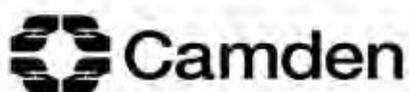


Kentish Town NeighbourhoodSpace: Engagement Report



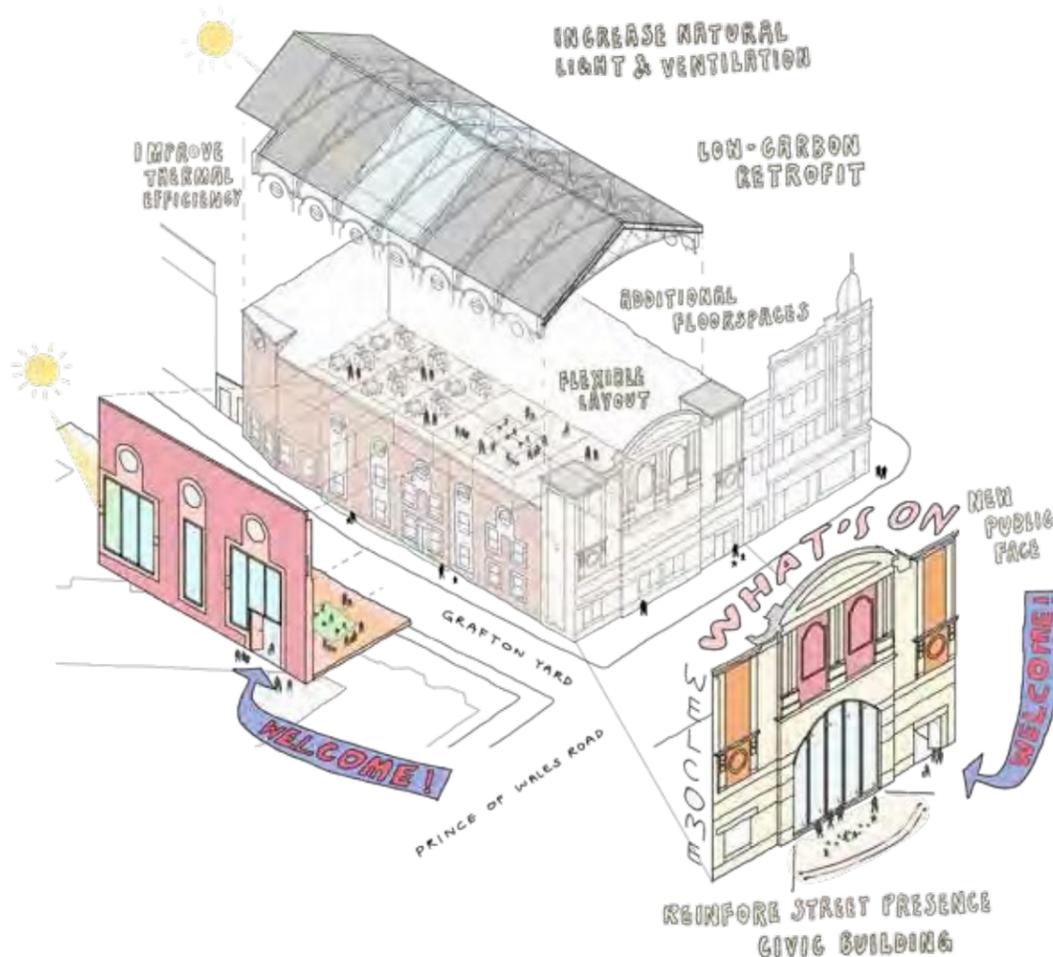
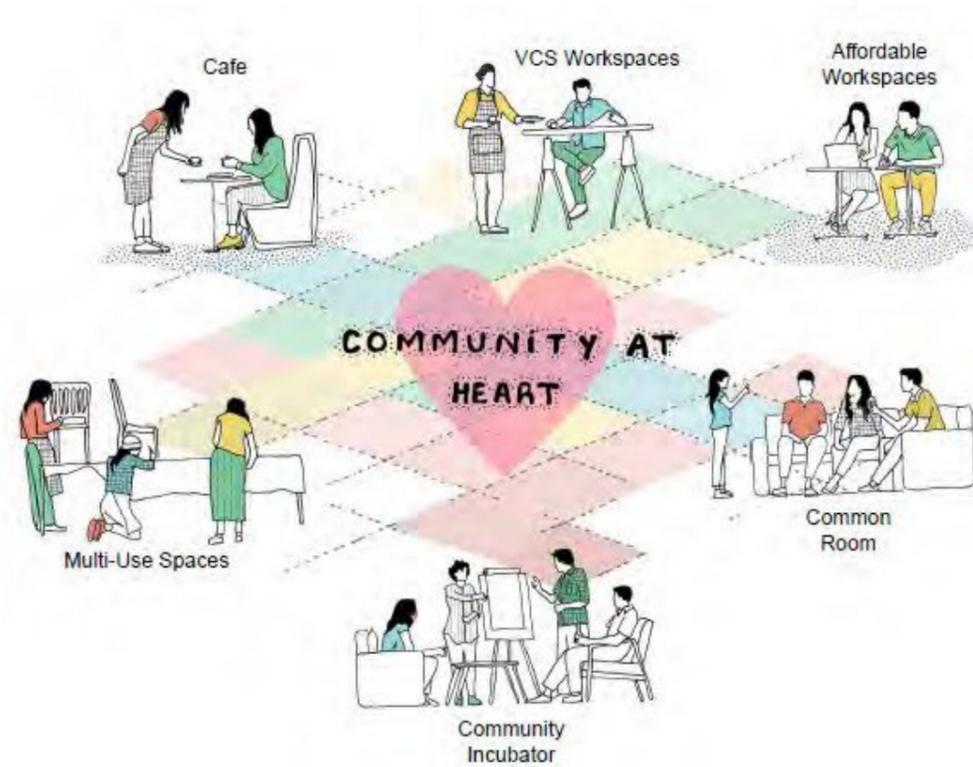
January 2026

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Background



Neighbourhood Spaces are all about bringing local residents, organisations and businesses together to create the neighbourhoods they want to see.

Developed through a series of pilot projects, the vision for Neighbourhood Spaces is to transform vacant or under-utilised Camden commercial properties into hubs for connection, innovation and participation. Neighbourhood Spaces will provide a platform for locally driven, mission-focused change by offering affordable workspace for voluntary sector organisations, social enterprises and business start-ups. Alongside this, community event space and project spaces will enable local people to test, develop and deliver innovative initiatives that unlock the creativity needed to build healthy, thriving, sustainable and resilient neighbourhoods that work for everyone.

Kentish Town has been the initial focus for the Council's Neighbourhoods Vision, including the Kentish Town Integrated Neighbourhood Team and the co-location of place-based services at the Holmes Road Depot. The Kentish Town Neighbourhood Space is the third element of the Council's Neighbourhoods strategy. The redevelopment of 2 Prince of Wales Road will create a new Neighbourhood Space, providing affordable workspace and project space that supports local change for residents of Kentish Town.

This report summarises the extensive

engagement undertaken by the Area Regeneration and Participation teams to establish the brief, vision, principles and design for the forthcoming Neighbourhood Space. Engagement has involved a range of methods to broaden participation and ensure that a diverse mix of local people and stakeholders can contribute to the process.

Engagement will continue as the project progresses to ensure residents remain at the heart of the Neighbourhood Space.

Our Neighbourhood Spaces will all look different but have the following core principles...

BESPOKE

Neighbourhood Spaces will be shaped by local need by local people, providing a bespoke offer for Kentish Town. They are designed to be flexible to adapt to changing need or demand

COLLABORATION

Bring together a range of stakeholders from across Kentish Town encouraging residents, VCS and businesses to come together to shape their local area

PARTICIPATION

Provide opportunities for all to engage in a varied programme, whether it's a repair workshop or poetry recital, Neighbourhood Spaces will offer something for everyone

INNOVATION

Neighbourhood Spaces will be a platform for imaginative and inventive projects that look to do things differently for the benefit of the community

SHARED POWER

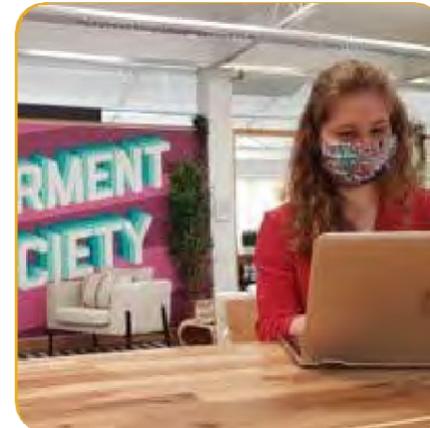
Creating spaces that no one person or group owns, where decisions are made collectively and everyone feels like they can have a say

The Journey So Far



BUILDING TOGETHER

Co-creating the initial vision for Neighbourhood Spaces



Number 19 Pilot *2021*

Utilising the temporary vacant space at 19 Highgate Road, a pilot was established to test new ways of working with local community organisations such as Refugee Community Kitchen and Think&Do and local institutions including London School of Economics.

The pilot demonstrated access to shared work and project space supported new initiatives, collaborations and added capacity to local grassroots organisations.

TESTING TOGETHER

Piloting future uses and establishing community priorities



Civic Action Lab *2025 - 2026*

Re-opening the ground floor of 2 Prince of Wales Road to pilot the future community use.

Building on the principles of the No19 pilot, the Civic Action Lab has acted as hub for local groups and residents to test new ideas and ways of doing things.

The Civic Action Lab has helped inform the design and use of the future Neighbourhood Space and supported the establishment of a community steering group.

THRIVING TOGETHER

Retrofit of building complete and building governed by the local community



Kentish Town Neighbourhood Space *Mid 2027*

Flexible community spaces designed to facilitate a range of activities and informed by the pilot phases will be at the heart of the new Neighbourhood Space.

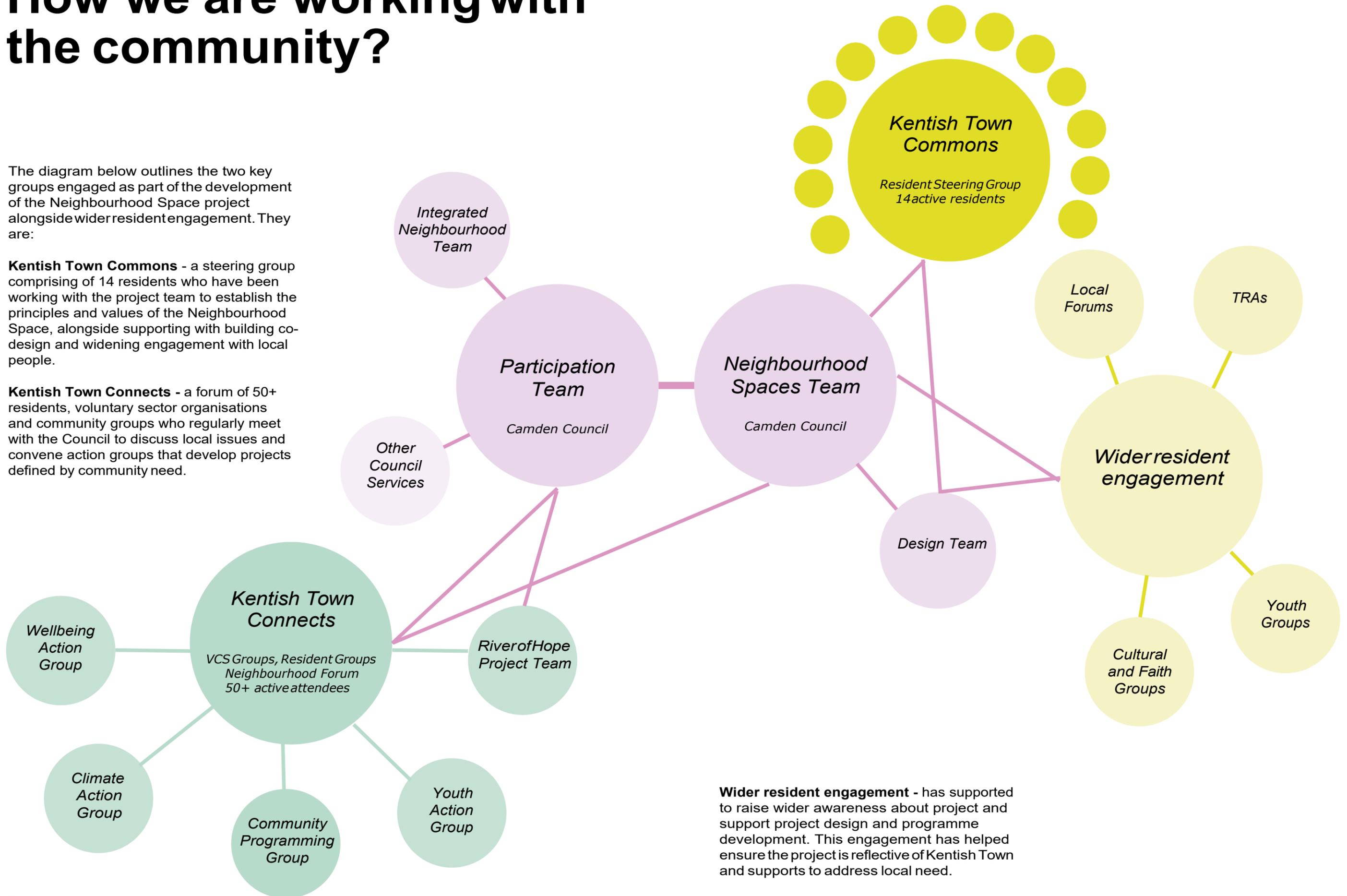
The building will be operated by an external operator and will actively work with the local community to oversee the buildings operations and use. This will support Kentish Town residents to have the power to shape the future of this asset and have a stronger connection to their neighbourhoods.

How we are working with the community?

The diagram below outlines the two key groups engaged as part of the development of the Neighbourhood Space project alongside wider resident engagement. They are:

Kentish Town Commons - a steering group comprising of 14 residents who have been working with the project team to establish the principles and values of the Neighbourhood Space, alongside supporting with building co-design and widening engagement with local people.

Kentish Town Connects - a forum of 50+ residents, voluntary sector organisations and community groups who regularly meet with the Council to discuss local issues and convene action groups that develop projects defined by community need.



Wider resident engagement - has supported to raise wider awareness about project and support project design and programme development. This engagement has helped ensure the project is reflective of Kentish Town and supports to address local need.

Who is engaging with the project?

One of the overarching aims of the Neighbourhood Spaces Programme is to create opportunities for local residents and stakeholders to engage in decision-making and take an active role in steering the project. This includes decisions about how the building should look and feel, who will run the space, and the principles that will underpin its operation.

The project aims to reach beyond the “usual suspects” and bring new voices into neighbourhood action. To achieve this, the project team has used a diverse range of engagement methods to ensure that a representative mix of local people can help shape the project.

These methodologies, outlined further overleaf, have enabled both qualitative and quantitative insights to inform the development of the Neighbourhood Space. As a result, more than 2,200 people have engaged with the project through direct events and a wide range of community programming.

The table below outlines key events held throughout the year and the number of participants involved.

Event Overview	Date and Time	Number of attendees
Community Meal and Launch Event	Weds 24th April 6-9pm	60
Kentish Town Connects Meeting and Workshop	Thurs 15th May 10am - 12pm	42
Summer Co-design Workshops inc. Youth focussed workshop	Various in July	Drop in - 56 Workshop - 4 Youth - 16
Community Art Exhibition and Open House Weekend	11th-14th September Daily	345
Kentish Town 'Welcome In' Wellbeing Event	Thurs 30th October 1-4pm	98
Keep it Kentish, Youth Pilot Weekend	8-9 th November various	45

RESIDENT STEERING GROUP Kentish Town Commons

The Council established the Kentish Town Commons Resident Steering Group to support project decision making. There were 24 applicants to the programme with 14 regular participants.

The group self selected, however as part of the role, all members can claim expenses for their time and for childcare. Meetings are often in evenings to fit around working arrangements and are typically catered.

The below graphs outline key demographic statistics relating to steering group members, showing the diversity and breadth of the group.

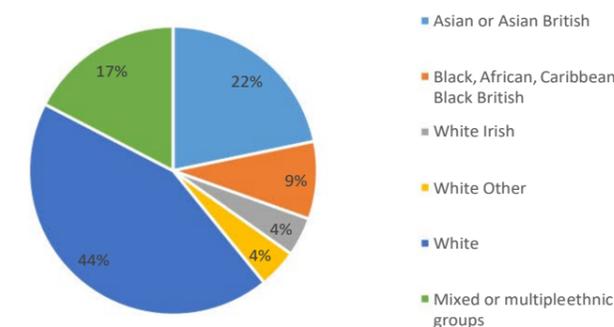
More information about the work with the steering group can be found on page 24.



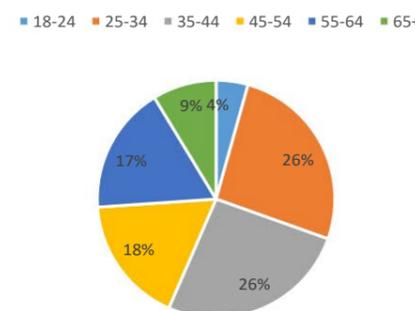
Participants with disabilities, impairments or long-term health conditions



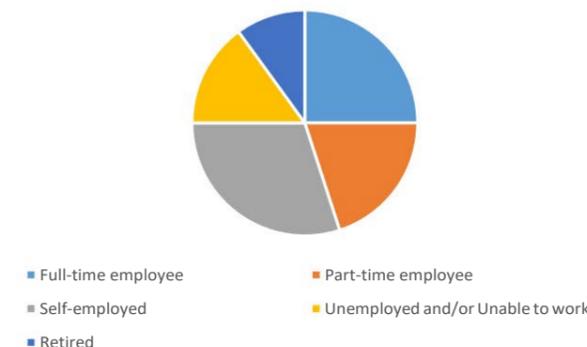
Participants by Ethnic Group



Participants by Age



Participants by Employment Status



Methods of Engagement

To maximise participation, the following strategies were employed to encourage participation, overcome potential engagement barriers and to deliver meaningful opportunities to steer the project at key milestones:

BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER



A range of community activities including a community meal, exhibitions and creative workshops running from the space have widened the reach of the project and brought more people to the project.

ESTABLISHING ACTION GROUPS



Residents and VCS organisations established priorities for community projects and formed action groups with relevant stakeholders to collaboratively deliver programmes to address local need.

PILOTING NEW IDEAS



Utilising the Civic Action Lab to enable local VCS organisations, community groups and residents to test a try new ideas. These pilots inform the design of the future building and the types of suitable activities.

FORMING A RESIDENT STEERING GROUP



Forming the Kentish Town Commons resident steering group to help to develop a community stewardship model for the building and to support local people to develop community-led programming.

WORKING WITH LOCAL VCS ORGANISATIONS



The Kentish Town Connects Network is a group of local voluntary sector organisations and resident groups that meet regularly to collaborate, share knowledge and participate in neighbourhood decision making.

CO-DESIGNING THE FUTURE BUILDING



Targeted workshops with local residents have helped shape the design of the future building to make it welcoming, accessible and reflective of local identity.

Method 1:

Bringing the community together

Over
2200



10
young people recruited
to run activities and
projects from over 80
applicants



163
Subscribers to email updates

3181
Visitors to website

27400
views on social media

14
residents became
members of the steering
group - Kentish Town
Commons



From Kitchen Table to Gallery Wall, community exhibition featuring works by over 75 residents and community groups



LEFT: Exhibition curated by artists in residence
RIGHT: Future of London talk and networking event



LEFT: Kentish Town Connects Community Workshop
RIGHT: Nature-inspired zine making workshop



LEFT: Wellbeing Day Weaving Session
RIGHT: Singer from local sixth form performing at community meal

Method 2:

Piloting New Ideas

The temporary Civic Action Lab has enabled the Council to work with local residents and groups to test potential future uses for the building. The ambition for the future Neighbourhood Space is to host innovative, collaborative community projects and events that respond to local needs. Through the provision of the temporary Civic Action Lab, residents and community groups have been able to deliver a wide range of pilot activities aligned with the Neighbourhood Spaces brief.

This pilot process has tested both the capacity of the future space and the types of activities it could host, and it has directly informed the building's design. It has highlighted several critical considerations that the project team has addressed, including:

- Noise and light sensitivity for people who are neurodivergent
- The need for privacy for activities that cannot take place in a public setting
- Flexible design to accommodate a range of group sizes
- An inviting, welcoming entrance and reception area to encourage people to enter the building
- Accessible design for people using wheelchairs, mobility scooters or pushchairs

Piloted ideas include:

- Wellbeing market
- Community Yoga
- Dementia-friendly arts workshops
- Music production workshop for 18-25s
- Story-telling workshops for under 12s
- Community-led exhibition
- Meet-up space for young carers
- East Neighbourhood Team community programme
- Upcycling workshops
- Welfare rights workshops
- Energy saving and community safety workshops
- Hub for Kentish Town Connects Network
- Meeting space for neighbourhood groups
- Regenerative textiles and repair workshop
- Migration Stories workshop
- River of Hope planning space

These ideas have all been developed and delivered by residents or community organisations, and have shown a strong appetite for the provision of a future neighbourhood space. Many more ideas have been received and hopefully will be supported over the coming months.

Method 3:

Establishing Action Groups



Above: Youth Action Group, made up of representatives from Camden Council, the Apex Project, GLL Kentish Town Leisure Centre, the Brandon Centre and Creative Health Camden

Natural areas of focus, collaboration and energy have emerged through spending time in Kentish Town, leading to the creation of the Kentish Town Action Groups. These are smaller groups that meet more intensively around a shared area of interest to drive social action and develop projects. Crucially, these action groups are led by local partners and residents, creating space for them to shape and influence local decisions and activities.

Access to free, prominent and accessible space through the temporary Civic Action Lab has enabled three pilot action groups to form around the themes of Young People, Social Connectedness and Environmental Action. Seeded with small amounts of funding and supported by Council officers, these groups have flourished into motivated, active collectives working collaboratively to address issues of local relevance and importance.

This approach has enabled the Council to test how the future Civic Action Lab can support neighbourhood-led social action and change. The groups have demonstrated a strong appetite for grassroots community projects that connect a wide range of people with the skills, resources and opportunities needed to address challenges within each thematic area.

Youth Action Group:

Made up of four community organisations working together to create more developmental opportunities for young people in Kentish Town (extended case study later). This group recruited, paid and supported 5 young people to develop their own event, 'Keep it Kentish'.

Social Connectedness Action Group:

5 community organisations collaborating on how to tackle loneliness and social isolation in the Neighbourhood. Supported through Civic Action Lab to deliver a community event, 'Welcome in, Kentish Town' to showcase local wellbeing opportunities which was attended by 132 local people. It successfully combined wellbeing-boosting events delivered by partners such as Zen Project who provided massages and sound baths, while also giving an opportunity for teams such as Occupational Therapists to connect local people to advice and guidance in non-clinical settings.

Environmental Action Group:

Organisations and residents meeting together to develop new ways to generate more environmental action. So far projects include commissioning local young people to create an informative social media campaign on the climate crisis and how to address it at a local level.

CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY EXHIBITION

turning a hobby into an achievement



Inspired by the Royal Academy Summer Show, the Civic Action Lab worked with Castlehaven to deliver an exhibition of artwork made by Kentish Town residents either at home or in community spaces.

Over 75 works by 75 different artists were exhibited, many of whom had never exhibited in a gallery before, in a collaborative show that saw a range of paintings, sculpture, photography and print-making demonstrating the creativity of the local area. Also three groups from Castlehaven and one group from Engage Here submitted to the exhibition.

The show ran for 3 days with over 300 visitors coming to see the works. Many visitors remarked on the high quality of largely part-time, amateur artists and were keen to see more art on display in the Neighbourhood, many making reference to recent closure of nearby galleries.

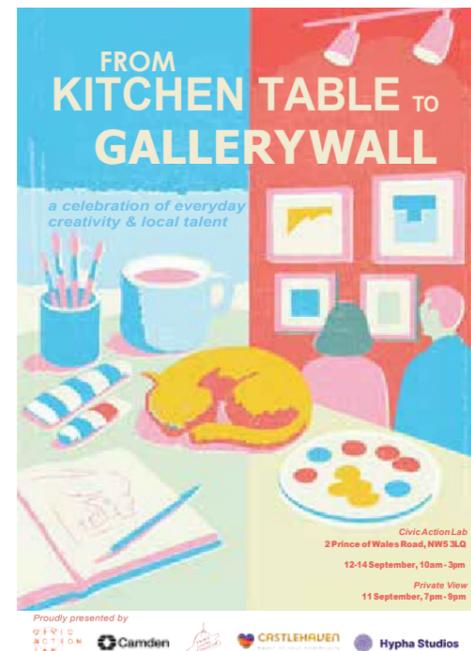
Some of the exhibiting artists have subsequently formed an action group to put on more exhibitions within the Civic Action Lab and other spaces around the borough. These connections are supporting local artists to access more resource, grow stronger connection to their neighbourhood and access to peer-to-peer mentoring.

Scott Ellis, Castlehaven Health Haven Project Manager, remarked:

“From the feedback I’ve received from clients, the theme of achievement has come across very strongly. That creating art on its own can be therapeutic, skill building, and fun, but with an exhibition like this it can turn a hobby into an achievement.”

Key Learning:

- Strong appetite for exhibition space within Kentish Town
- Lack of affordable artist studio space is a problem for many local artists
- Exhibition organisation and installation is resource intensive and would be better led by the artists themselves.



TOP: Photo of Visitors enjoying the exhibition

LEFT: Posters for exhibition titled “From Kitchen Table to Gallery Wall”, inspiring residents to exhibit their home creations in a gallery setting

CASE STUDY: YOUTH ACTION GROUP

youth led cultural programming

The **Keep it, Kentish Youth Event Planning Pilot** was a community engagement project conceived, designed, and executed by a team of paid young people (aged 16–25) who live in or are connected to Kentish Town. The project was co-led by the Youth Action Group.

The project's objectives were to create paid opportunities for local young people, boost personal development, and activate a neighbourhood space through youth-led social action. Alongside their involvement in the project, the young people were also connected to a mentor from each of the organisations, promoting both personal and professional development.

Impact:

- 45 young people attended recruitment events to take part in the project, with 6 successful candidates.
- Young people learned key skills including, time management, budgeting, working in a team, leadership and community engagement
- A weekend long series of creative workshops and events took place including arts and crafts activities, story telling and music production workshops with 45 attendees!
- The weekend concluded with an intergenerational community celebration and raffle with local business contributions.
- Over 7,000 impressions on social media content produced by participants

Feedback:

Political Recognition: Councillors remarked the project's approach to Neighbourhood collaboration was innovative.

Amplifying Youth Voice: One attendee of the Celebration Party shared feedback highlighting the positive influence of the youth voice: "Hearing from the young people and listening to them express themselves has made me more positive and less anxious about the future."

Skill Development: The pilot achieved its aim of enhancing confidence, with one organiser noting: "I wanted to improve my communication skills and find it easier talking to people I don't know. It's made me feel a lot more confident in doing this." The event led to tangible opportunities, with one young organiser being approached by an attendee interested in their work, resulting in a request for their CV and Instagram profile.

Key Learning

- Length of project. The young event planners fed back that next time a shorter but more intensive timeframe would work even better. For example, the project taking place over six weeks, with weekly in-person meetings.
- Move to summer holiday period. The success of the mentoring component varied, with some pairings working well with young people being connected to advice and shadowing, whereas engagement varied in other pairings. Conversations with young people suggest a potential reason could be the time of year, with young people suggesting that it could work well as a summer programme.
- Increased capacity to increase sustainability. The organisations involved were able to deliver the project despite having limited capacity. However, more funding to increase capacity would support this work to develop sustainably going forward.



Various photos from events designed and delivered by the young activators programme

Method 4:

Forming a resident steering group

Kentish Town Commons

In April 2025, the Council formed Kentish Town Commons, a resident steering group established to support vision-setting, decision-making and the co-design of the future Neighbourhood Space.

Following an open application process, we received 25 applications for the role. We offered a place to all applicants, resulting in 14 regular attendees. The key criteria for joining the group were to be a resident of Kentish Town North or South wards and to have a strong interest in unlocking space for community benefit. The group represents a broad and diverse range of participants with varied skills and experience. Many are already active within Kentish Town, either as members of local groups such as the Neighbourhood Forum or through their work within the local voluntary and community sector.

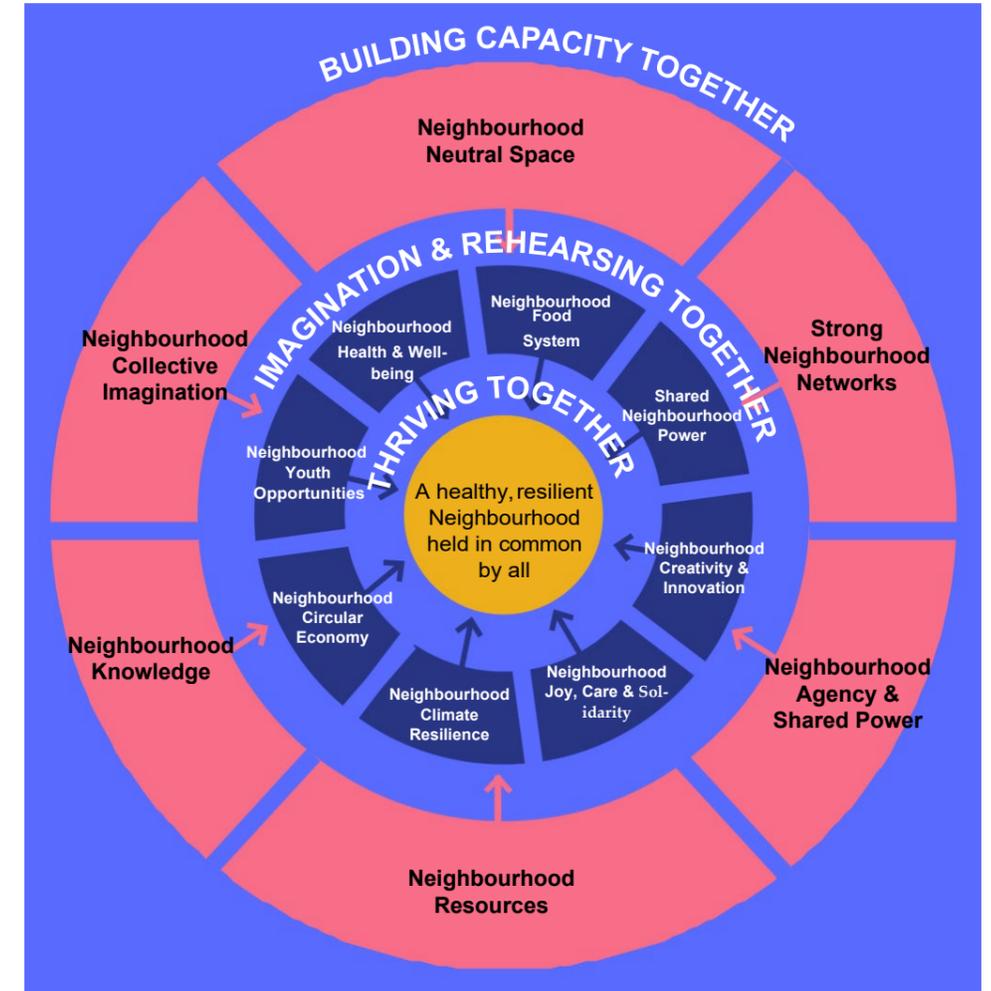
Officers have met fortnightly with the group to build skills, knowledge and capacity through a series of engaging workshops and discussions. This process helped equalise the group's skill levels and build confidence. Following this, officers worked with the group to:

- Co-design the building - the group helped the architect to make key decisions about interior fitout of the building and potential public art interventions. They also provided critical feedback on the overall building design including ensuring the building is accessible to all.
- Helped to design the community programming - providing ideas and suggestion for how the temporary Civic Action Lab can support.
- Established a project "manifesto" - that outlines the key resident priorities and values for a potential operator.



The group will also:

- Participate in the operator selection process
- Work with officers and the operator to establish a community governance model for the building
- Support with engagement activities to bring the Neighbourhood Space proposal to a wider audience



TOPLEFT: Kentish Town Commons Flyer and Logo



TOPRIGHT: Kentish Town Commons Principles and focus areas

BOTTOMLEFT: Site visit with Commons Group to Fore Street For all in Upper Edmonton

BOTTOMRIGHT: Kentish Town Commons Co-design Session

Method 5:

Working with local groups and organisations

Kentish Town Connects

Officially formed in late 2024, Kentish Town Connects is a collective of community organisations, resident groups, and active citizens. Aiming to build a new way of working together in the Kentish Town area. Kentish Town Connects covers Kentish Town North, Kentish Town South, and Camden Square wards. Guided by relationships, committed to openness, and driven by action. We want to collectively prioritise, support, and deliver community-led projects for the benefit of residents, organisations, and everyone within Kentish Town. Kentish Town Connects has a membership of over 150 organisations, a shared purpose, and set of principles, designed and agreed by everyone involved.

Key achievements and strengths

Through prioritising spending time, with people, in place, we've been able to build trust, develop open relationships, listen to local priorities, challenges and develop a new way of working with, and between, organisations rooted in Kentish Town. This has been through:

- **Open Community Meetings**, attended by 35-50 community leaders, councillors, Camden teams, and residents.
- **Bi-weekly community newsletter** sharing local events and updates.

A key focus of this work is supporting our local VCS partners, and resident groups to deliver their priorities, working together to try new ways of working and of supporting local people.

For example, Kentish Town Connects has supported the growth of the **River of Hope**, a winter well-being initiative that funds local VCS partners to deliver activities and projects, some

of which are hosted at the Civic Action Lab. The provision of this space brings the projects to a wider audience and enables funding to be maximised through the provision of free space, delivering more for less.

Civic Action Lab

Kentish Town Connects has utilised the Civic Action Lab as a space to host open community meetings, project meetings, engagement events and activity delivery. All projects delivered in the space are led by local insight and work to address local challenges.

The Civic Action Lab's central location has widened participation and encouraged new voices in the project. Having this neutral space has supported fostered the growth of new collaborations, sharing of skills and new ways of doing things. This mutual learning has built local capacity and unlocked new opportunities for funding, organisational growth and development.

The future Civic Action Lab provision will continue to support this work and provide space to the Kentish Town Connects Network. The design includes:

- Large open event spaces for community meetings
- Small meeting spaces for project groups to meet and collaborate
- Flexible project space that could be arranged for group workshops such as repair cafes or small scale therapeutic activities
- A regularly open, free to access warm space
- Project storage for groups to store shared equipment and resources



ABOVE: Photo of Kentish Town Connects Community Gathering



ABOVE: Kentish Town Connects Community Meeting

Method 6:

Co-Design



The Council commissioned project architect IF_DO to engage local residents and organisations on the design of the proposed Neighbourhood Space. The purpose of their engagement was to:

- Inform local people of the proposed changes to the building
- Work with people in establish an identity for the building that reflects Kentish Town
- To ensure the building is safe and accessible to all, including working with young people and people with disabilities
- To address any concerns relating to impact to the buildings heritage

Co-Design Overview

Engagement Programme

At key stages throughout the development of the project, a series of workshops are planned to be held with groups representing the interests of the Workspace, Civic Action Lab and Local Community in response to the design development of the brief.

The format and purpose of these indicative workshops are described here, with further detail and recorded outcomes to be illustrated in the form of a feedback loops. Co-creation and engagement strategies include creating co-design feedback loops, accessibility, embedding local identities and narratives, transparent process, playful and creative with clear outputs.

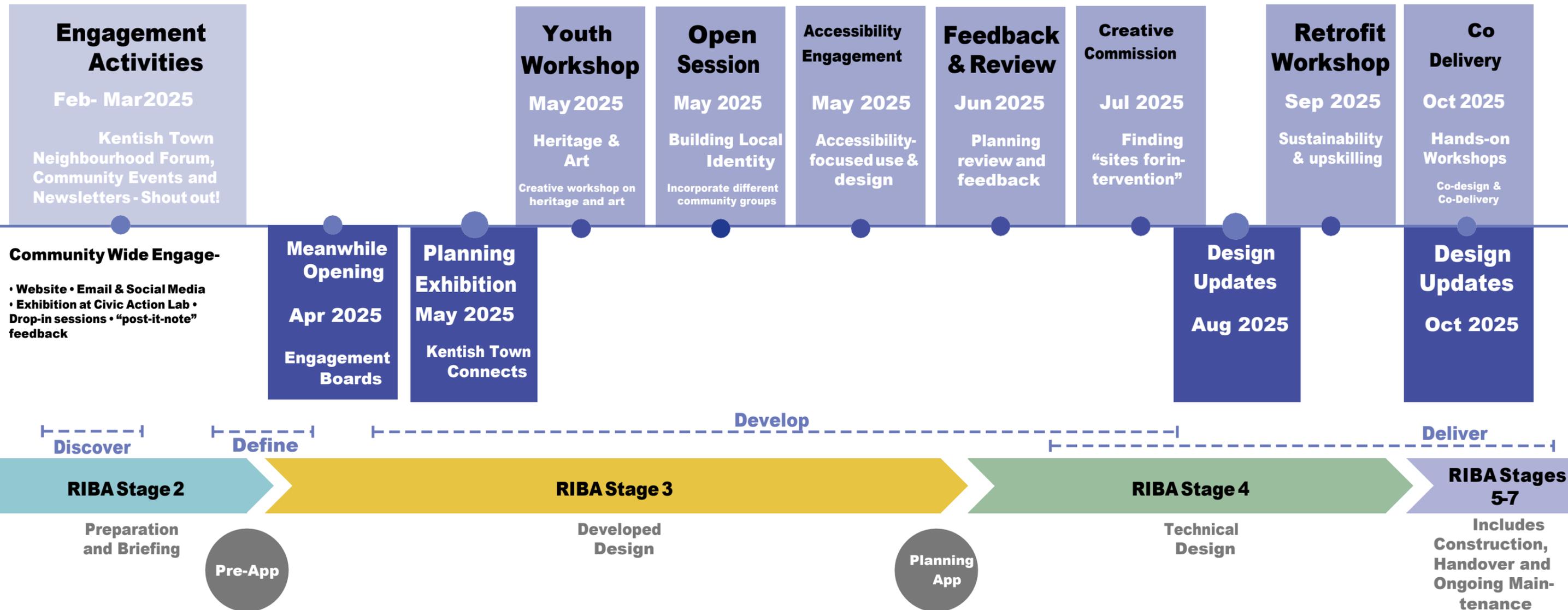


KTNF Presentation - Feb 2025



Euston Skills Centre Visit - Feb 2025

Targeted Co-design Sessions



Workshop 1 - Youth-Focussed Co-Design

The first workshop was a youth-focused co-design workshop held on the 20th May 2025 at 2 Prince of Wales Road at 5pm, with participants from the local charity organisation NW5 Community Play Project. There were 16 attendees.

There were four key activities that formed part of the workshop:

- 1. What colour is Kentish Town?** This activity was used as an ice-breaker to engage young people in design and how they relate to their local environment
- 2. Responding to public art and craft-how to incorporate making into the design?** The second exercise invited participants to explore their personal tastes in art by voting on the types of artwork they enjoy and sharing the reasons behind their choices. Each participant was given smiley face stickers to place on a curated selection of art examples presented by the IF_DO team. This interactive approach helped surface the group's aesthetic preferences and provided valuable insight into the kinds of visual language that resonate with them.
- 3. Where could art go in the building?** As part of our engagement with local youth, participants were invited to work in pairs to build physical models and annotate building mock-ups. This collaborative format encouraged dialogue and idea-sharing, allowing the young people to explore where art could be integrated into the proposed design, both interior and exterior. Through this hands-on activity, participants reflected on how art could shape their experience of the space and contribute to a sense of identity and belonging within the building.
- 4. What are the key symbols and identity of Kentish Town?** In the final activity, participants were invited to design a flag representing Kentish Town, using motifs inspired by the local area in groups. They drew from a range of visual references, including local buildings, architectural details, symbols, and plants, to create meaningful and expressive designs.

Activity 1 - What colour is Kentish Town?

The workshop began with an icebreaker activity, prompting participants to consider the question: "If Kentish Town was a colour, what colour would it be?" This creative exercise served both as a way to spark conversation and as the foundation for a collaborative art piece that reflects local identity.

Colours selected included red, yellow, orange, green, blue, and grey, together capturing the vibrancy, diversity, and layered character of Kentish Town. Participants agreed that the area is not defined by a single colour, but by a dynamic mix that represents its people and atmosphere.

The resulting canvases are now on public display in the meanwhile space at 2 Prince of Wales Road, offering a visual expression of community identity and pride.



Workshop 1 - Youth-Focussed Co-Design

Activity 2 - Responding to art and craft

The second exercise invited participants to explore their personal tastes in art by voting on the types of artwork they enjoy and sharing the reasons behind their choices. Each participant was given smiley face stickers to place on a curated selection of art examples presented by the IF_DO team. This interactive approach helped surface the group's aesthetic preferences and provided valuable insight into the kinds of visual language that resonate with them.

The bar chart shows participant responses to public art types via sticker voting:

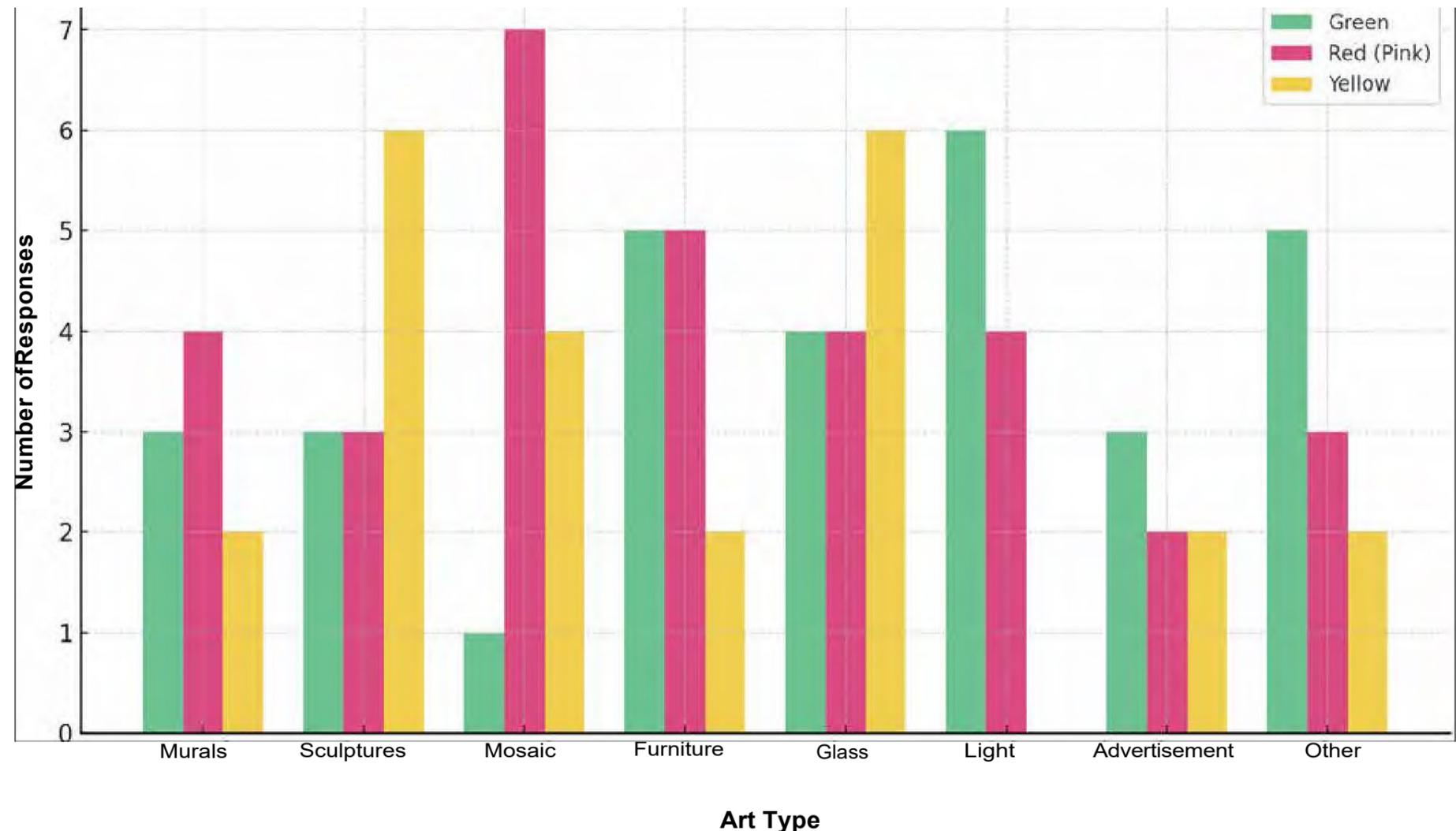
Green = Positive | Red = Negative | Yellow = Neutral/ Curious

Key Insights:

- Murals drew the most criticism: seven red votes, one green, and four yellow, indicating strong scepticism.
- Furniture and Glass had evenly split opinions (five green, five red), suggesting mixed views on their artistic relevance.
- Light installations received the most neutral votes (six), plus four green and four red, reflecting intrigue but uncertainty.
- Sculptures prompted cautious interest: three green, three red, six yellow, neither strongly supported nor opposed.
- Murals leaned negative (four red vs. three green), hinting at concerns over clichés or execution.
- Advertisement-based art and Other ideas saw modest, evenly spread engagement, showing openness but no strong preference.

Summary:

Mosaics were most critically received, while Light, Furniture, and Glass sparked the most debate. Sculptures attracted the highest neutrality, suggesting potential for reinterpretation. Overall, feedback highlights the need to balance bold ideas with local relevance and community resonance.



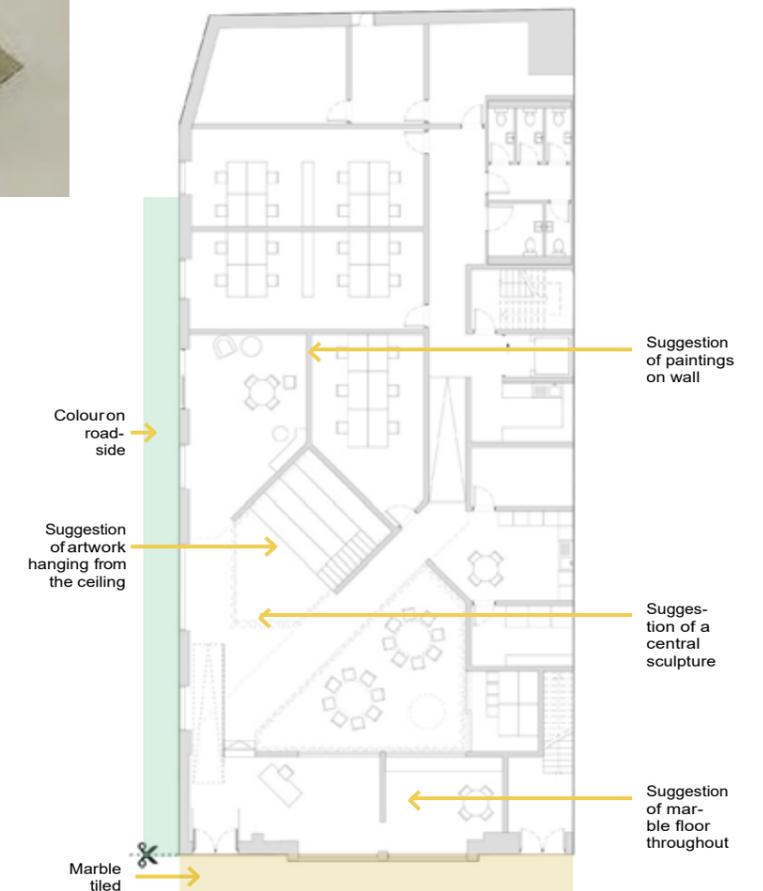
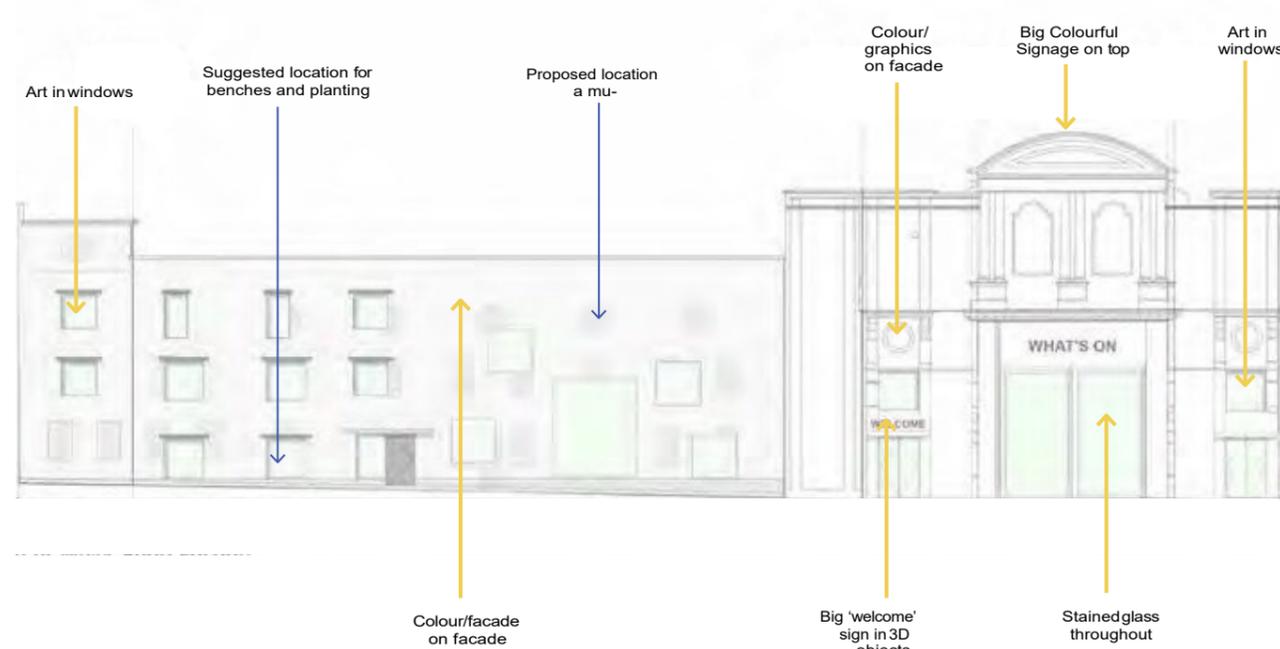
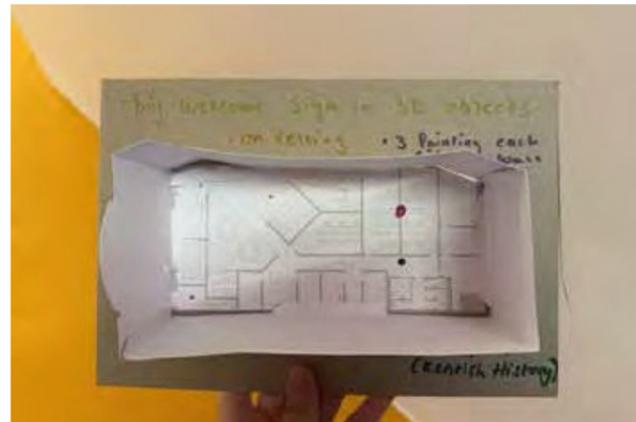
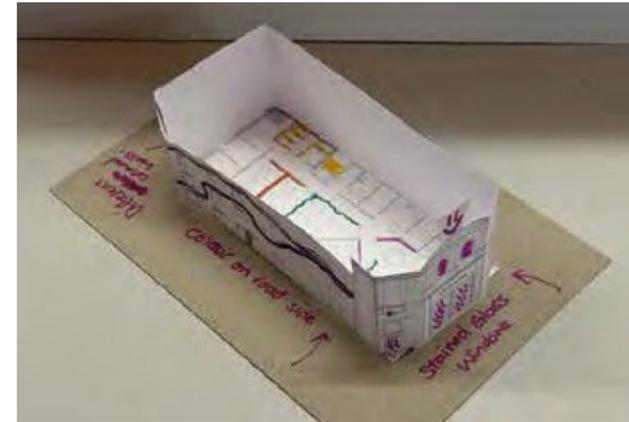
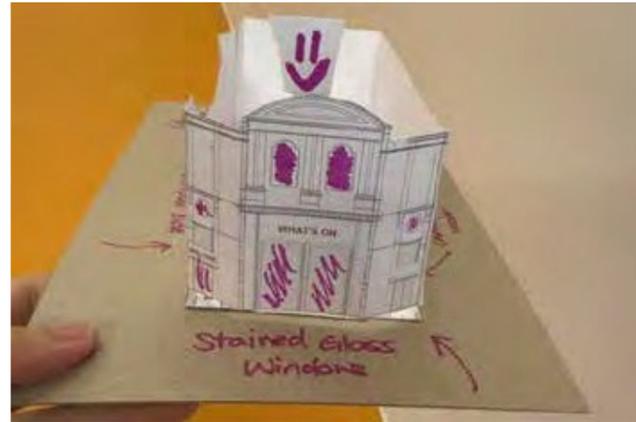
Workshop 1 - Youth-Focussed Co-Design

Activity 3- Where could art go in the building?

As part of our engagement with local youth, participants were invited to work in pairs to build physical models and annotate building mock-ups. This collaborative format encouraged dialogue and idea-sharing, allowing the young people to explore where art could be integrated into the proposed design, both interior and exterior. Through this hands-on activity, participants reflected on how art could shape their experience of the space and contribute to a sense of identity and belonging within the building.

Participants offered a range of creative and thoughtful ideas for integrating art into the building and surrounding public realm. Key suggestions included:

- **Public Art on Prince of Wales Road Elevation:** Ideas included incorporating art onto the building's columns, installing a prominent and welcoming sign, and using bold colour and lighting to enhance visibility and vibrancy.
- **Central Feature Installation:** A statement piece, such as a suspended sculpture or hanging installation, was proposed for the tiered seating area to create a dynamic and memorable focalpoint.
- **Interior Design Elements:** Suggestions included a mosaic-style carpet or flooring at the main entrance to introduce colour, texture, and a sense of arrival.
- **Furniture and Landscape Art:** Participants envisioned integrated bench seating, sculptural elements, and planting that would encourage gathering, relaxation, and interaction in the outdoor spaces.



Workshop 1 - Youth-Focussed Co-Design

Activity 4 - What are the key symbols and identity of Kentish Town?

In the final activity, participants were invited to design a flag representing Kentish Town, using motifs inspired by the local area in groups. They drew from a range of visual references, including local buildings, architectural details, symbols, and plants, to create meaningful and expressive designs.

From the flag-making activity, a number of recurring themes and aspirations emerged, reflecting how participants envision Kentish Town's identity. These ideas were expressed through colours, shapes, and symbols drawn from local inspiration. The most common elements included:

- Building Signage – referencing the character of local architecture and its potential to communicate identity
- Shapes and Motifs – using abstract or symbolic forms to represent the area's uniqueness
- Street Art – reflecting Kentish Town's creativity and urban edge
- Colour and Graphics – bold use of colour to express energy, personality, and visibility
- Connection with Community – themes of belonging, togetherness, and cultural pride
- Iconic Elements – recognisable landmarks and features that anchor the designs in place
- Greenery – incorporating plants and natural forms to highlight the area's green spaces and environmental values

These co-designed flags not only offered a creative outlet but also revealed strong, recurring ideas that could inform the brief for future creative commissions within the building. They represent an authentic expression of local identity, directly shaped by young people in the community.



Open Co-design: Public Drop-In Session

a public drop-in session was held on 21 May 2025, starting at 5:30pm. This drop-in session offered a chance to engage with the broader community and invite those who may wish to take part in a more focused session. To reach as many people as possible, it was organised as an outdoor event and positioned at the intersection with the main street.

During the drop-in session, the IF_DO team set up along Kentish Town High Street, directly opposite 2 Prince of Wales Road. Public were invited to contribute to a communal canvas by making a mark using the colour they most associate with the area. This creative exercise was designed to explore local identity and inspire ideas for potential public art on the building.

The engagement revealed that the majority of participants associated Kentish Town with the colours yellow, green, and blue. These colour preferences provide valuable insight into the community's perception of place and will serve as foundational elements in informing

the future use of colour palettes and graphic design throughout the building.

The communal canvas, painted collaboratively by participants during the drop-in session, captures this diverse yet harmonious blend of hues. It stands as a tangible expression of community identity and creative engagement. This artwork is now on display in the meanwhile use space at 2 Prince of Wales Road, where it continues to inspire visitors and stakeholders, acting as a vibrant reminder of the collective vision and input that is shaping the project.



*'What Colour is Kentish Town?'
Canvas*



Open Co-design Workshops

The first workshop was a youth-focused co-design workshop held on the 20th May 2025 at 2 Prince of Wales Road at 5pm, with participants from the local charity organisation NW5 Community Play Project. There were 16 attendees.

There were four key activities that formed part of the workshop:

1. **Responding to public art and craft-how to incorporate making into the design?**

The second exercise invited participants to explore their personal tastes in art by voting on the types of artwork they enjoy and sharing the reasons behind their choices. Each participant was given smiley face stickers to place on a curated selection of art examples presented by the IF_DO team. This interactive approach helped surface the group's aesthetic preferences and provided valuable insight into the kinds of visual language that resonate with them.

2. **Who could be work with to create new public art?** The purpose of this task was to draw out a list of potential collaborators to commission artwork and furniture for the building.

3. **Where could art go in the building?**

As part of our engagement with local youth, participants were invited to work in pairs to build physical models and annotate building mock-ups. This collaborative format encouraged dialogue and idea-sharing, allowing the young people to explore where art could be integrated into the proposed design, both interior and exterior. Through this hands-on activity, participants reflected on how art could shape their experience of the space and contribute to a sense of identity and belonging within the building.

4. **What are the key symbols and identity of Kentish Town?** In the final activity, participants were invited to design a post-card representing Kentish Town, using motifs inspired by the local area in groups. They drew from a range of visual references, including local buildings, architectural details, symbols, and plants, to create meaningful and expressive designs.



Open Co-design Workshops

Activity 1 and 2- Responding to Public Art - How to incorporate art into the design?

The first exercise invited participants to explore their personal tastes in art by voting on the types of artwork they enjoy and sharing the reasons behind their choices. Each participant was given smiley face stickers to place on a curated selection of art examples presented by the IF_DO team. This interactive approach helped surface the group's aesthetic preferences and provided valuable insight into the kinds of visual language that resonate with them.

The bar chart shows participant responses to public art types via sticker voting:

Green = Positive | Red = Negative | Yellow = Neutral/ Curious

Key Insights:

- Sculptures received the strongest support with 5 green votes and no negatives, showing clear enthusiasm for this art form.
- Light installations also scored well (4 positive, 1 negative), indicating strong interest with minor hesitation.
- Glass art earned 3 positives and no negatives, suggesting broad appreciation though less discussion.
- Murals split opinion: 2 positive, 3 negative, pointing to stylistic divides or mural saturation elsewhere.
- Mosaics had mixed feedback (3 positive, 1 neutral, 1 negative), reflecting curiosity and scepticism.
- Furniture drew only 1 positive vote, implying low relevance as an artistic medium.
- Advertisements and Other ideas saw evenly spread responses (1 each green, red, yellow), signalling uncertainty about their role.

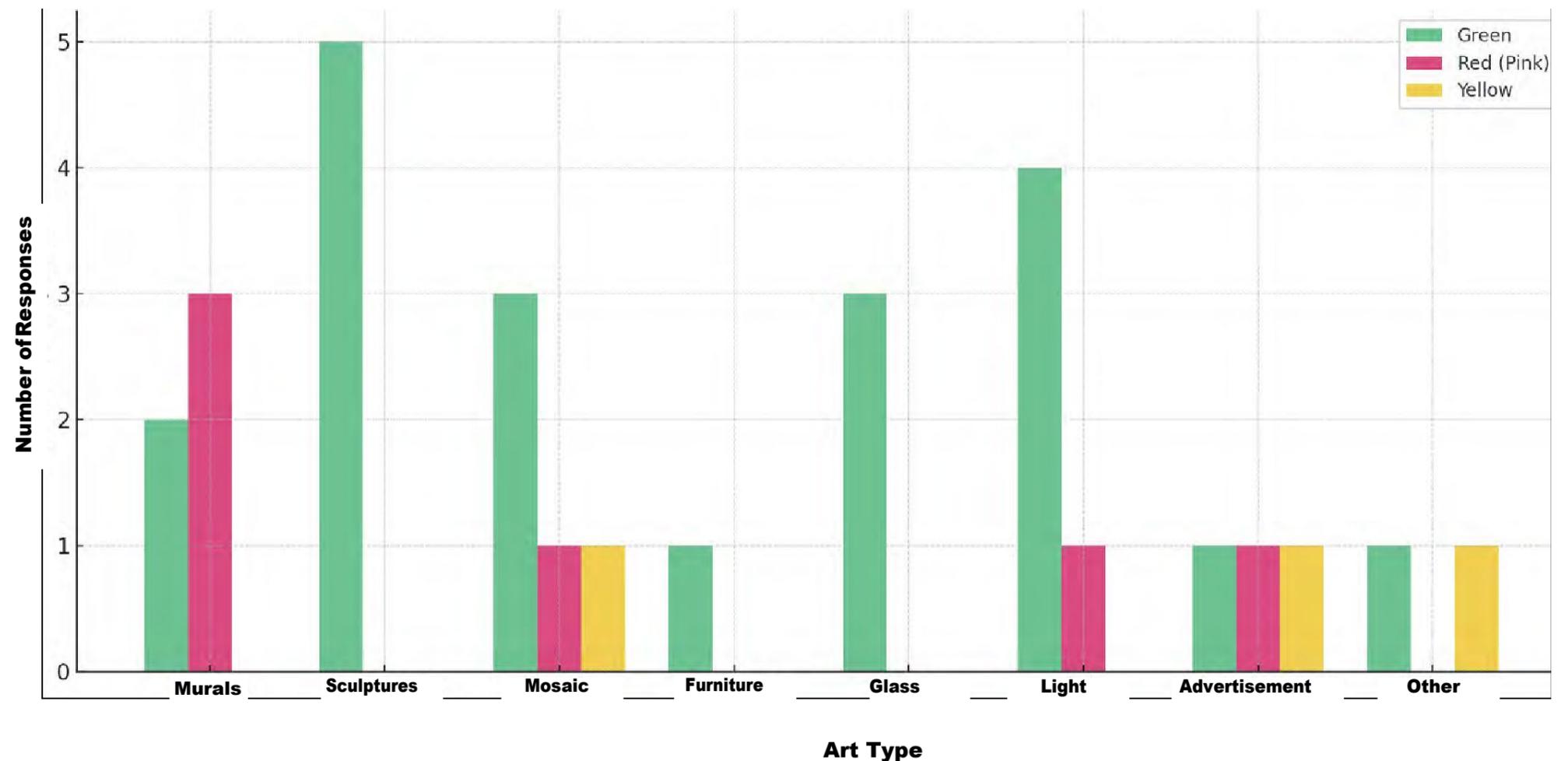
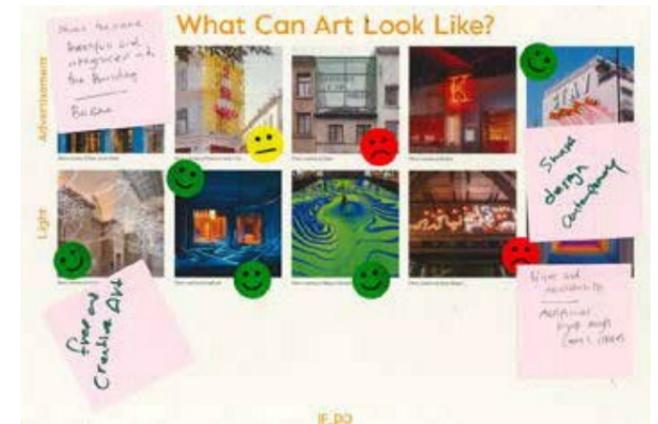
Summary:

Participants clearly favoured sculpture, light, and glass-based art, while mosaics prompted mixed reactions. Murals remain polarising, and unconventional options like furniture or ads lack strong appeal. These insights suggest prioritising tactile, immersive, and visually impactful forms with material presence and spatial interaction.

Participants expressed a strong desire for more artwork by local artists and organisations within the building. Suggested groups included:

- Central Saint Martins Students
- Camden Open Air Gallery
- Roundhouse
- Undercraft
- Social Pottery
- Gospel Oak Clay Co-op
- Clean Break
- Cockpit Arts
- Keppel

These ideas reflect local identity and insight. As the project develops, we will explore collaborations with these artists and groups to embed local culture in the design.



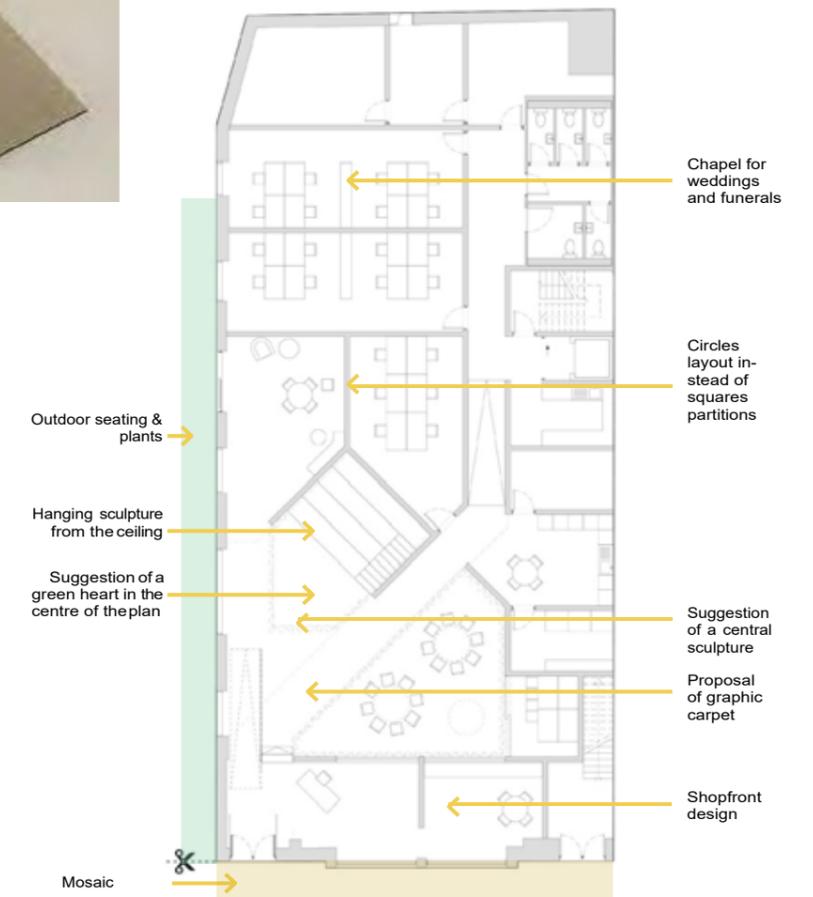
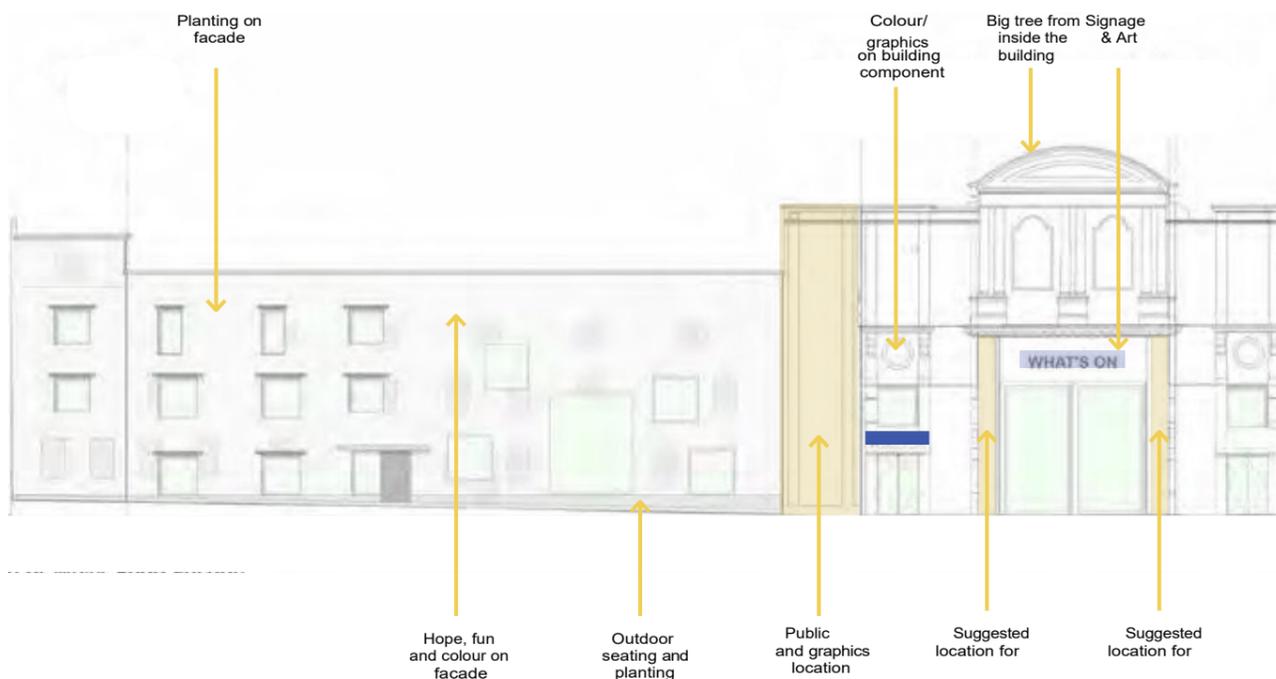
Open Co-design Workshops

Activity 3- Where could art go in the building?

As part of our engagement with local youth, participants were invited to work in pairs to build physical models and annotate building mock-ups. This collaborative format encouraged dialogue and idea-sharing, allowing the young people to explore where art could be integrated into the proposed design, both interior and exterior. Through this hands-on activity, participants reflected on how art could shape their experience of the space and contribute to a sense of identity and belonging within the building.

Participants offered a range of creative and thoughtful ideas for integrating art into the building and surrounding public realm. Key suggestions included:

- Public art and graphics on the Prince of Wales Road elevation, such as art on the columns, colour applied to existing façade elements, and the use of stained glass to create a welcoming and vibrant street presence.
- Furniture and art commissions within interior public spaces, offering opportunities to integrate functionality with artistic expression.
- Greenery integrated into the interior, contributing to a sense of wellbeing and connection to nature.
- Outdoor seating, benches, and planters along the Grafton Yard elevation, with added colour to enliven the façade and create a more inviting public realm.



Open Co-design Workshops

Activity 4 - What are the key symbols and identity of Kentish Town?

In the final activity, participants were invited to individually design a postcard representing Kentish Town. Each person developed their own creative response using motifs inspired by the local area, including buildings, architectural details, symbols, and plants.

The resulting postcards were colourful and imaginative, reflecting how community members observe, connect with, and creatively reinterpret their surroundings. This activity offered a platform for personal expression and a unique lens into the local identity of Kentish Town.

Based on the individual postcard designs and visual explorations, we identified a number of recurring themes and aspirations expressed by participants when creating motifs for Kentish Town. These themes highlight what elements are most meaningful and memorable in shaping local identity:

- Local building forms and architectural details – celebrating the unique structures and heritage of the area
- Street furniture – such as benches, signage, and railings, which featured frequently as everyday markers of place
- Colour and graphic expression – bold use of colour and patterns emerged as key tools for visual storytelling
- Shapes and symbolic motifs – simplified forms were often used to represent ideas or familiar landmarks
- Sense of community – many designs reflected values of togetherness, diversity, and social connection
- Iconic elements – recognisable imagery unique to Kentish Town featured prominently
- Greenery and plants – local flora appeared often, underlining the value of green space and nature in the urban landscape

These recurring themes can begin to inform the creative direction for future public art commissions—ensuring that designs resonate with local experience and reflect the collective identity of the community.

