

# RACECOURSE TOGETHER SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION 12.06.23



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# HIGH LEVEL OPTIONS

Interpretation of the brief

The Racecourse Together report takes a broad view of what constitutes community infrastructure.

We have taken the proposal put forward in the options paper; the installation of a stand alone modular unit such as a converted container, and have reviewed the sites suggested for its location. Alongside this, we have drawn upon our study of the estate; its spaces, community and local initiatives, to develop a series of high level proposals that aim bring about community benefit on the estate by supporting what exists there.

This optioning is intended to expand the thinking around what could be shared, robust and well used community space by setting out some tangible, sited high level ideas that can be discussed and compared.

The proposals were presented to the local authorities, to councillors and to the community as part of an open co design process.

**A. A CONTAINER AS A COMMUNITY ROOM**  
Installing a stand alone modular unit that would serve as a temporary community room for hire.

**B. LANDSCAPES OF LAUNDRY**  
Resurfacing under the laundry lines to create enhanced and multifunctional shared spaces.

**C. AN INSTITUTIONAL PERIMETER**  
St Richard's kitchen garden and grounds.

**D. A SKILLS AND STORE COURT**  
Adapting an ancilliary building to support social enterprise and local initiatives.

**E. A SPATIAL VISION FOR THE CHILDRENS CENTRE**  
Improving an existing community space : The Childrens Centre.

**F. LINKING THE PARKS**  
Connecting Northolt and Mandeville Parks through greening and programmed public realm improvements.

**G. A FLOATING COMMUNITY ROOM**  
Supporting, opening up and enhancing existing community spaces across the estate.



# OPTION A

A container as a community room for hire

## THE PROJECT

Fit out and install a container/ stand alone modular unit. The site appraisal on subsequent pages serves as a review of possible locations for the container that were identified in the options paper.

The precedent for this proposal is the Solon Estate Community Hub in Lambeth which is a customised shipping container. The space includes a circa 30m<sup>2</sup> multi-purpose meeting space, toilet and small kitchenette. The shipping container format is cost-effective and allows for a quick construction programme. The hub at Lambeth hosts a range of events and is available to hire for private events, as well as to local services for consultation meetings.

The project was delivered by the Solon New Road Tenants & Resident Association in partnership with Lambeth council. The presence of a strong and proactive TRA in this case was critical to the success of the project. The Solon New Road Tenants & Resident Association registered the Solon Community Charity in 2017 to maintain and manage the Community Hub. The hub is reliant on volunteers and support from local organisations. The hub is managed by volunteers. There is no TRA at Racecourse currently.

The Solon New Road Tenants & Resident Association secured £99,995 Big Lottery Funding from the Reaching Communities grant programme in 2015 to construct the hub and surrounding playground landscaping. It is noted that the surrounding playground landscaping is not needed for the Racecourse Estate. However, construction costs have increased significantly over the past 8 years, since this precedent case study was built.



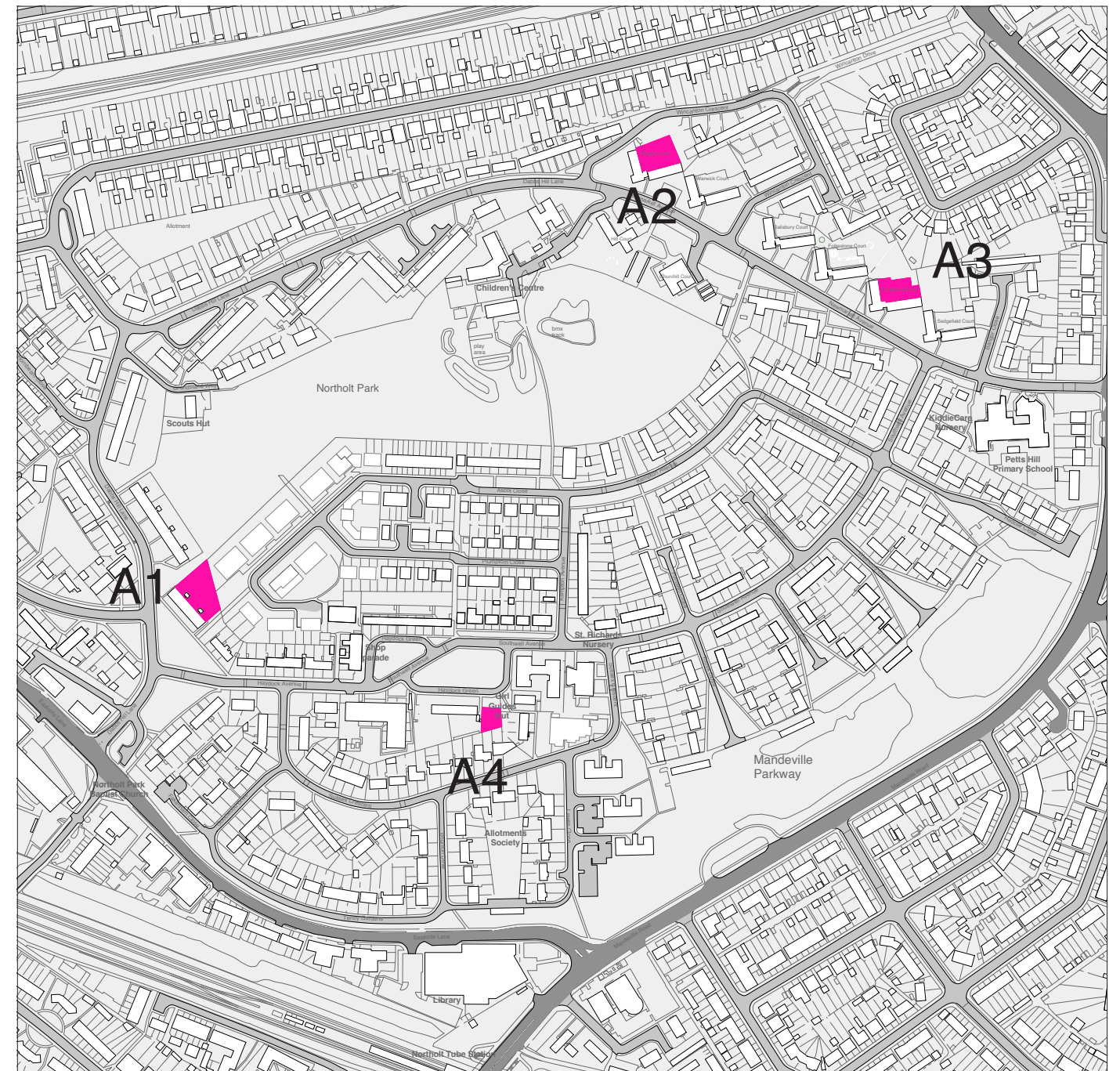
Precedent, Hub on the Solon Estate, Lambeth

## STRENGTHS / OPPORTUNITIES

- There is potential to establish a space the community could take ownership of and that meets the need to establish a space for informal socialising set out in the brief.

## WEAKNESSES / CONSTRAINTS

- Robust ongoing management for an install such as a converted container would have to be in place to justify the capital spend and there is no obvious organisation on the estate currently to take this on, an active tenants and residents association for example, as is the case in Lambeth.
- There are many underutilised ancillary buildings on the estate, garages, pramsheds, bin stores etc with similar sqm to that which a container would provide which could be converted.
- A number of the existing community spaces, for example the scout hut and girls guide hut among others, are pre fab buildings not dissimilar from a container. There is a risk that installing another stand alone modular unit replicates what is already there. The Racecourse Together project is an opportunity to provide a different type of space.



The Options Paper that served as the brief for this report put forward four sites. The sites were selected with a view to constructing a temporary stand alone community room on them, potentially an adapted container. As part of our work, we have reviewed each of these sites and considered them as locations for a pre fabricated modular unit such as a container.

The sites identified in the Options Paper were:

1. Dabbs Hill Lane
2. Lanark Court
3. Pontefract Court
4. Haydock Green

Sites 1,2 and 3 are drying spaces and 4 is a car parks.

# OPTION A. SITE 1

Dabbs Hill Lane, drying space

## SITE DESCRIPTION

This site is a laundry drying space, behind a housing block off Dabbs Hill Lane. It is adjacent to a housing development that is nearing completion and to an entrance to Northolt Park which is quite steep and hidden. The laundry space is underutilised. The boundary with the new housing lacks consideration.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- The cut through is used by students of Northolt High who cross the park to get to school.
- It is between a new development and an existing housing block and as such, there is an opportunity to consider and to design this adjacency carefully and to create a precedent for other parts of the estate where new development is coming forward.
- It is close to a bus route.

## CONSTRAINTS

- Currently it is an underutilised, inhospitable and quite hidden site. As such, an intervention here would have to deliver significant improvement.
- It is relatively close to the scout hut which is underutilised. To install a converted container here risks duplication of an existing space/ model.



View of housing off Dabbs Hill Lane  
View looking south from entrance to park  
View looking north from entrance to park

# OPTION A. SITE 2

Lanark Court, drying space

## SITE DESCRIPTION

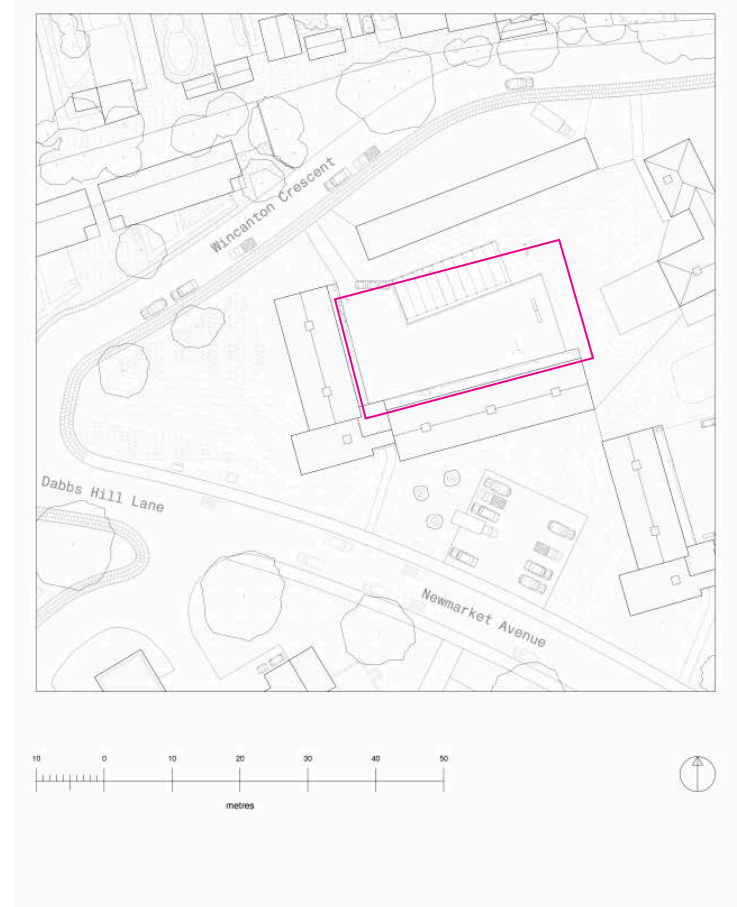
The site is a laundry space, behind a housing block at the Northern edge of the estate near the borough boundary. There are bin stores and a series of garages. The space is larger and less defined than the other drying spaces off Newmarket Avenue.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- The open space is expansive.
- There is an opportunity to activate Wincanton Crescent, to increase the flow of people using this quiet route into the estate.
- The crescent is the historic entry to the Racecourse and leads on to an avenue of mature trees.

## CONSTRAINTS

- The space feels less intimate than the drying spaces adjacent to other blocks and as such less supervised and cared for.
- The space feels like the back/ edge of the estate and so somewhat leftover. Its location could also limit the number of people that a project here would serve.
- It is relatively close to a series of disused garages. If working with this site, funding may be better invested in converting the garages than installing a converted container.



View of garages behind Lanark Court  
View of Lanark Court open space  
View Lanark Court open space

# OPTION A. SITE 3

Pontefract Court, drying space

## SITE DESCRIPTION

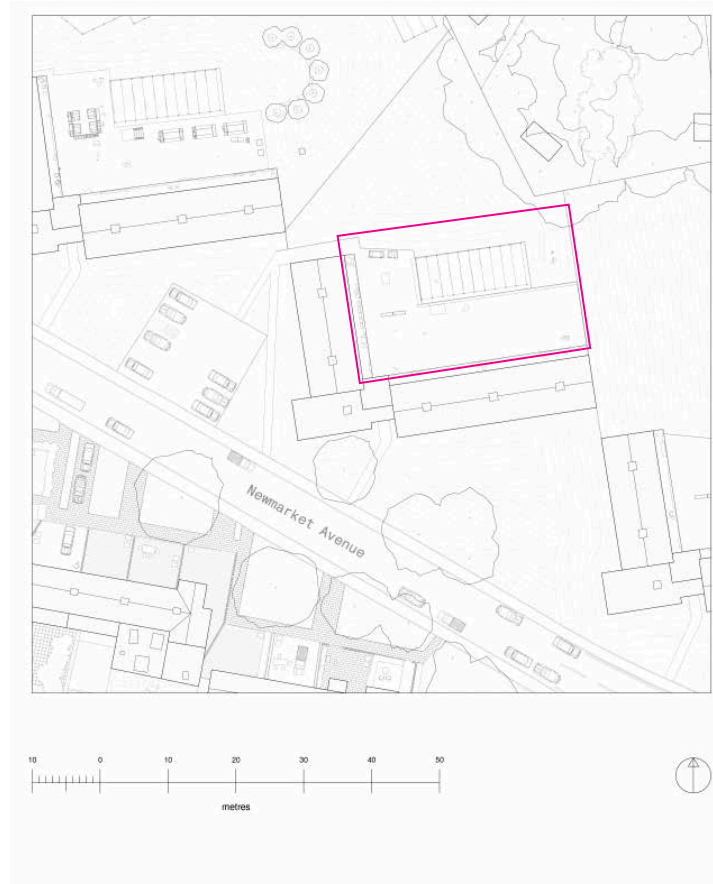
The site is a recently resurfaced laundry space overlooked by housing. It is well used. Trees for Cities worked on the drying space adjacent, at Folkestone Court, installing planters and seating there.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- The space is well used by immediate residents.
- It is overlooked so there is informal surveillance.
- It is multifunctional. Alongside drying laundry, it serves as a space to gather and for children to play.
- There are some issues to be addressed as a result of the planting and installation on the adjacent drying space and the resurfacing. The interventions would benefit from some post occupancy evaluation and potentially, further work.

## CONSTRAINTS

- The space serves a particular group of people, those living immediately adjacent to the laundry space and overlooking it. As a site for the install of a stand alone unit, it may not serve the widest audience and may be too much of an imposition. There is a balance to be struck between creating a public and shared space here and maintaining a sense of privacy and security for residents.



View from flats above  
View of Pontefract court laundry lines  
View of Pontefract court laundry lines

# OPTION A. SITE 4

Haydock Green, carpark

## SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is a car park off Haydock Green adjacent to the girl guides hut.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- It is located centrally within the estate as a whole off Haydock Green, where there is a parade of shops. St Richards Church and the new development at Sussex Crescent are close by, as is the site of the former social club. It is a relatively visible and public site therefore and there is opportunity to build relationships with neighbouring businesses and institutions.

## CONSTRAINTS

- It is surrounded by the backs of houses and is undefined and inhospitable as a site.
- Existing car parking would have to be relocated.
- It is adjacent to the girls guide hut which is an underutilised stand alone modular unit. To install a converted container here risks duplication of an existing space/ model.



View of car park and backs  
View towards girl guide hut  
View towards green

# OPTION B

Folkestone Court and Dabbs Hill Lane

## THE PROJECT : LANDSCAPES OF LAUNDRY

The laundry drying spaces are a distinctive type of space within the estate that serve the denser housing blocks. A number of them are well used, whilst some others are more neglected. They are valuable and compelling spaces for a number of reasons:

- They take a routine domestic task out of individual flats and into a communal space, making it a shared activity that brings people together and freeing up space within often overcrowded homes. Ref. <https://molonglo.com/theory/articles/the-landscape-of-laundry>

- They are partially enclosed and are overlooked by the adjacent housing blocks that they serve, which establishes a degree of privacy, stewardship and informal surveillance.

- They are multifunctional spaces. Where they have been resurfaced with asphalt, they are ideal for childrens' cycles, scooters and play.

This proposal focuses on the drying spaces off Dabbs Hill Lane (see site 1, option A) and on a drying space at Folkestone Court off Newmarket Avenue where Trees for Cities installed some planters and seating. The surface at Folkestone remains potholed and degraded as it was not resurfaced by the council because they didn't want to move the planters.

This project proposes that the two sites be resurfaced in a beautiful, hardwearing material, and that features such as planting and seating are added, so as to intensify the use of the space, particularly promoting young children's play and celebrating laundry as an activity that brings neighbours together. The proposal is essentially a public realm project.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- As a public space project, the proposal is not so dependent upon management/ operators.

- Trees for Cities have an evaluation team. There is an opportunity to work with them to evaluate the intervention at Folkestone Court and to act upon the feedback.

Extract from interview with a resident of Folkestone Court, woman in her thirties with her two young kids around age 4-6. Had lived in Northolt for five years.

*People [in Folkestone Court] are lovely. Trees for Cities put all the tables, benches and planters up. They are used quite a lot. But the estate management team put the trash bins in front of my little garden in the fencing that Trees for Cities did. The tarmac hasn't been fixed in our courtyard but in all of the other courtyards it has. I think it is because of the planters and stuff that Tree for Cities have added. The tarmac is so bad here that children can't play. My daughter had a horrible accident here because of that. There are four entrances to our courtyard and it is used a lot by residents from the other courts, maybe a little too much. Especially by young people not living here. It is really annoying when they sit here smoking and drinking and being loud until late in the evening.*

## CONSTRAINTS

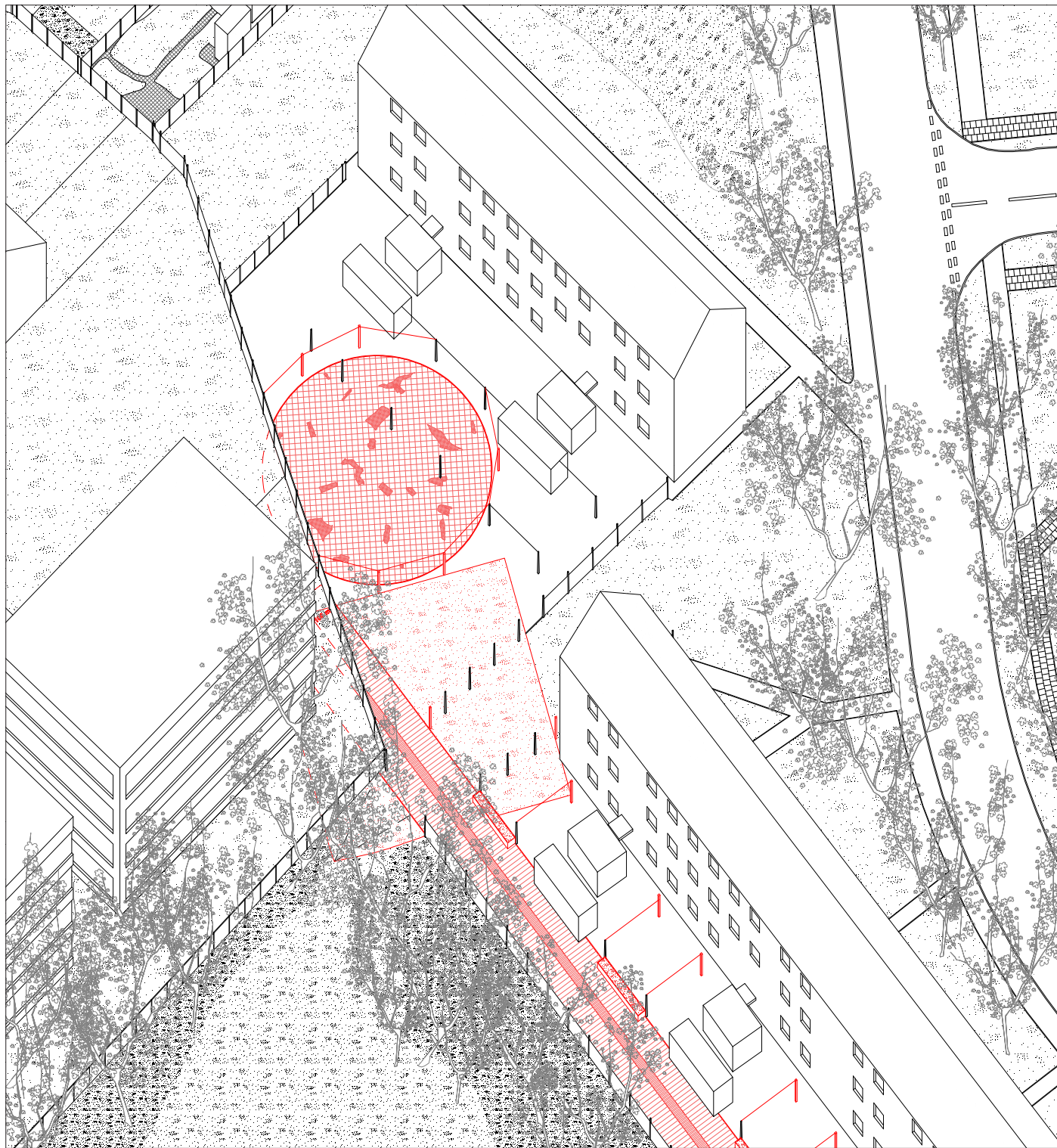
- Interventions that bring people "from outside" into the drying spaces off Newmarket Avenue compromise their privacy and security. Currently, the spaces serve the adjacent housing and investing in them could bring anti social behaviour into these protected environments. At Dabbs Hill Lane this isn't an issue.

- As a public realm project, this proposal doesn't create a new interior space for informal socialing which is what the brief asked for. It builds upon existing community infrastructure and patterns of behaviour/ socialising.

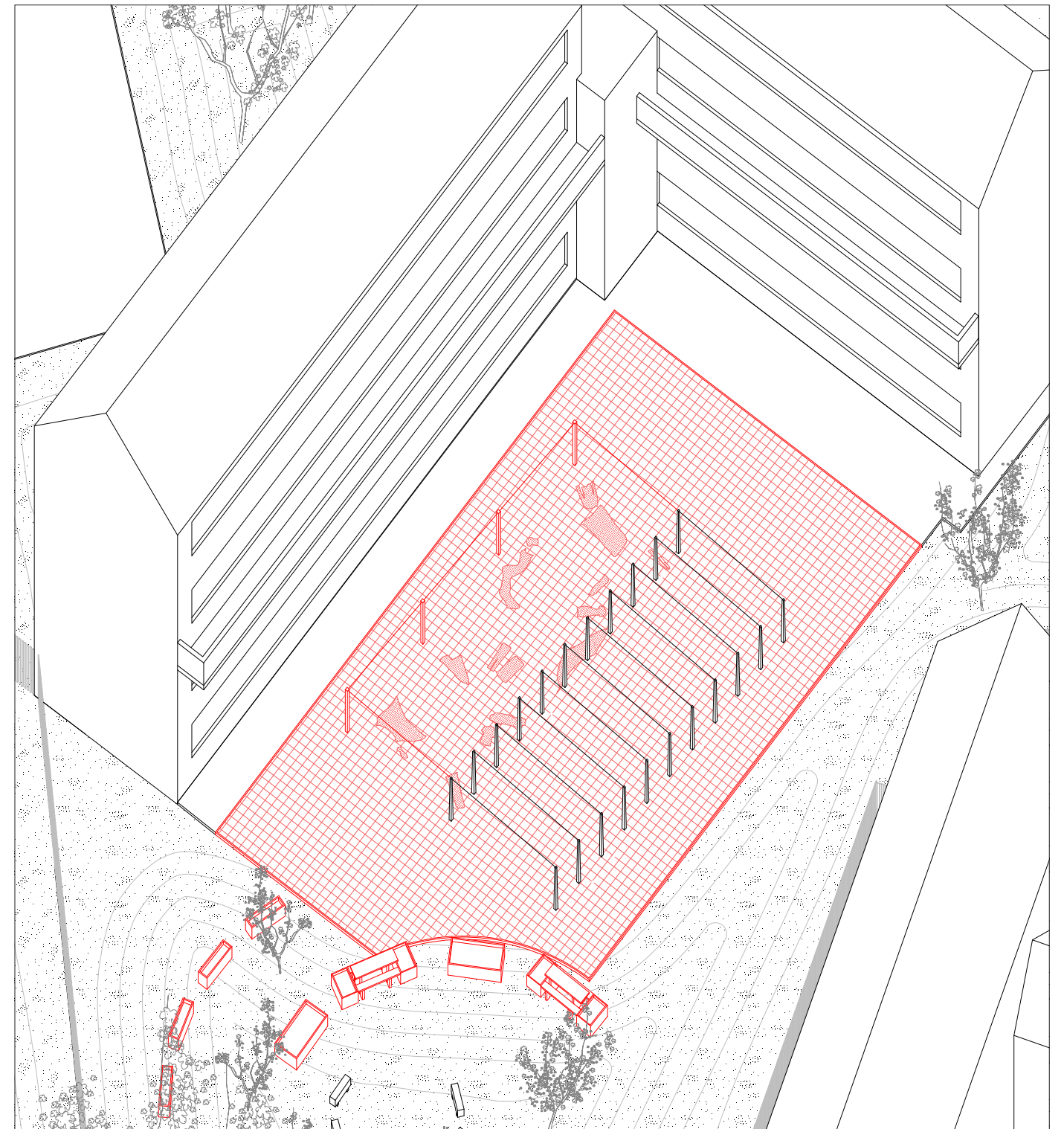
Hackney Wick underpass, Venice garden, Laundry, Barking town Square, Archive image of laundry lines on Racecourse, Resurfaced drying space at Pontefract Court, Trees for Cities intervention at Folkestone Court.



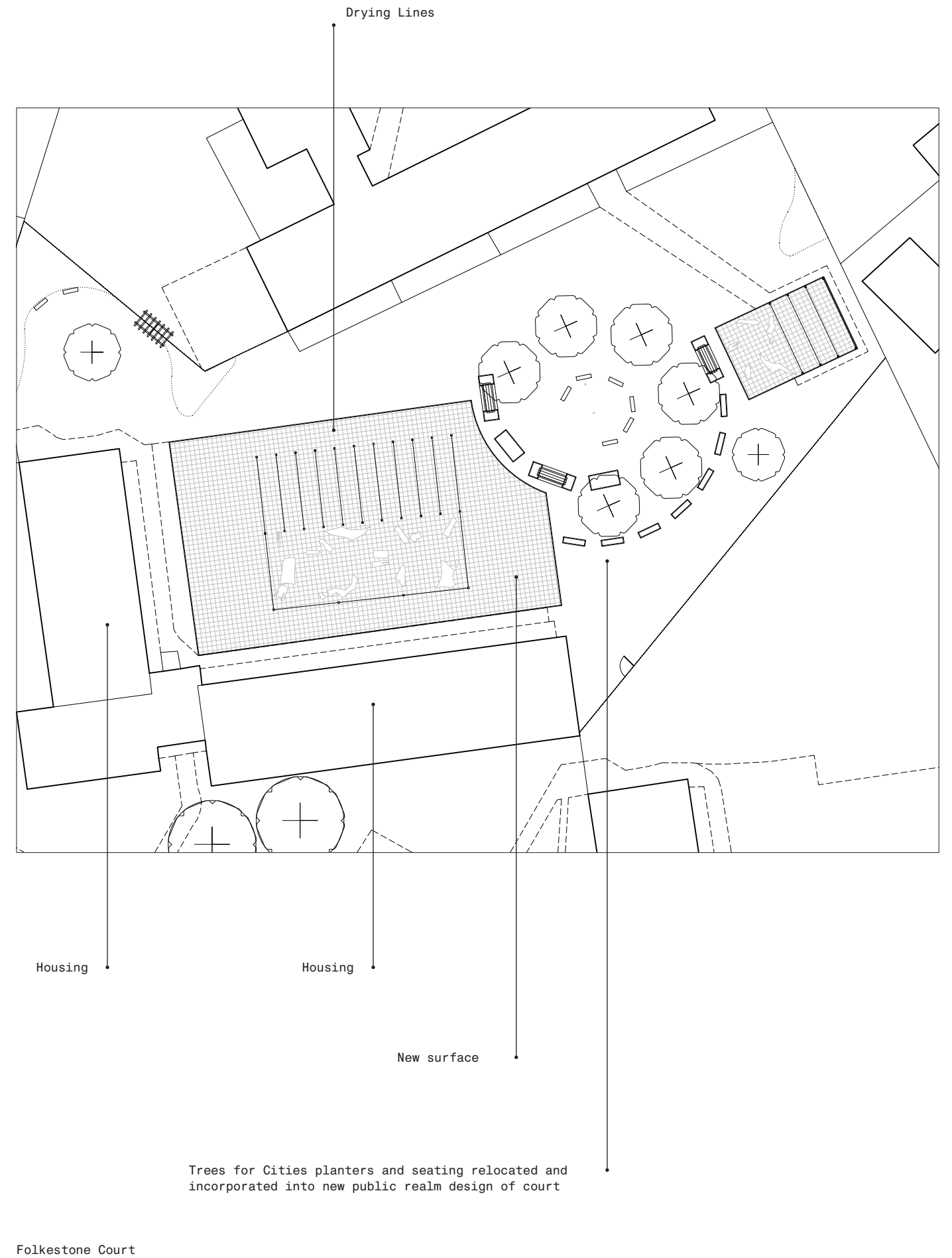
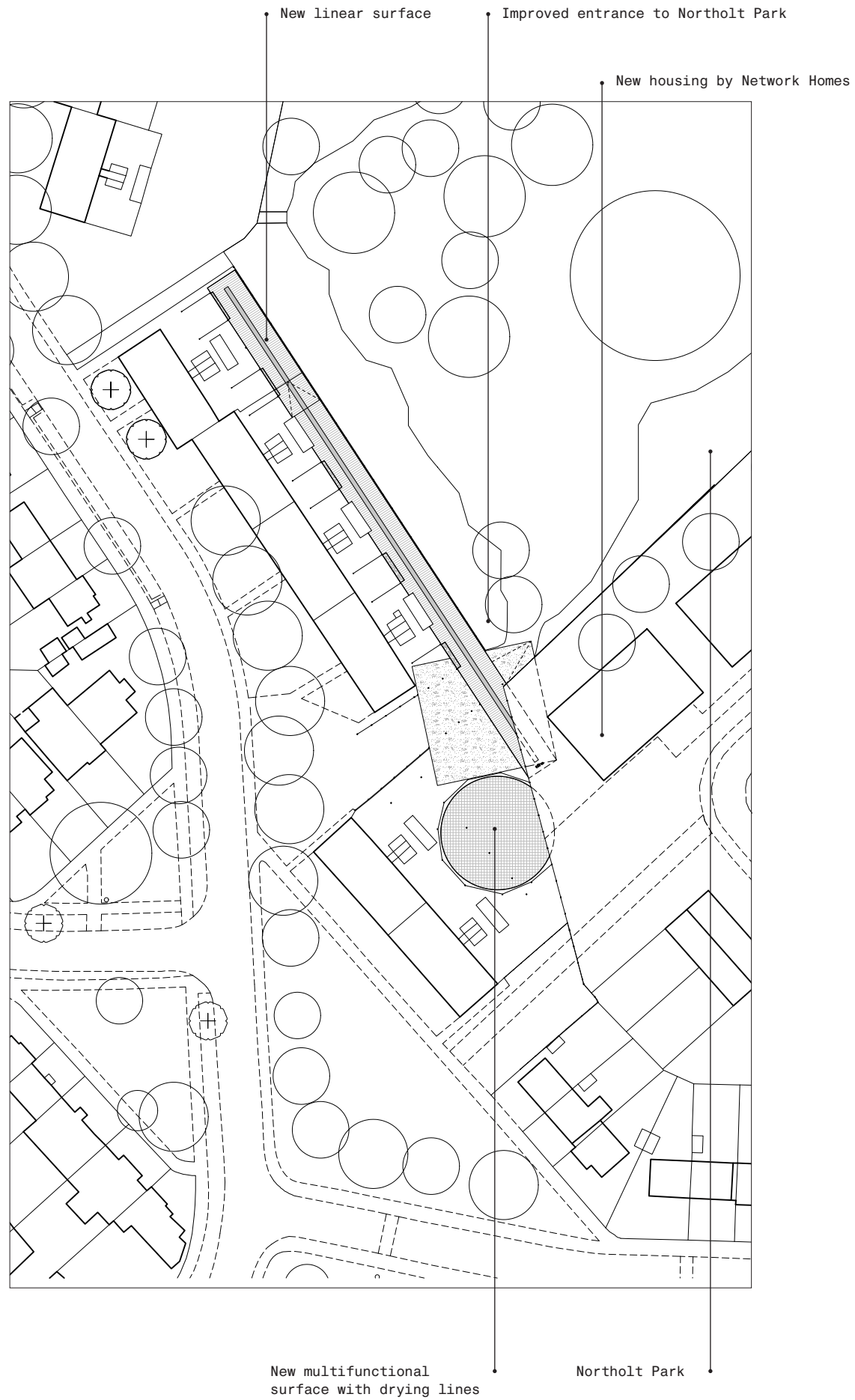




Dabbs Hill Lane



Folkestone Court



# OPTION C

St Richards

## THE PROJECT : AN INSTITUTIONAL PERIMETER. ST RICHARDS KITCHEN AND GARDEN

St Richards is a prominent institution within the Racecourse Estate. The building includes a large hall which is used by a nursery during the week and a chapel used for services currently every two weeks. The building has three small and understated entrances, all its windows are at high level and it is not very open to the green spaces around it. The building itself does not feel welcoming from the outside which doesn't reflect its role within the estate nor the ambition of its reverend to bring more of the public in and to expand its community offer. It is surrounded by green spaces that are underused, particularly an area with a low wooden fence around it, in front of the nursery.

This project aims to create a generous institutional perimeter through improvements to the entrances and foregrounds of St Richards. It proposes an edible garden outside the nursery within the area that is now a fenced lawn, replicating the garden that Trees for Cities have created successfully at Petts Hill Primary. The kitchen that serves the hall/nursery is located next to the fenced area outside.

St Richards is located on a corner, near Haydock Green and between Northolt Park and Mandeville Parkway. The green spaces that wrap around the church are mirrored on the opposite sides of the road, as open green corners are a distinctive feature of the streets and housing south of Northolt Park. Trees for Cities have completed some planting on the corners opposite the church which would be supplemented with seating as part of this project.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- The site is relatively open and there is good informal surveillance so it is less vulnerable to anti social behaviour than other parts of the Estate.
- St Richards could provide maintenance/ stewardship of their improved and public perimeter in return for the investment in their grounds.
- Improvements would contribute to a stronger public realm and better connection between Mandeville and Northolt parks.
- The proposal supports the ambition of St Richards to expand its community offer. There is potential for the church hall to act as a community room for hire.

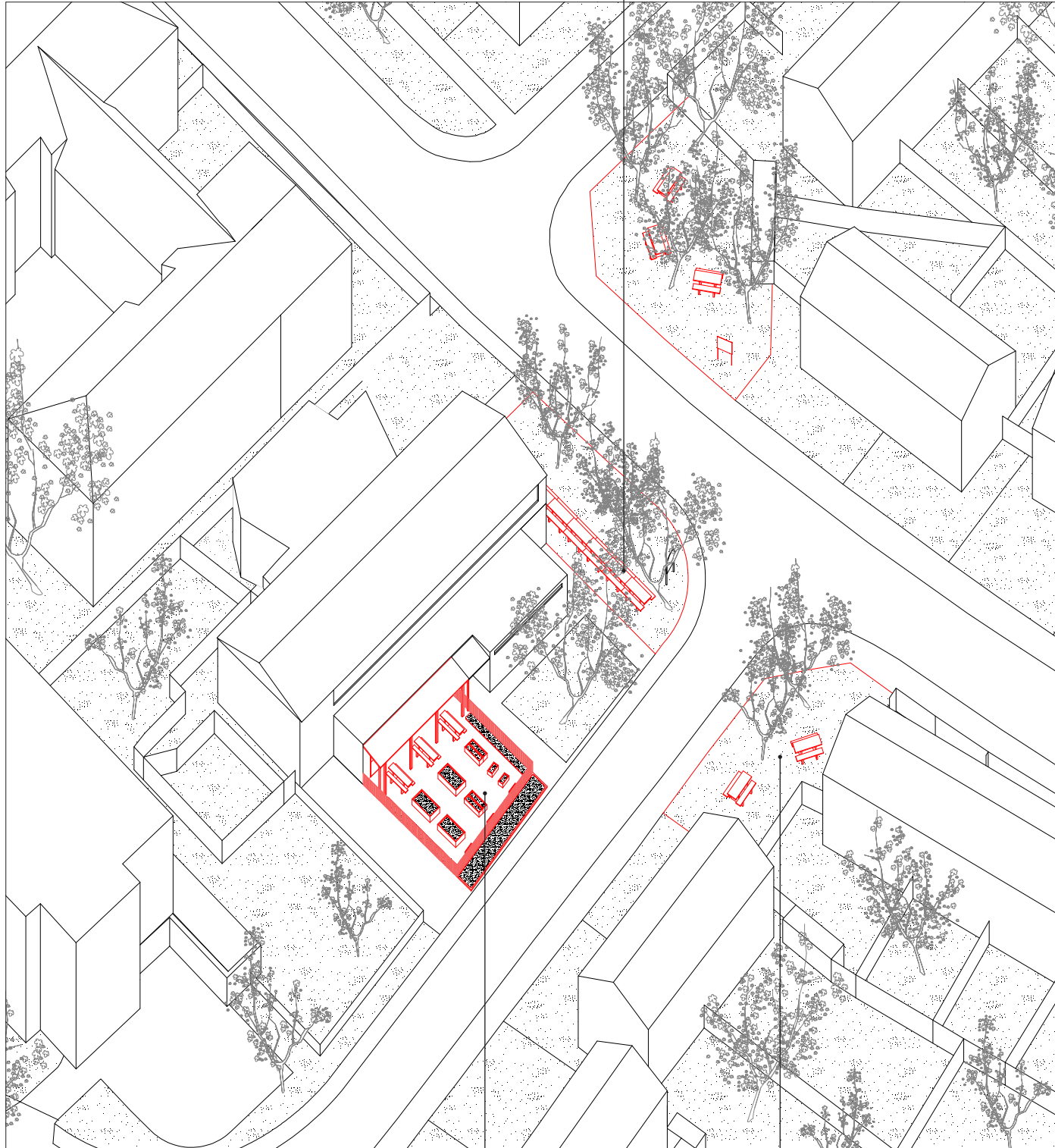
## CONSTRAINTS

- As a public realm project, this proposal doesn't create a new interior space for informal socialing. It engages with existing community infrastructure.
- The hall at St Richards is owned and managed by the church. Whilst changes in the way it is run may open it up to the community, clearly the community will not lead the operation/ management of the hall itself and some activities, such as the consumption of alcohol for example, may not be permitted. This doesn't rule out improvements to the open spaces around the church.

St Richards, Edible gardens by Trees for Cities at Petts Hill, Archive photo of care home at Racecourse with a generous and well used perimeter.



Improved grounds and entrances to St Richards to create a generous perimeter



Proposed edible garden outside nursery at St Richards

Enhanced open green corners

St Richards foregrounds.

