

# Kirkdale High Street, Willow Way Proposed Change of Designation

Prepared for SEE3 Ltd (Portas Pilot)

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Final Draft Issue For Comments 09.09.2014



Aerial view of Kirkdale and Willow Way

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## 01 Introduction

The subject of this report is currently a derelict piece of council owned land located behind Kirkdale and bordered by Willow Way and Dartmouth Road, allocated for employment within LB Lewisham's Core Policy. In the short to medium term the land will be used as an overspill site by Adamsrill School whilst the main school is being refurbished.

There is an opportunity to propose a strategy of re-generation that could have a positive impact on the immediate area as well as informing local planning policy and guidance. There is a degree of change currently taking place with increased pressure on local schools, healthcare and housing and the Willow Way site could be used as generator for both economic benefit and as a means to improve the poor current quality of the built environment within Kirkdale.

Following initial discussions held in 2013 within the Kirkdale Planning Group and meetings with members of the local community and traders it was agreed that a master plan would be developed for discussion that proposes a range of uses more reflective of current and projected future needs including educational facilities, healthcare provision and mixed-use and residential buildings grouped around a series of public squares and streets. This to form an application for a change of designation for Willow Way within LB Lewisham's Core Policy documents.

It was also agreed that suggestions for improving the streetscape of the surrounding area through careful re-planning of pavements, crossings and intersections were needed though these are not covered within the scope of this document.

## 02 Site and Context

Kirkdale is situated at the western portion of Lewisham and is bordered by Forest Hill to the east, Crystal Palace to the west and Dulwich to the north.

Situated roughly equidistant between Forest Hill and Sydenham centres like many of London's boroughs Lewisham has experienced an exponential growth in its population creating significant pressures on its public services and infrastructure.

The arrival of the Overground between Dalston and West Croydon with a branch to Crystal Palace and the general rise in property values across inner London has led to an influx of younger residents and families which in turn has created a rising demand for services not traditionally served by Kirkdale.

The existing built environment is a patchwork of public and private housing, poorly developed commercial property and a number of listed properties. There are also a number of schools within walking distance of the site including Kelvin Grove, Eliot Bank and Sydenham School and also private pre-school facilities which are heavily utilised and in some cases over-subscribed.

Much of the purpose behind this report is directed toward identifying an argument for the re-designation of the Willow Way site from local employment to residential; the traditional light industrial activities are giving way to other potential uses and revenue generators including creative industries and the service sector and as such the need for goods vehicle access and factory style units is being replaced by more loose fit, flexible accommodation.

The closure of the local police station and its acquisition by developers also suggests that Willow Way could also be an attractive large site for a developer interested in providing a medium density development that also includes a degree of public infrastructure.

The local health care provision is heavily utilised and there could be the opportunity of creating a new clinic as part of any scheme. In addition there is almost certainly capacity for further educational provision whether at entry or upper levels.

Though there is extensive green space within the immediate locale, Wells Park being a short walk there is currently no public space within Kirkdale other than the highly congested pavement areas on Kirkdale itself.

As part of any scheme it would seem advantageous to propose some form of public shared space as a civic asset.

The images on the following page show both the condition and generally poor quality of development within Kirkdale and also the site in its condition prior to the installation of the Adamsrill over-flow accommodation.

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01 View of site showing derelict structures (demolished)  
 02 View of Kirkdale buildings  
 03 View of uncontrolled development on Kirkdale  
 04 View of Bricklayers Arms from Dartmouth Road  
 05 View of entry to Willow Way  
 06 View of site from Dartmouth Road

### 03 History

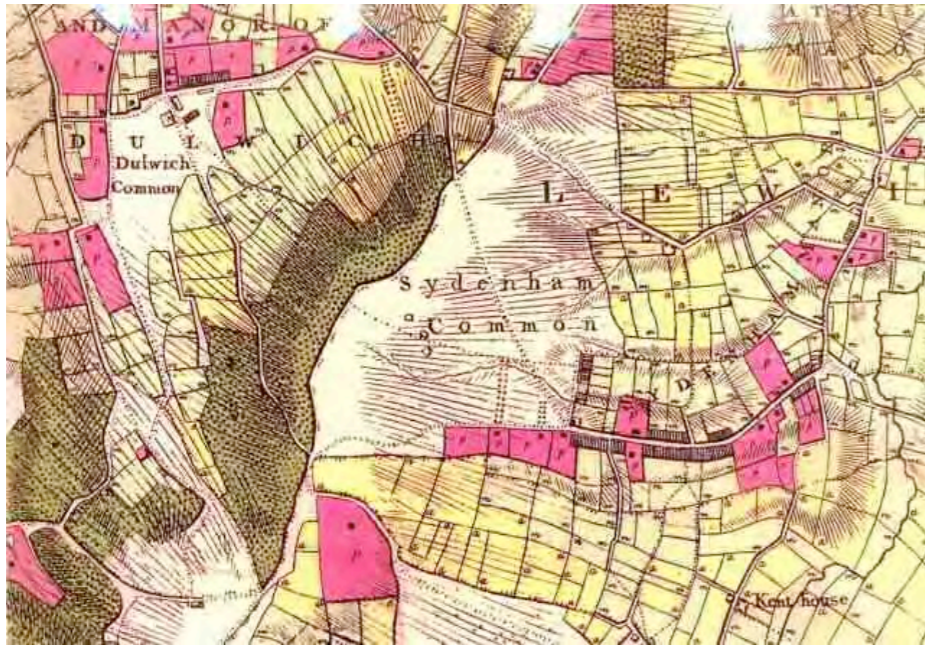
Originally known as Sydenham High Street Kirkdale was the historical main retail street of Sydenham and exemplified the typical Edwardian high street with a mix of local traders, residential accommodation and civically scaled buildings. As with many areas in outer London Kirkdale has lost much of its character through economic deprivation, poor planning decisions and uncontrolled and ad-hoc development.

Over time its essential qualities and character have been eroded by a lack of care on the part of the local authorities and its position and distance from the centre of Lewisham; this and the closure of various local resources has increased the sense of neglect and underlying dilapidation at large.

Forest Hill has experienced a degree of economic improvement in recent years but due to its being bounded by several major roads it struggles to have a centre and any urban public spaces; Willow Way could both offer this to Forest Hill and also create a new focus to Kirkdale redolent of its previous place in local history.

The following images show its earlier incarnation and also the original character of Willow Way typified by modest dwellings showing Kentish vernacular elevational treatments.

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01 1797 map of Sydenham  
 02 Map showing historical layout of Willow Walk (now Way)  
 03 House on Willow Close  
 04 View of Kirkdale (circa 1900)



## 04 Proposals

The following proposals are the result of a period of consultation which was run between autumn 2013 and late spring 2014 when an informal exhibition was held at the office of HoughtonBudd Architects followed by a presentation to the Forest Hill Assembly in early July. Over this period a number of meetings were held with the various interest groups including local residents and other parties at which time the initial ideas were developed in response to comments and suggestions received.

From an early stage it was agreed that the overall use of the site should include a mix of uses including public services (education and healthcare) private tenure housing and live work accommodation; this overall mix being proposed as reflection of the change in demographic and employment in the area.

Early studies led to the creation of a publicly accessible site around which a number of buildings are grouped; both to create a natural focus to the site and also a new grain to the area which will be used by residents and visitors alike. Precedents in this included the garden squares of Georgian London and also successful examples of recent public housing and public realm design such as Coin Street in Waterloo.

The overarching intention is to propose a scheme which has a appropriate density which will be flexible in its use over a period of time, a loose fit approach will be adopted to allow the buildings to have a number of uses as the market demands; thus the larger public building at the south of the site whilst currently identified as being for either healthcare or educational use could in time be changed to office space or even additional residential usage.

The proposal deliberately steers clear of a specific design approach and palette but it has proved useful to describe in broad terms what the massing and scale of any scheme might be. At the southern end a large lozenge shaped building announces entry to the site and faces onto the first of three public squares around which the various buildings would be grouped.

Facing into the first square two blocks of private housing face commercial buildings that create a new street frontage to Willow Way. These have been identified as being potentially a mix of purely commercial use and live-work to reflect the growth of creative industries in Sydenham and Forest Hill. A smaller block is proposed adjacent to Dartmouth Road and faces a new commercial site across another public square.

To the north of the site commercial buildings would be proposed to encourage local enterprise and employment in the area.

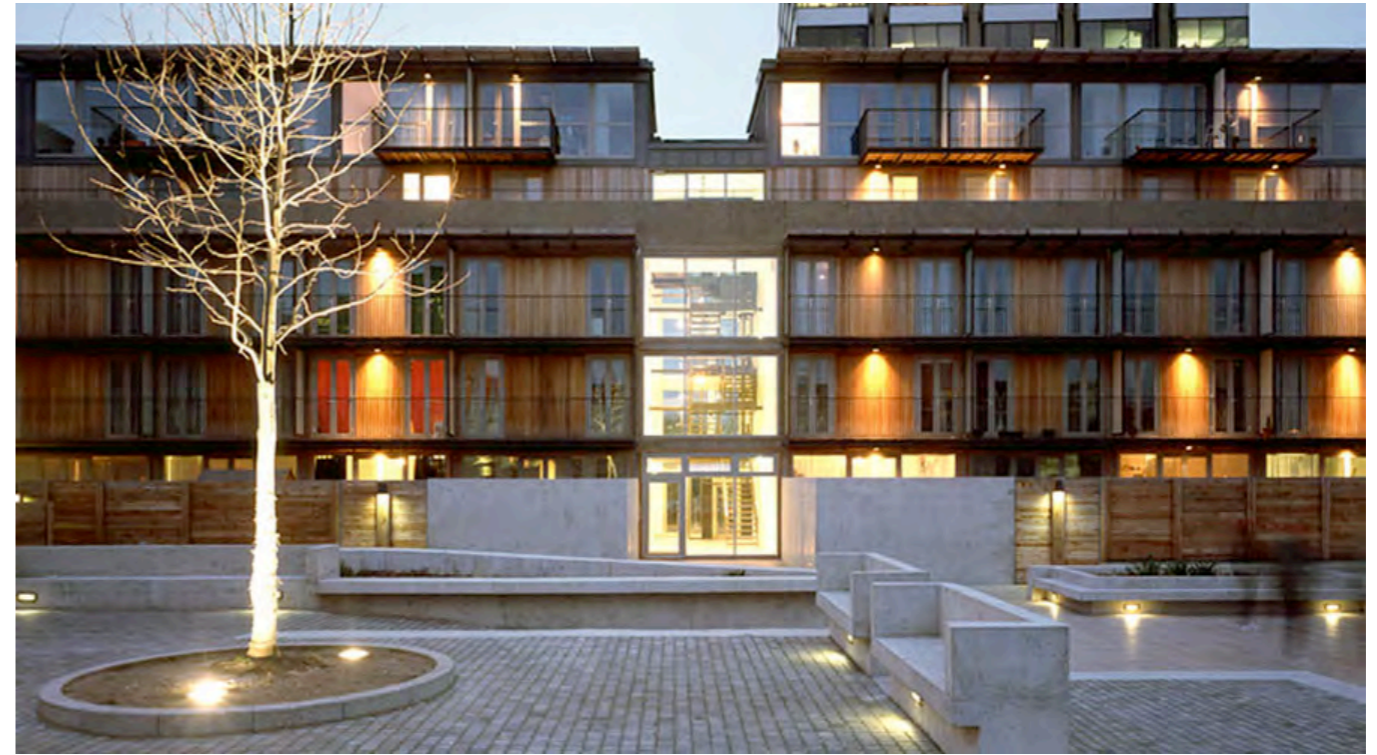
The site would be provided with a service road at its southern end, both to maintain access to the existing residential accommodation and also to provide a new service corridor which would have parking provision and facilities for refuse collection away from Kirkdale itself.

The following pages show how the arrangement might be developed and are intended to form the discussions regarding the alteration of the sites current designation within LB Lewishams UDP.

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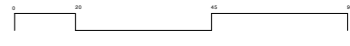


01 Royal Road Kennington, Panter Hudspith Architects  
 02 Vassall Road, Brixton Tony Fretton Architects  
 03 Coin Street Housing Waterloo, Haworth Tompkins  
 04 Bedford Square (attributed to Thomas Leverton)  
 05 Unite D'Habitation Marseilles, Le Corbusier

05 Drawings

- 100\_Existing Site Plan
- 101\_Proposed Site Plan
- 102\_Site Strategy
- 103\_Land Use
- 104\_Site Section

Model Images



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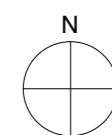
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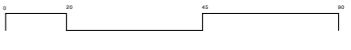
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Willow Way

Drawing Title  
Existing:  
Site Plan

Date Scale Status  
05.09.14 1/1250 @ A1 INFORMATION

Project Number Drawing Number & Revision  
**057 100\_**





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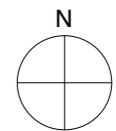
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Project  
Willow Way

Drawing Title  
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Site Plan

Date: 05.09.14 Scale: 1/1250 @ A1 Status: INFORMATION

Project Number: 057 Drawing Number & Revision: 101\_



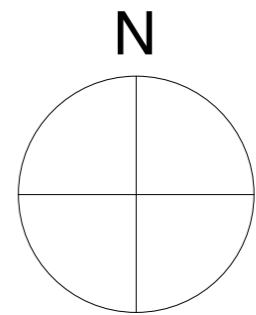


Rev	Date	Description



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Registered No 5552623  
 Project  
 Willow Way



Drawing Title  
 Proposed:  
 Site Strategy

Date	Scale	Status
05.09.14	1/750 @ A3	INFORMATION

Project Number Drawing Number & Revision  
**057 102\_**



Rev	Date	Description
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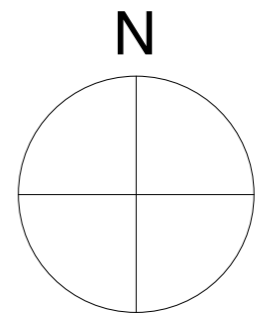
**Key**

- Commercial
- Residential/Commercial
- Education/Healthcare
- Residential
- Refuse

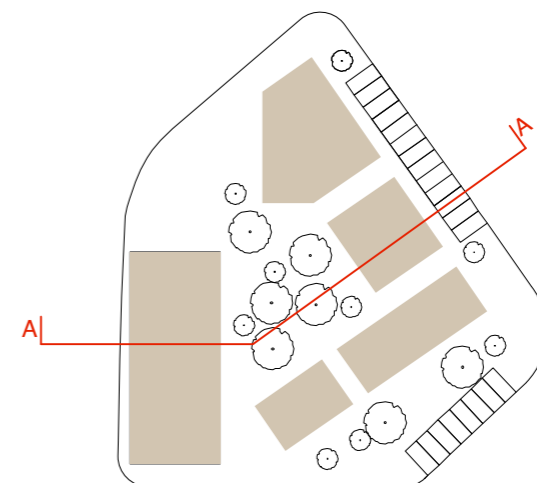
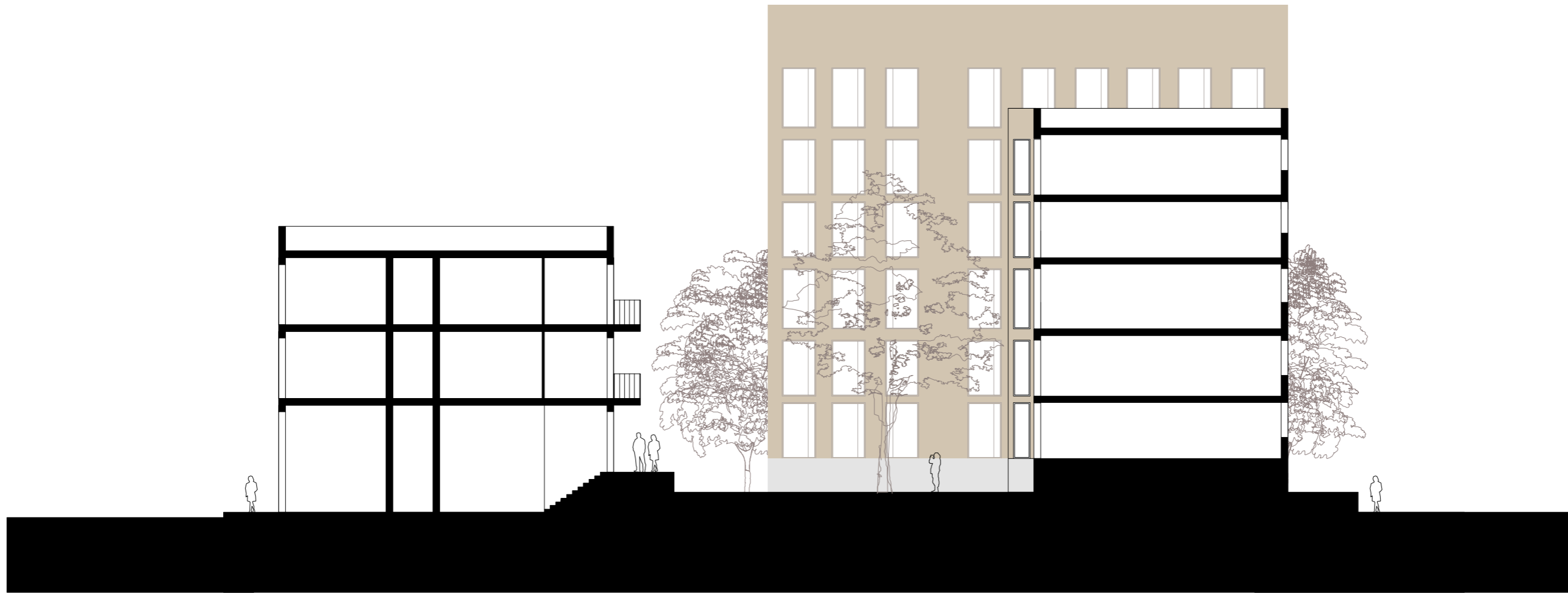


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Registered No 5552623  
 Project  
 Willow Way



Drawing Title	Date	Scale	Status
Proposed: Land Use	05.09.14	1/750 @ A3	INFORMATION
Project Number	Drawing Number & Revision		
<b>057</b>	<b>103_</b>		



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Registered No 5552623

Project  
Willow Way

Drawing Title  
Proposed:  
Section AA Through Site

Date Scale Status  
09.09.14 1/200 @ A3 INFORMATION

Project Number Drawing Number & Revision

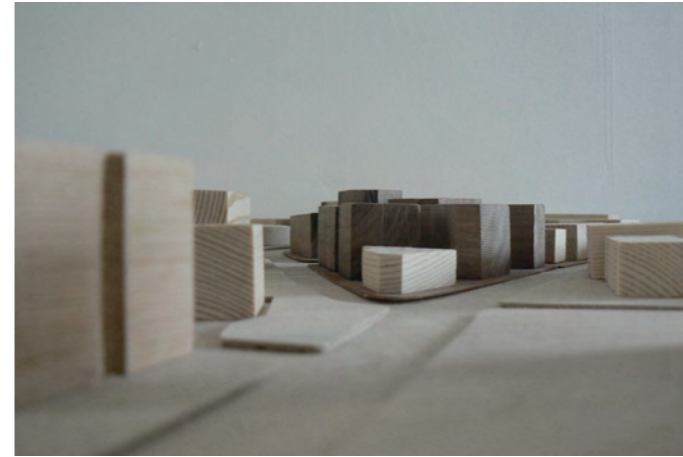
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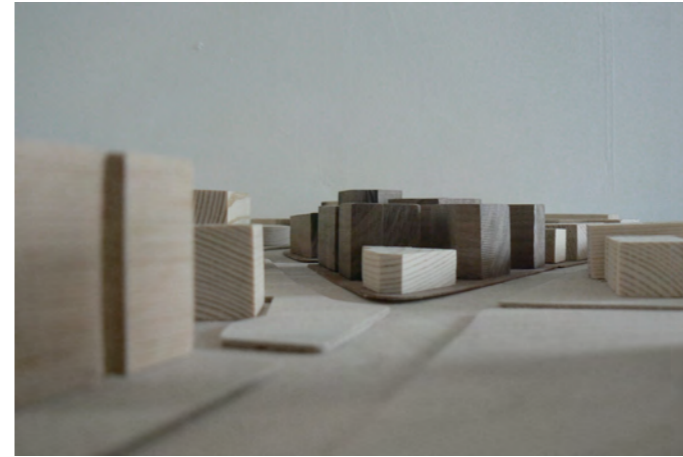


01 View of model showing proposal in its context  
02 View of model from Datmouth Road  
03 View of model from Kirkdale  
04 View of model from Sydenham Park Road

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01 View of model showing proposal in its context  
02 View of model from Datmouth Road  
03 View of model from Kirkdale  
04 View of model from Sydenham Park Road

## 06 Conclusions

The various discussions and workshops with local stakeholders and positive responses received to these proposals clearly demonstrates the interest in seeking a change of designation for the Willow Way site.

Given the rapidly changing demographic and economic mix of Kirkdale, Forest Hill and Sydenham there is a need to address the changing priorities and aspirations of the local population.

There is also a clear benefit for interest groups in proposing such schemes in advance of any changes planned in local legislation; and the benefits for local authorities to be seen to engaging with these groups cannot be underestimated.

These proposals should be seen as a positive step for Kirkdale, Forest Hill and Sydenham and The Kirkdale Planning Group, Sydenham and Forest Hill societies, local traders and residents will expect that the many benefits of this scheme will be fully considered by LB Lewisham during their forthcoming Core Strategy review.

#### 07 Credits

In autumn 2013 a group of post-graduate architecture students from Kingston University met Pat Trembath Chair of the Kirkdale Planning Group to discuss both Kirkdale and how the Willow Way site might be better utilised. From this initial discussion an interim report was prepared to be used as a tool in any negotiations with LB Lewisham regarding a change in designation for Willow Way from Local Employment to Residential/Mixed Use.

This document issued for comments is based on these early studies and the workshops held and credit is due to the group for putting much in place that was then developed by HoughtonBudd Architects for SEE3 Ltd into a working document for consideration by LB Lewisham.

Due thanks should be also expressed to those members of the Forest Hill and Sydenham Societies who gave their time and support to this exercise and also to the local traders and residents of Kirkdale who have offered welcome advice and suggestions throughout the period of this documents development.

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#### HoughtonBudd Architects

Established in 2003 HBA has produced a varied body of work including commercial and private residential schemes, school projects and competitions.

The work of the practice is typified by an interest in place, form and material and both directors have taught at leading schools of architecture including Sheffield and Kingston universities.

This document was produced on behalf of:

SEE3 Ltd (Portas Pilot Legacy)  
Sydenham Society  
Forest Hill Society  
Kirkdale Planning Group

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