

# COMMUNITY PLAN VIABILITY REPORT

Hulme. Manchester
September 2024

THE GAMECOCK COMMUNITY PLAN

Unit 38



# 1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gamecock Community Plan sets out a community-led vision for the future of the former pub site in Hulme, Manchester. This RIBA Stage 0 report (feasibility study) sets out findings from three public workshops, the views of over 40 Hulme residents, and builds on the research and work of many other local organisations including but not limited to Greater Manchester Tenants Union, On Top of the World, Community Savers and CLASS. The workshops were kindly hosted by the Aquarius Centre, the Old Abbey Taphouse, the Union Hall Church and the Darul Aman Mosque. This work was funded by the University of Manchester and Economic and Social Research Council as part of the project 'Public land and housing inequalities in Manchester' led by Dr Tom Gillespie.

This feasibility study is the first stage in taking the project forwards. It consolidates existing research and the views of residents into a coherent strategic brief. This was carried out through a series of structured workshops with residents and local stakeholders, enabling key ambitions for the community plan to be defined through a participatory process. This report forms the basis of further RIBA design stages and will enable the campaign to appoint suitably qualified consultants as required. The design work produced is not final, and is just one step along the process towards delivering a community-led development. All images produced are to assist with promotion, community organising and fundraising for the campaign.

Unit 38 are an architectural design and co-research collective, founded in 2018. They work with local authorities, social movements and community groups to develop bottom-up proposals for urban development, with community wealth building and social impact at their heart.

The project could be a pioneering Public-Commons-Partnership (PCP), where local authorities and community groups work together to maximise the benefits of urban development. PCPs are institutional frameworks that set out new models of joint ownership and governance, in which the two principal parties are a public body (such as a local authority) and a Common Association (such as a cooperative, community benefit society or community interest company). The Gamecock site offers Manchester an opportunity to demonstrate a new model of development for public land in the city, where the needs of residents are prioritised and communities have meaningful control over their own neighbourhood.




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THE GAMECOCK
BLOCK
THE
BLOCK

# 2.1 LOCAL CONTEXT

Hulme developed as a densely populated working class neighbourhood in the late 19th century. The development of industry in Castlefield saw huge population growth in Hulme, and the construction of large areas of terraced housing. Hulme in this time was described by Engels as “the more thickly built-up regions chiefly bad and approaching ruin, the less populous of more modern structure, but generally sunk in filth.” However, it also had a thriving culture and at the start of the 20th century two theatres, the Hulme Hippodrome and The Playhouse were opened to the public.

Following WWII, much of this housing, built as back-to-backs and without indoor plumbing was deemed unfit and demolished as part of a vast programme of slum clearance. A new and innovative design for system built deck access living was built across much of Hulme, but quickly fell into disrepair due to design flaws and a lack of maintenance. The Gamecock pub was opened in 1974 towards the end of this mass redevelopment of the neighbourhood, along with Hopton Court and Cooper House.

In 1988 it appeared that Hulme would become the testing-ground for the Thatcher government’s Housing Action Trusts. Tenant resistance to this bureaucratic and top-down initiative blocked the attempt to impose a Trust on Hulme and established the principle of a tenant ballot in future HAT proposals.

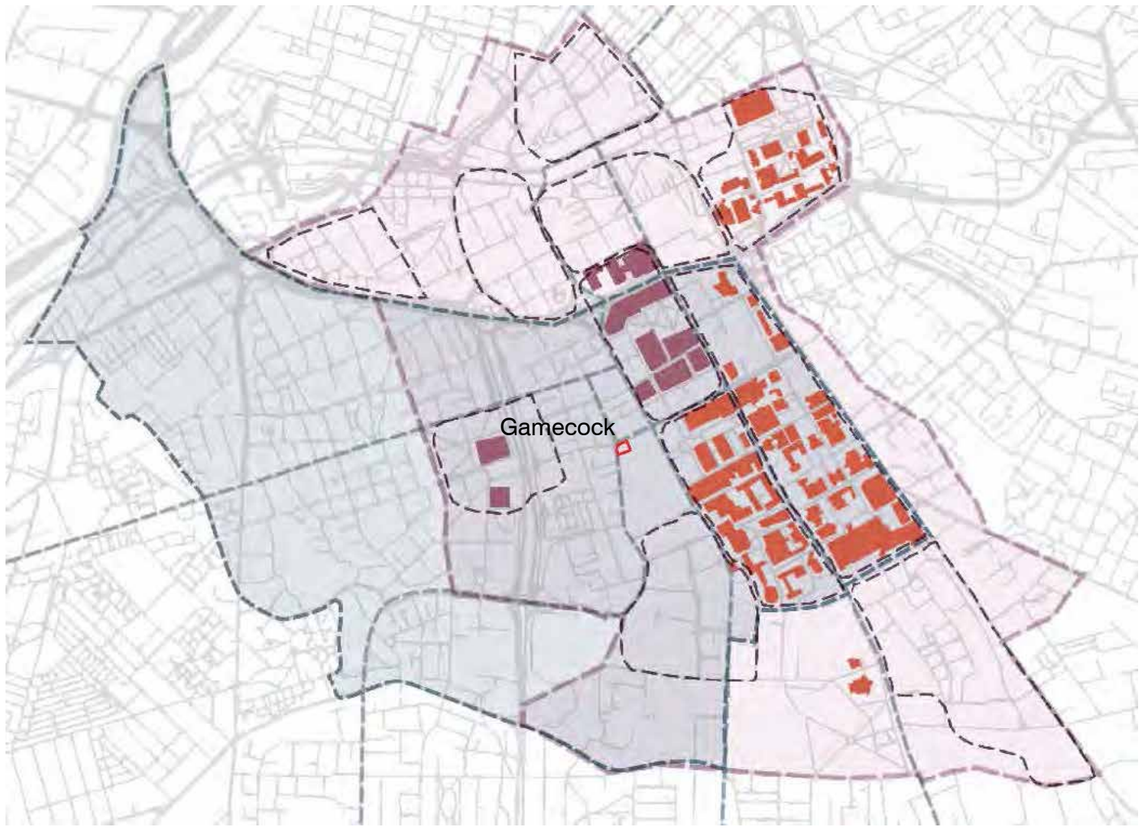
In 1992 Manchester City Council established Hulme Regeneration Ltd funded by City Challenge. Their principles for the redevelopment is set out in their Guide to Development in Hulme published by Hulme Regeneration Ltd in 1994 and the attempt to ‘create a new neighbourhood with the “feel” of a more traditional urban community’. Much of the estates were finally demolished in 1994 and replaced with low-rise houses and flats.

The Gamecock closed as a pub in the early 2000s. Hopton Court and Cooper House to the east of Hulme were saved and have been recently refurbished. Hopton Court is managed by One Manchester and Cooper House was refurbished by Guinness with new kitchens and bathrooms, new boiler systems and improved insulation.










Map of Manchester showing Oxford Road Corridor and University expansion

The small site (0.13 hectares) now sits outside of the Oxford Road Corridor which is earmarked as an area for development of increased density. Much of that area has been redeveloped by the University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University and the Royal Northern College of Music. These developments are putting pressure on land values across Hulme, and the amount of student housing and facilities directly catering for those students is putting pressure on the amenities of local residents.

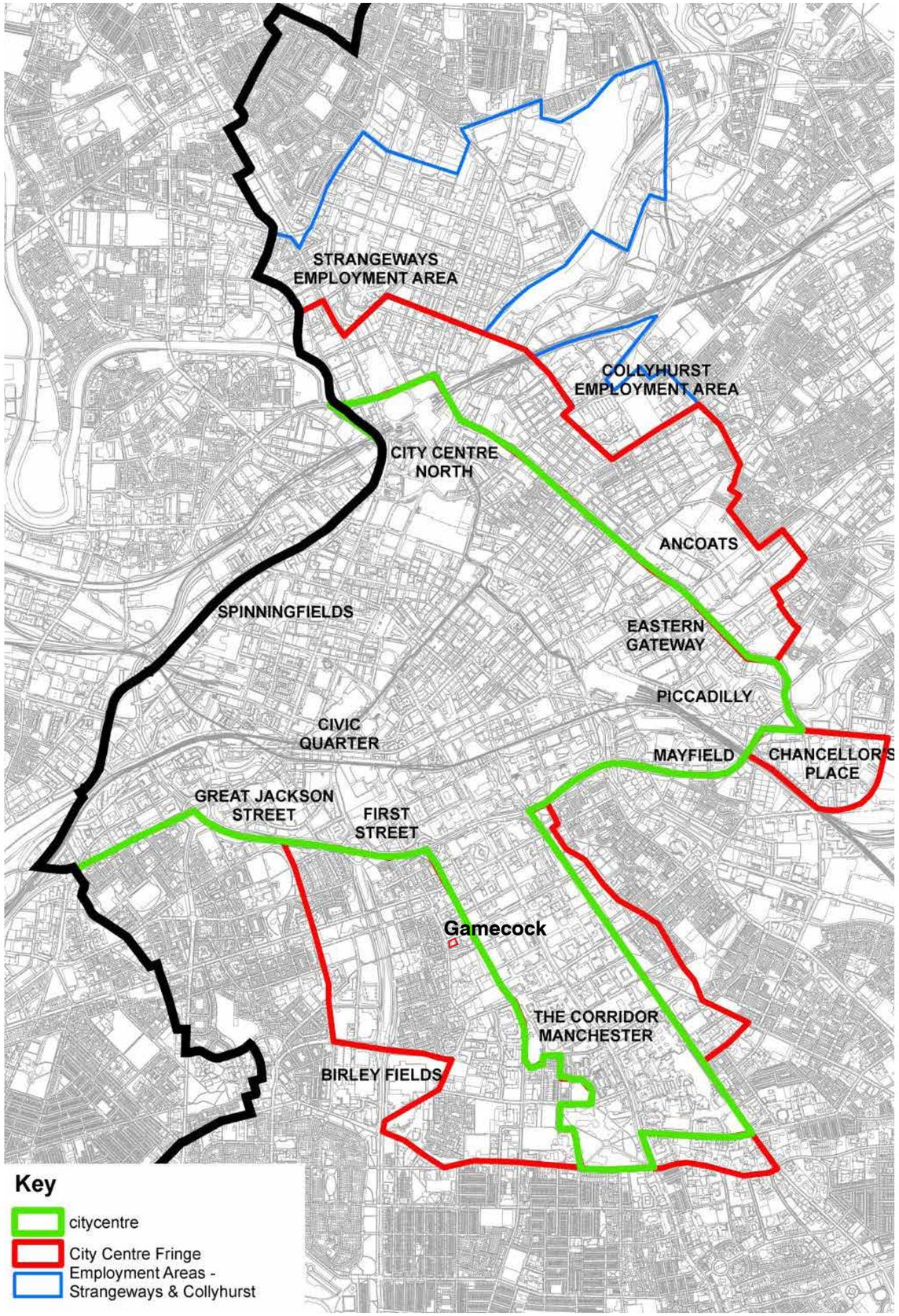
# 2.2 PLANNING POLICY

**Local Plan - Core Strategy**

Manchester's Core Strategy 2012 - 2027 was adopted on 11 July 2012 and is the key document in the Manchester Local Plan. The Local Plan is currently being reviewed in line with future growth and the ambition to be a zero-carbon city by 2038 or before. Consultation on the new Local Plan finished in May 2020 and the draft Local Plan is due to be published soon. The Gamecock site currently sits in the City Centre Fringe, but there are concerns that in the new Local Plan this may become the city centre, due to its proximity to the Oxford Road Corridor.

From Manchester's Core Strategy there are two key policies affecting the development of the Gamecock Site. Policy H1 - Overall Housing Provision - that sets out 60,000 new dwellings to be provided in Manchester before March 2027. However, it also states that there is a shortage of housing for elderly and disabled people. The number of elderly people is growing and there is likely to be a disproportionate increase in the number of disabled people as the population becomes older. To meet this need, additional housing is necessary, which is or can be adapted. This will include the provision of high quality small units which will encourage older households, which are currently under-occupying socially rented houses which are larger than they require, to move into smaller units in their local area.

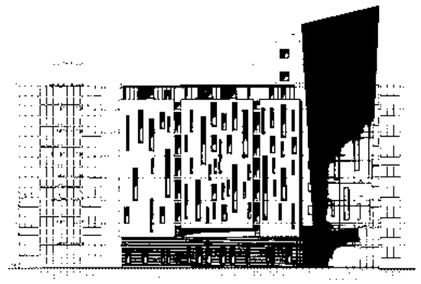
Policy H10 - Housing for people with additional support needs. The Council will support development of appropriately designed accommodation which enables people with additional support needs to maintain an independent lifestyle. The Council defined people with additional support needs as including: homeless people, elderly people, people with mental health problems, people who have experienced domestic violence, people with a long term debilitating illness, people who suffer drug or alcohol addiction, young people with specific support needs and people with learning or sensory disabilities.

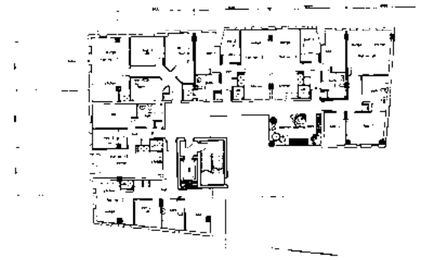


# 2.3 PREVIOUS PLANNING APPLICATIONS

### 2007 - 085071/FO/2007/S1

Barrowford Property submitted plans for 42 apartments over 8 floors with parking provided at the ground floor and mezzanine level in November 2007. It was initially refused in July 2008, but later approved on appeal. The initial rejection was in part due to its height and architectural massing which would fundamentally alter the open character of the site, have a detrimental impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding areas and an overbearing impact on the occupiers of cooper house to the detriment of their residential amenity. The later appeal decision stated whilst the neighbourhood to the west of Boundary Lane consists of residential development of two, three and four storeys, the area between Boundary Lane and Higher Cambridge Street is characterised by taller blocks. The tallest part of the proposed development would stand out but the differences in height between buildings would not be such as to result in extremes in the area.





### 2012 - 099285/FO/2012/s1

Plans were submitted in May 2012 for a part 8 part 11 storey building comprising 48 units (38 x 4 bed and 10 x 3 bed) to provide student accommodation (sui generis). The application was refused in August 2012. Reasons for refusal included:

- A failure to demonstrate unmet need for student accommodation or have entered an agreement with an education provider
- Due to scale and massing it would be an overly-dominant and intrusive feature in the street scene and detriment of the visual amenity of the area
- Overbearing impact on the occupiers of cooper house
- It is considered that the number of residents for the proposed development would have a detrimental effect on the amenity of other residents in the area.





### 2021 - 130387/FO/2021

In May 2021, Curlew submitted plans for the proposed erection of a part 9, part 13 storey purpose built student accommodation (PBSA) building comprising 261 bed spaces with ancillary amenity space, a ground floor community hub and associated landscape works and infrastructure. The Planning Committee in May 2022 recommended the application to be 'minded to refuse'. In response to this the plans were amended and resubmitted for the erection of a part 7, part 11 storey purpose built student accommodation building comprising 197 bed spaces (56no. studios, 14 no. three bed studios, 10 no. cluster units (Sui Generis use class) with ancillary amenity space, a ground floor community hub (proposed for Use Classes F2(b), E(b), E(3), E(f)) and associated landscape works and infrastructure.

The revised massing matches that of a residential scheme consented on the site in 2008. However, the scheme takes up a considerably larger proportion of the site.

The planning consultants Urban Imprint, were appointed by 'Block the Block', a resident-led campaign, led and supported by Hopton Hopefuls, Aquarius Tenants and Residents Association, Hulme Community Forum and On Top of the World Hulme. Urban Imprint have written two formal responses to the planning application and its amendments. Their key considerations included:

Observing the urban grain of the immediate area, there is a clear opportunity on this site to complete the urban block and retain some of the plot's area for meaningful and effective amenity space and parking. The surrounding buildings all do this with their layout lining the perimeter of each block. The proposed block would contradict with this prevailing character where the larger and taller buildings are set in more spacious plots and landscaped surroundings. It is also notable that the applicant has failed to address any of the other concerns that were raised as part of the original letter of objection from May 2021. We are still therefore greatly concerned by the impact on trees, construction management and the tokenistic nature of the community hub.

The planning committee considered the scheme in October 2022 and recommended it to be 'minded to refusal'. In early 2024 the scheme was granted permission, but this decision is being taken to the High Court for a Judicially Review in 2025.



Original 13-storey proosal



Revised 11-storey proosal



Floorplan of student accommodation, small single-aspect north--facing rooms


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# 3.1 CO-RESEARCH

**Participatory Process**

Unit 38 began working with Block the Block and Greater Manchester Tenants Union in September 2022 to explore a community plan for the Gamecock site.

Through a co-research process we set out to consolidate existing information and the views of residents into a coherent strategic brief. This was accomplished through three structured public workshops with residents, alongside structured interviews with local stakeholders, enabling key ambitions for the community plan to be defined through a participatory process. The outcomes were defined ahead of the process as producing a RIBA Stage 0 report to enable the campaign to appoint suitable further consultants as required, and to produce three key images to assist with promotion, community organising and fundraising for the campaign.

The workshops were advertised on social media, and through several printed bulletins (shown here) which were delivered door-to-door by volunteers in Hopton Court, Copper House and across the wider Aquarius Estate.

The first workshop in October 2022 was used to collate stories of the site and the wider Hulme neighbourhood, building an understanding of what has been lost in the community before encouraging people to come forward with ideas for what they want to see in the neighbourhood. Along with ideas of programmes and uses, we also wanted to explore potential partnerships with other local organisations.

The second workshop, a month later in November 2022, set out an initial programme for the building and options for the design for discussion and debate with residents. As well as proposing options the workshop was to define certain non-negotiable elements, particularly in regards to the overall height of the development and it's main uses.

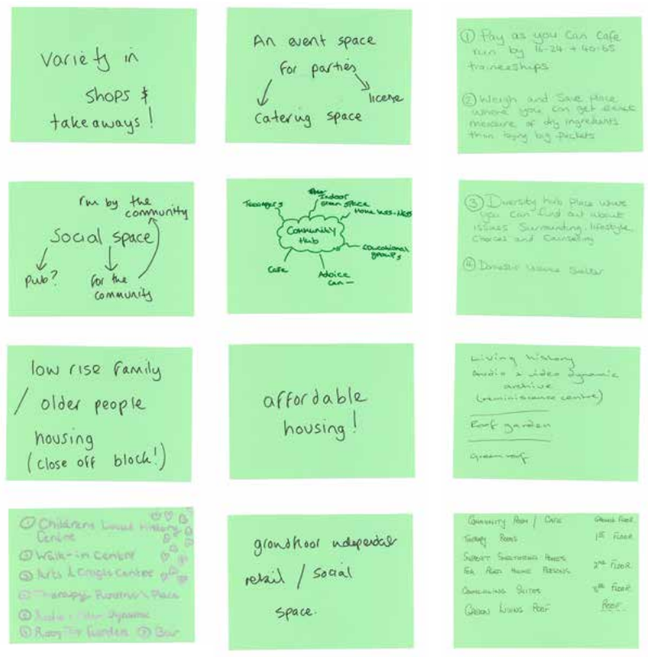
The third and final design workshop, in February 2023, was used to present a developed design, alongside drafts of the final key images, so that residents could inform the design before it was finalised at this stage for the report. However, the design presented here are an initial proposal, which will continue to be developed with residents and local partners when more funding is available.

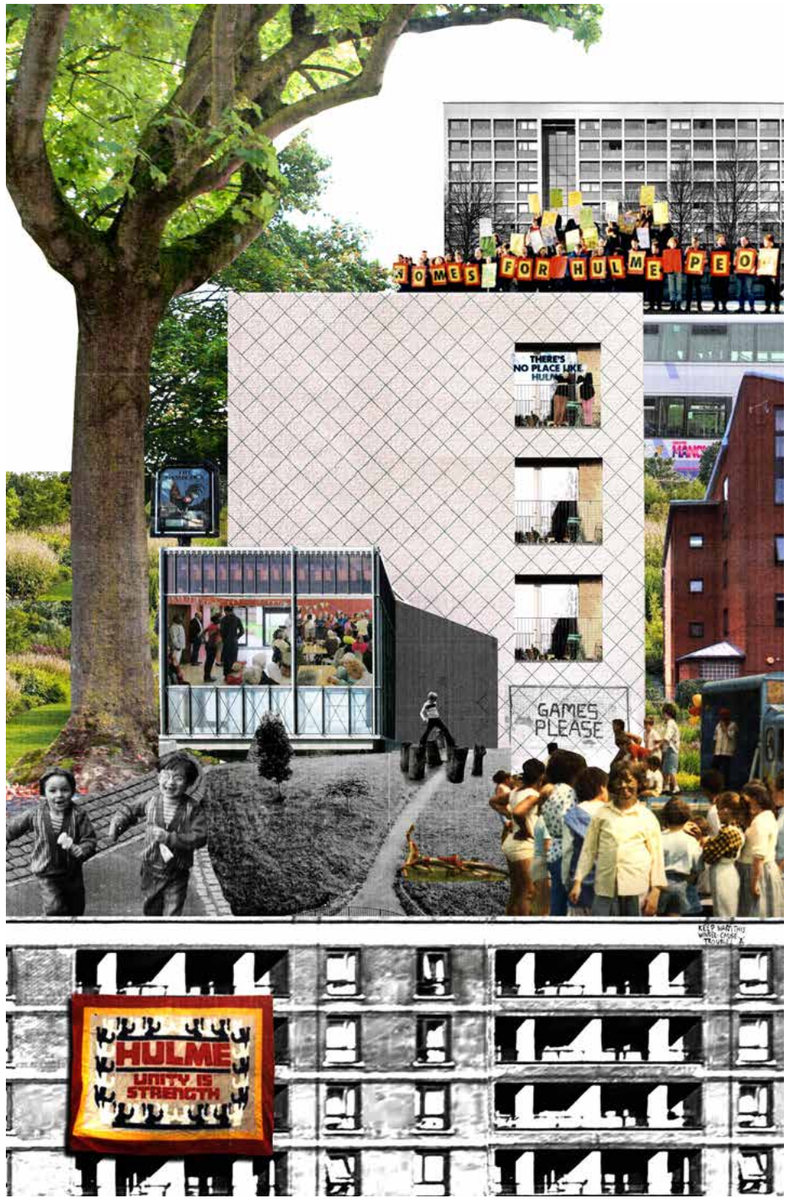
An additional workshop, led by local residents with support from Greater Manchester Tenants Union, then focused on strategy for how to take the Community Plan forward.





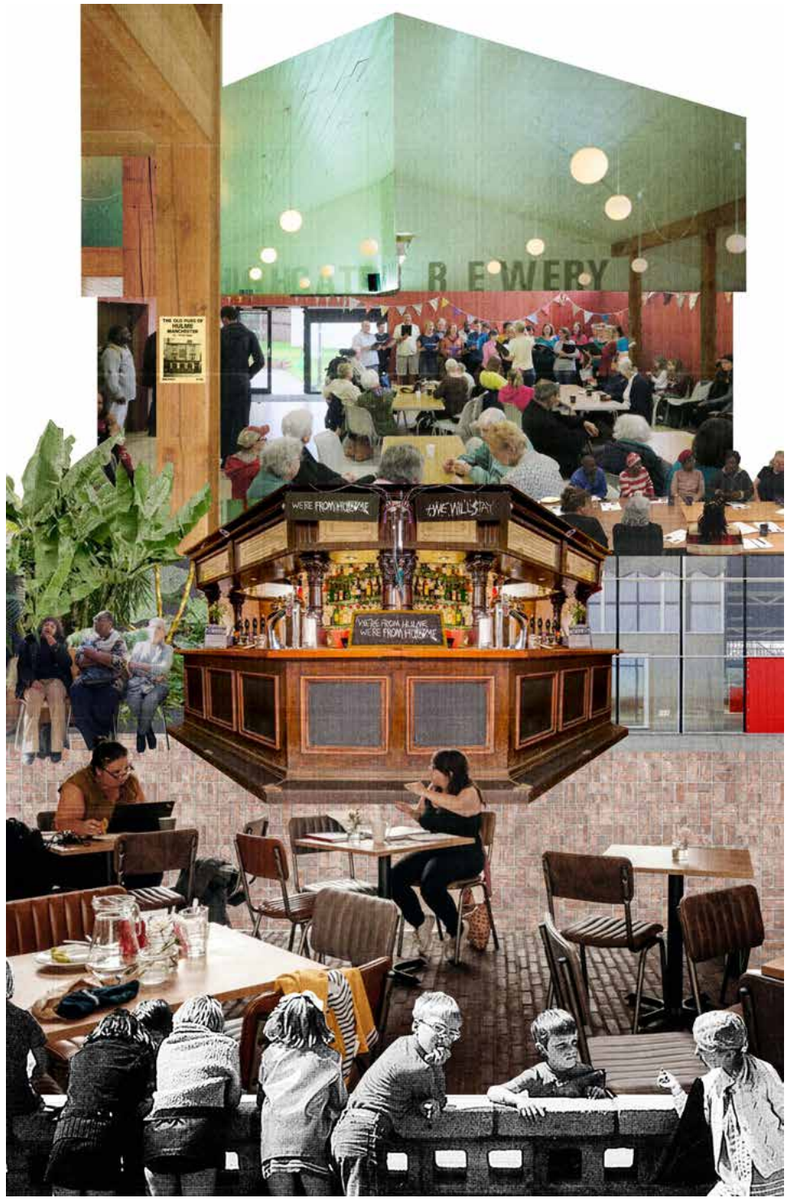





## Outdoor and Green Space

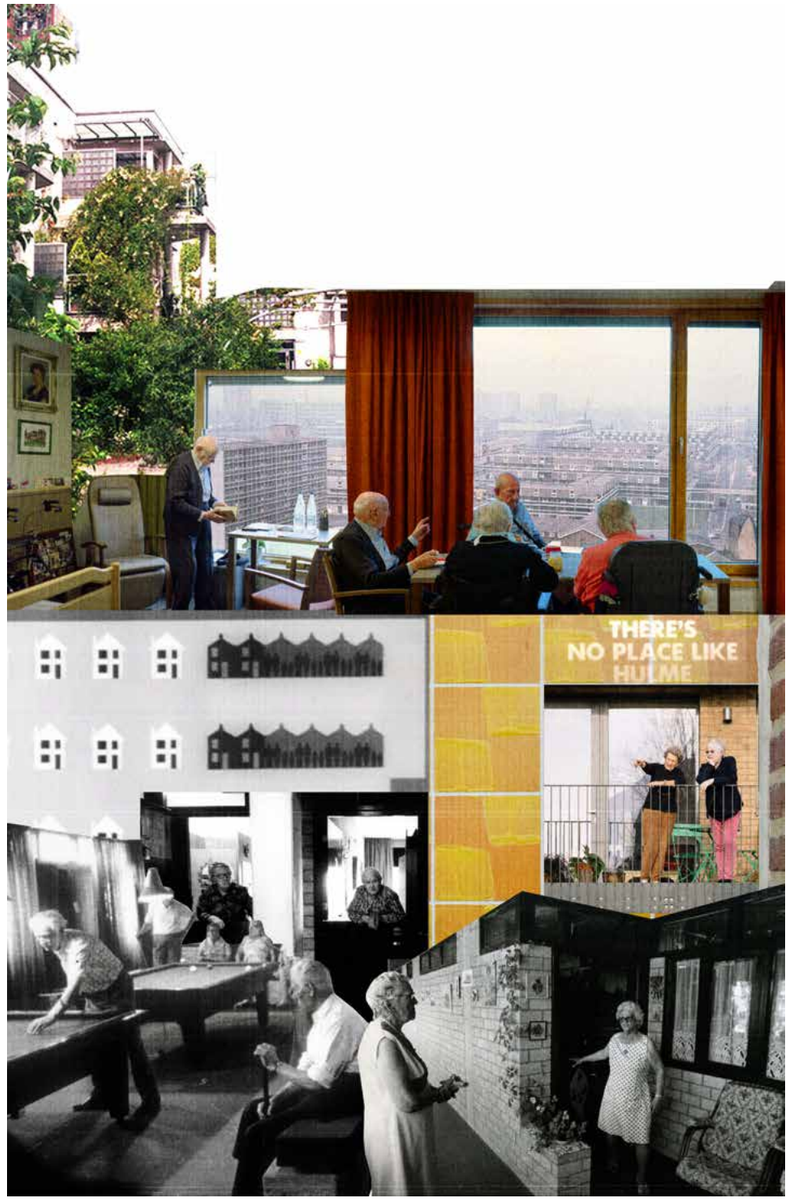
The first image describes the green, outdoor public space on the site and the priorities for the use of that space to improve the wider site. This includes: protecting the mature trees already on the site that are at least fifty years old; providing community gardens for residents; improving biodiversity; outdoor seating and shelter from the rain; a space for events and local arts; and play space for children.




## Social Spaces

The second image demonstrates the types of social spaces people want to see in Hulme. These included a community hub, event space, cafe, library, education, local history, bar, pub, shops, therapy rooms, walk-in centre. There has been much discussion of whether a pub, or a licensed bar, is a good idea for the site. Instead what is proposed is a more flexible community hub, that could have a cafe and fully functioning commercial kitchen, as well as event spaces, libraries and smaller rooms for therapy, consultations and private meetings.

These uses would be for residents from across Hulme, not just those of the new development, and with a particular focus on those currently not provided for such as elderly residents and young adults who aren't students.



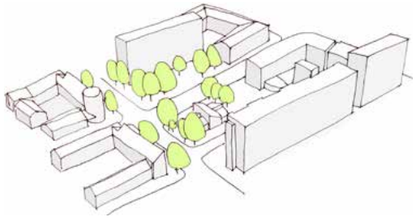

## Supported Housing

There is an ageing population in Hulme, particularly around the Gamecock site - yet the neighbourhood is not very age-friendly. Much of the existing housing stock isn't suitable for people with mobility issues or disabilities. New purpose built accommodation could allow older residents to stay living in their communities amongst their support networks.

Ideas from residents included: affordable housing; accommodation for family members visiting relatives to stay overnight; housing services for older people; a green roof; garden space specifically for residents; and communal spaces for residents to socialise outside of their apartments.

# 3.3 DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS



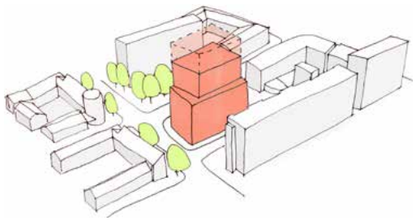


### Refurbish

Demolition should never be the first response, but an audit of the existing building makes it unsuitable for the ambitions of the Gamecock Community Plan. The existing building is two stories, with a brick ground floor and timber shiplap cladding to the top floor. The building could easily be refurbished but isn't big enough to house the multiple uses put forward by residents.

The building's location at the centre of the site means extending the existing building to provide further accommodation is also unfeasible. The buildings materials can be reused and recycle in any future development.



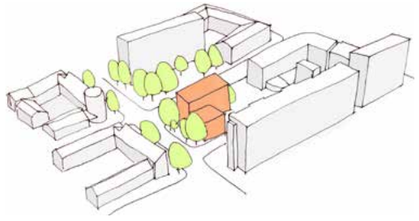


### Maximising the site

The second option is to maximise the development area of the site. This could provide the maximum amount of housing on the site. However, it requires removing several mature trees on the site and potentially damaging trees on the neighbouring site, the car park of Cooper House.

Developing the whole site, even if only up to five stories, also brings the new building too close to residents of Cooper House, limiting their views and daylight. It also leaves no room for improved public space, gardens or seating.



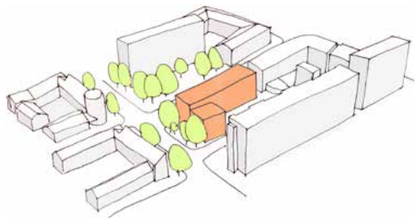


### Building the Corner

As discussed in the model a 3 to 6 storey building that sits on the street edge of Booth Street West is most accepted by residents. A lower building could follow the edge of Boundary Lane to complete the urban block, but stepped back from the pavement to preserve the existing mature trees.

This creates a more private garden space sheltered from the road that could be used by residents of the new development, residents of Copper House, or the wider public.





### Completing the Urban Block

A final option is to complete the urban block along Booth Street West, forming a continuous building lane and more space for shops and services along the main road. This would require the removal of several mature trees, but creates the most harmonious urban form.

The land to the east of the site is owned by the Guinness Trust, who also manage Cooper House. This would require a partnership with Guinness or them selling the land, and therefore it was deemed not viable at this stage for the Community Plan.


Cooper House

# 4.1 GAMECOCK COMMUNITY PLAN

The illustration here shows the massing of the student housing scheme (the red boxing), within which is the proposal for the Gamecock Community Plan. Twenty-four one and two bed flats sit above a public ground floor, forming a new street edge to Booth Street West while preserving the mature trees around the site. The height of the building sits comfortably between the trees, not blocking the daylight or views of residents in Cooper House and Hopton Court. The scheme would be designed to Passivhaus principles, which will greatly reduce bills and energy use in winter and reduce overheating in summer. The proposal is a height of five stories meaning the building sits below the 18m threshold in the Building Regulations concerning fire. This allows the construction to be timber framed or mass timber, which could greatly reduce the embodied carbon of the development and help Manchester achieve net-zero by 2038.

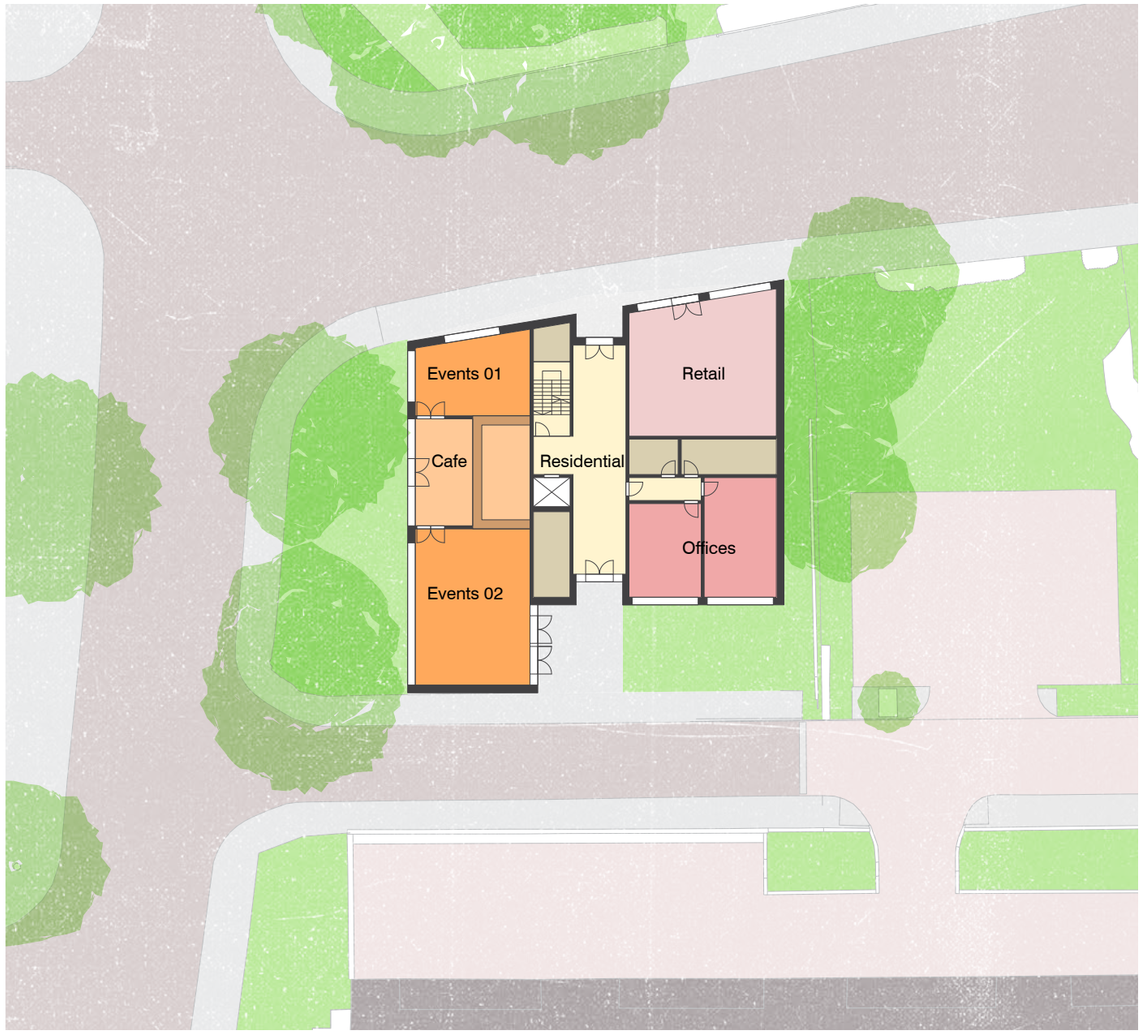
| Floor | GIA / sqm | GIA / sqft |
|---|---|---|
| 00 | 458 | 4,917 |
| 01 | 388 | 4,166 |
| 02 | 388 | 4,166 |
| 03 | 388 | 4,166 |
| 04 | 388 | 4,166 |
| 05 | 388 | 4,166 |
| 06 | 74 | 794 |
| Total | 2084 | 22,374 |



# 4.2 GROUND FLOOR

The following layouts are indicative of what could be provided on the site, though further engagement, consultation and detailed design will decide the final scheme. A cafe sits on the ground floor, serving as a social space and also entrance space to the two larger event rooms that could operate as seating for the cafe or host private events. A retail unit to the north provides essential goods, and smaller offices and treatment rooms sit to the south opening onto the garden. The residents can enter from either side into a generous lobby.

| Space | GIA / sqm | GIA / sqft |
|---|---|---|
| Retail | 85 | 913 |
| Offices | 50 | 537 |
| Cafe | 60 | 644 |
| Events 01 | 38 | 408 |
| Events 02 | 76 | 816 |
| Circulation | 97 | 1,041 |
| Total | 458 | 4,917 |



# 4.2 UPPER FLOORS

The upper floors could provide up to 6 flats per floor with a mix of two 2-beds and four 1-beds. All the flats are dual aspect with their own private covered balcony. Each home is designed to have windows from kitchens on to the shared circulation space to encourage more informal social interaction. All are wheelchair accessible and designed to be adaptable to future needs.

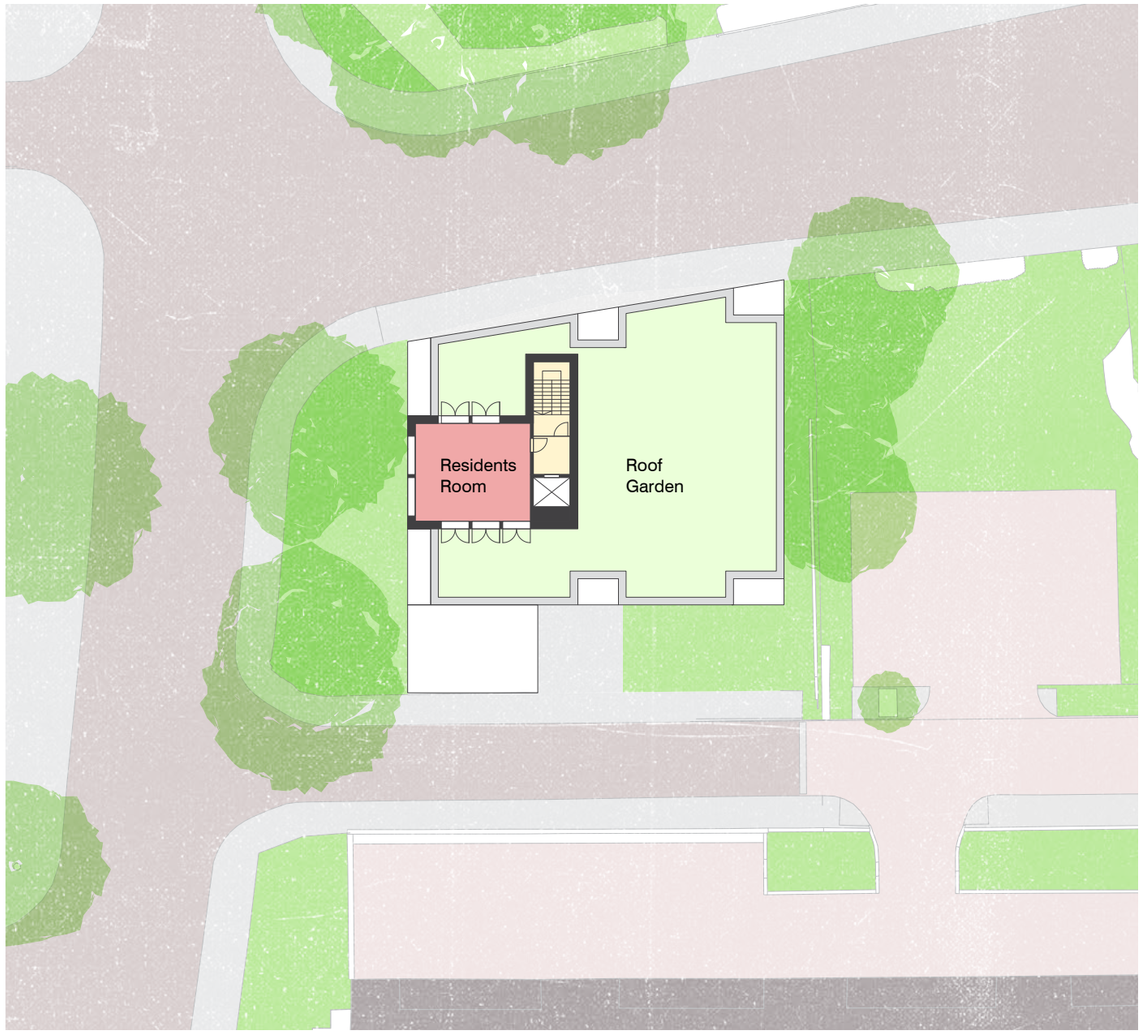
| Space | GIA / sqm | GIA / sqft |
|---|---|---|
| 2-bed | 61 | 655 |
| 2-bed | 61 | 655 |
| 1-bed | 50 | 537 |
| 1-bed | 50 | 537 |
| 1-bed | 50 | 537 |
| 1-bed | 50 | 537 |
| Circulation | 50 | 537 |
| Total | 388 | 4,166 |




# 4.2 ROOF

The flat roof provides a large roof garden where residents can share raised beds and allotments. The lift and stairs run to roof level to provide wheelchair access to a communal room that provides space for residents' activities and social events..

| Space | GIA / sqm | GIA / sqft |
|---|---|---|
| Residents | 48 | 515 |
| Circulation | 25 | 268 |
| Total | 50 | 537 |
| | | |
| Terrace | 297 | 3,189 |



# 4.3 PUBLIC SPACE

The event space on the ground floor extends to the south of the building to shelter the site from the road and create a new garden between Cooper House and the Gamecock. The event space and offices can both open directly into the garden, which could be used for gardening clubs, outdoor dining and public events. Whether this is a private garden for residents, shared with those in Cooper House or a publicly accessible green space it will greatly increase the biodiversity of the area and provide opportunities for nature-based activities and workshops.





# 5.1 VIABILITY SUMMARY

The following pages assess the financial viability of the scheme. Several options were explored assessing four main variables: the construction cost, the land value and the rent of the commercial units to assess the amount of capital grant that would be required.

Construction costs have the greatest variability in the amount of grant funding required, very low-construction costs (£1,700/sqft) required just £60,000 of grant per unit whereas high-spec construction costs (£2,700/sqft) required up to £230,000 of grant funding per unit. An average construction cost of £2,000/sqft would require £100,000 of grant funding per unit.

Each rent option is 100% social rent homes to go some way to address the loss of social housing in Hulme, Manchester. The weekly rent levels are set at Manchester City Council's Local Housing Allowance - which at the time of writing is £143 for a 1-bed and £172 for a 2-bed.

For sale options have been explored to understand the viability of transferring the management of the homes to a community-led vehicle such as a Community Land Trust or Housing Coop, or to a specialist provider of extra-care housing. Freehold ownership could be retained by Manchester City Council or a housing association - with a community-led group taking on day-to-day management.

The viability of providing peppercorn and subsidised rents for the non-residential units has been tested - and would increase the amount of grant-funding required for each residential unit between £20,000 to £40,000. A peppercorn rent could allow these spaces to offer community cafes, lunch clubs, healthcare and service provision to go some way to restoring the loss of social community spaces for the residents of Hulme.

The final option explores a subsidised rent for the non-residential units of 50% of market-rent. A subsidised rent could allow a local community business to operate the space. This option is most popular with local-residents and follows a similar operational model to Kim's Kitchen & Bar in Work For Change



# 5.2 VIABILITY OPTIONS – SOCIAL RENT

The viability of each option has been tested using a financial appraisal tool and cashflow model developed by Community Led Housing London, it does not constitute formal valuation advice, but highlights the many ways the Gamecock Community Plan could be delivered. Each option has a considerable development profit, can pay off finance at 7% over a 30-year term, has no borrowing shortfall and the debt service ratio stays above target for the loan term.

Capital Grant could be provided through Homes England's Affordable Homes Programme (AHP), from Manchester City Council or from other capital funders. More detailed work needs to be carried out to assess different models of staged funding and structuring the grant funding through construction.

| *Description* | *Area/sqm* | *Area/sqft* | *Peppercorn Rent* | *Subsidised Rent* | *Commercial Rent* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Shop*** | 85 | 913 | £1 | £950 | £1,901 |
| ***Office*** | 50 | 537 | £1 | £559 | £1,118 |
| ***Cafe*** | 60 | 644 | £1 | £671 | £1,342 |
| ***Event Space 01*** | 38 | 408 | £1 | £425 | £850 |
| ***Event Space 02*** | 76 | 816 | £1 | £850 | £1,700 |

| *Option* | *Description* | *Residential rent - £pcm* | | *Non-residential rent - £/sqft* | *Land Value* | *Construction Costs* | | *Capital Grant Required* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *1-bed* | *2-bed* | | | *Cost - £/sqft* | *Total inc. fees* | *Per Unit* | *Total* |
| ***1*** | ***Low construction cost*** | £143 | £172 | £25 | £0 | £1,760 | £5,441,239 | £60,000 | £1,440,000 |
| ***2*** | ***Medium construction cost*** | £143 | £172 | £25 | £0 | £2,000 | £6,029,549 | £100,000 | £2,400,000 |
| ***3*** | ***High construction cost*** | £143 | £172 | £25 | £0 | £2,700 | £8,076,043 | £230,000 | £5,520,000 |
| ***4*** | ***Medium land value*** | £143 | £172 | £25 | £500,000 | £2,000 | £6,029,549 | £125,000 | £3,000,000 |
| ***5*** | ***High land value*** | £143 | £172 | £25 | £1,000,000 | £2,000 | £6,029,549 | £150,000 | £3,600,000 |
| ***6*** | ***Non-residential peppercorn rent*** | £143 | £172 | £1 | £0 | £2,000 | £6,029,549 | £140,000 | £3,360,000 |
| ***7*** | ***Non-residential subsidised rent*** | £143 | £172 | £12.50 | £0 | £2,000 | £6,029,549 | £120,000 | £2,760,000 |

# 5.3 VIABILITY OPTIONS - SALE

Options to sell off the residential units to a community housing provider, housing co-op or specialist extra-care provider have been explored. This option calculates the total value of the residential units and the non-residential spaces - allowing two separate operators to purchase separate spaces within the building.

This model has been used successfully in London by London CLT - purchasing recently completed new-build units from a larger housbuilder at cost after overheads and profits.

| ***Option*** | ***Description*** | ***Construction Costs*** | | ***Land Value*** | ***Capital Grant*** | ***Sale Value*** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | ***Cost - £/sqft*** | ***Total inc. fees*** | | ***Per Unit*** | ***1-bed*** | ***2-bed*** | ***Total Residential*** | ***Non-Residential*** |
| ***1*** | ***Sale - Medium construction cost*** | £2,000 | £6,029,549 | £0 | None | £170,000 | £212,500 | £4,420,000 | £1,609,549 |
| ***2*** | ***Sale - High construction cost*** | £2,700 | £8,076,043 | £0 | None | £250,000 | £312,500 | £6,500,000 | £1,576,042 |
| ***3*** | ***Sale - High land value*** | £2,000 | £6,029,549 | £1,000,000 | None | £210,000 | £262,500 | £5,460,000 | £569,549 |

# 5.4 OPERATIONS

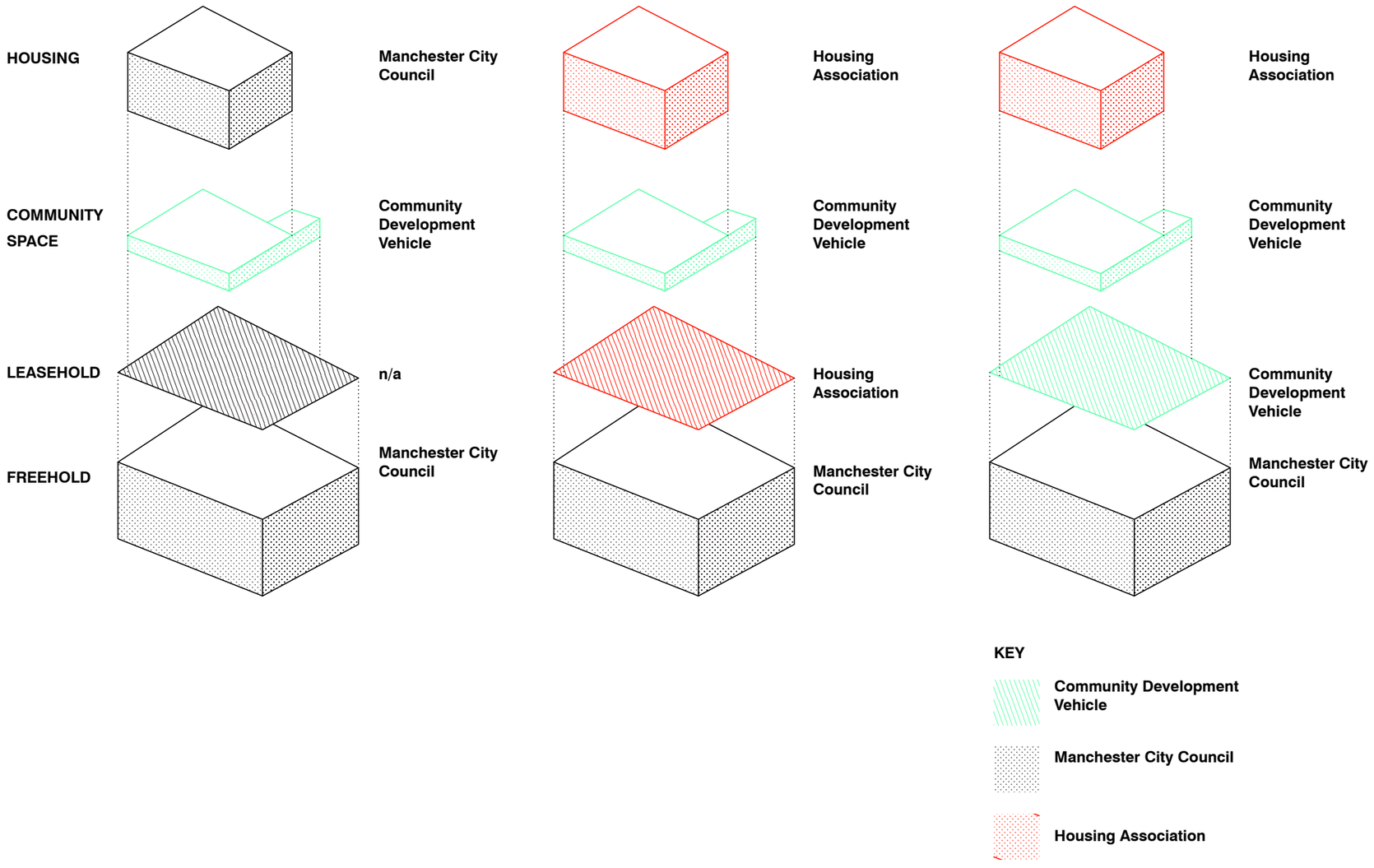
These options explore different models for the ongoing operation of the building. The lease and ownership structures alongside what organisations are best placed to manage which parts of the building. The Community Development Vehicle could be any democratic, non-profit organisation to allow residents control and power over key decisions.

The construction work could be delivered by Manchester City Council, many local authorities are delivering social housing across the country. As the land is already in public ownership the acquisition of the land should be more straightforward. The Community Space could be run by and for the community to make sure it meets local needs.

The leasehold of the land could be sold to the Housing Association, which might be most preferable to a housing provider. The housing, particularly if it is to be social rent or extra-care housing, will be provided by a Housing Association or other Registered Provider. The community space could be run by the community on a subsidised or peppercorn rent.

The Community could take on the lease of the land and run and manage the community spaces. The land would stay in public ownership with a long lease granted to the community development vehicle. The housing, particularly if it is to be social rent or extra-care housing, could be managed by a Housing Association or other Registered Provider.

The housing could be delivered by a community-led organisation such as a Community Development Trust or Community Land Trust. There are many recent successful examples of these models across the country. However, it isn't deemed the most suitable option here to provide extra-care housing for vulnerable residents.




Cooper House
THE GAMECOCK COMMUNITY PLAN
Unit 98