

# The CIP Challenge

## Central Somers Town CIP

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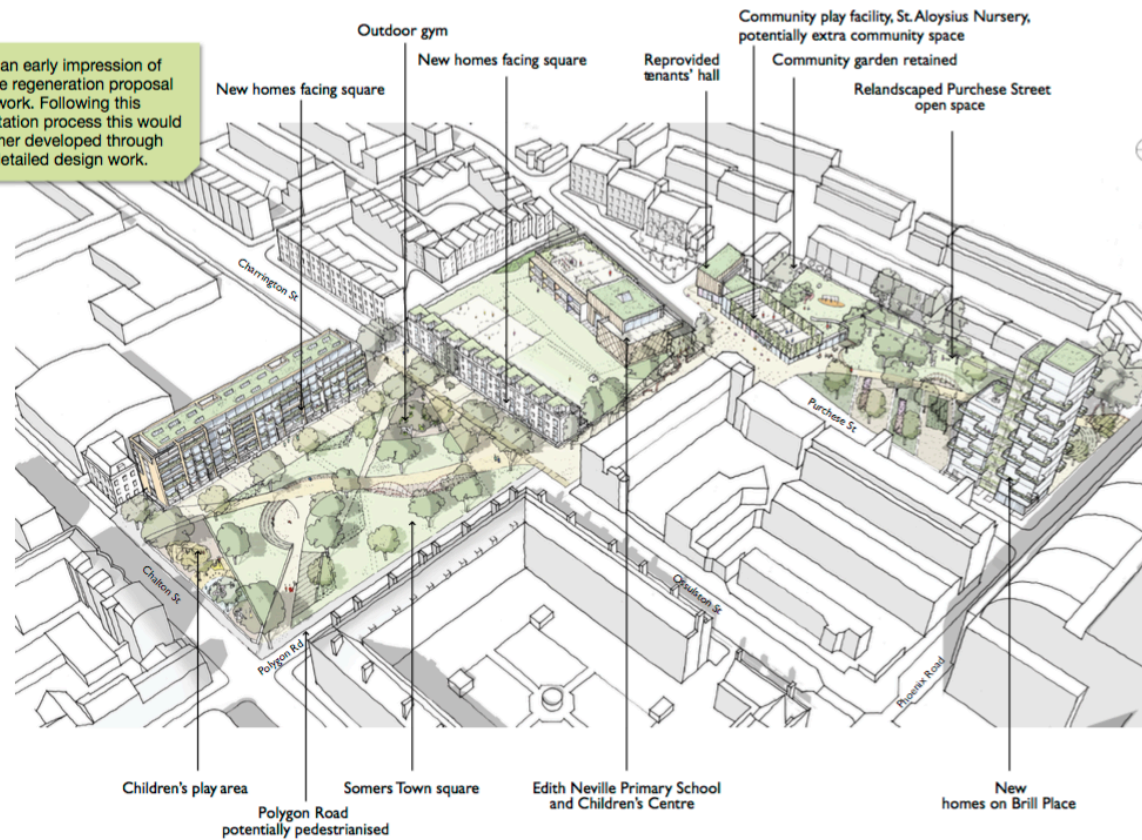
# Central Somers Town CIP



# 2013 scheme

## Central Somers Town design concept

This is an early impression of how the regeneration proposal could work. Following this consultation process this would be further developed through more detailed design work.

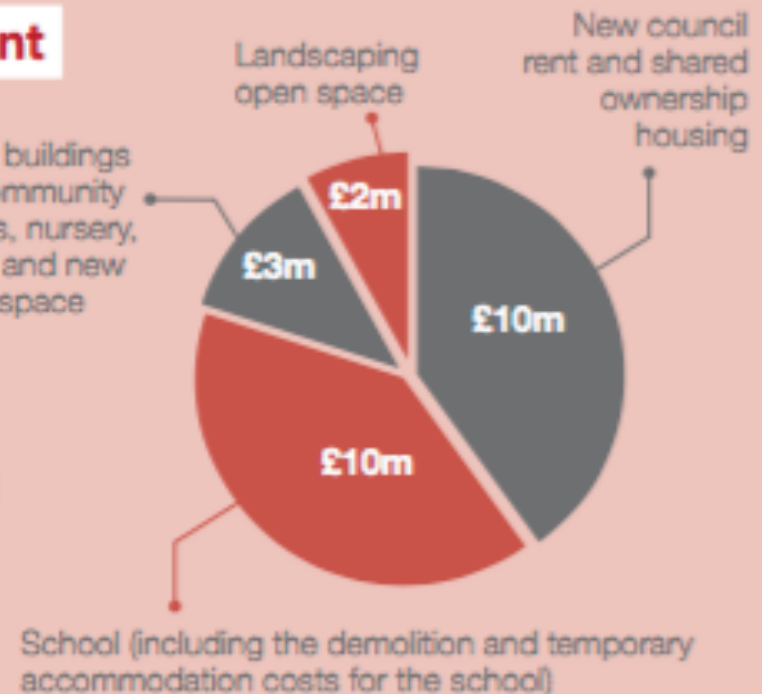


# Costs of 2013 scheme

## 'Central Somers Town' potential investment

By **building** and **selling** some new private housing as part of the proposal this would pay for the costs of building the **new community facilities** and **social housing**.

Community buildings including community play facilities, nursery, tenants hall and new community space



# Costs of 2015 scheme

- Camden Council have not revealed the costs of the scheme.
- The London Mayor's Stage II planning report revealed the rebuilding of the school and community facilities, and the reprovision of public open space is expected to be approximately £27 million.
- The scheme itself will afford 14 per cent (20 units) of affordable housing.
- Costs have gone up by 80 per cent in two years.

# Why did costs rise so much?

- Viability assessments encourage developers to maximise costs. Without an Open Book policy, the public have no way of challenging figures.
- The design of the school: the school as designed will be a one form entry primary school, but will be as big as a two form entry primary school.
- The decision to build the highest residential tower in Camden was an expensive one, as tall buildings take longer to build, cost more and are less efficient.



# Why build a children's centre?

Central Somers Town CIP

Design & Access Statement - Plot 4

Edith Neville Primary School and Children's Centre

DECEMBER 2015

Hayhurst and Co.

MAX FORDHAM

wynne-williams associates

PRICE&MYERS



Somers Town Community Investment Programme



# Why pay over the odds for social housing?

I asked the question:

If the additional floorspace afforded by the AHF is  $47813 - 22315 = 25,498$  sqft or  $2,369\text{m}^2$  and that is costing £10.3M, then the construction cost is £4,347 per sq metre. I'm told that construction costs in London have gone up massively recently, but are currently around £2,200 per sq metre. So this scheme is costing double the going rate?



I received this answer from the planning officer:

I have discussed this with our viability consultant. The cost of the additional affordable is driven primarily by loss of private floorspace when it is switched to affordable, as the private values are over £10,000 per sqm. So the level of funding required would not be driven by build costs as such. I hope this makes sense.

# The Neighbourhood Forum's position

## The Forum

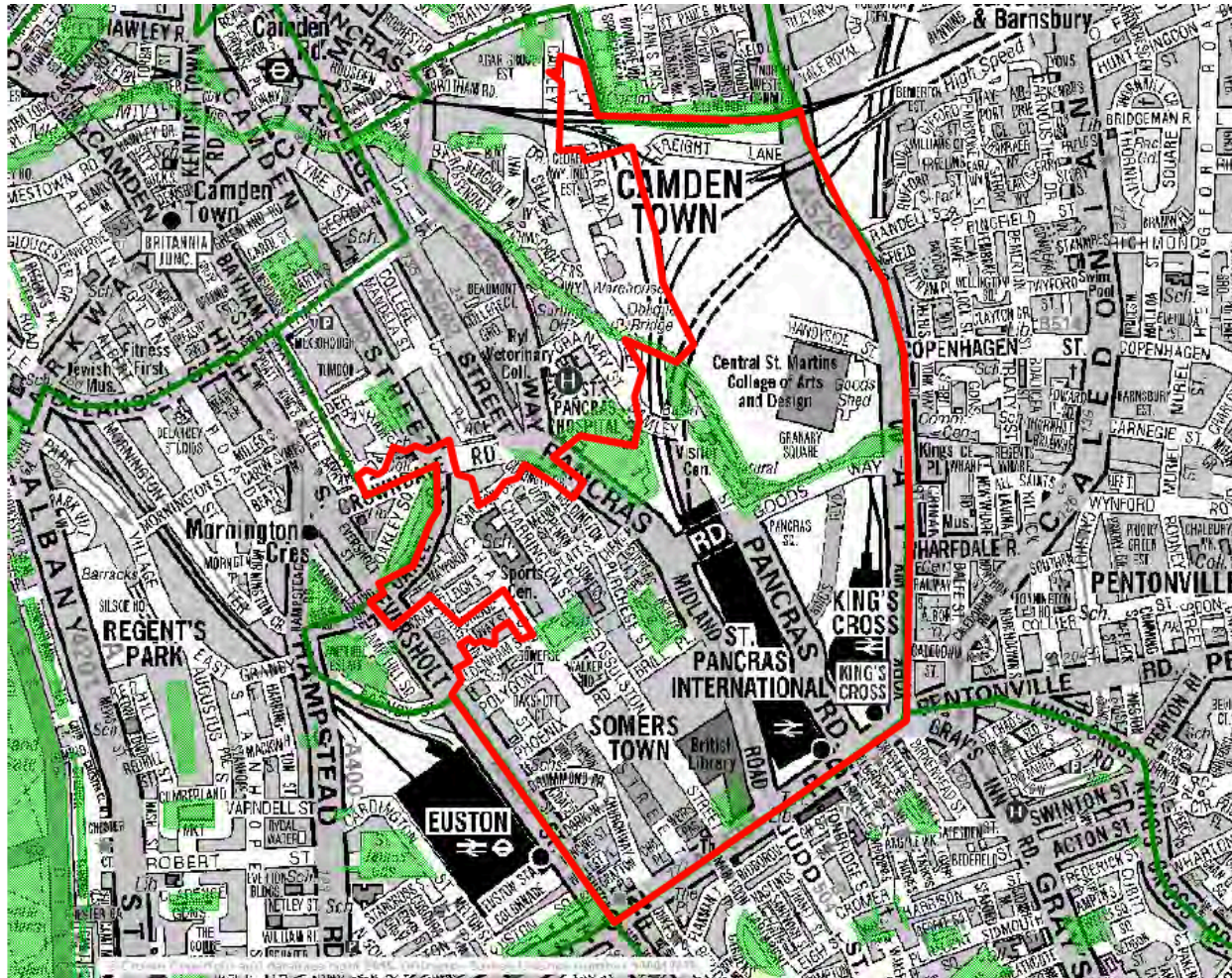
values our green spaces and believes that both Purchase Street and Polygon Road open spaces should be designated Local Green Spaces;

- wishes to see air quality in Somers Town improve;
- is hugely concerned about the cumulative impact of the CIP, HS2, Crossrail 2, the Maria Fidelis consolidation project and the British Library extension project;
- supports the rebuilding of Edith Neville School;
- believes there is a cheaper, better, more deliverable solution in Somers Town.

# An alternative plan

In response to a widespread community calls for a first phase “do minimum” investment option to rebuild the school, the Forum put forward an alternative proposal that included 40–50 new housing units. This proposal was assessed by LBC’s independent property and cost consultants who concluded that it **“could generate sufficient value to build a new school and complete the enabling and infrastructure works associated with the new private housing and school.”**

# Why can't they build above the school?



Population in Somers Town is to increase by 47.4% by 2028.

Camden has to plan for new school places in Somers Town. The school may need to expand upwards in the future.

The population explosion comes from the King's Cross Development, with its own two-form-entry primary school.

# Type of housing proposed

- Housing plots are not mixed tenure. The tower is 100 per cent private, with the viability assessment proposing values for some of the flats at “substantially over £2,000 per sqft”.
- The viability assessment bemoans the close proximity of social housing on private housing values.
- We question the sensitivity of building homes for the super rich in an area famed for its social housing. This is not a plan for social cohesion. What happened to “building for the Somers Town community”?

# Ignoring planning policy

The Central Somers Town CIP breaches

Camden's own guidance on:

- Tall buildings
- Heritage
- Open space
- Light
- Overlooking
- Disabled parking



# What we would like to see

- Proper consultation, where the Council asks open questions, listens to the answers and keeps a “do nothing” option on the table;
- An open book policy, where the public can scrutinise and challenge developments;
- Even better, an end to viability assessments;
- Proper consideration of environmental and health impacts, including air pollution and loss of green space.
- Homes, including private and shared ownership homes, that meet local need rather than maximising profit.
- A Council that forcefully makes the case for more genuinely affordable housing – not a Council that builds investment flats for the super rich.

# The future of the CIP in Somers Town

