands were not treated as separate outputs, but as complementary forms of evidence. The case studies provided an architectural reading of how existing and proposed housing schemes express issues of scale, materiality, entrances, hierarchy, rhythm, and integration. The questionnaire, in contrast, provided insight into how similar features are perceived and interpreted by residents in everyday life. Bringing these two sources together made it possible to move from descriptive analysis to a more grounded and socially informed design framework.

The first stage of the process involved the case study analysis. Each case study was examined through a set of architectural themes relevant to the thesis, including plot subdivision, building footprint, façade rhythm, material use, window and entrance treatment, access hierarchy, parking, ground materials, and the relationship between public, semi-private, and private space. The purpose of this stage was to identify which architectural decisions appeared to support a more integrated, ordinary, and socially neutral housing environment. Rather than looking only at overall form, the analysis focused on the smaller design elements through which difference becomes visible, such as threshold treatment, surface changes, façade continuity, and the way individual dwellings are made legible within a larger scheme.

The second stage involved the analysis of questionnaire responses. Residents’ comments were coded and grouped through thematic analysis in order to identify recurring patterns in how buildings are perceived. This process revealed four broader themes: visible care as social value, visual integration as belonging, materiality as class language, and thresholds of inclusion. Within these themes, residents repeatedly referred to issues such as maintenance, paving condition, greenery, scale, height, façade rhythm, brick tones, material mismatch, accessibility, hidden entrances, hostile thresholds, and the difference between welcoming and excluding forms of entry. This stage was important because it showed which architectural features are not only present in the built environment, but are also actively read and socially interpreted by residents.

The final framework was then developed through an intersection-based method. Instead of merging all findings from both strands into one broad list, the analysis focused only on the points of overlap between them. In other words, an architectural feature was included in the final framework only where it appeared in both the case study analysis and the resident perceptions. This overlap was treated as the strongest form of evidence, because it showed that a feature was significant both analytically and socially. For example, if a theme such as façade rhythm, entrance dignity, or material continuity emerged in the case studies and was also repeatedly identified by residents as shaping belonging, value, or exclusion, it was retained as part of the final framework. By contrast, themes that appeared in only one strand of research were not given the same weight in the final design guidance.

The final framework therefore represents a translation of shared findings into design guidance. It is not intended as a universal checklist for all housing, but as a context-specific framework for designing tenure-blind infill social housing in a way that reduces the architectural legibility of social difference. By relying on the intersection between case study evidence and resident perception, the framework provides a more robust basis for the design proposal developed in the following chapter.

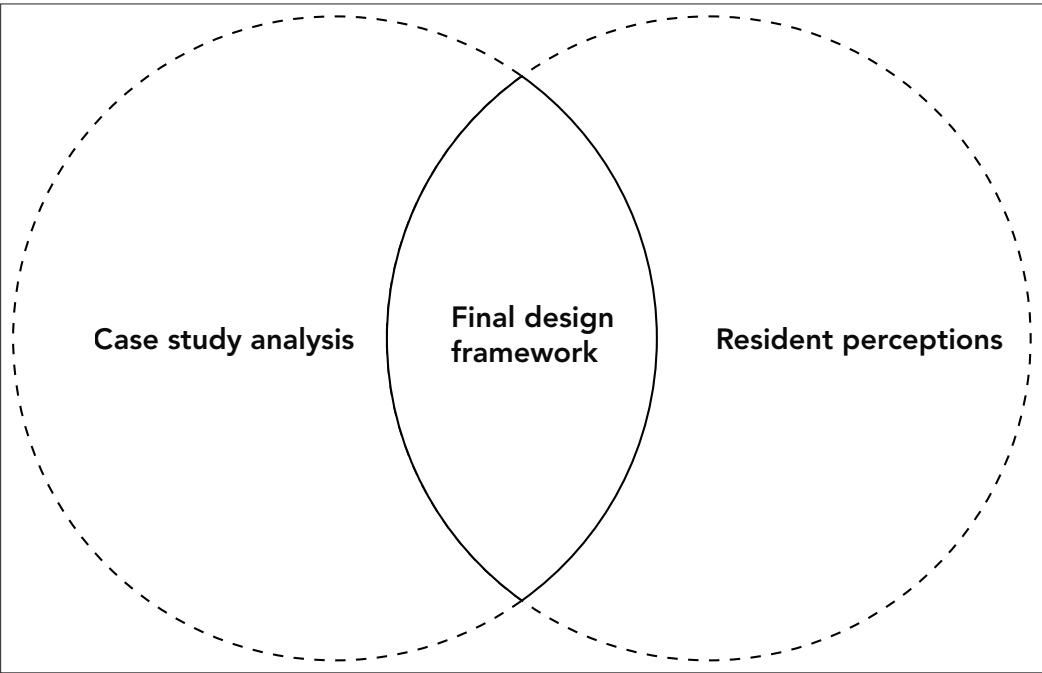


Figure 4.85 Intersection of case study analysis and resident perceptions informing the final design framework (Author’s drawing).

4.6.2 Final Design Framework

4.6.2.1 Openings (Windows)

Sub-Category	Design Guidance (What Should Be Done)	Social Intention
Consistent window design	Maintain uniform window size, alignment, proportions, and detailing across all units. Organise openings according to façade rhythm. Avoid irregular or mixed window types	Reinforces order, care, and equality. Avoids visual hierarchy.

4.6.2.2 Material & Construction Quality

Sub-Category	Design Guidance (What Should Be Done)	Social Intention
Shared material language	Apply a limited, consistent material palette across all dwellings. Prioritise durable, contextually familiar materials (e.g., brick). Avoid mixing high- and low-quality finishes.	Avoids material-based hierarchy and prevents residents from being distinguished through façade quality.
Controlled variation through detail	Introduce variation only through subtle differences (reveals, recesses, tonal shifts). Avoid strong contrasts in colour or material.	Prevents parts of the building from appearing different in status or identity.
Visible and continuous care	Use durable materials and consistent detailing across façades, entrances, and ground surfaces. Avoid finishes that stain, peel, or age unevenly. Ensure uniform condition over time.	Prevents visible neglect being read as lower value or abandonment. Supports dignity and collective identity.

4.6.2.3 Urban Form (Scale & Massing)

Sub-Category	Design Guidance (What Should Be Done)	Social Intention
massing	Subdivide large plots into smaller dwelling-related volumes. Align height, width, and proportions with surrounding buildings. Avoid bulky or oversized forms.	Ensures the building reads as part of the neighbourhood, not as socially distinct or institutional.

4.6.2.4 Access & Spatial Organisation

Sub-Category	Design Guidance (What Should Be Done)	Social Intention
Inclusive and step-free access	Provide level or ramped access to all dwellings. Organise clear movement from public to private through paving, depth, and enclosure. Avoid unclear routes.	Ensures inclusion.
Equal entrance dignity	Design all entrances to be equally visible, well-lit, and consistently detailed.	Prevents division.
No spatial or visual separation	Avoid gated or separate entrances.	Prevents entrances from signalling inequality or exclusion.

4.6.2.5 Ground & Landscape Interface

Sub-Category	Design Guidance (What Should Be Done)	Social Intention
Ground plane hierarchy and clarity	Use paving to define public, semi-private, and private zones. Apply consistent materials and clear transitions. Avoid neglected or undefined areas	Communicates care, safety, and organisation. Prevents uneven treatment of shared space.
Shared landscape quality	Use planting to support enclosure and soften edges. Distribute greenery evenly across the scheme. Avoid concentrating better landscape in specific areas.	Prevents landscape from signalling privilege. Supports shared residential identity.

4.6.2.6 Maintenance & Long-Term Condition

Sub-Category	Design Guidance (What Should Be Done)	Social Intention
Consistency of condition over time	Ensure consistent upkeep and maintenance across all parts of the building. Avoid visible differences in ageing or repair.	Prevents visible neglect from being interpreted as social difference or lower value. Reinforces equality over time.

Figure 4.86 Final tenure-blind design framework derived from the intersection of case study analysis and resident perception findings (Author’s drawing).

5.0 | Design Proposal

Aim:

The aim of this chapter is to develop a tenure-blind infill housing proposal for the selected site in Newham by translating the research findings, resident perspectives, case study lessons, and contextual analysis into a coherent architectural design.

5.1 | Site Analysis

Aim:

To examine the site and its urban context to establish a contextual foundation for the proposed housing development.

5.1.1 Site Frontage and Streetscape Analysis

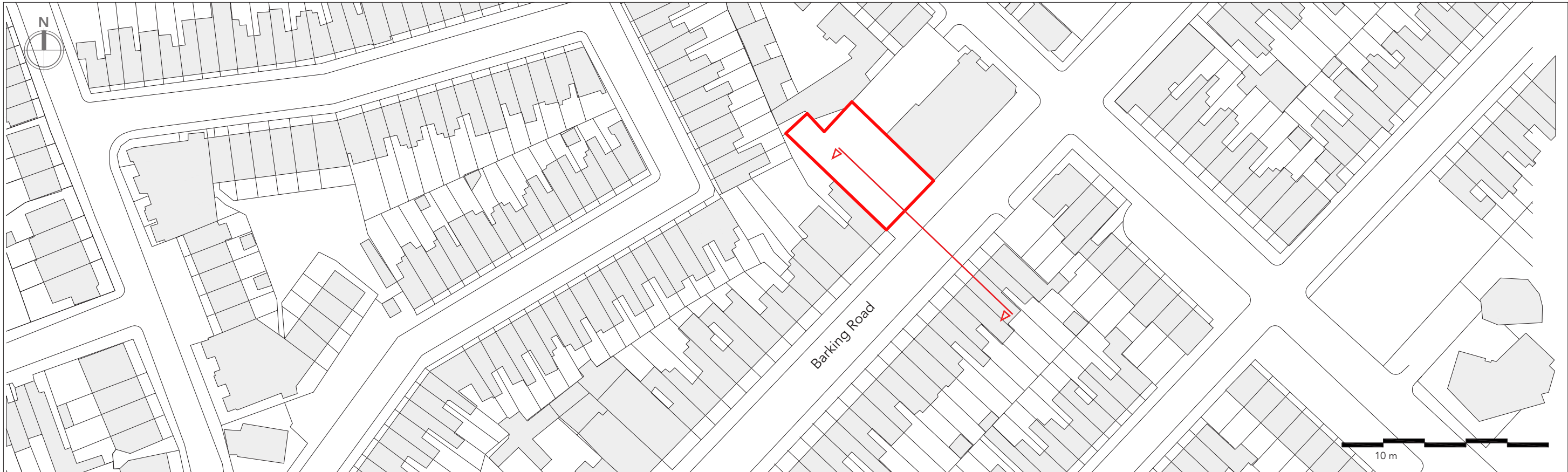


Figure 5.1 Site location and surrounding urban context of the proposed design site, Newham, London (Author's drawing).



Figure 5.2 Street elevation analysis of Barking Road, illustrating the prevailing building heights, façade rhythms, bay window projections, and material character within the surrounding urban context. (Author's drawing).

5.1.2 Axonometric View and Site Dimensions

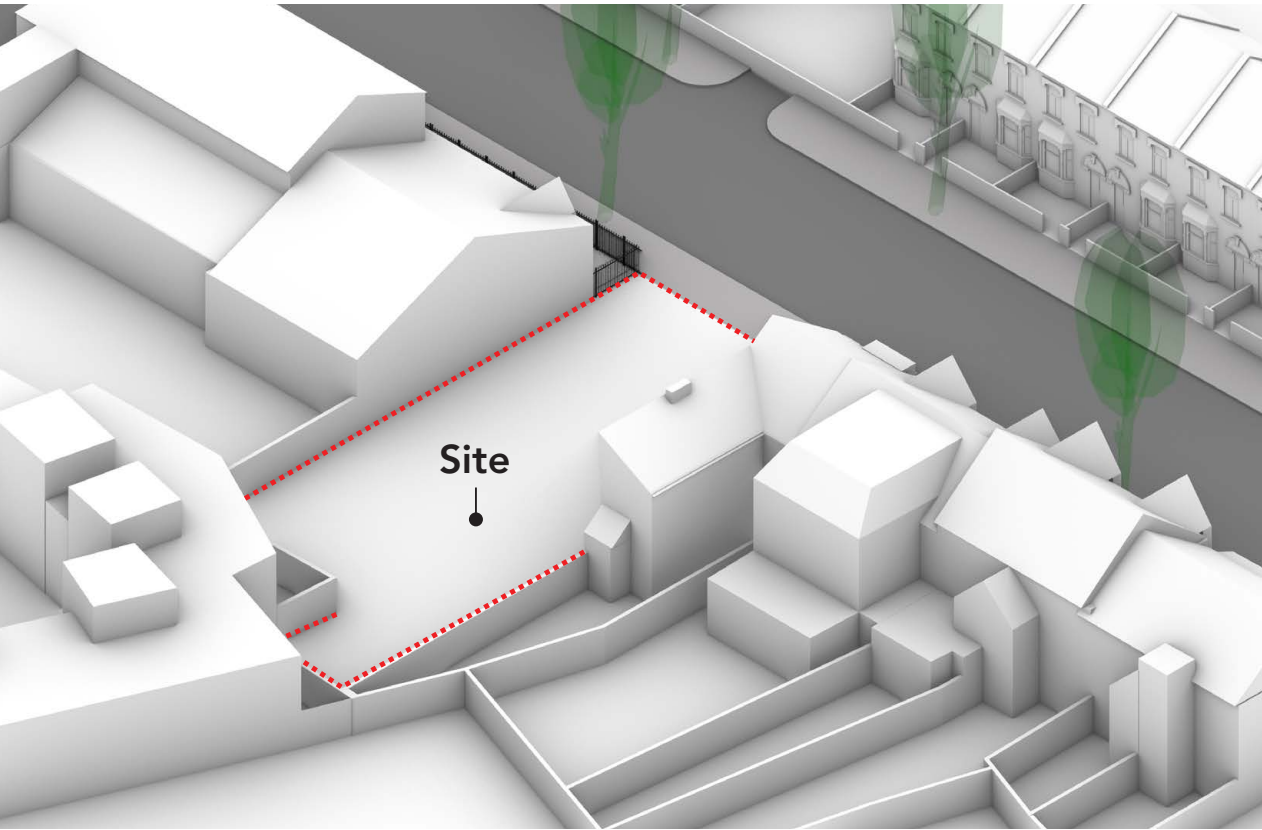


Figure 5.3 Axonometric site context diagram illustrating the location of the proposed infill housing site within the existing urban morphology (Author's drawing).

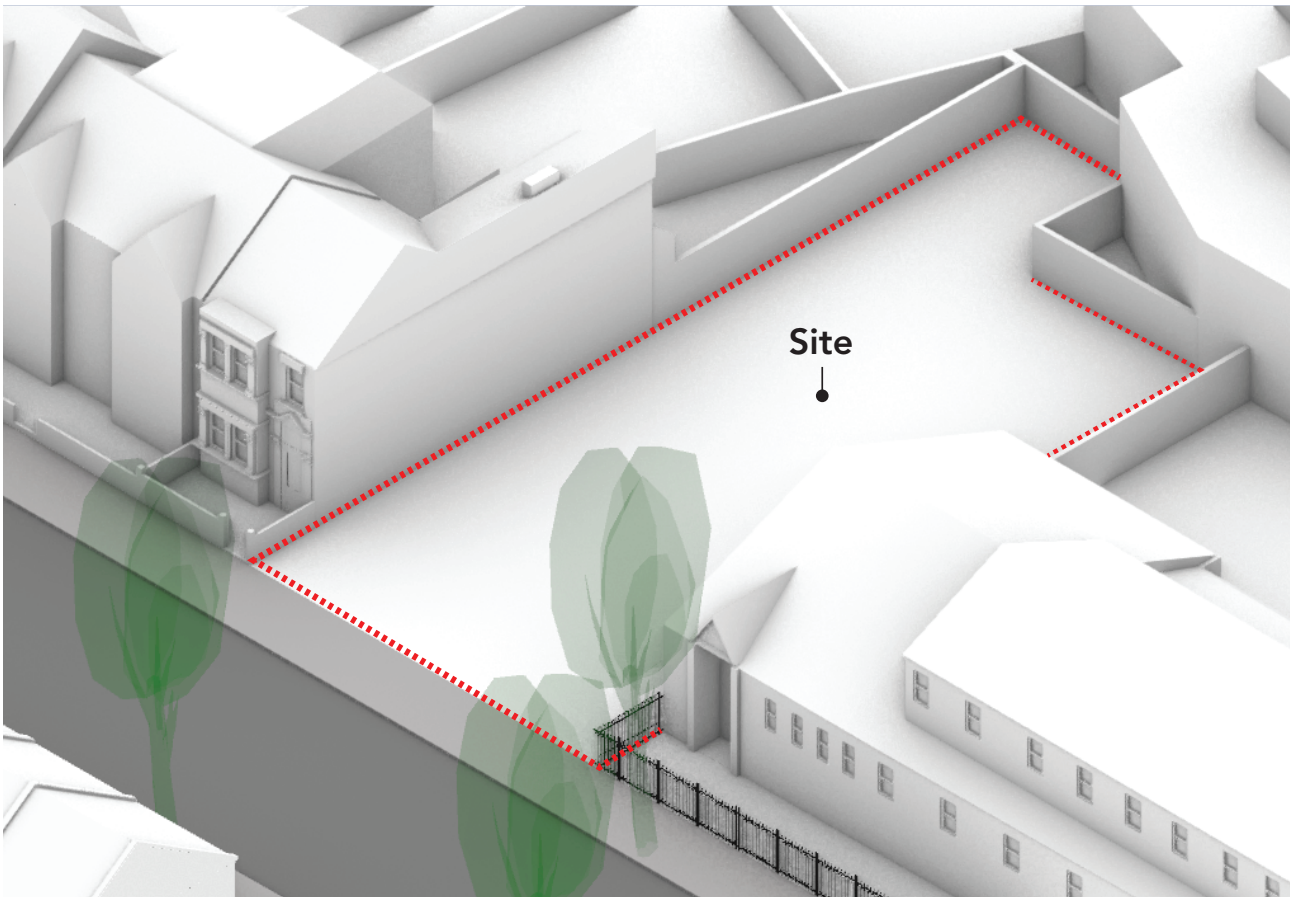


Figure 5.4 Axonometric site context diagram illustrating the location of the proposed infill housing site within the existing urban morphology (Author's drawing).

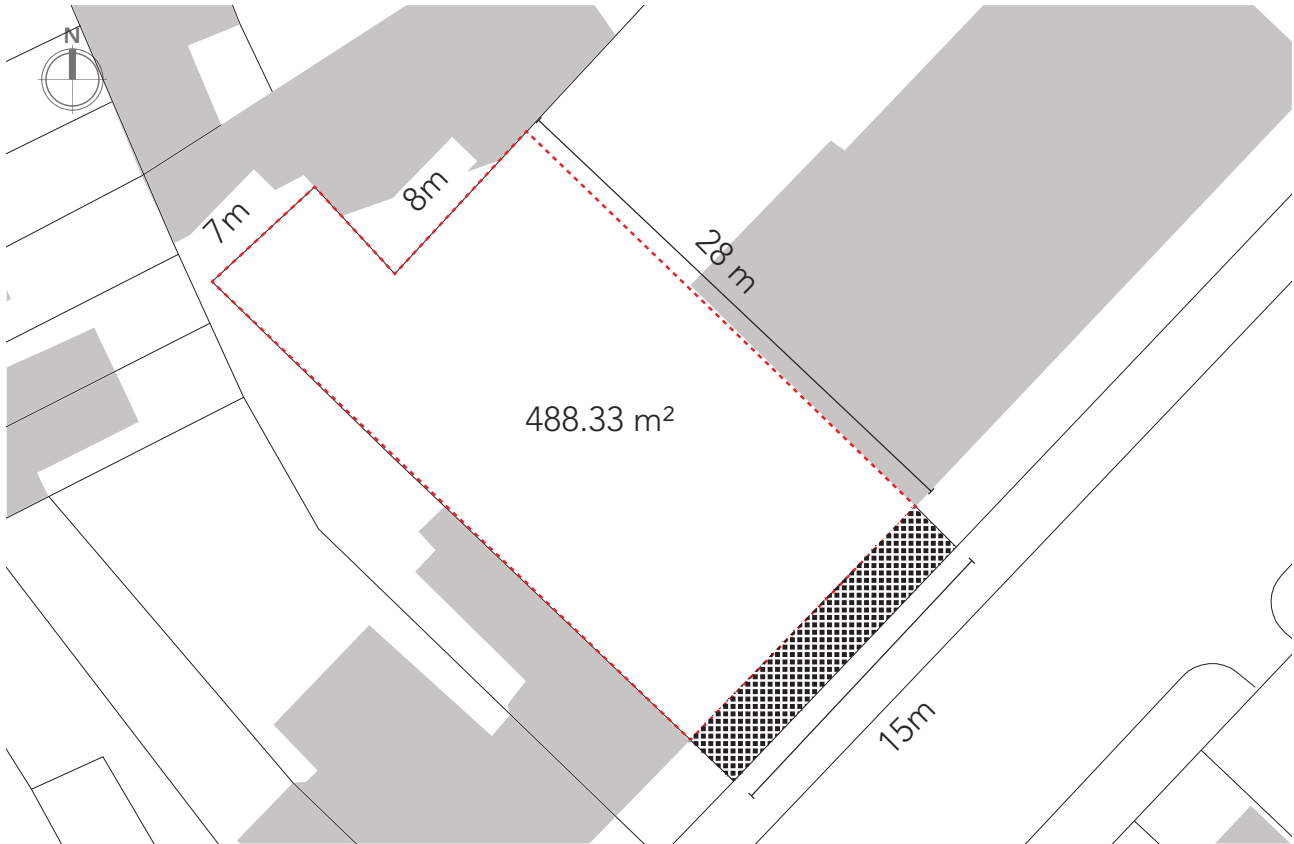


Figure 5.5 Measured site boundary showing the geometry, key dimensions, and total site area (488.33 m²) of the selected infill housing site in Newham. (Author's drawing).

The selected site is located within an established residential area of Newham and occupies a vacant infill plot embedded within an existing urban block. The site is bordered by residential buildings on multiple sides and benefits from direct access to Barking Road, a key local street characterised by a mixture of residential and commercial uses. Its position within an already developed urban fabric presents an opportunity to increase housing provision without requiring expansion into undeveloped land.

The site has a total area of approximately 488.33 m² and is defined by an irregular geometry shaped by the surrounding built form. The plot measures approximately 28 m in depth and 15 m along its street frontage, with additional variations in width resulting from the existing block configuration. Despite its constrained form, the site offers sufficient capacity for residential development while maintaining meaningful outdoor space and appropriate relationships with neighbouring properties.

The surrounding context is predominantly composed of Victorian and Edwardian terraced housing, characterised by consistent building lines, pitched roofs, bay windows, and clearly defined residential entrances. These contextual characteristics informed the design approach and provided important references for massing, façade articulation, roof forms, and the overall architectural language of the proposal. The site's location within a well-established neighbourhood also supports the objective of creating a development that integrates seamlessly with its surroundings.

The analysis identified several opportunities and constraints that influenced the subsequent design process. Key opportunities include the site's accessibility, its proximity to existing amenities, and the potential to introduce new housing within an underutilised urban parcel. At the same time, the close relationship with neighbouring buildings required careful consideration of daylight access, privacy, overshadowing, and spatial integration. These factors formed the foundation for the development of the final tenure-blind housing proposal.

5.2 | Design Development

Aim:

To demonstrate how the final design framework informed the evolution of the building form, architectural language, and material strategy, translating contextual analysis and tenure-blind design principles into a cohesive residential proposal.

5.2.1 Final Design Framework

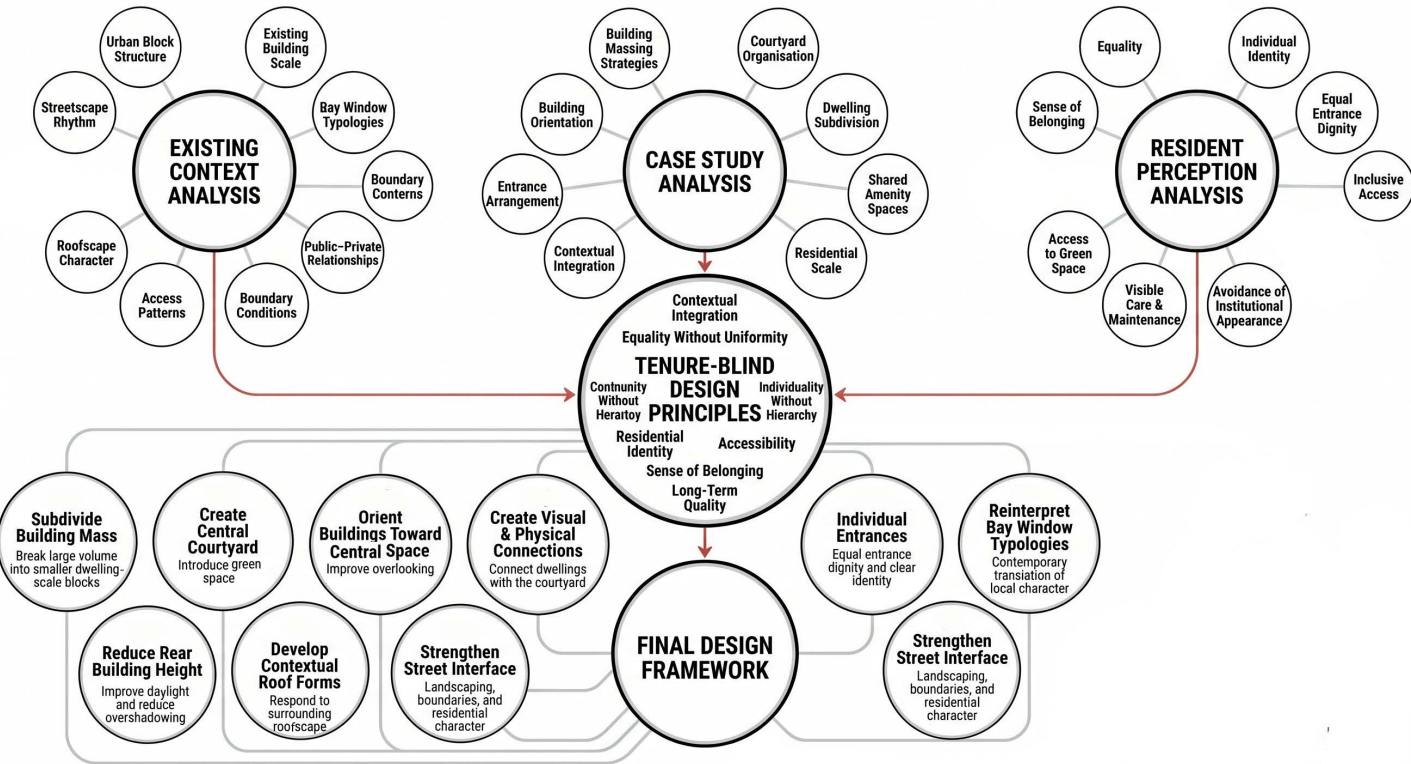
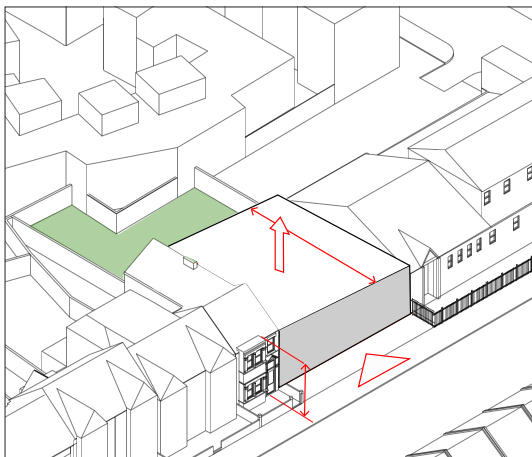
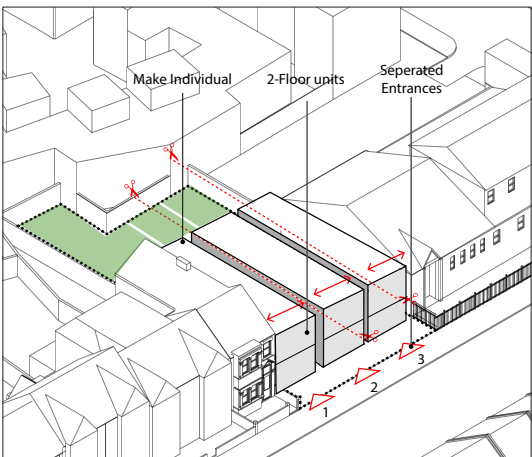


Figure 5.6 Synthesis of context analysis, case study findings, and resident perceptions into tenure-blind design principles and the final design framework (Author's drawing).

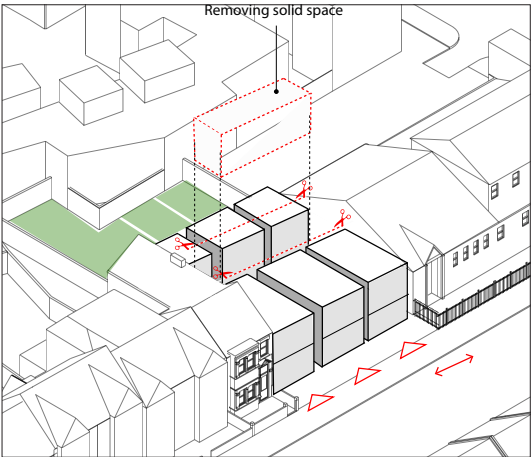
The final design framework translates findings from the contextual analysis, case study review, and resident perception survey into a tenure-blind architectural proposal. Building massing and urban form are derived from the surrounding context, while subdivision into smaller volumes, a central courtyard, and enhanced visual and physical connections promote residential quality and a sense of community. Contemporary reinterpretations of local architectural elements, including bay windows, roof forms, entrances, and boundary treatments, strengthen contextual integration while reinforcing equality, individuality, accessibility, and long-term quality across all dwellings.



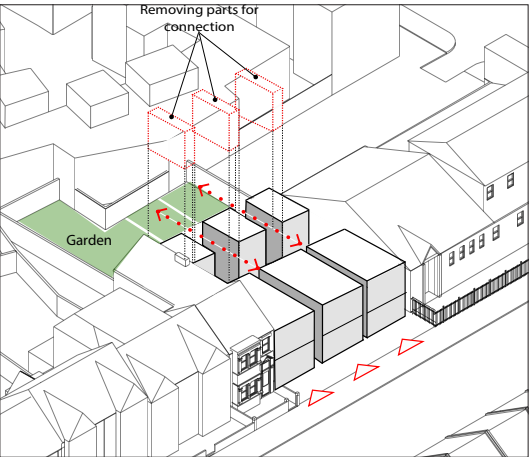
1. Built-unbuilt proportions established in response to the prevailing development pattern and spatial structure of the surrounding urban block.



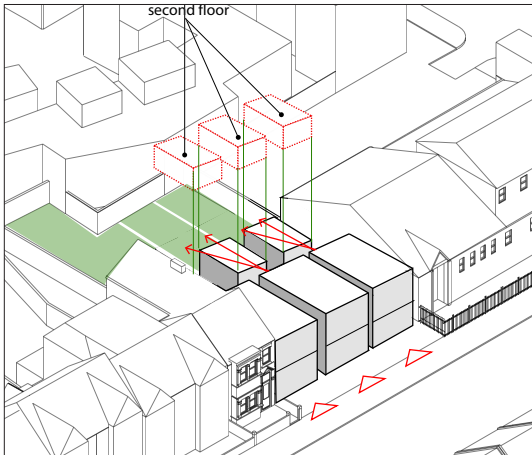
2. The initial mass is subdivided into individual volumes to reduce the perception of a single institutional block and reinforce a domestic residential character.



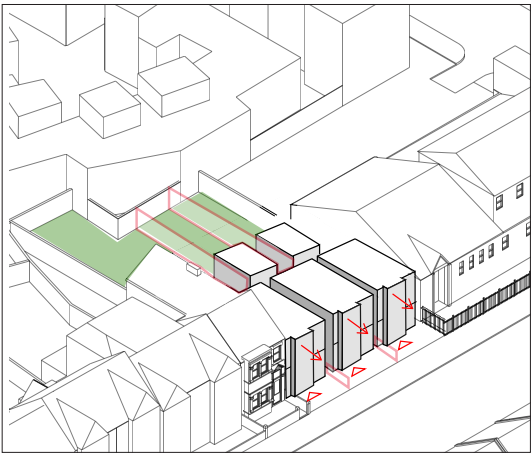
3. A central courtyard is created by removing part of the building mass, allowing the garden to extend into the heart of the scheme.



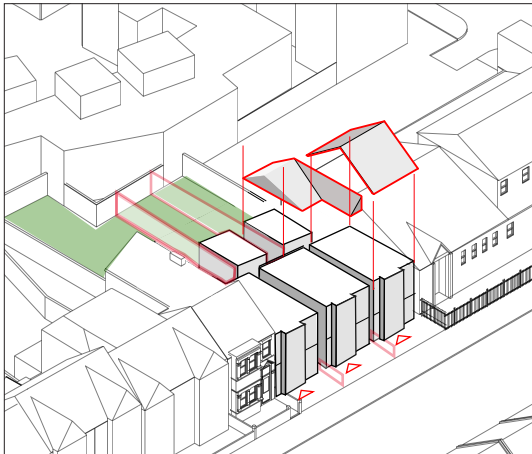
4. Portions of the building mass are removed to create direct visual and physical connections to the central courtyard.



5. The rear building mass is reduced to a single storey to improve sunlight penetration into the courtyard and minimise overshadowing of neighbouring properties



6. Bay windows and clearly defined entrances are introduced to reinforce the residential character of the development, emphasise individual dwelling entrances, and strengthen integration with the surrounding streetscape.



7. Roof forms are developed in accordance with the prevailing roovescape of the surrounding context and adapted to respond to London's high rainfall conditions.



8. Dwelling boundaries and street-facing landscaping are added to strengthen residential identity and improve integration with the surrounding streetscape.

Figure 5.7 Design development diagrams illustrating the massing transformation, spatial subdivision, and contextual integration of the proposed infill housing scheme (Author's drawing).

5.2.2 Bay Window Typologies and Streetscape Character

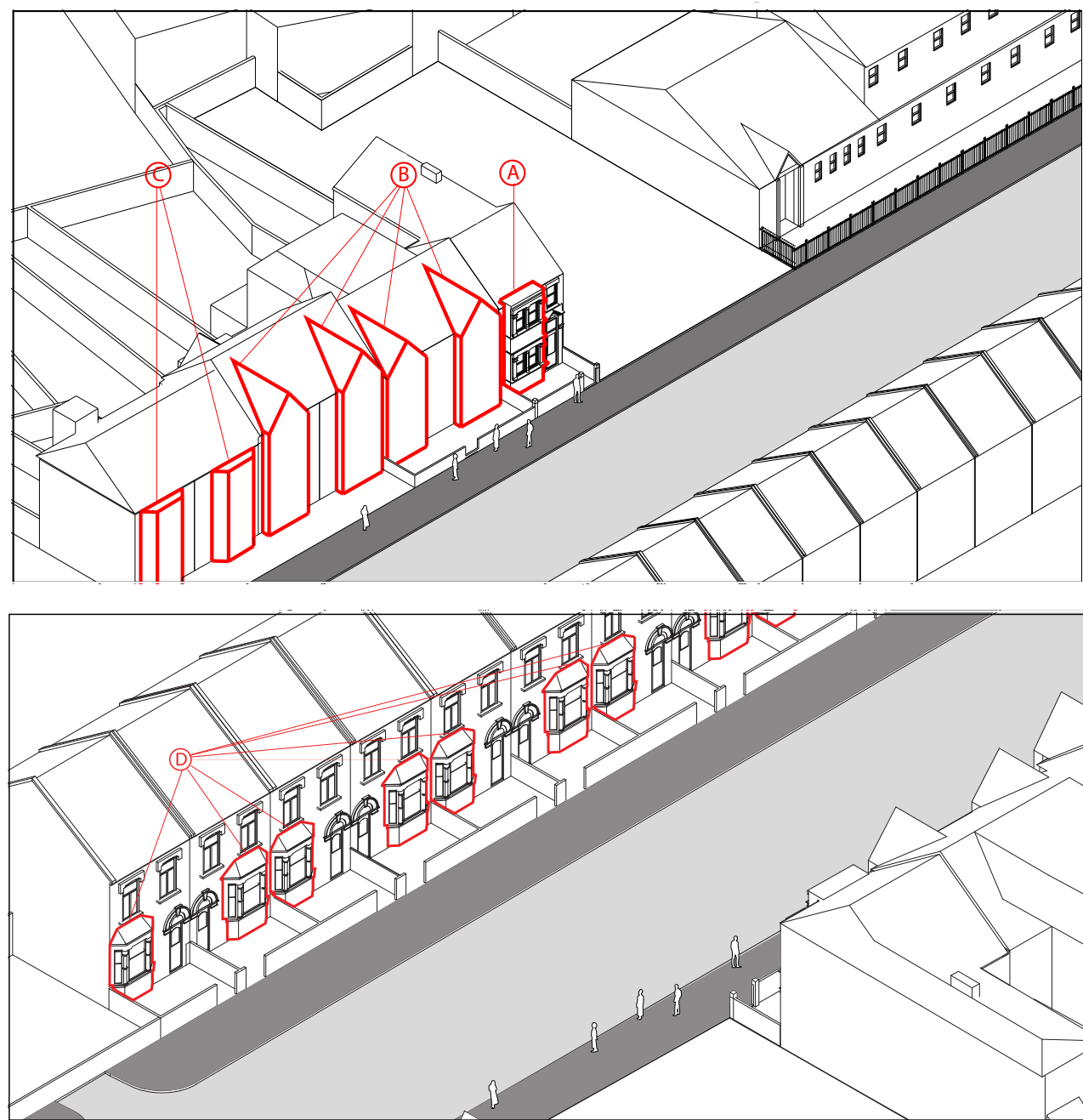


Figure 5.8 Existing bay window rhythms and façade projections within the surrounding urban context (Author's drawing).

The contextual analysis demonstrates that bay windows are a recurring architectural element throughout the surrounding neighbourhood. As highlighted in red, bay windows appear consistently along both the immediate street frontage and neighbouring residential blocks, contributing to a strong and recognisable façade rhythm. Their repeated use creates a sense of visual continuity within the streetscape and forms an important characteristic of the local architectural identity.

The distribution of bay windows also reinforces the vertical articulation of façades and helps define the relationship between individual dwellings and the public realm. Their prevalence within the study area indicates that bay windows are a dominant contextual feature, making them a significant reference point for the development of a contextually responsive infill housing proposal.



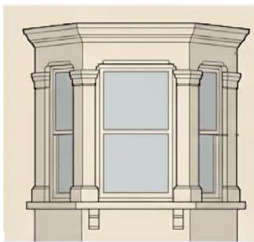
Figure 5.9 Existing bay window typologies identified within the surrounding urban context (Author's drawing).

The survey of the surrounding built environment identified four principal bay window typologies (A–D). While each type varies in its architectural detailing, roof form, and level of projection, all contribute to the visual richness and articulation of the neighbourhood façades. These variations reflect the incremental development of the area while maintaining a coherent architectural language.

Their repeated presence establishes a consistent pattern of façade composition that informs the proposed design. Drawing on these prevalent typologies enables the project to respond to the existing streetscape while maintaining a contemporary architectural expression.



White bay windows



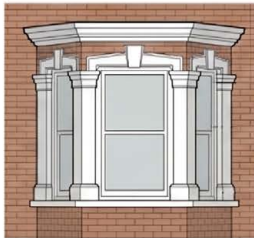
Cream bay windows



Dark grey bay windows



Black bay windows



Exposed brick bay windows

Figure 5.10 Existing bay window typologies identified within the surrounding urban context, including white, cream, dark grey, black, and exposed brick bay windows (Author's drawing).

5.2.3 Development of the Bay Window and Building Form

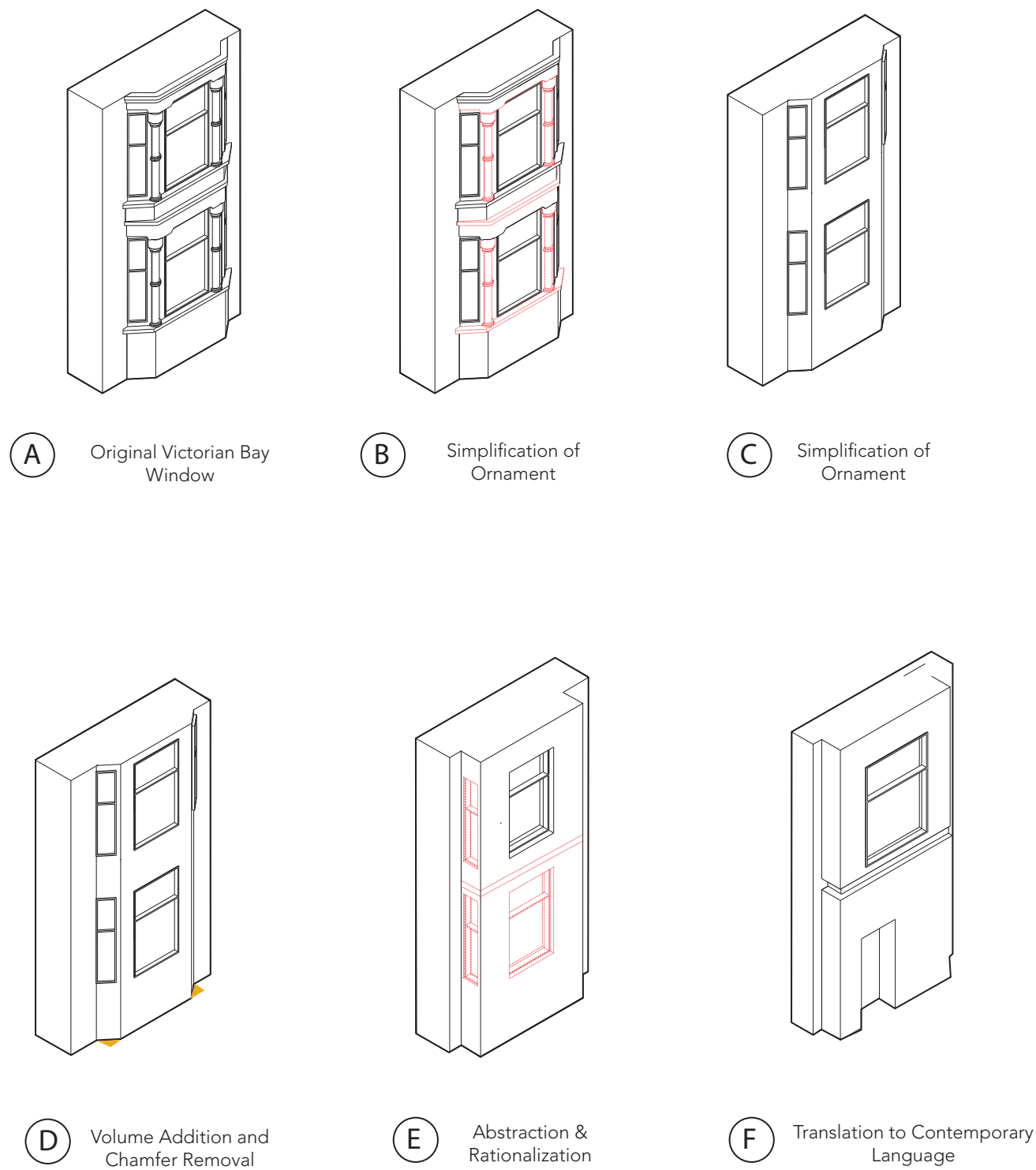


Figure 5.11 Diagram showing the transformation of a traditional Victorian bay window into a contemporary architectural language through simplification, abstraction, and rationalization (Author's drawing).

The design framework originated from an analysis of the surrounding streetscape, which identified bay windows as one of the most distinctive and recurring architectural features within the neighbourhood. The original Victorian bay window (A) was selected as a contextual reference due to its prevalence and contribution to the area's façade rhythm, vertical articulation, and visual identity. Rather than replicating the historic form directly, the design process sought to reinterpret its key characteristics in a manner appropriate for contemporary housing.

The transformation process involved a series of stages of simplification and abstraction. Decorative mouldings, cornices, columns, and ornamental details were progressively removed (B–C) to isolate the essential geometric qualities of the bay window. Through further abstraction and rationalisation (D), the projecting form and vertical proportions were retained while unnecessary historic detailing was eliminated. The final stage (E) translated these contextual principles into a contemporary architectural language, resulting in a simplified façade composition that maintains a connection to the local character while expressing a modern identity.

Building upon the simplified façade language, the final design introduces individuality through controlled variations in colour rather than changes in form. While all dwellings share the same architectural framework, proportions, and façade composition, selected elements such as window frames, entrance doors, and brick tones vary between units. This approach creates visual diversity and a sense of individual identity without disrupting the overall coherence of the development.

The strategy supports the thesis objective of achieving tenure-blind housing by avoiding architectural hierarchies or distinctions between dwellings. Instead of expressing difference through size, form, or status-related architectural features, individuality is achieved through subtle material and colour variations. The result is a unified streetscape that balances contextual integration, resident identity, and architectural equality.

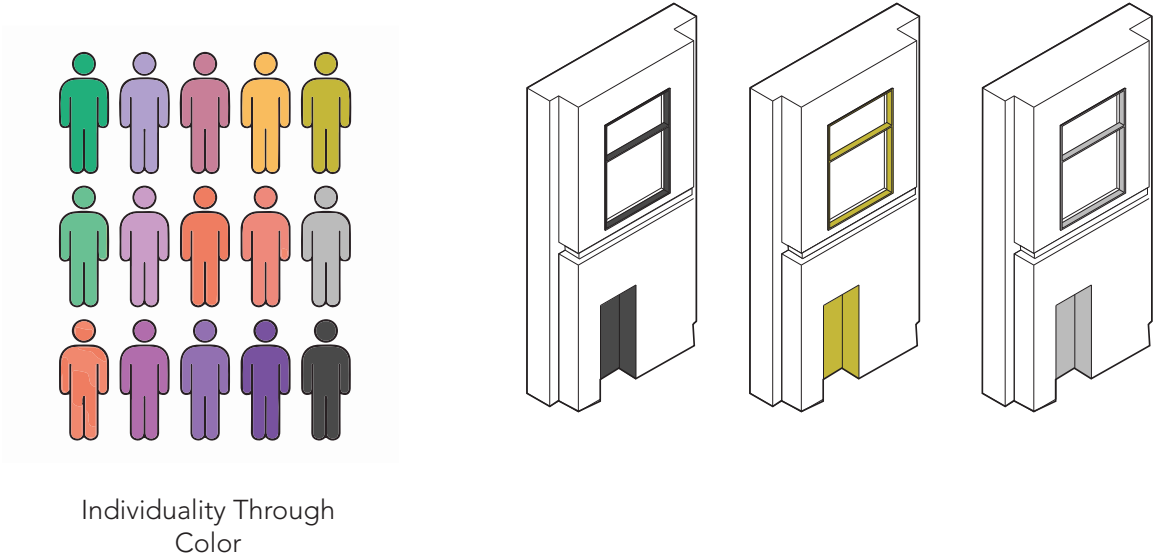


Figure 5.12 Diagram illustrating individuality through Colour variation within a shared architectural framework. (Author's drawing).

5.2.4 Materials Selection

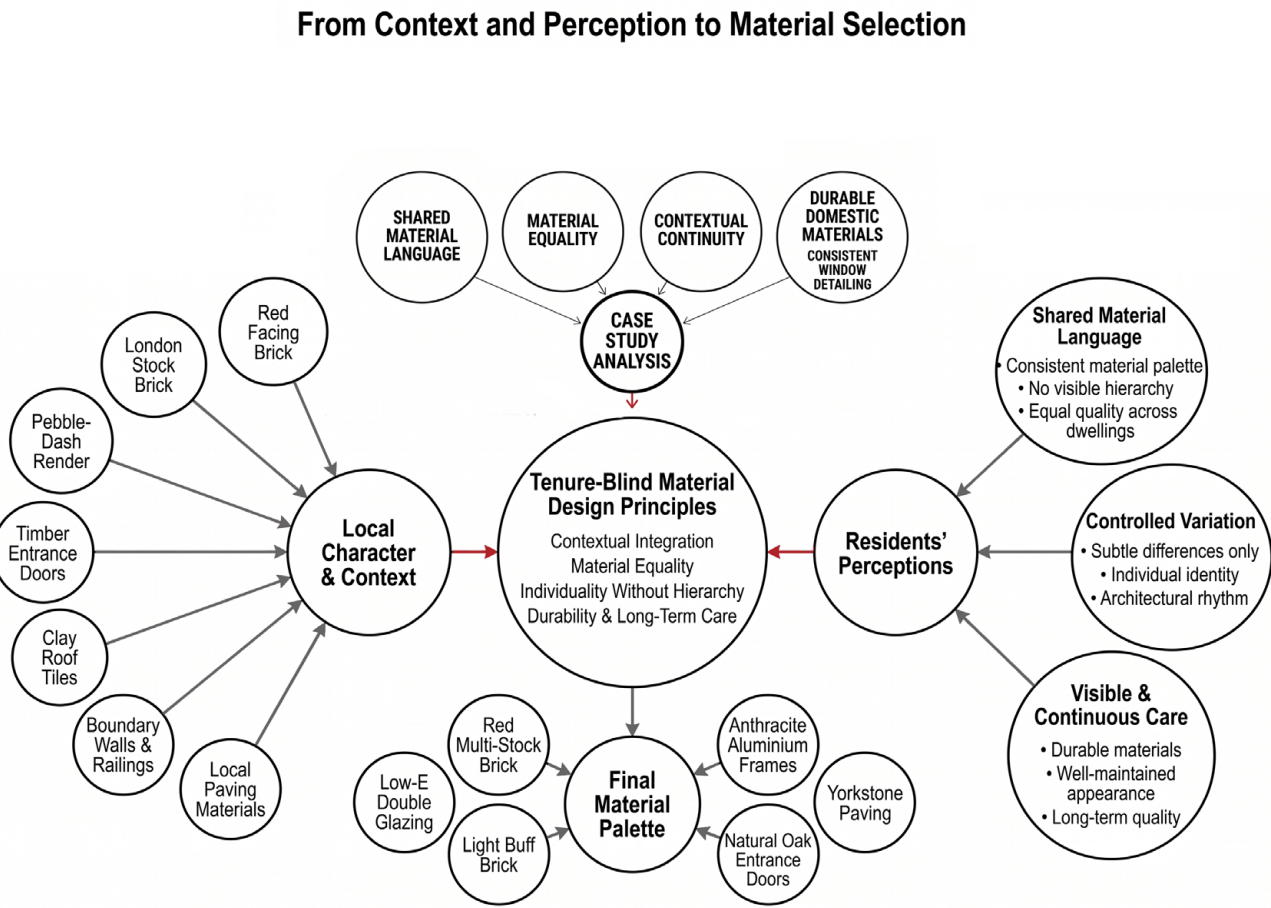


Figure 5.13 . Material selection process linking neighbourhood context and residents’ perceptions to the final material palette. (Author’s drawing)

5.2.4.1 Existing Materials

A material survey of the surrounding streetscape was undertaken to identify the predominant façade, roof, boundary, and paving materials that contribute to the local character of the neighbourhood. The analysis revealed a consistent palette of traditional East London residential materials, including London stock brick, red facing brick, painted masonry, stucco render, pebble-dash render, clay roof tiles, painted timber doors, various window frame types, brick boundary walls, metal railings, and concrete and block paving surfaces. While variations exist between individual properties, these materials collectively establish the visual identity and architectural character of the area. The material palette presented in this study represents the principal materials observed throughout the neighbourhood and serves as a contextual reference for the subsequent design proposal.

5.2.4.2 Main Wall Façade Materials



Red Facing Brick
A dense fired clay brick swatch with a slightly darker, richer red-brown tone and smoother texture, used in decorative bands and bay windows.



London Stock Brick
traditional handmade yellow-buff clay brick with natural grey and brown inclusions, rough texture, irregular colour variation typical of East London Victorian terraces.



Painted Masonry
A brick-textured swatch coated with smooth white, cream, or light-grey exterior masonry paint, used to create a uniform decorative façade finish while retaining the underlying brick texture.



Stucco Render
A smooth painted off-white cement-lime render swatch showing its use for decorative mouldings, cornices, and string courses.



Traditional Beige Pebble-Dash Render



Light Grey Painted Pebble-Dash Render



Cream Roughcast Render



Aged Pebble-Dash Render

Figure 5.14 Main façade and wall materials observed in the surrounding neighbourhood (Author’s drawing).

5.2.4.3 Entrance Materials



Painted Timber Doors

Figure 5.15 Typical painted timber entrance doors observed in the surrounding streetscape.

5.2.4.4 Window Materials



Aluminium Window Frames



UPVC Window Frames



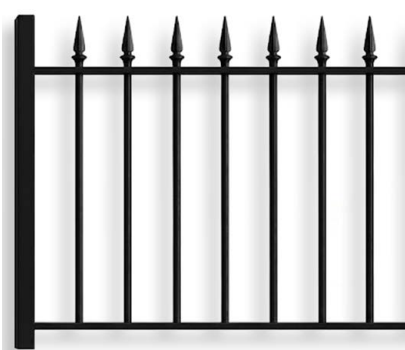
Timber Window Elements

Figure 5.16 Common window frame materials observed in the surrounding streetscape.

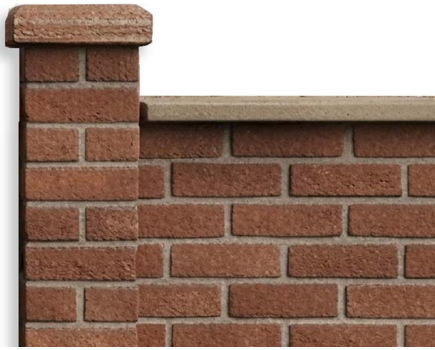
5.2.4.5 Boundary Wall Materials



Timber Fencing



Metal Railings



Brick Boundary Walls

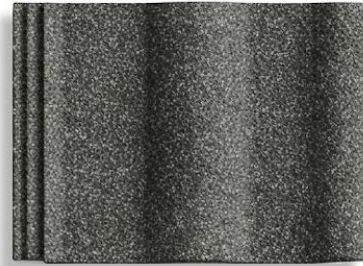
Figure 5.17 . Common boundary wall and fencing materials observed in the neighbourhood.

5.2.4.6 Roof Materials



CLAY ROOF TILES

Weathered red-brown clay tiles, the predominant roofing material in the surrounding context.



CONCRETE ROOF TILES

Dark grey concrete tiles used on a smaller number of neighbouring properties.

Figure 5.18 . Common roof tile materials observed in the surrounding streetscape.

5.2.4.7 Paving Surfaces



Concrete paving



Asphalt Road Surface



Block paving

Figure 5.19 . Common paving surfaces observed within the neighbourhood streetscape.

5.2.4.8 Material Design Palette

Material 01:



Red Multi-Stock Facing Brick
Primary façade material, provides durability, thermal mass and contextual integration with surrounding Victorian housing.

Material 03:



Anthracite Powder-Coated Aluminium Frames
Slim thermally broken aluminium framing system for contemporary windows and balcony doors.

Material 05:



Yorkstone Paving Slabs
Natural sandstone paving providing durability, permanence, and a refined threshold character for residential entrances.

Material 02:



Light Buff Facing Brick
Secondary façade brick used to create visual hierarchy, rhythm, and individuality within the building composition.

Material 04:



Natural Oak Entrance Door
Durable timber entrance element introducing warmth and residential character.

Material 06:



Low-E Double Glazing
High-performance insulated glazing providing daylight, thermal efficiency, and acoustic comfort.

Material 07:



Natural slate tiles
Durable roof covering with a refined grey tone, providing weather resistance and a traditional material character that fits the surrounding residential context.

Material 08:



Stone finish plinth, headers
Providing durability while complementing the brick mortar to create a cohesive façade

Figure 5.20 Selected material palette supporting a tenure-blind architectural approach through the use of durable, high-quality, and contextually appropriate materials. (Author's compilation).



Figure 5.21 . Entrance threshold design using contrasting Yorkstone and red clay brick paving to express individuality and improve dwelling legibility (Author's drawing).



Figure 5.22 Material application on the proposed street elevation, showing the use of red multi-stock facing brick as the primary façade material to provide durability, contextual continuity, and visual integration with the surrounding residential character. (Author's drawing.)



Figure 5.25 Material application on the proposed street elevation, showing the use of natural oak timber entrance doors to introduce warmth, define the residential thresholds, and add a softer material contrast within the façade composition. (Author's drawing.)



Figure 5.23 Material application on the proposed street elevation, showing the use of light buff facing brick as an entrance border to frame the access points, define the threshold, and introduce subtle material variation within the façade . (Author's drawing.)

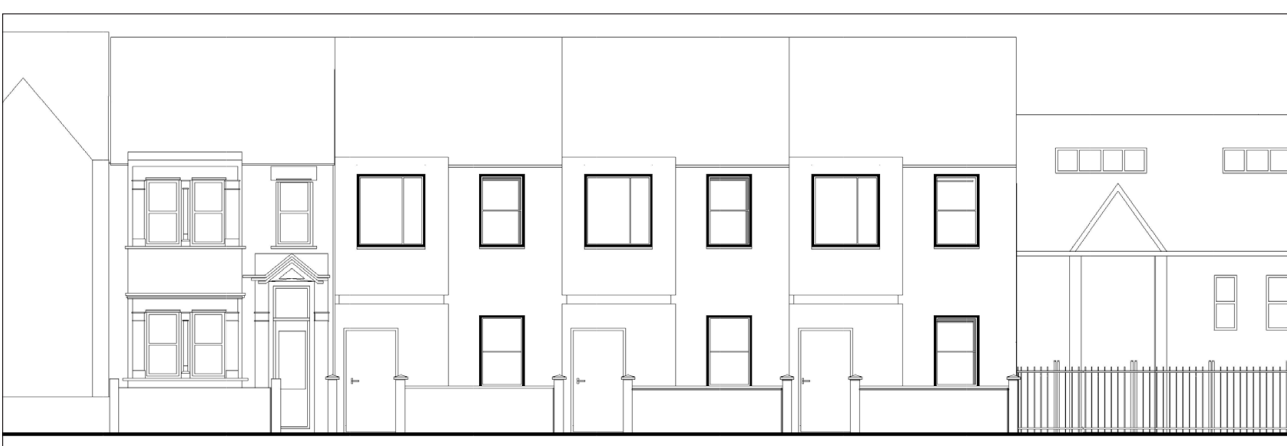


Figure 5.26 Material application on the proposed street elevation, showing the use of anthracite powder-coated aluminium frames to define the windows, giving the façade a slim, contemporary, and durable finish. (Author's drawing.)



Figure 5.24 Material application on the proposed street elevation, showing the use of natural slate tiles as the roof covering to provide a durable, weather-resistant finish and a traditional material character. (Author's drawing.)



Figure 5.27 Figure X.X Material application on the proposed street elevation, showing the use of Low-E double glazing in the window openings to improve daylight, thermal performance, and acoustic comfort. (Author's drawing.)

5.3 | Final Architectural Proposal

Aim:

To present the final architectural proposal and demonstrate how the design principles established in the previous sections are translated into a coherent tenure-blind housing scheme through its site layout, plans, elevations, sections, and visualizations.

5.3.1 Floor Plans

5.3.1.1 Ground Floor

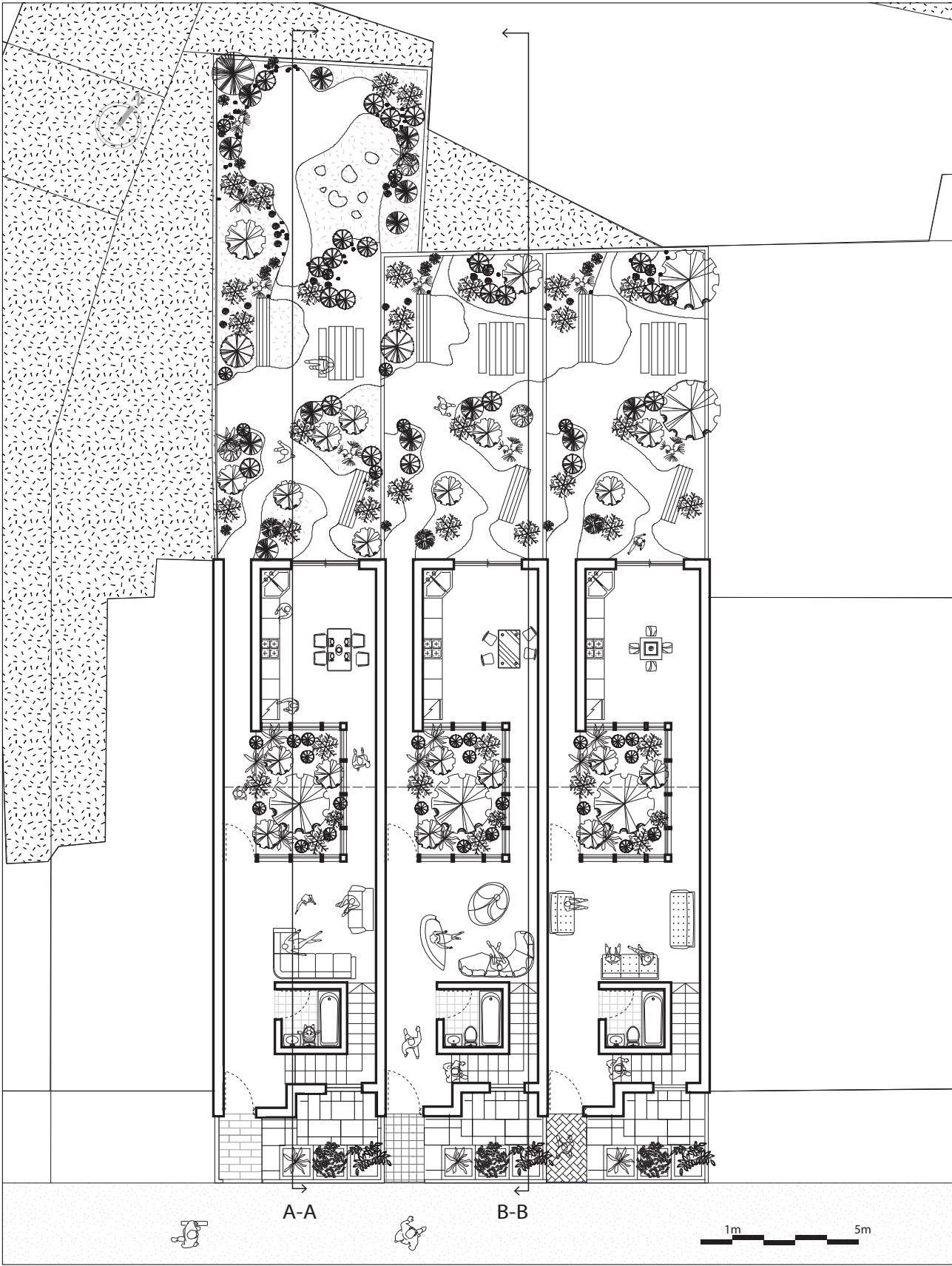


Figure 5.28 Ground floor plan of the final architectural proposal. (Author's drawing)

5.3.1.2 First Floor

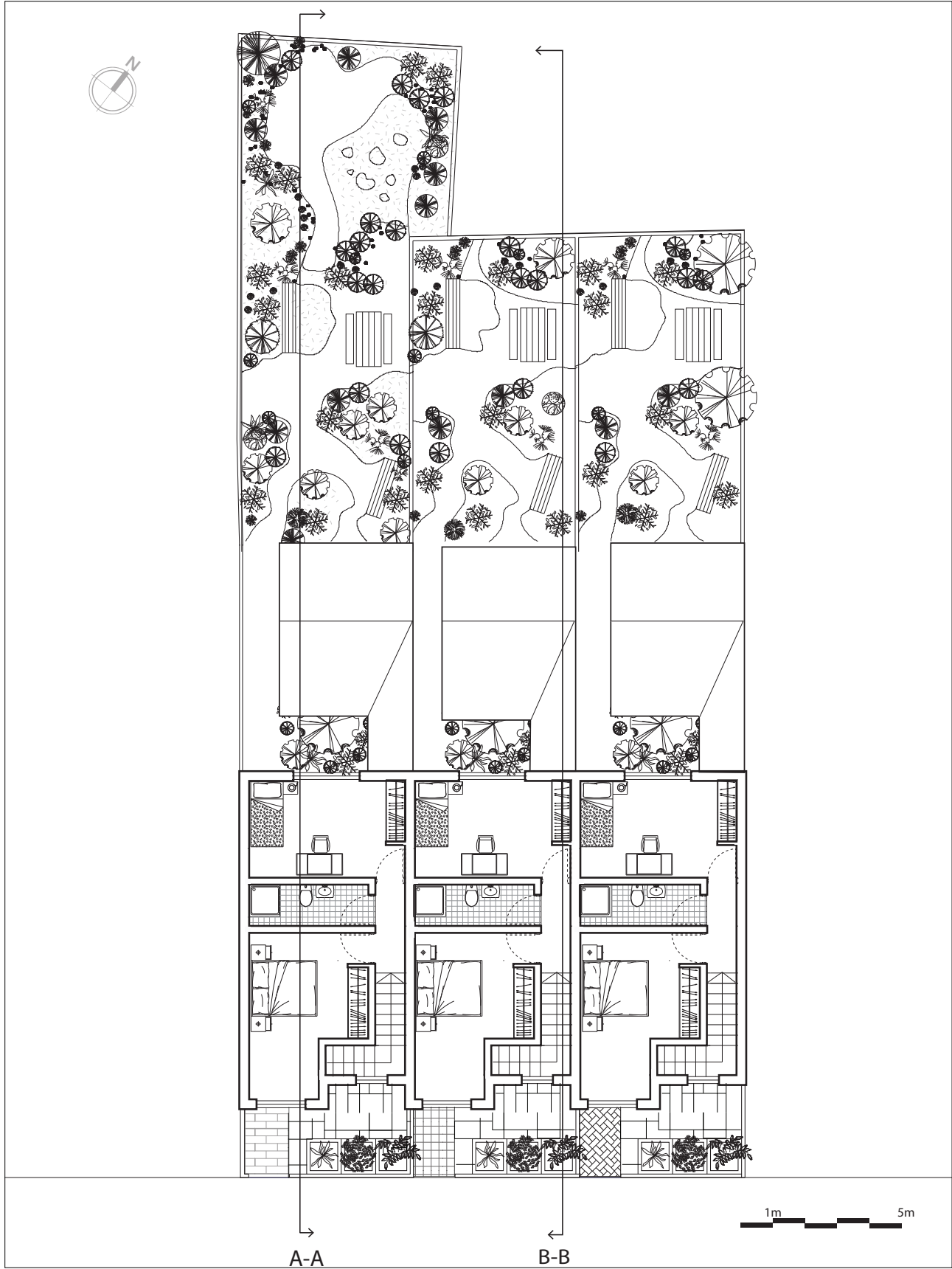


Figure 5.29 First floor plan of the final architectural proposal. (Author's drawing)

5.3.2 Roof Plan

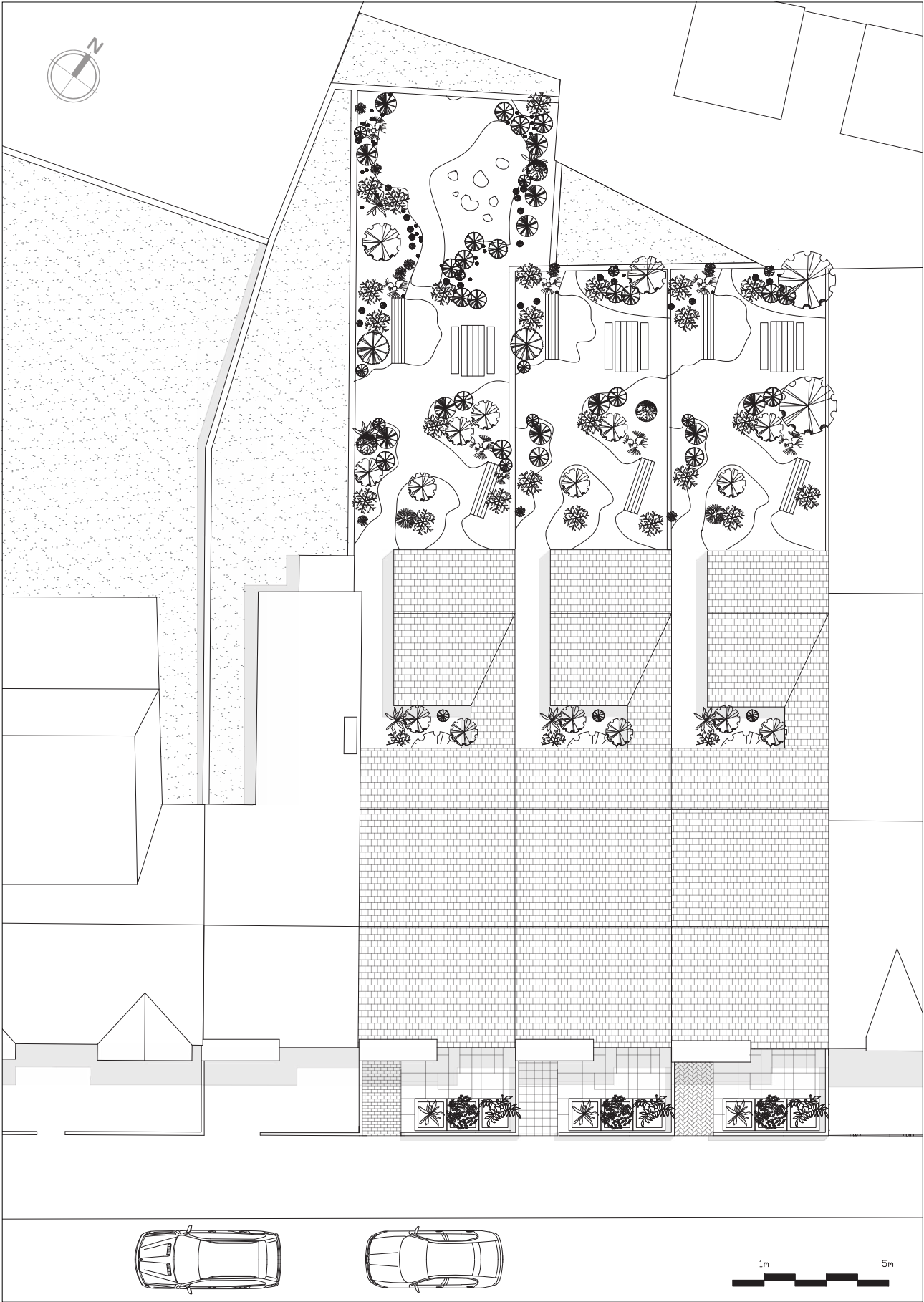


Figure 5.30 Roof plan showing the roof configuration and architectural composition of the final design proposal. (Author's drawing)

5.3.3 Resident Perceptions and Architectural Responses



Figure 5.31 Integration of resident perceptions within the final design proposal. The diagram illustrates how questionnaire themes and participant quotations were translated into architectural decisions. Graphical inspiration was drawn from the work of Jean Giraud (Moebius). (Author's drawing).

5.3.4 Sections

5.3.4.1 Section A-A

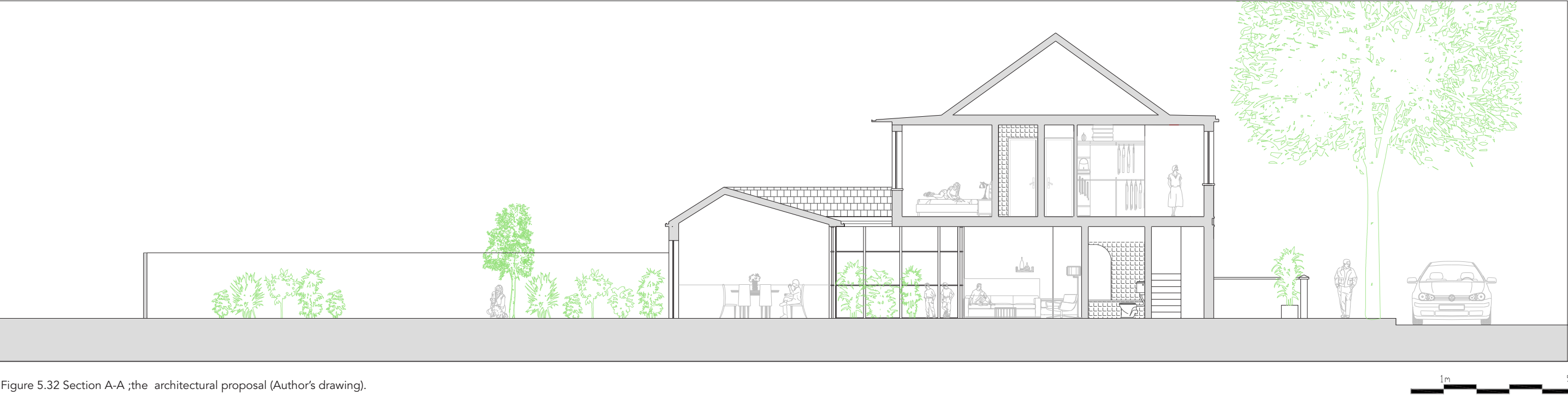


Figure 5.32 Section A-A ;the architectural proposal (Author's drawing).

5.3.4.2 Section B-B



Figure 5.33 Section B-B ;the architectural proposal (Author's drawing).

5.3.5 Elevation



Figure 5.34 Street elevation of the final architectural proposal (Author's drawing).

5.3.6 Architectural Visualizations



Figure 5.35 Street elevation view of the final architectural proposal, showing the proposed façade and its relationship to the existing streetscape (Author's drawing).



Figure 5.36 Interior render of the final architectural proposal, illustrating the living space and its visual and physical connection to the courtyard through full-height glazing (Author's drawing).



Figure 5.37 Render showing the landscaped yard and its visual connection to the kitchen (Author's drawing).

6.1 Findings and Discussion

This research set out to answer the following question:

How can social housing infill in Newham be designed to eliminate architectural stigma markers and achieve tenure-blind integration within the existing urban fabric?

The literature reviewed throughout this study demonstrated that housing stigma is not solely produced through housing policy, socio-economic conditions, or territorial narratives, but can also become visible through architectural design. While previous research has extensively examined the social and political dimensions of housing stigma, comparatively limited attention has been given to how architectural interventions can actively reduce visible markers of inequality and contribute to more inclusive residential environments.

To address this gap, this thesis investigated the relationship between architectural design and housing stigma through a design-led research methodology that combined literature review, borough comparison, case study analysis, contextual investigation, and a perception-based questionnaire. The findings from these stages were translated into a comprehensive design framework and ultimately applied through the architectural proposal for a small infill site in Newham.

The research demonstrates that tenure-blind integration cannot be achieved through a single architectural gesture. Instead, it results from the careful coordination of urban, spatial, and architectural strategies that collectively minimise visible expressions of tenure difference while reinforcing equality, dignity, and contextual belonging.

6.1.1 Answer to the Research Question

The answer to the research question is presented through the final design framework and its architectural application within the proposed infill housing scheme. The study concludes that architectural stigma can be reduced by designing social housing that is visually and spatially integrated into its surrounding urban fabric rather than being distinguished from it.

Context as the Starting Point of Design

The findings demonstrate that the existing urban context should serve as the primary reference for the design process. Because architectural stigma is highly relational, new social housing cannot be designed independently of its surroundings. The scale, rhythm, materials, roof forms, and spatial organisation of the neighbourhood should inform the architectural proposal so that the development becomes part of the existing urban fabric rather than an isolated institutional object.

Individuality Without Hierarchy

The research shows that architectural individuality should not be confused with architectural hierarchy. By subdividing the building mass into smaller volumes and introducing variations in façade composition and bay windows, the proposal reflects the diversity of the surrounding streetscape while avoiding the appearance of a single monolithic housing block. Variation therefore creates identity without signalling differences in social status.

Equality Through Entrances and Access

Equal access emerged as one of the most important conditions for tenure-blind design. Separate or hierarchical entrances communicate social distinction and reinforce architectural stigma. The proposed design therefore provides clearly articulated and equal entrances, ensuring that no dwelling is visually or spatially identified as inferior through its access arrangements.

Material Quality and Façade Expression

The findings indicate that architecture communicates social meaning through its visual language. Material selection, façade articulation, window proportions, and architectural detailing all influence public perception. By employing materials derived from the local context and maintaining consistent design quality throughout

the development, the proposal reduces visible markers of tenure difference while strengthening contextual integration.

Landscape and Shared Space

The research also demonstrates that landscape should function as an integral component of tenure-blind housing rather than as residual open space. The introduction of a central courtyard, extensive greenery, and direct visual and physical connections between dwellings and communal areas improves residential quality and supports a stronger sense of belonging and identity.

Overall Answer

Overall, this research concludes that tenure-blind integration is achieved through the coordinated application of contextual integration, equal architectural quality, articulated entrances, high-quality material expression, architectural individuality, and well-designed communal landscape. Together, these strategies minimise visible architectural stigma and enable social housing to become an integrated and dignified component of the existing urban environment rather than a recognisable symbol of social difference

6.1.2 Key Contribution

The principal contribution of this research lies not only in the final architectural proposal but in the development of a design framework for tenure-blind social housing that translates theoretical and empirical knowledge into practical architectural strategies. While previous studies have examined housing stigma from sociological, policy, or urban perspectives, relatively few have investigated how these insights can be systematically converted into design principles at the scale of small-site infill development.

This thesis addresses that gap by synthesising evidence from four complementary sources: the literature review, comparative architectural case studies, contextual analysis, and resident perceptions collected through the questionnaire. Rather than relying on a single source of evidence, these components were integrated to identify recurring themes and transform them into a coherent design framework.

The final architectural proposal therefore should not be viewed as the primary contribution of the research, but as a demonstration of the framework’s practical application. The framework itself offers a transferable methodology that can assist architects, planners, and policymakers in designing social housing that reduces visible markers of stigma and promotes tenure-blind integration within existing urban contexts.

By bridging sociological theory and architectural practice, this research contributes a structured approach for translating the concept of tenure-blind housing into concrete design strategies, providing a foundation that can be adapted and tested in future housing projects and research.

6.2 Critical Reflection

6.2.1 Limitations

The findings presented in this thesis should be considered within the scope and limitations of the research methodology. While the study demonstrates how architectural design can contribute to reducing visible housing stigma through tenure-blind strategies, it does not claim that architecture alone can eliminate the broader social, economic, and political processes that produce housing inequality. Housing stigma is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon shaped by housing policy, governance, media representation, and socio-economic conditions, many of which extend beyond the influence of architectural design.

A primary limitation of this research is its focus on a single case study site within the London Borough of Newham. Although the selected site provides an appropriate context for investigating small-site infill and tenure-blind housing, the resulting design framework was developed and tested within one specific urban setting. Consequently, the framework may require adaptation when applied to different boroughs, cities, or housing systems with distinct social, cultural, and planning contexts.

The questionnaire provides qualitative insights into how participants perceive architectural features associated with housing stigma and tenure-blind design. However, the findings should be interpreted with caution due to the relatively small sample size. Consequently, the results are indicative rather than statistically representative of the wider population of Newham residents. The survey was intended to complement the literature review, case studies, and contextual analysis by identifying recurring perceptions and themes rather than producing generalisable conclusions. As such, its value lies in informing the design framework and supporting architectural decision-making rather than establishing population-level evidence.

The research is also design-led in nature. The proposed framework was evaluated through its translation into an architectural proposal rather than through the construction and occupation of a completed project. As a result, the effectiveness of the proposed strategies in reducing perceived housing stigma has not been validated through post-occupancy evaluation or long-term observation of resident experience.

Furthermore, the study focuses primarily on architectural and spatial dimensions of tenure-blind design. Issues such as financial feasibility, procurement processes, long-term management, maintenance strategies, and housing governance were beyond the scope of this research. These factors inevitably influence the implementation and long-term success of tenure-blind housing and should therefore be considered alongside architectural design.

6.2.2 Design Process

The iterative nature of the design process also enabled continuous evaluation and refinement of the proposal. Decisions regarding massing, façade articulation, entrances, material selection, and landscape design were repeatedly assessed against the research objectives and the principles identified throughout the study. Consequently, the final architectural proposal represents the synthesis of successive analytical and design stages rather than a single design exercise.

However, the design process also presented certain challenges. The translation of theoretical concepts such as architectural stigma and tenure blindness into physical design required interpretation, meaning that some decisions inevitably involved professional judgement. Furthermore, the limited timeframe of the research constrained the exploration of alternative design solutions and prevented the development of multiple fully resolved proposals for comparison.

Another limitation of the design process is that the evaluation of the different design proposals was partly subjective. Although the designs were assessed using the research framework and findings, the final decisions relied on the researcher's judgement. Different architects or stakeholders may have selected different solutions. Furthermore, while the questionnaire informed the design, broader public consultation would be necessary to fully evaluate the acceptance and effectiveness of the proposed framework.

6.2.3 Future Research

While this research demonstrates the potential of tenure-blind architectural design to reduce visible housing stigma, several opportunities remain for future investigation. Future research could include, but is not limited to, the following:

Application in different contexts: Testing the proposed design framework on different sites, boroughs, and cities to evaluate its adaptability under varying urban, social, and cultural conditions.

Post-occupancy evaluation: Assessing completed tenure-blind housing developments through resident surveys and long-term observation to examine whether the proposed strategies effectively reduce perceived housing stigma.

Public participation: Conducting larger-scale community engagement and perception studies to validate the design framework and better understand public attitudes toward social housing.

Economic and management considerations: Investigating the financial feasibility, long-term maintenance, housing management, and policy implications of implementing tenure-blind design strategies.

Integration of Artificial Intelligence and Computer Vision: Exploring how computer vision and human perception analysis can systematically identify the visual characteristics associated with housing stigma, neighbourhood reputation, safety, and desirability. Such research could provide evidence-based tools for architects, planners, and housing providers to design and manage more inclusive and positively perceived social housing environments.

6.3 Closing Statement

This thesis has argued that housing stigma is not solely a consequence of housing policy, socio-economic inequality, or territorial reputation, but is also expressed through the physical environment. Architectural design therefore plays an important role in shaping how housing is perceived and how residents experience dignity, belonging, and identity within the city.

The design framework and architectural proposal developed in this research demonstrate that tenure-blind integration is not achieved by concealing social housing, but by ensuring that architecture does not communicate social hierarchy. Through contextual integration, equal access, high-quality materials, articulated façades, and carefully designed shared spaces, social housing can become an ordinary and valued part of the urban fabric rather than a visible marker of disadvantage.

This research does not suggest that architecture alone can eliminate housing inequality. The structural causes of inequality lie within broader economic, political, and social systems. However, architecture can determine whether these inequalities are reinforced or challenged through the built environment. By refusing to make tenure differences visible, design can contribute to reducing stigma and promoting more inclusive communities.

Ultimately, housing should not reveal a person’s social status through its architecture. It should provide security, dignity, and a sense of belonging. If architecture has the power to communicate inequality, it also has the responsibility to communicate equality. It is hoped that the work presented in this thesis contributes to that objective and encourages future housing developments in which design becomes a tool for inclusion rather than distinction.

Reference List

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aernouts, N., Maranghi, E. & Ryckewaert, M. (Eds.) (2020). The regeneration of large-scale Social Housing estates. Spatial, territorial, institutional and planning dimensions, Brussels: Sohoblab, 191 p.

Angel, S., Sheppard, S., With, R., Buckley, A., Chabaeva, L., Gitlin, A., Kraley, J., Parent, M., & Perlin. (2005). The Dynamics of Global Urban Expansion.

Ashforth, B., & Kreiner, G. (1999). “How Can You Do It?”: Dirty Work and the Challenge of Constructing a Positive Identity. *The Academy of Management Review*, 24, 413. <https://doi.org/10.2307/259134>

Beswick, J., Alexandri, G., Byrne, M., Vives-Miró, S., Fields, D., Hodkinson, S., & Janoschka, M. (2016). Speculating on London’s housing future. *City*, 20, 321–341. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2016.1145946>

Bornschlegl, S., & Kropp, C. (2025). Co-agency in urban densification: Understanding hybrid agents and their consequences for sustainability. *International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development*, 17(1), 252–267. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19463138.2025.2569349>

Borja, J. (2023). The City, Urbanization and Inequality. In J. Zabalo, I. Filibi, & L. Escajedo San-Epifanio (Eds.), *Made-to-Measure Future(s) for Democracy?* (pp. 119–138). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08608-3_7

Bourdieu, P. (2002). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste* (11. print). Harvard Univ. Press.

Bowie, D. (2017). *Radical Solutions to the Housing Supply Crisis*. Bristol University Press. <https://doi.org/10.46692/9781447336662>

Bresnahan, M., & Zhuang, J. (2016). Detrimental Effects of Community-Based Stigma. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 60, 1283–1292. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764216657378>

Brickell, K., Nowicki, M., & Harris, E. (2023). Stigma, Cladding, and Modular Housing: Resident Experiences of Dublin’s “Rapid Build” Scheme. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 40(3), 377–393. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14036096.2023.2171111>

Brill, F., & Raco, M. (2021). Putting the crisis to work: The real estate sector and London’s housing crisis. *Political Geography*, 89, 102433. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2021.102433>

Burton, E., Jenks, M., & Williams, K. (Eds.). (1996). *The compact city: A sustainable urban form?* (First edition). E & FN Spon. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203362372>

Brusasco, P. L. (1987). *A ciascuno la sua casa : riflessioni sull’ abitazione unifamiliare*. Alinea.

Brickell, K., Nowicki, M., & Harris, E. (2023). Stigma, Cladding, and Modular Housing: Resident Experiences of Dublin’s “Rapid Build” Scheme. *Housing, Theory and Society*, 40(3), 377–393. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14036096.2023.2171111>

Castells, M. (1979). *The urban question: A marxist approach*. Transl. by Alan Sheridan (1. MIT Press paperback ed). MIT Press.

Colenutt, B. (2020). *The Property Lobby: The Hidden Reality Behind the Housing Crisis* (1st ed.). Policy Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvzsmcrm>

Davy, B. (2020). Human dignity: Is there a place for it in planning? *Transactions of the Association of European Schools of Planning*, 4, 7–21. <https://doi.org/10.24306/TrAESOP.2020.01.002>

Denedo, M., & Ejiogu, A. (2022). *Stigma and Social Housing in England: Feedback on the consultation responses*.

Dianati, K. (n.d.). (PDF) *London’s Housing Crisis; A System Dynamics Analysis of Long-term Developments: 40 Years into the Past and 40 Years into the Future*. Retrieved November 14, 2025, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/360909646_London’s_Housing_Crisis_A_System_Dynamics_Analysis_of_Long-term_Developments_40_Years_into_the_Past_and_40_Years_into_the_Future

Förster, W. (2013). Social Housing Policies in Vienna, Austria: A Contribution to Social Cohesion. In M. Glendinning & F. Urban (Eds.), *The New Tenement: Tradition and Modernity*, Conference Proceedings. DOCOMOMO ISC:U+L. https://blogs.ed.ac.uk/docomomoiscul/wp-content/uploads/sites/8300/2015/01/Wolfgang-Forster-paper_secured.pdf

Frank, A. (2025). Urbanization and Its Effect on Community Relationships. 10, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.59298/JBESS/2025/1011700>

Frost, D. (2011). Social Stigma and its Consequences for the Socially Stigmatized. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 5, 824–839. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2011.00394.x>

Georgina Lambie, L. (2022). *Thriving communities: Developing a strategic framework for mixed-tenure housing: A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Planning at Lincoln University*. <https://researcharchive.lincoln.ac.nz/entities/publication/df36cb42-c87a-40df-b07b-d8b47b645d3a>

Goffman, E., 1922-1982. (1963). *Stigma; notes on the management of spoiled identity*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice-Hall, [1963]. <https://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/999472649302121>

Hancock, L., & Mooney, G. (2013). “Welfare Ghettos” and the “Broken Society”: Territorial Stigmatization in the Contemporary UK. *Housing*, 30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14036096.2012.683294>

Harvey, D. (1988). *Social justice and the city*. B. Blackwell.

Horgan, M. (2020). Housing Stigmatization: A General Theory. *Social Inclusion*, 8(1), 8–19. <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v8i1.2345>

Hricová, A., & Urban, D. (2021). Positives and negatives of social housing. *Journal of Nursing, Social Studies, Public Health and Rehabilitation*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.32725/jnss.2021.002>

Hyötyläinen, M. (2020). “Not for Normal People”: The Specialization of Social Rental Housing in Finland. *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 19(2), 545–566. <https://doi.org/10.14288/acme.v19i2.1772>

Jäger, J. (2020). Land Rent Theory. In *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (pp. 93–98). Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-102295-5.10666-3>

Kadi, J., & Lilius, J. (2024). The remarkable stability of social housing in Vienna and Helsinki: A multi-dimensional analysis. *Housing Studies*, 39(7), 1607–1631. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2022.2135170>

Kalfaoglu Hatipoglu, H. (2020). UNDERSTANDING POST-WAR SOCIAL HOUSING STRATEGIES OF VIENNA: A REFERENCE FOR THE REPRODUCTION OF CURRENT CITIES. *Theory and Research in Architecture, Planning and Design*.

Karakayaci, Z. (2016). THE CONCEPT OF URBAN SPRAWL AND ITS CAUSES. *Journal of International Social Research*, 9, 815–815. <https://doi.org/10.17719/jjsr.20164520658>

Kemp, P. A. (2025). Reserved for the poor? Social housing in a liberal market economy. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 41(1), 167–178. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxrep/graf006>

Kiberd, E., & O’Connor, A. (2024). THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE HOUSING CRISIS.

Levy, D. K., McDade, Z. J., & Bertumen, K. D. (2010). Effects from Living in Mixed-Income Communities for Low-Income Families: A Review of the Literature. Urban Institute. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/effects-living-mixed-income-communities-low-income-families>

- Lefebvre, H. (2003). *The Urban Revolution*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Liu, ke, & Leng, J. (2019). A Study of Sustainable Social Housing Community Design in Britain and China. *KnE Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v3i27.5549>
- Marquardt, S., & Glaser, D. (2023). How Much State and How Much Market? Comparing Social Housing in Berlin and Vienna. *German Politics*, 32(2), 361–380. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644008.2020.1771696>
- McFarlane, A. (2019). The Properties of Integration: Mixed-Income Housing as Discrimination Management (SSRN Scholarly Paper No. 3489272). Social Science Research Network. <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=3489272>
- Murdock, G. (2010). Pierre Bourdieu, Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 16, 63–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286630902952413>
- Nechyba, T., & Walsh, R. (2004). Urban Sprawl. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 18, 177–200. <https://doi.org/10.1257/0895330042632681>
- NHBC Foundation. (2015, September 28). Tenure integration in housing developments. <https://www.nhbc.co.uk/insights-and-media/foundation/publications/tenure-integration-in-housing-developments-a-literature-review>
- Norris, M., Hayden, A., McMahon, E., & Palmer, A. (2021). Social housing in mixed tenure communities [electronic resourced]. Irish Council for Social Housing : An Gníomhaireacht Tithíochta = The Housing Agency.
- Nowicki, M. (2023). *Bringing Home the Housing Crisis: Politics, Precarity and Domicide in Austerity London* (1st ed.). Bristol University Press. <https://doi.org/10.46692/9781447361886>
- Pescosolido, B. A., & Martin, J. K. (2015). The Stigma Complex. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 41, 87–116. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071312-145702>
- Ramzanpour, M., Sharghi, A., Nourtaghani, A., & Saleh Sedghpour, B. (2023). The reduction of low-income housing stigma with façade features; low- and medium-sized cities. *Architectural Engineering and Design Management*, 19(3), 250–266. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17452007.2022.2094313>
- Reades, J., Lees, L., Hubbard, P., & Lansley, G. (2023). Quantifying state-led gentrification in London: Using linked consumer and administrative records to trace displacement from council estates. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 55(4), 810–827. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X221135610>
- Robinson, J. W., & Thompson, T. (1999). Stigma and Architecture. In E. Steinfeld & G. S. Danford (Eds.), *Enabling Environments* (pp. 251–270). Springer US. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4615-4841-6_12
- Ronkainen, M., & Eskelä, E. (2020). Helsinki’s housing policy – A historical overview and the current situation. *Central Administration* 2022:4, 47.
- Romero-Pérez, C., Rodríguez-Muñoz, N., Alpuche, M., & Martin-Dominguez, I. (2017). Preliminary study of the condition of social housing in the city of Durango, México. *Energy Procedia*, 134, 29–39. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.egypro.2017.09.594>
- Schindler, S. (2015, April 16). Architectural Exclusion: Discrimination and Segregation Through Physical Design of the Built Environment. *Yale Law Journal*. <https://yalelawjournal.org/article/architectural-exclusion>
- Samassa, F. (1997). *La casa con il giardino: L’architettura di una forma dell’abitare* (Doctoral thesis). Università degli Studi di Genova. <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14242/270054>
- Seto, K. C., Güneralp, B., & Hutyra, L. R. (2012). Global forecasts of urban expansion to 2030 and direct impacts on biodiversity and carbon pools. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 109(40), 16083–16088. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1211658109>
- Sisson, A. (2022). Public housing and territorial stigma: Towards a symbolic and political economy. *Housing Studies*, 39, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2022.2108383>
- Slater, T. (2013). Your Life Chances Affect Where You Live: A Critique of the ‘Cottage Industry’ of Neighbourhood Effects Research. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37(2), 367–387. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2013.01215.x>
- Tyler, I., & Slater, T. (2018). Rethinking the sociology of stigma. *The Sociological Review*, 66, 721–743. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038026118777425>
- UN-Habitat (Ed.). (2022). *Envisaging the future of cities*. UN-Habitat.
- Venturi, R., Scott Brown, D., & Izenour, S. (1985). *Learning from LasVegas: The forgotten symbolism of architectural form* ([rev. ed.], 7th printing). MIT Pr.
- Wacquant, L. (2007). Territorial Stigmatization in the Age of Advanced Marginality. *Thesis Eleven*, 91(1), 66–77. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0725513607082003>
- Watt, P. (2020). Territorial Stigmatisation and Poor Housing at a London ‘Sink Estate.’ *Social Inclusion*, 8(1), 20–33. <https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v8i1.2395>

Appendices

Housing Design and Neighbourhood Perception – survey

This study explores how the design of residential buildings is perceived within neighbourhoods.

When you submit this form, it will not automatically collect your details like name and email address unless you provide it yourself.

* Required

1. Consent Statement

* 

Participation in this survey is voluntary. Your responses will be collected and kept confidential and used only for research purposes. You may skip any question you do not feel comfortable answering.

☒ Yes, I agree to participate

☐ No, I do not agree to participate

2. What type of housing do you currently live in? 

☐ Social housing

☐ Private rented

☐ Owner-occupied

☐ Shared ownership

☐ Prefer not to say

3. When you look at buildings in this area, what parts of the outside do you notice first? 

Why do those things catch your eye? You can mention things like windows, balconies, colours, the front door, etc.

4. When walking around the neighbourhood, what makes some buildings look different from others on the same street? 

Please say what you notice (e.g., shape, height, or details) and tell us why it feels different to you.

Enter your answer

5. From what you see every day, are there any building materials that change how a place looks to you? If so, please explain why. 

You can mention things like different bricks, cladding, shiny panels, window frames, etc.

Enter your answer

6. Colours and surfaces can change how a building fits into a street. In your opinion, what colours or surfaces help a building blend in, and what colours or surfaces make it stand out? 

Please tell us why you feel that way and give examples if you can

Enter your answer

7. . When you look at the main door or entrance of a building, what aspects of its appearance give you an impression? 

For example, size, detailing, visibility, or something else. Please explain why.

Enter your answer

B. Organisation CONSENT SHEET

8. Sometimes the condition of a building changes how it looks. What things such as stains, rust, broken paving, or empty planting areas affect the way you see a place?

Please explain why these things change your impression.

Enter your answer

9. When looking at a street, what helps some buildings feel like they belong there, while others feel different or out of place?

Please give examples if you can.

Enter your answer

10. In your opinion, what design or visual choices could help new buildings in this area feel fair, welcoming, and consistent for everyone?

You can mention materials, colours, entrances, or anything else you feel is important.

Enter your answer



This content is created by the owner of the form. The data you submit will be sent to the form owner. Microsoft is not responsible for the privacy or security practices of its customers, including those of this form owner. Never give out your password.

Microsoft Forms | AI-Powered surveys, quizzes and polls [Create my own form](#)

The owner of this form has not provided a privacy statement as to how they will use your response data. Do not provide personal or sensitive information. [Terms of use](#)



Annexe 2

Consent Form

Project title: Architectural Design for Tenure-Blind Social Housing on a Small Infill Site in London

Name(s) of researcher(s): Dr Luana Parisi, Hossein Khalatabad, Professor Davide Rolfo

Please tick as appropriate:

	YES	NO
I have read the information leaflet relating to the above research project in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research project have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.		
I understand that this study does not involve audio or video recording.		
I understand that this research may use AI tools for analysis; it is unlikely to identify me, and my data will not be used to train AI systems, although there is a small risk it could be used without my or the researcher's knowledge to train AI platforms.		
I understand that my involvement in the research project, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential as far as possible. Only the researchers involved in the research project will have access to the data. <i>(Please see below)</i>		
I understand that although this study involves a limited number of participants, the responses are collected anonymously and no information will be gathered that could identify the participants personally.		

November 2024



University of
East London

Pioneering Futures Since 1898

I understand that confidentiality will be maintained unless a disclosure is made that indicates that I or someone else is at serious risk of harm, in which case this may be reported to the relevant authority.		
I understand that anonymised quotes from the responses may be used in the thesis and publications.		
I understand that participants will not be named or identifiable in any publications arising from this research		
I understand that the findings of this research will be disseminated through Master's thesis and may be shared in academic publications or conference presentations.		
I understand that the data collected for the research project will be anonymised/pseudonymised before it is published. (Pseudonymised data can no longer be attributed to an individual without the use of additional information).		
I understand that the University's lawful basis for processing my personal data collected, used and retained for research purposes is the 'public task' condition and the University does not rely on consent to process my personal data.		
I understand that the published results of the research project will be accessible in the public domain and may be deposited in an open access data repository.		
I understand that the published results of the research project will be accessible in the public domain and may be re-used, republished or reanalysed by others in future research.		
I give my permission for the research team to use the data that I have provided in future research projects which may be made publicly available.		
I give my permission for the research team to retain my personal contact details and contact me regarding participation in future research projects.		
It has been explained to me what will happen once the research project has been completed.		
I understand that my participation in this research project is entirely voluntary, and I am free to withdraw at any time during the research without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason. I understand that my data can be withdrawn up to the point of data analysis, and that after this point it may not be possible if the data is anonymised.		

November 2024



University of
East London

Pioneering Futures Since 1898

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the research project which has been fully explained to me and for the information obtained to be used in relevant research publications.

Participant's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)
.....

Participant's Signature
.....

Investigator's Name (BLOCK CAPITALS)
.....

Investigator's Signature
.....

Date:

November 2024

Annexe 3

Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee Privacy Notice

The University of East London adheres to Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.

UK GDPR states that personal data is any information that can be used to identify a living person directly or as result of combinations of data relating to or being about a person. As a participant in a research project the University has a responsibility to inform you how we are collecting, using and managing your personal data. Fully anonymised data is not governed by UK GDPR, however data that has had identifiers removed or replaced to pseudonymise the data is classed as personal data for the purposes of UK GDPR.

The Data Protection Act 2018 is based around seven principles which grants a person specific rights in relation to their personal information and places certain obligations on those organisations that are responsible for processing the information. The seven principles govern the collection, use, retention, transfer, disclosure and destruction of personal data. These principles are followed by the University of East London when processing personal data:

- **Lawfulness, Fairness and Transparency** – Personal data shall be processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner;
- **Purpose Limitation** – Personal data shall be collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not used for other purposes where such use would be incompatible with the initial purpose;
- **Data minimisation** – Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary for the purpose it was collected;
- **Accuracy** – Personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to data;
- **Storage Limitation** – Personal data shall be kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary;
- **Integrity & Confidentiality** – Personal data shall be processed in a manner that ensures appropriate securing including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing, and against accidental loss, destruction or damage to that data;
- **Accountability** – The University must be able to demonstrate how we comply with the law by ensuring that we have documented process, procedures and policies in place.

November 2024

Further guidance on data protection can be found on the University's website: [Data Protection | University of East London \(uel.ac.uk\)](https://www.uel.ac.uk/data-protection)

Information Rights

Every participant in a research project has rights associated with how their personal data is used and managed. Where an individual makes a request related to any of their information rights the University will consider each request in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

The Data Protection Act, 2018 gives you more control over your personal data by strengthening your information rights. These are:

- The right to be informed;
- The right of access;
- The right to rectification;
- The right to erasure (aka. The right to be forgotten);
- The right to restrict processing;
- The right to data portability;
- The right to object;
- Rights related to automated decision making and profiling.

Please note, that none of above are absolute rights. More information about each of these rights is provided on the Information Commissioner's Office website: [A guide to individual rights | ICO](https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/individual-rights/)

You can submit an Information Rights request to the University quickly, easily and free of charge by completing an [Information Rights Request form](#) and emailing the form to the dpo@uel.ac.uk. A request can also be made directly to the University.

Should you have any concerns about the conduct of the research project or management of your personal data please contact the Ethics, Integrity and Compliance Manager, Catherine Hitchens: researchethics@uel.ac.uk or the Data Protection Officer: dpo@uel.ac.uk

Appendix

ICO website: [Home | ICO](https://ico.org.uk/). Accessed on 6th November 2024

November 2024

Annexe 4 Questionnaire/Survey

Participant Information Sheet

University of East London

School of Architecture, Computing and Engineering (ACE), 4-6 University Way
London, E16 2RD

Research Integrity

The University adheres to its responsibility to promote and support the highest standard of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research, observing the appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.

The University is committed to preserving your dignity, rights, safety and well-being and, as such, it is a mandatory requirement of the University that formal ethical approval, from the appropriate Research Ethics Committee, is granted before research with human participants, human material, human data, personal and/or sensitive data, pre-existing data collected from humans without their knowledge of inclusion of the information in a research project or non-human animal commences.

The purpose of this Participant Information Sheet is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this research project.

The Principal Investigator/Director of Studies

- Name(s) Dr Luana Parisi
- Contact Address(es)
- UEL telephone/email l.parsi2@uel.ac.uk

Student researcher

- Name(s) Hossein Khalatabad
- Contact Address(es)
- UEL telephone/email hossein.khalatabad@studenti.polito.it

Collaborator(s)

Polytechnic University of Turin, Professor Davide Rolfo



November 2024

Project Title

Architectural Design for Tenure-Blind Social Housing on a Small Infill Site in London

Project Description

This project explores how the design of buildings can influence how social housing is perceived within London neighbourhoods. It focuses on how architectural features such as materials, colours, entrances, and overall appearance may affect whether buildings feel visually integrated or different from their surroundings.

Participants are asked to share their views on the appearance of housing in their local area through a short online questionnaire. The findings will help inform a design proposal that aims to create visually inclusive, tenure-blind housing.

Data Protection statement for participants 18 years of age and over

In compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) the University's lawful basis for the processing of personal data collected, used and retained for research purposes is the 'public task' condition, GDPR Article 6 (1) (e). Therefore, the University does not rely on consent to process your personal data. However, the University will seek your consent to participate in this research project. Please see the following link for more information: [Data protection – University of East London \(UEL\)](#)

Remuneration

None

Ethical Approval for the research project has been granted by the Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee (EISC).

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the research in which you are being asked to participate, please contact:

Catherine Hitchens, Ethics, Integrity and Compliance Manager, Office for Postgraduates, Research and Engagement, University of East London, Docklands Campus, London, E16 2RD. Telephone: 020 8223 6683. Email: researchethics@uel.ac.uk

For general enquiries about the research, please contact the Principal Investigator on the contact details at the top of this sheet.

November 2024