

Building Our National Education Service: A Pilot Scheme for Poplar

Foreword by George Allen



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BUILDING THE NES: OUR PLEDGE

A National Education Service for the Many

FOREWORD

Britain could have the best system of education in the world. A system that sees every child and adult benefit from life-long learning, no matter what their background. Where education is seen as a benefit to all of society, rather than just the individual. And in which education is at the heart of the community, treating every individual fairly to forge a society based on common values and mutual support. Our vision for the National Education Service will see radical reform, ending the injustices of today's outdated system.

Inequality in Britain begins at school. Whereas comparable European countries operate fully comprehensive systems, Britain's turbulent and unequal educational apparatus fuels societies' underlying inequalities. Central to the system's ailments is the continuation of private education alongside the free state education used by the vast majority of the population. While the Netherlands, Germany, Norway and Finland have dispensed of a private sector, Britain has allowed its historic private schools to flourish, perpetuating an immense advantage afforded to the most privileged families in society, at the expense of the wider community. While 93% of the population study at their local state school free of charge, 7% are removed from the mainstream by parents who elect to have them educated separately. Even within the state sector, constant turbulence sees comprehensives, academies, free schools and grammar schools compete with one another for students and funding, generating a nationwide disequilibrium, where some

communities thrive while others are left behind. Educational inequality and social segregation continues throughout individual lives and through generations, underpinning the very existence of the nation's unjust class structure.

This project proposes an alternative. Building on current Labour Party Policy, the National Education Service would provide a truly integrated, socially inclusive and economically robust system, offering every citizen free access to life-long learning. The Lansbury Ward in Poplar, in East London, is taken as a testing ground to propose a pilot scheme, working with local stakeholders to create an education service with its foundations set firmly within the community. The ultimate aim of the project is to understand the nationwide applicability of an education system based on a community philosophy, and to identify the architectural and urban interventions the NES would require.

George Allen
Design Consultant
Poplar Education Service



**BUILD
OUR**

INES

CHAPTER 1

A BROKEN SYSTEM

ARCHITECTURAL MANIFESTATION OF EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY

Architecture is one of the few areas where advantage manifests itself physically. While many state schools struggle to maintain overcrowded buildings which freeze in winter, overheat in summer and leak all year long, many private schools maintain grand estates designed to accommodate the sons (and to a lesser extent daughters) of Britain's historic nobility and an increasingly international elite.

Haphazard development of state schools, in response to sudden and unforeseeable rises in student intake, contrasts with the carefully planned and well funded longterm expansion of private school campuses. Medieval chapels, Victorian clock towers, and 21st century laboratories are built to last, dominating their surrounding landscape and displaying private education's grip on society. To harness the opulence and longevity of private schools as a method for highlighting inequality, may help to direct public attention towards the debate and provide a stimulus for long term planning in the state sector.



Malvern College: Jeremy Paxman's school



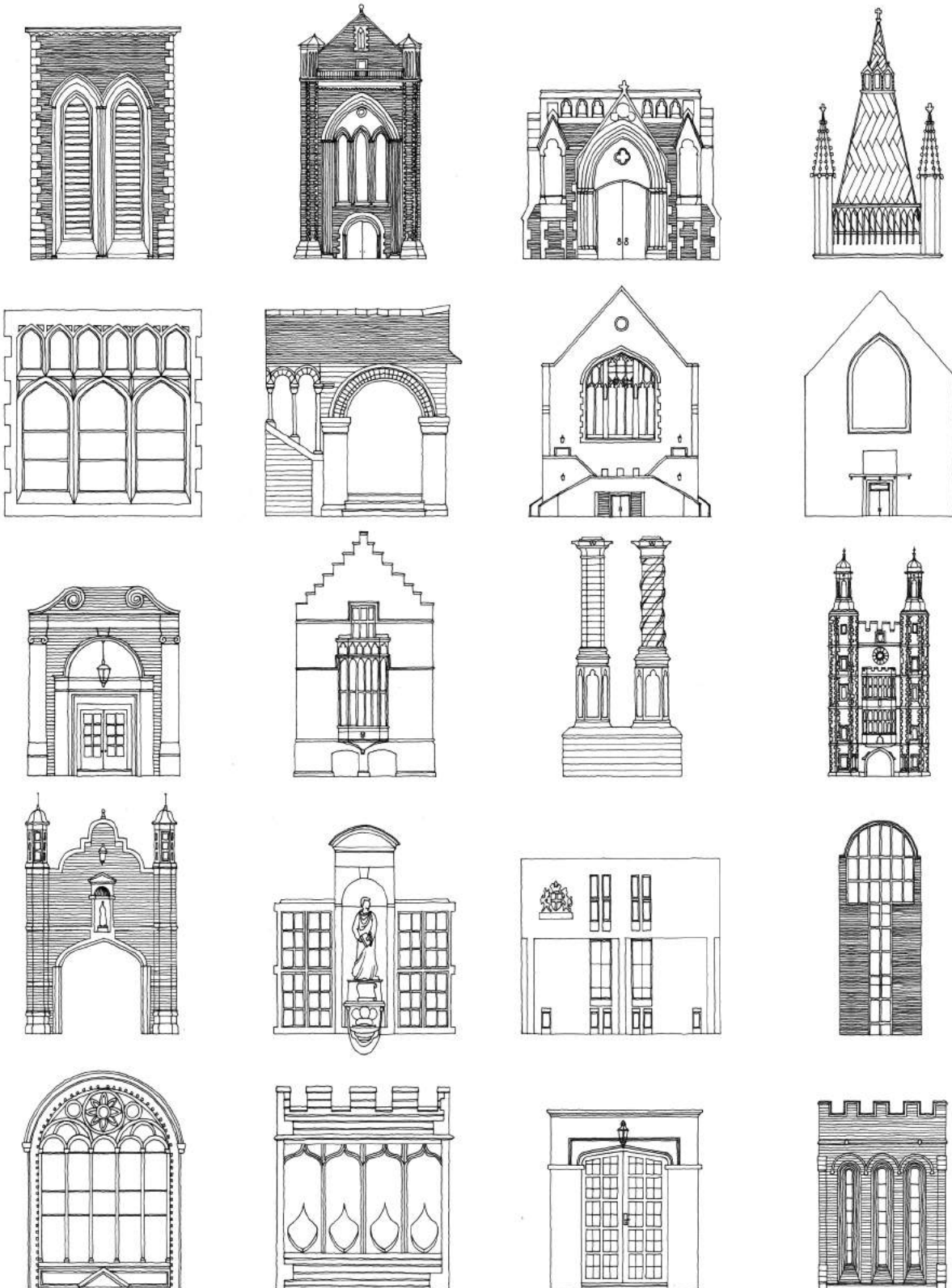
Witchford Village College: a typical state school

Civic Presence

Architecture is frequently utilised by private schools to establish and maintain the institution's identity. Though many schools are composed of buildings from a variety of periods, it is generally the oldest buildings on a school's campus which feature most prominently in marketing material. Several unifying characteristics reoccur in almost all of the above examples, including more recent designs: symmetry, vertical emphasis, ornamentation, masonry construction and clearly defined points of entry.

Left to Right:

1. Charterhouse
2. Charterhouse
3. Charterhouse
4. Charterhouse
5. The Leys
6. King's School, Canterbury
7. King's College, Wimbledon
8. King's College, Wimbledon
9. King's School, Ely
10. Harrow School
11. Eton College
12. Eton College
13. Christ's Hospital
14. Christ's Hospital
15. City of London Boy's School
16. City of London Boy's School
17. Dulwich College
18. Malvern College
19. Malvern College
20. Eastbourne College



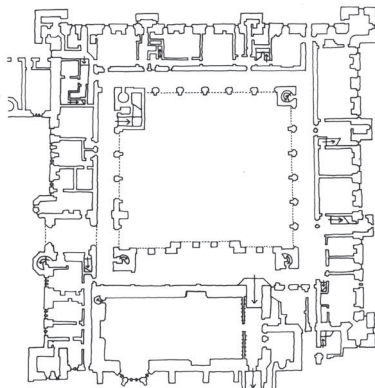
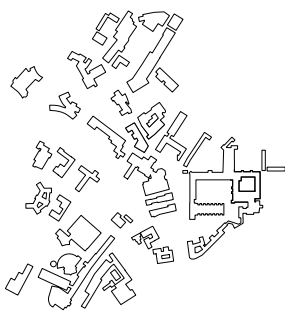
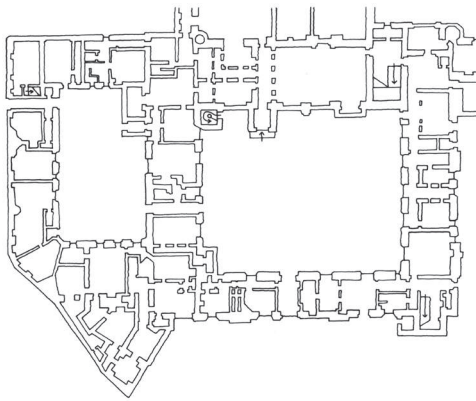
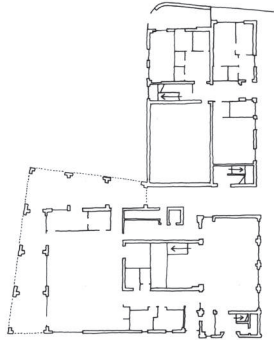
The architecture of state schools varies greatly, with widely ranging styles and methods of construction. Whereas private institutions generally build upon an element of historic architecture, which still provides a valuable sense of identity, state schools often lack historic architecture. Unifying features are difficult to establish in such a varied sample, though a lack of ornamentation, a broader range of materials, and a clear horizontal emphasis, could be seen as very loose identifying characteristics of state school architecture.

Left to Right:

1. Impington Village College
2. Witchford Village College
3. Rackham Primary School
4. Cromwell Community College
5. Tower Bridge School
6. Long Road Sixth Form College
7. Hills Road Sixth Form College
8. Burntwood Girl's School
9. Cottenham Village College
10. Chesterton Village College
11. Ely Community College
12. Swaversey Village College
13. Streatham High School
14. Hunstanton School
15. Hallfield School
16. Holy Trinity Pewley Down School
17. Belham Primary School
18. Robert Browning School
19. Central Foundation Boy's School
20. Burrowmoor Primary School



Interstitial Spaces: Cloister Typology



Private Schools

Analysis of private school plans reveals the importance of circulation space as a common feature. Many schools use cloisters as a mode of spatial organisation, providing a generous space for socialising which celebrates the school community which celebrates the school community. The cloister typology also carries significant symbolic meaning, connected with royal and monastic power and exclusivity.

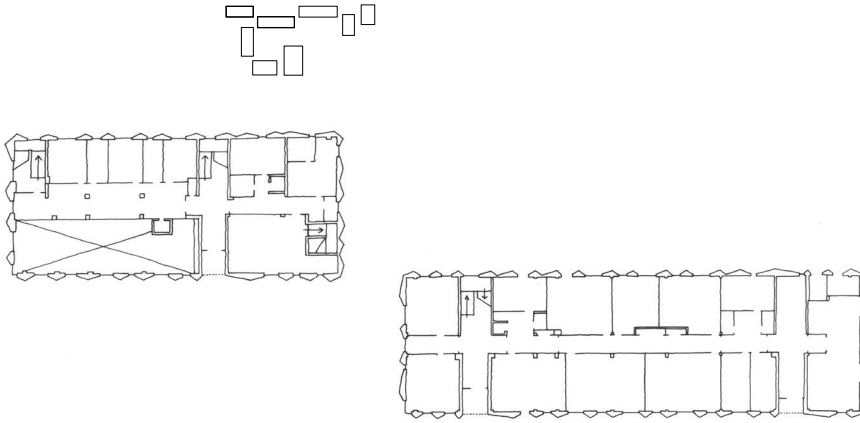
Brentwood School

Charterhouse (Original London Campus)

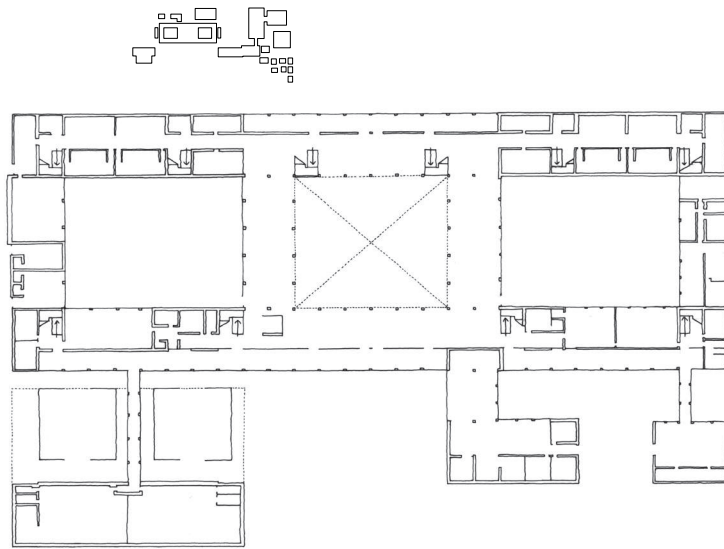
Eton College

State Schools

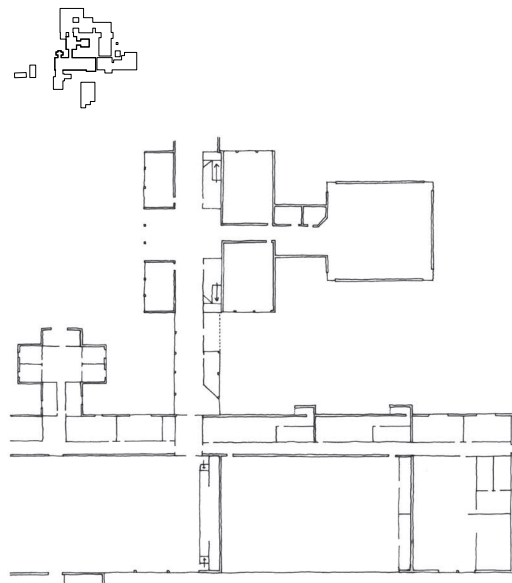
State schools are generally more varied and constructed from lightweight construction, with little attention paid to the design of interstitial space.



Burntwood School



Hunstanton School

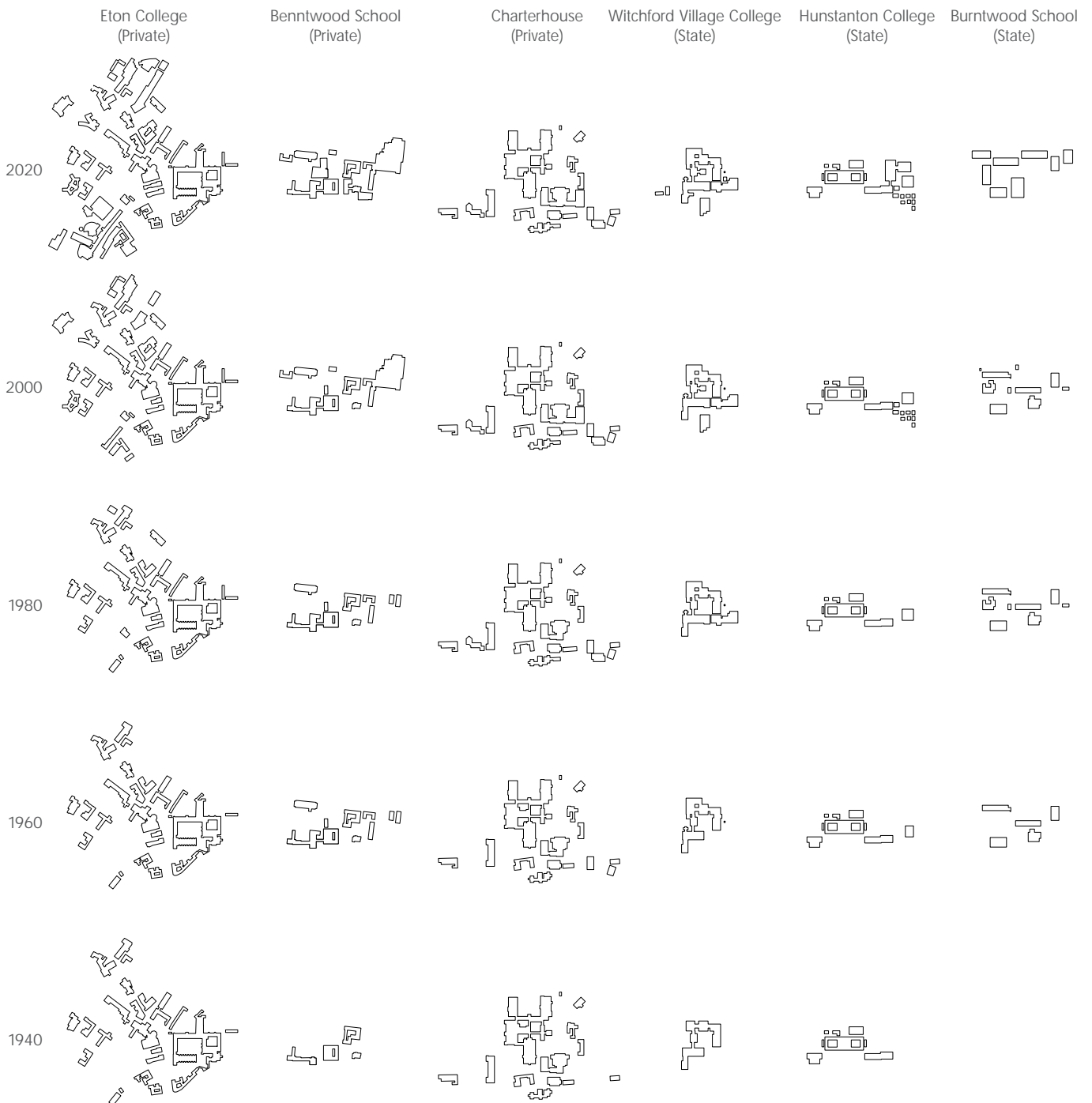


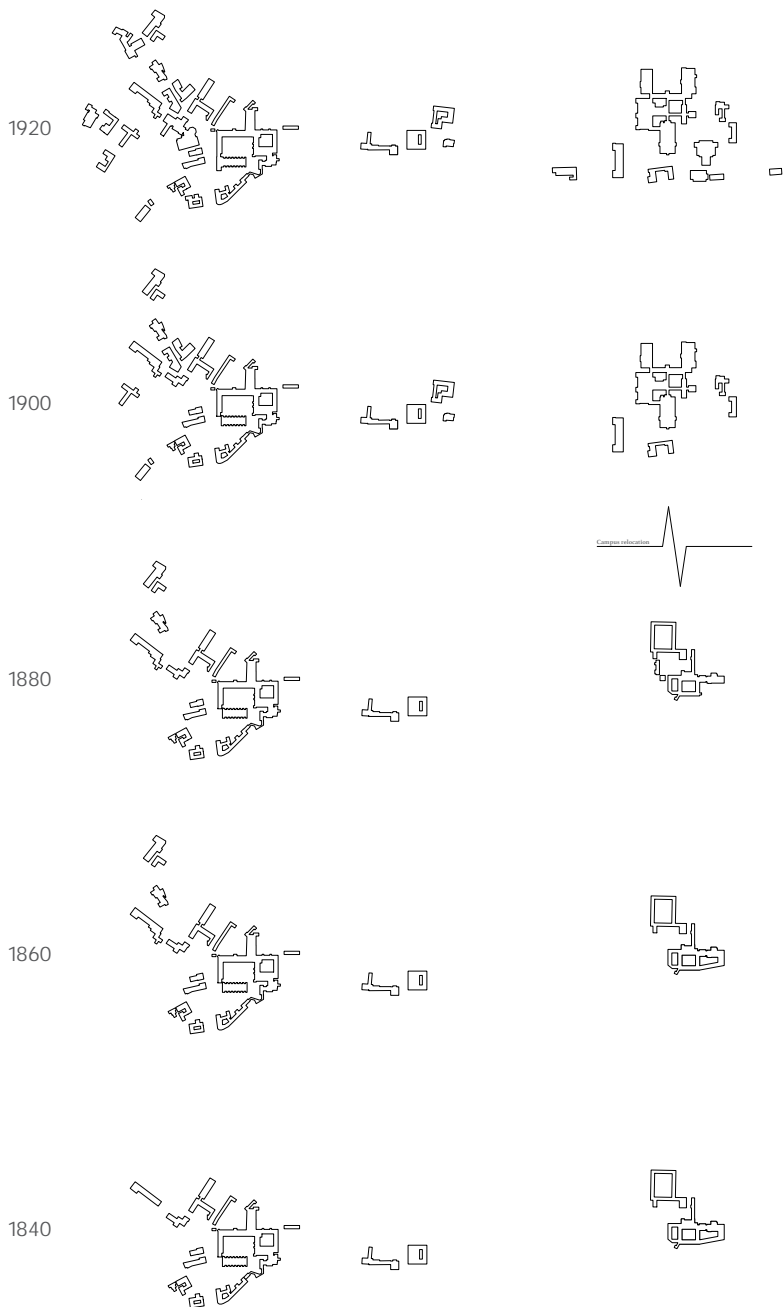
Witchford Village College

Incremental Development

Comparison of private and state schools also reveals stark differences in the longevity of their school buildings. While state schools rarely operate buildings older than a century, many private schools maintain vast campuses stretching back centuries. This longevity is contributed to by

masonry construction, large estates which allow for expansion and an incremental approach to development which sees schools gradually expand to create diffuse campuses embedded within the surrounding urban grain.

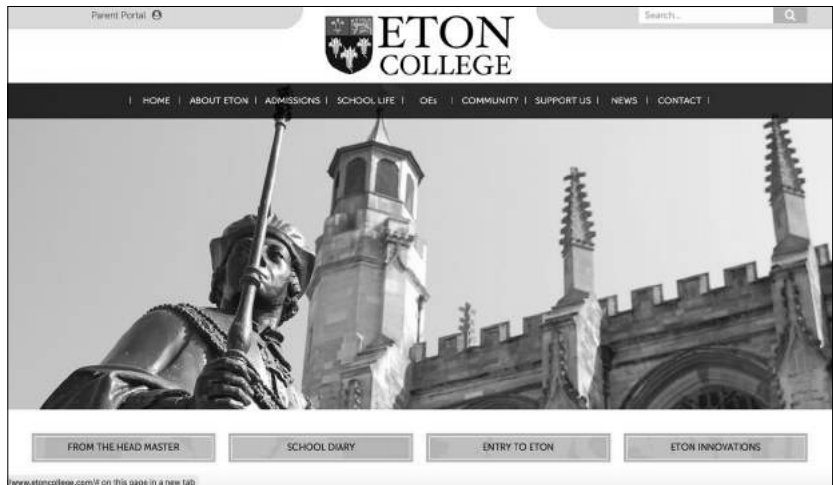




SCHOOL BUILDINGS COMMODIFIED

Both online and in printed prospectuses, private schools rely heavily on architecture to promote their educational offer to prospective parents. From ancient chapels to cutting edge laboratories, architecture is employed to give colleges a sense of unique identity, while reaffirming the idea that parents are buying into an institution which is comparable to their preconceived notions of what an elite education should be.

Child's Perspective



Campus Overview



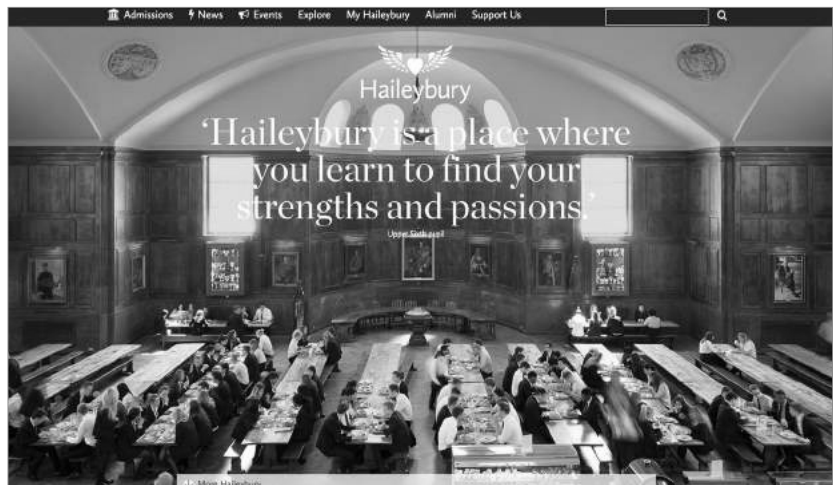
Civic Appropriation



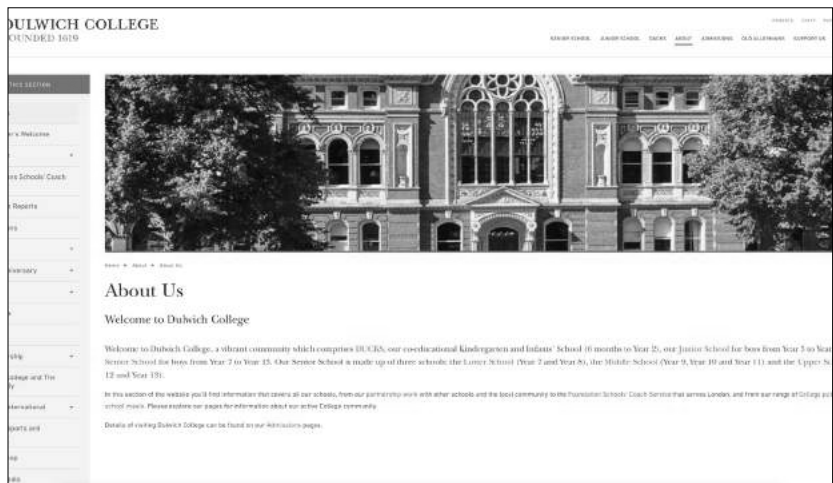
Heritage



Symmetry



Architecture as Texture



ESTABLISHED ELITISM

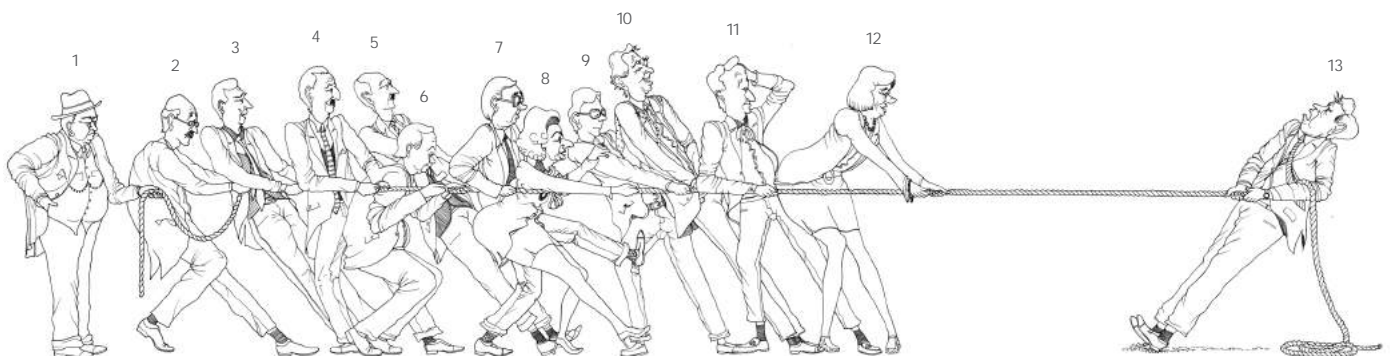
While 93% of children attend their local school free of charge, 7% are removed from the mainstream by parents who elect to have them educated separately. These children enjoy three times the spend per pupil, study in classes half the size and leave school with the grades they need to enter the top universities. On average 1 in 20 privately educated students go on to study at Oxford or Cambridge; in state education this number is closer to 1 in 2,000.

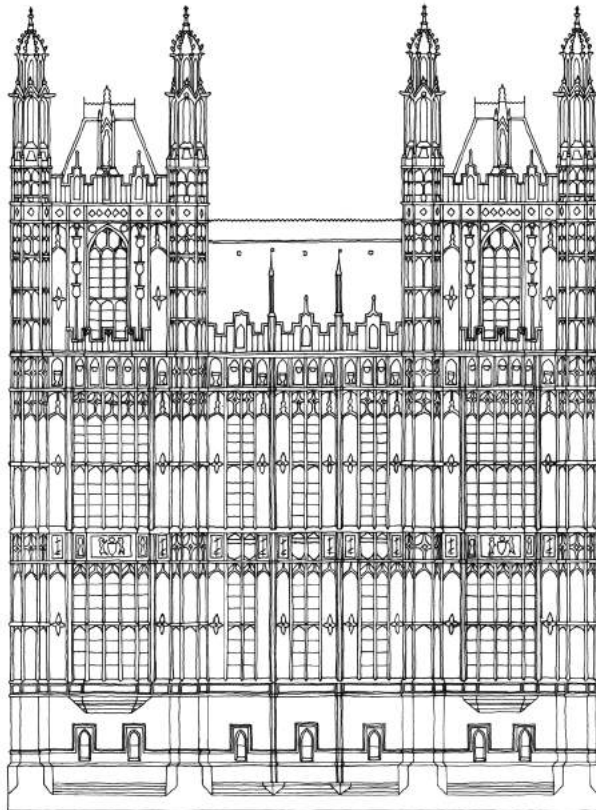
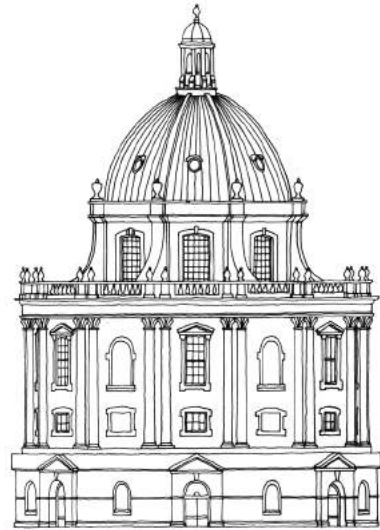
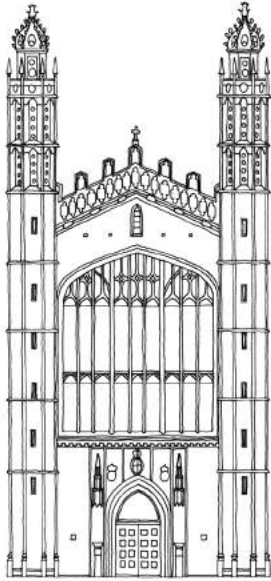
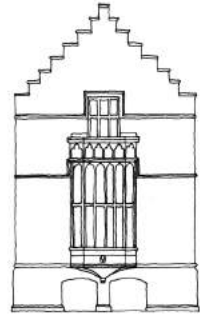
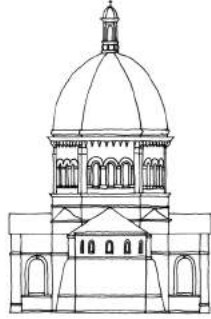
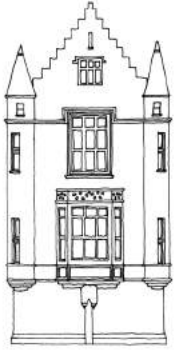
Presently, a third of MPs received a private education, as did half of the peers in the House of Lords, and almost three quarters of the judiciary. To push for unsubstantiated change in education would be to undermine the core of a system which ensures an ability to pass power and wealth to the next generation. Even within Labour opposition is weak. Given that many MPs continue to pay for their own children to be educated outside of the community, public criticism of private education risks accusations of hypocrisy.

- 1 Winston Churchill:
Harrow School
- 2 Clement Attlee:
Haileybury
- 3 Anthony Eden:
Eton College
- 4 Harold Macmillan:
Eton College
- 5 Alec Douglas-Home:
Eton College
- 6 Harold Wilson:
Royds Hall Grammar
- 7 James Callaghan:
Portsmouth Northern School
- 8 Margaret Thatcher:
Grantham Girls School
- 9 John Major:
Rutlish School
- 10 Tony Blair:
Fettes
- 11 David Cameron:
Eton College
- 12 Theresa May:
St. Juliana's Convent School for Girls
- 13 Gordon Brown:
Kirkcaldy High School

Below: Since 1945 Britain has had only one Prime Minister who has not been personally involved in private education, either attending a private school, or sending children to one.

Opposite: the architectural language of private schools provides a hidden advantage to those pursuing political careers, accessed through Oxford and Cambridge.



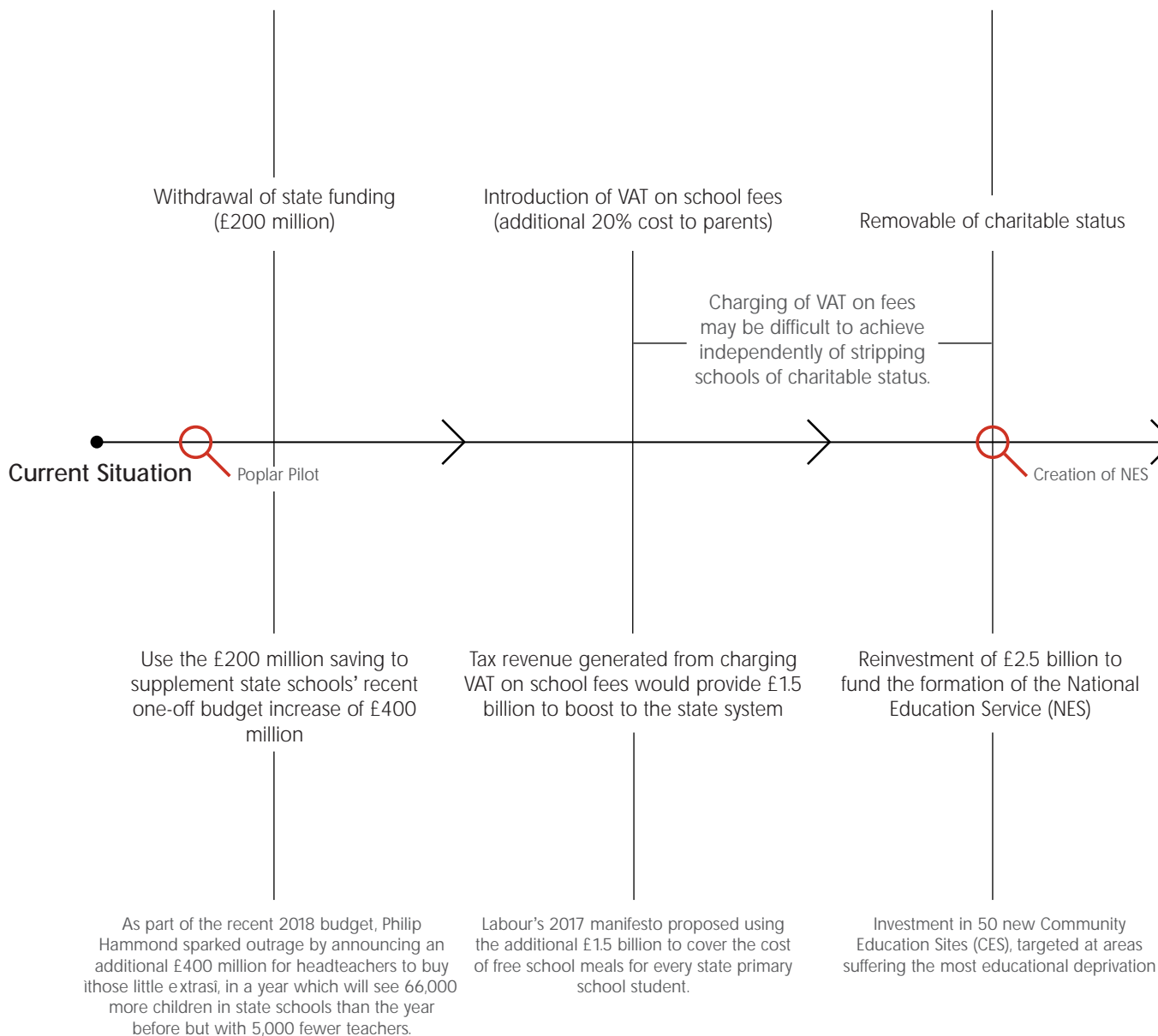


REFORM TIMELINE

The reform timeline sets out clear steps towards integrating Britain’s private schools within the National Education Service. Though no specific timescale is given to each step, it is envisioned that this process will take around ten years. The Poplar Pilot Scheme can be implemented without any legislative change and so should provide the catalyst for incremental integration.

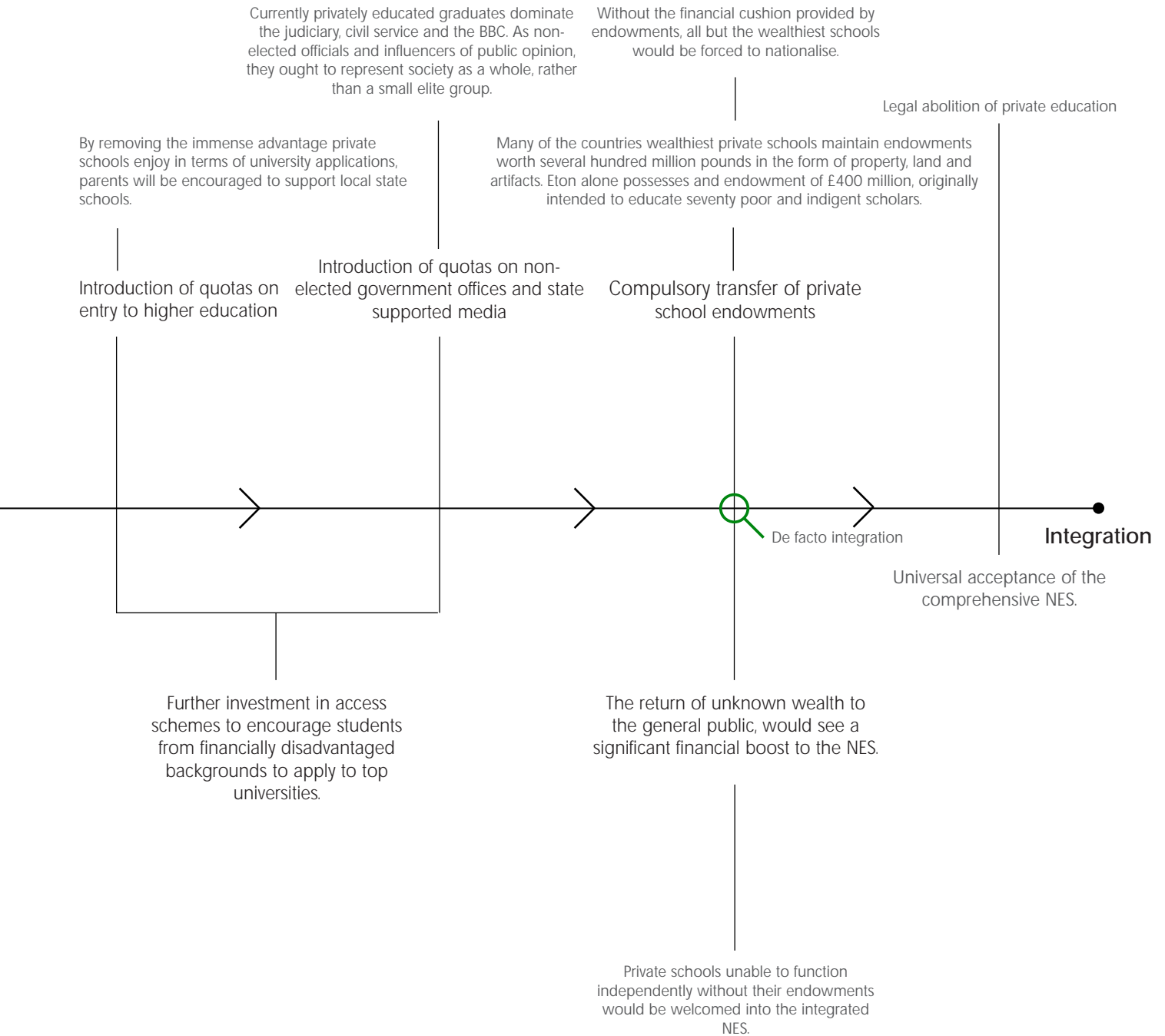
The state currently funds the education on children belonging to high ranking military families and the clergy, allowing already wealthy families to educate their children at schools including Marlborough, Eton and Harrow at the tax payers’ expense.

In addition to revenue from charging VAT on school fees, removal of charitable status would gain the treasury a further £500 million through corporation tax (charged at 19% on all company profits and investments) as well as increased revenue from charging business rates which over half of independent schools currently receive an 80% discount from.



State Sector Impact

Private Sector Impact



State Sector Impact

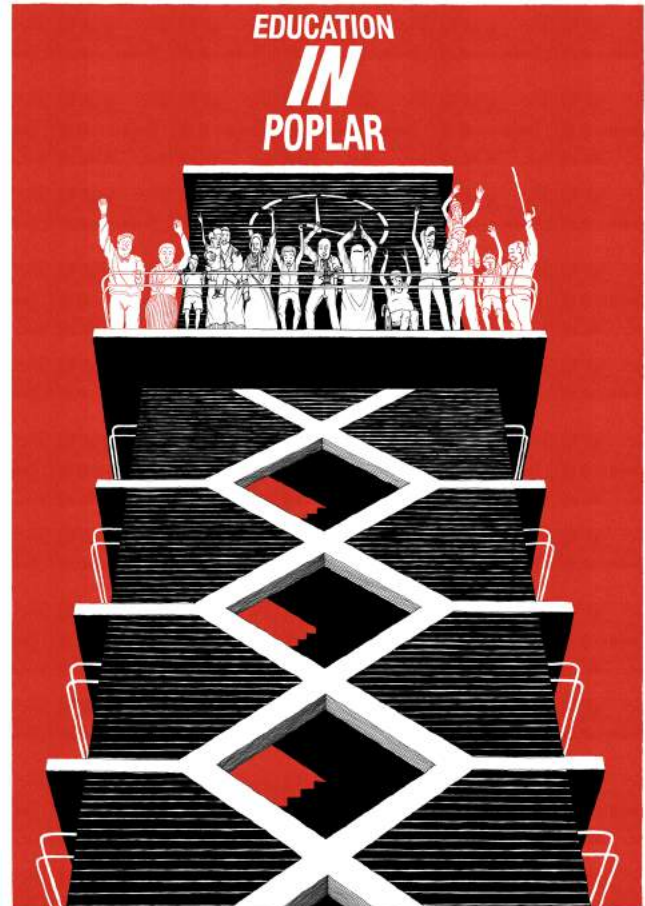
CHAPTER 2

A PILOT SCHEME FOR POPLAR

WHY POPLAR?

Governmental indifference means a locally funded pilot scheme is the only feasible way to demonstrate the benefits a life-long comprehensive National Education Service.

Located in Tower Hamlets, the borough which sees the highest levels of financial hardship amongst its state school pupils, Poplar's struggle typifies the negative effects of inequality. 2017 census data reveals the area to have a 9% unemployment rate double the national average, with over half of the population living in socially rented accommodation. 28% of its secondary school students currently receive free school meals, compared with less than 10% in some of London's outer boroughs. Furthermore, with a median average age of 27, 13 years below the national average, Poplar has an exceptionally high proportion of the population within full time education, putting intense strain on local schools. Poplar also has specific problems of gang violence and a large Muslim population, which has traditionally limited women's opportunities in education, presenting the Poplar Education Service with specific challenges. Targeting an economically deprived area, which lacks employment and educational opportunities, will allow the pilot scheme to have the most impact where it matters.



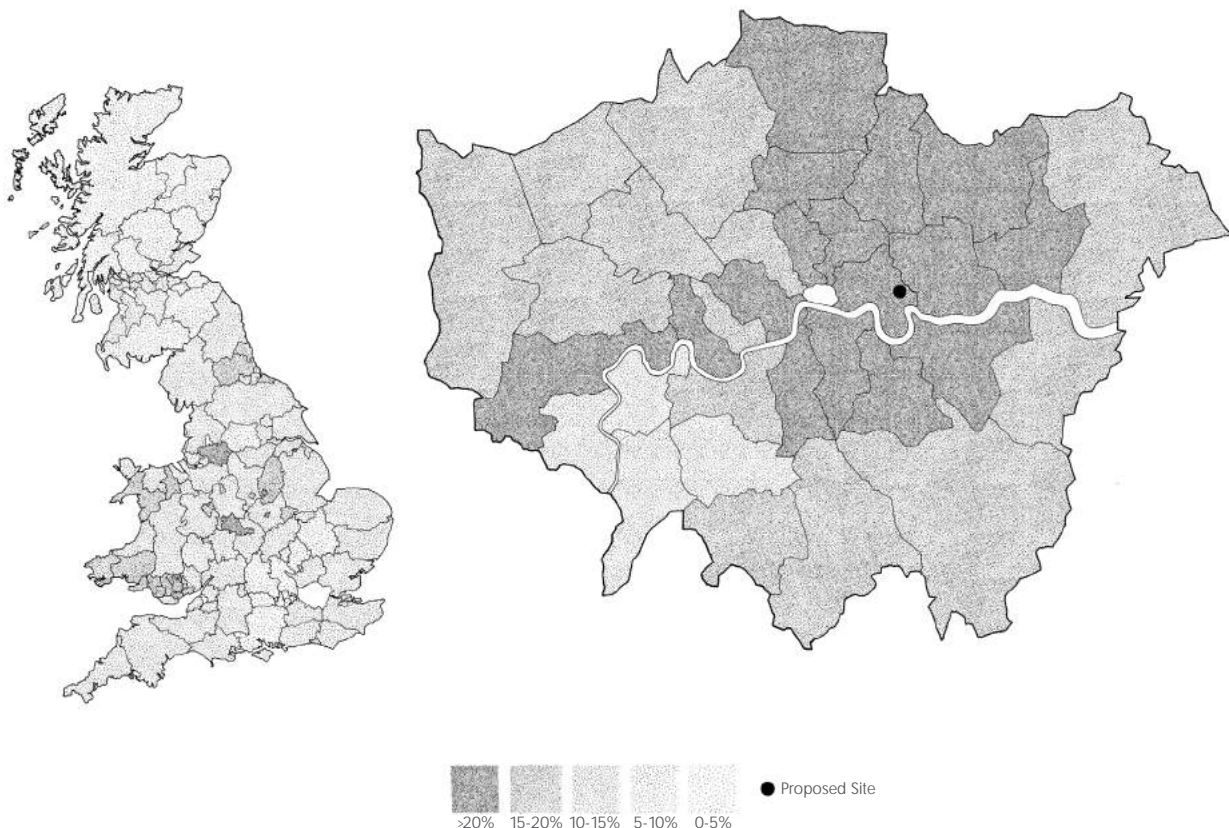
POPLAR'S CHALLENGES

Poplar's educational infrastructure faces specific challenges relating to the high levels of poverty in the neighbourhood. As well as a historically high unemployment rate resulting from the deindustrialisation of the Lea Valley, Poplar faces issues of gang violence, child obesity, oppression of women and high levels of illiteracy.

As the area enters once again into a period of intense development, with 6,000 new homes planned or under construction, sudden population increase coupled with a rapidly evolving demographic is forcing the local authority to act. While Tower Hamlets Council plans to recommission and expand a derelict primary school and build a new local secondary school, there remains no comprehensive plan for life-long education in Poplar. The foundation of a Poplar Education Service (PES) aims to tackle many of the issues faced by Poplar's residents by improving access to education as

well as creating a social infrastructure designed to alleviate tensions between different community groups and to bridge the physical barriers which divide the neighbourhood.

Child Poverty Rates: UK and Tower Hamlets

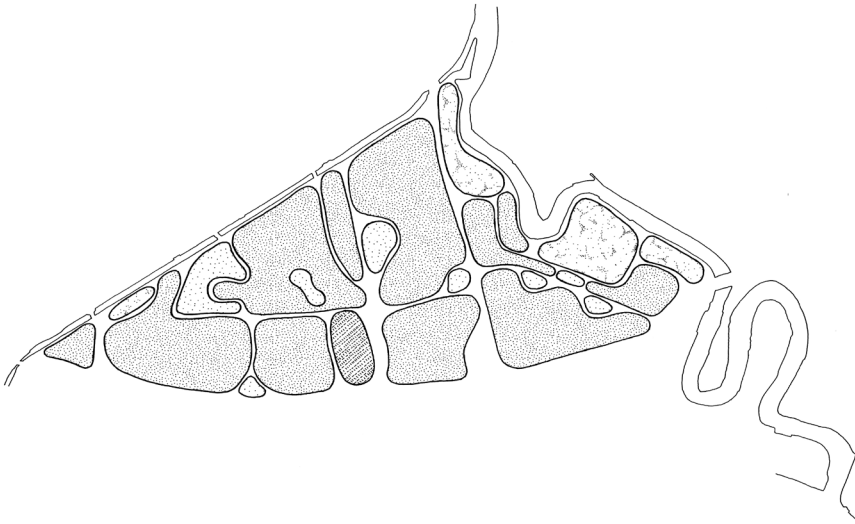
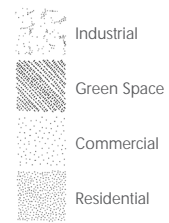


Urban Grain

Poplar's fragmented urban grain sees clear divisions between adjacent neighborhoods, which can translate into social tensions.



Land Uses



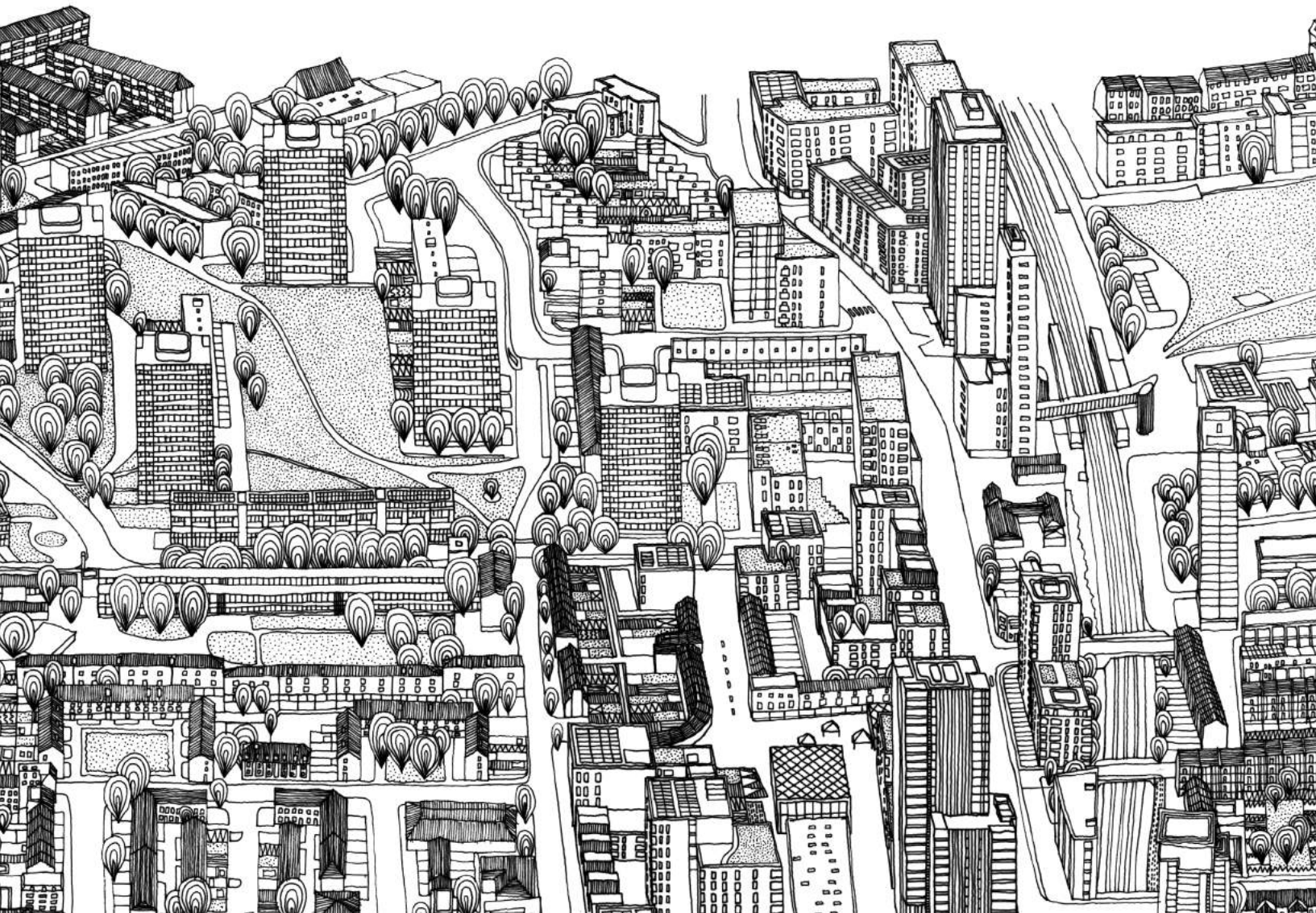
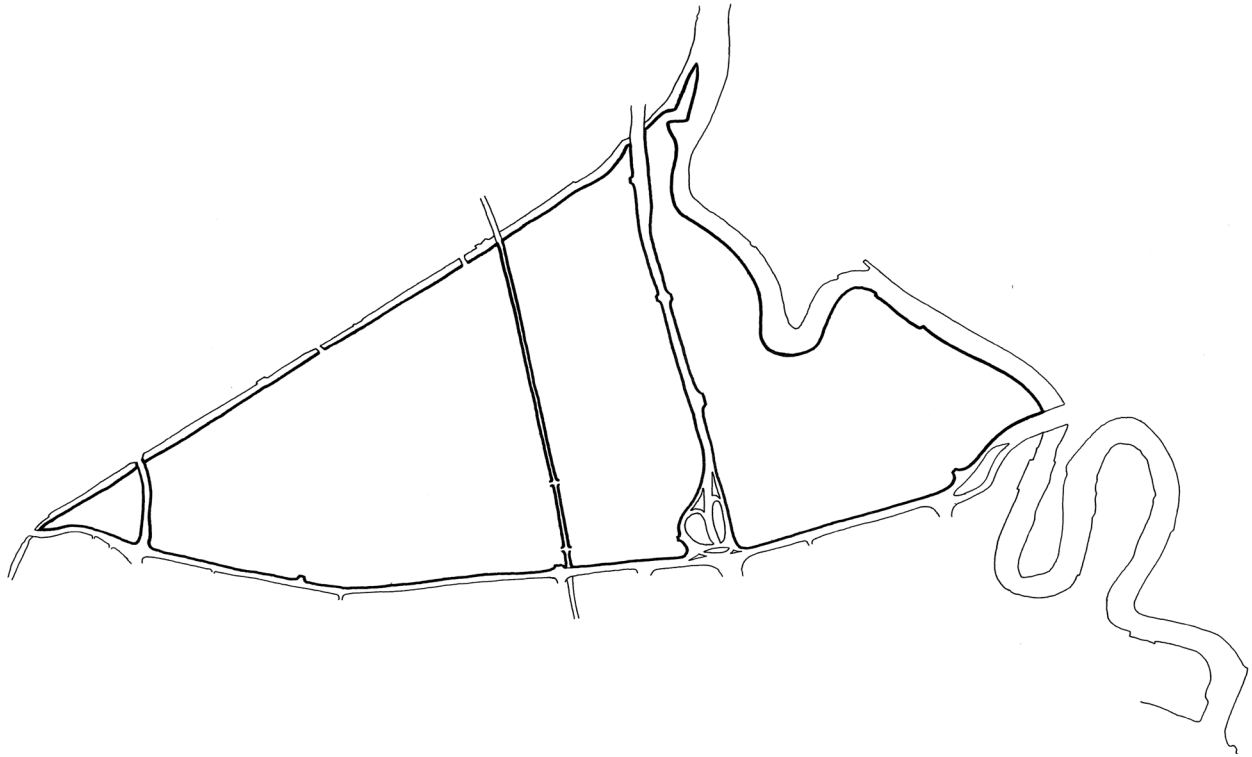
Existing Schools

1. Mayflower Primary School
2. Bygrove Primary School
3. St. Saviour Primary School
4. Manorfield Primary School
5. Langdon Pard Secondary School
6. Bromley Hall School
7. Culloden Primary School
8. Proposed new secondary school



A Divided Neighborhood

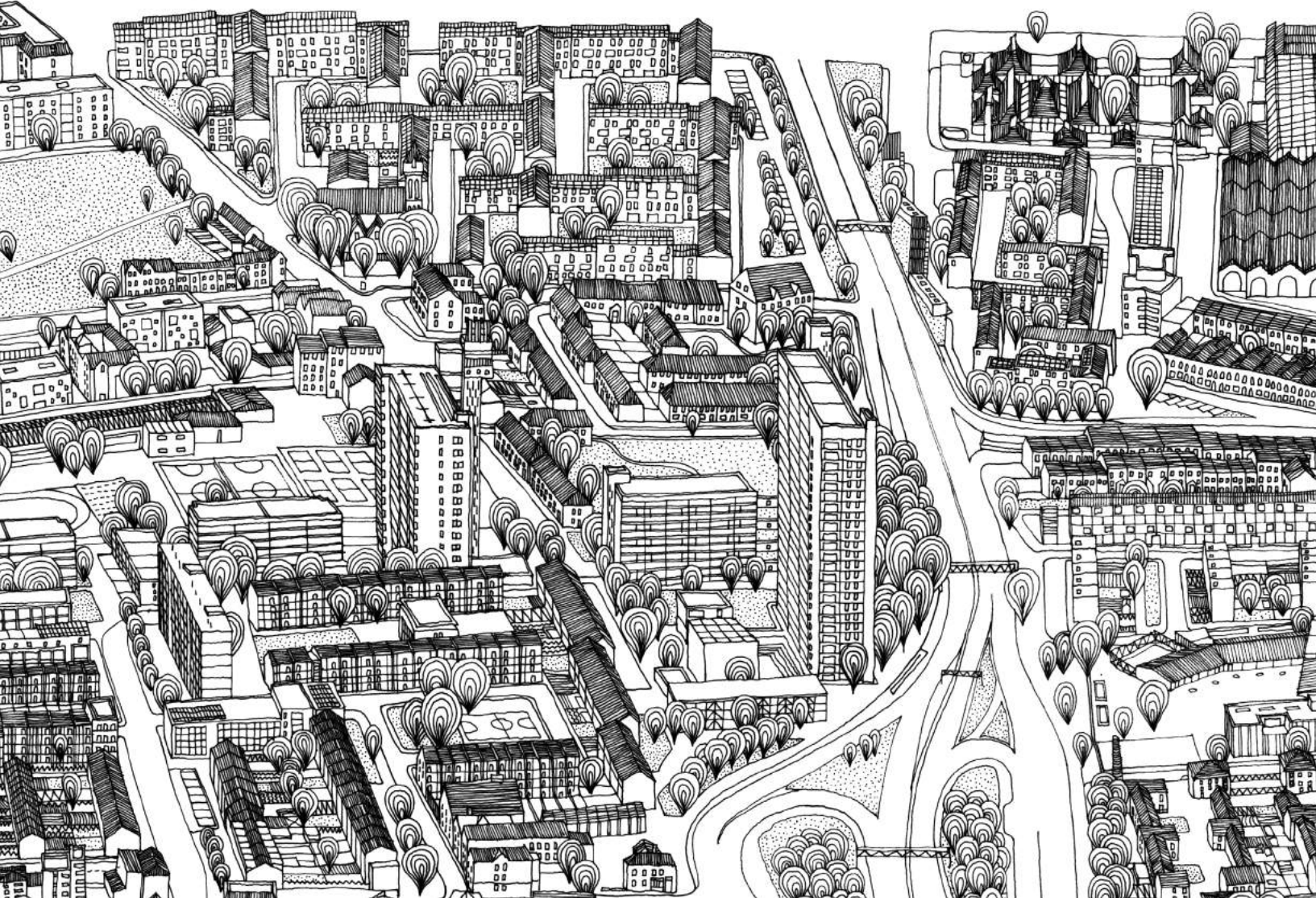
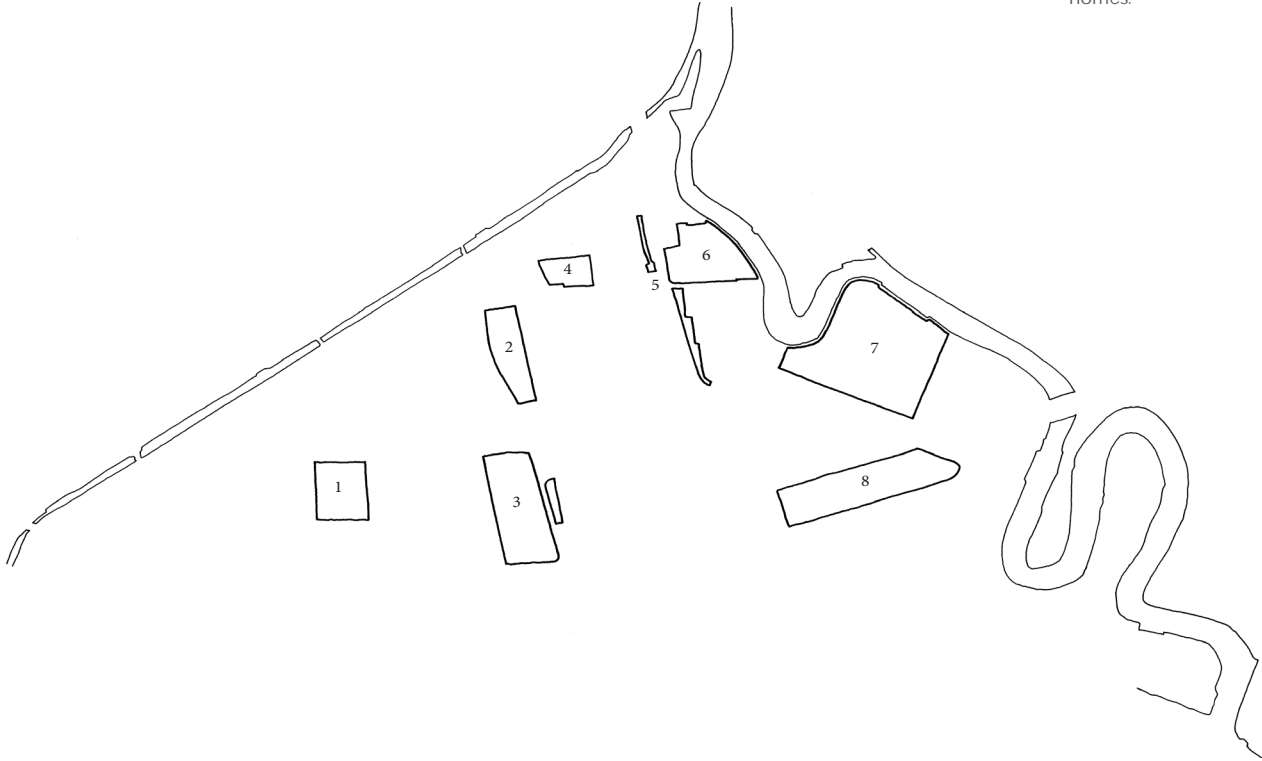
Both the six lane A12 and the DLR cut through the Lansbury Ward. More than being a mere inconvenience to residents, these physical divisions separate communities.



Rapid Regeneration

Designated as part of the 'Poplar Regeneration Area', the Lansbury Ward is set to undergo substantial redevelopment, with 6,000 new homes to be built in the next 20 years. Dramatic population increase demands expansion of Poplar's educational offer, providing a real opportunity to proactively invest in the PES.

1. Upper North Street: residential development of 535 new homes. Demolition of existing school.
2. Morris Road: residential development of 700 new homes
3. Crisp Street Market Regeneration: mixed use redevelopment including 643 new homes.
4. Manorfield Primary School extension
5. Fashioning Poplar: Conversion of domestic garages into business units and textile studios
6. Ailsa Wharf: mixed use development, including 650 new homes.
7. Poplar Gas Works, Leven Road: mixed use development, including 2,800 new homes.
8. Aberfeldy Village: mixed use development including 1,000 new homes.



DESIGN DRIVERS

Despite recent developments, mid-century Modernist buildings remain dominant in Poplar's urban grain and civic identity. Buildings such as Chrisp Street Clock Tower and Bromley Bow Common Church recall a period synonymous with the rise of the welfare state, the NHS and decent housing for all.

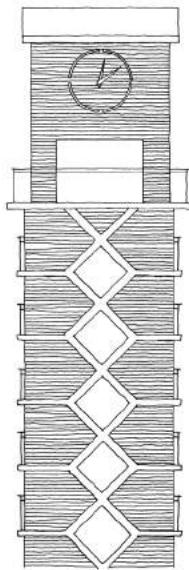
The architectural language of the Poplar Education Service aims to forge a connection with the strength and optimism imbued within the area's 20th century legacy. Through materiality, pattern and architectural form, buildings of the PES intend to reflect Poplar's fit comfortably within the neighbourhoods architectural history, tapping into a local heritage as a vehicle for elevating the civic prominence of educational within the community.

A collection of Towers

Poplar's skyline is punctuated by a series of towers, marking churches, housing blocks, and civic squares. The Poplar Education Service will see schools contribute to Poplar's well established language of towers.

Below: Chrisp Street Clock Tower, designed by Frederick Gibberd, 1952.

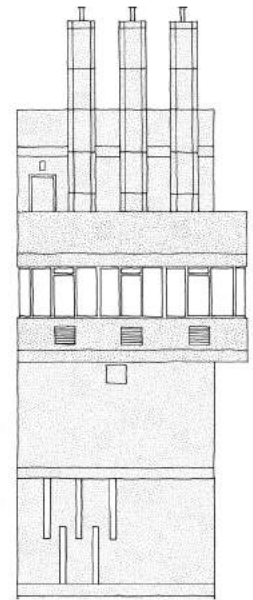




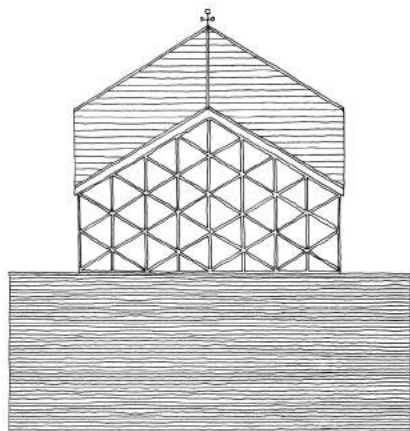
Crisp Street Clock Tower



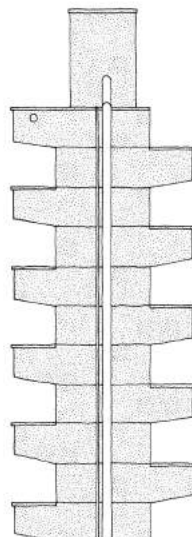
St Nicholas Church



Glenkerry House



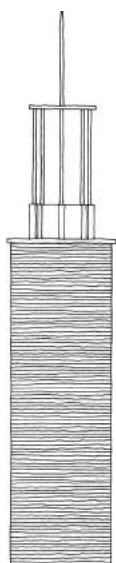
St Paul's Bow Common Church



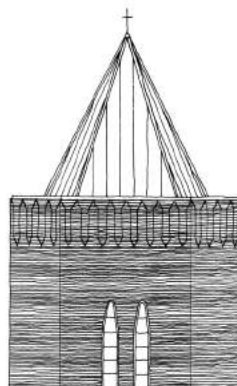
Poplar Fire Station



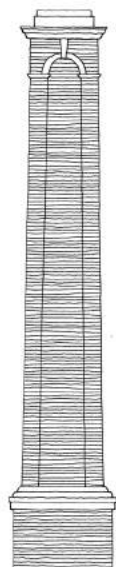
All Saints' Church



Trinity Church



St Mary and St Joseph Church



Blair Street Chimney

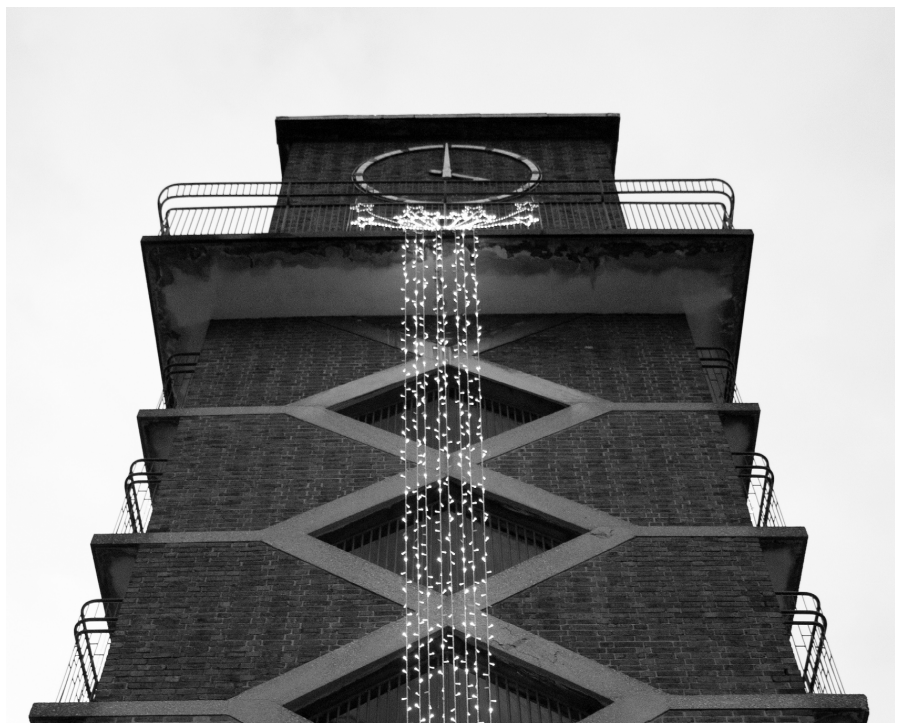
Mid-Century ‘Vernacular’

Landmark Modernist buildings in the surrounding area provide a rich context for the architectural language of the PES to draw from. Appropriating the civic architecture of any given context is key to providing the NES with a sense of belonging and longevity across Britain. While in Poplar this means drawing on mid-20th century influences, the architectural language of the NES will vary across the country.

Glenkerry House



Chrip Street Clock Tower



Bromley Hall School



Bromley Hall School



INTERVENTION OPPORTUNITIES

Poplar's public realm falls short in many areas. While at a macro scale fragmentation of the urban grain decreases the legibility and hierarchy of the street structure, at a micro level inadequate paving, street furniture and green-space undermine the human experience of the public realm. The PES seeks to address these shortfalls by creating interstitial social spaces within the public realm, blurring the boundary between formal educational spaces and street.

School Gate

Boundaries between schools and the street currently contribute very little to the public realm, consisting essentially of a brick wall and a tall wire fence. Though attempts have been made to soften this boundary, the PES proposes a more celebrating this boundary in a more meaningful way, extending the educational environment and providing civic place markers which celebrate communal discourse of the school gate.



Poor Quality Greenspace

Poplar is punctuated by several small parks, none of which fulfill their potential. The PES will see Poplar's parks transformed Forest School environment, allowing children and adults who rarely leave London, or even Poplar, to learn and play amongst trees and wildlife.



Arterial Roads

Within the context of Poplar's rapid redevelopment, there is an opportunity to combine educational infrastructure with crossing points to overcome the busy, dangerous and polluting A12.



Isolated Residential Courtyards

Bringing educational opportunity to the doorstep of the most isolated and vulnerable households in the neighbourhood is a key aim of the PES.



LEARNING FROM POPLAR

Implementation of the Poplar Education Service will reveal both successes and areas for improvement. Recording the project's performance will help to guide subsequent schemes elsewhere to form the National Education Service. Even before the PES comes to fruition however, pilot schemes in alternate locations can learn from the work done towards the PES. Here we set out the key steps to be taken by a local any local authority seeking to implement an enhanced community education service.

1. Record specific shortfalls in the local educational offer

The PES has been designed to address some of the educational issues facing Poplar specifically. Other districts will have widely ranging educational deficiencies and it is crucial these be well understood before attempts are made to augment the existing educational infrastructure. In Poplar this involved speaking with local schools as well as Poplar HARCA, the local housing and regeneration association.

2. Identify existing development opportunities

Gaining a clear understanding of local developments will allow precise targeting of educational infrastructure, to better serve areas with imminent population increase and demographic shifts. Delivering educational infrastructure in combination with large scale developments may also prove a cost effective implementation strategy.

3. Survey existing civic vernacular

Completing a comprehensive survey of the area's dominant civic architectural language will help to inform the architecture of any proposed local education service within the NES framework. While architecture of the NES need not be restricted by the context, drawing references from the existing civic vernacular will help to assert the project's civic legitimacy through association with established local architectural tradition.

4. Assess weaknesses and opportunities in public realm

Combining educational spaces with public realm improvement is key to the proposals for Poplar. Decisions to improve the boundary condition between schools and the street, as well as transforming portions of Poplar's under-used green-space were taken following careful assessment of the local area. In other locations opportunities may arise in shopping streets, car parks, underpasses, bridges, market squares etc.

1. Collaborate with primary stakeholders and wider community

Delivery of a local education service may be a joint venture between the local authority and other not-for-profit local stakeholders. The Poplar Education Service will be implemented by a partnership between Poplar HARCA and Tower Hamlets council. Local educational providers, educational charities and local residents should all be given opportunities to influence the planning and running of their local education service.

1. Outline plan for incremental development

Any local education service will take years or even decades to implement. Before works commence, a clear long-term plan should be agreed upon by all stakeholders.

CHAPTER 3

BUILDING THE NES: OUR PLEDGE

OUR PLEDGE

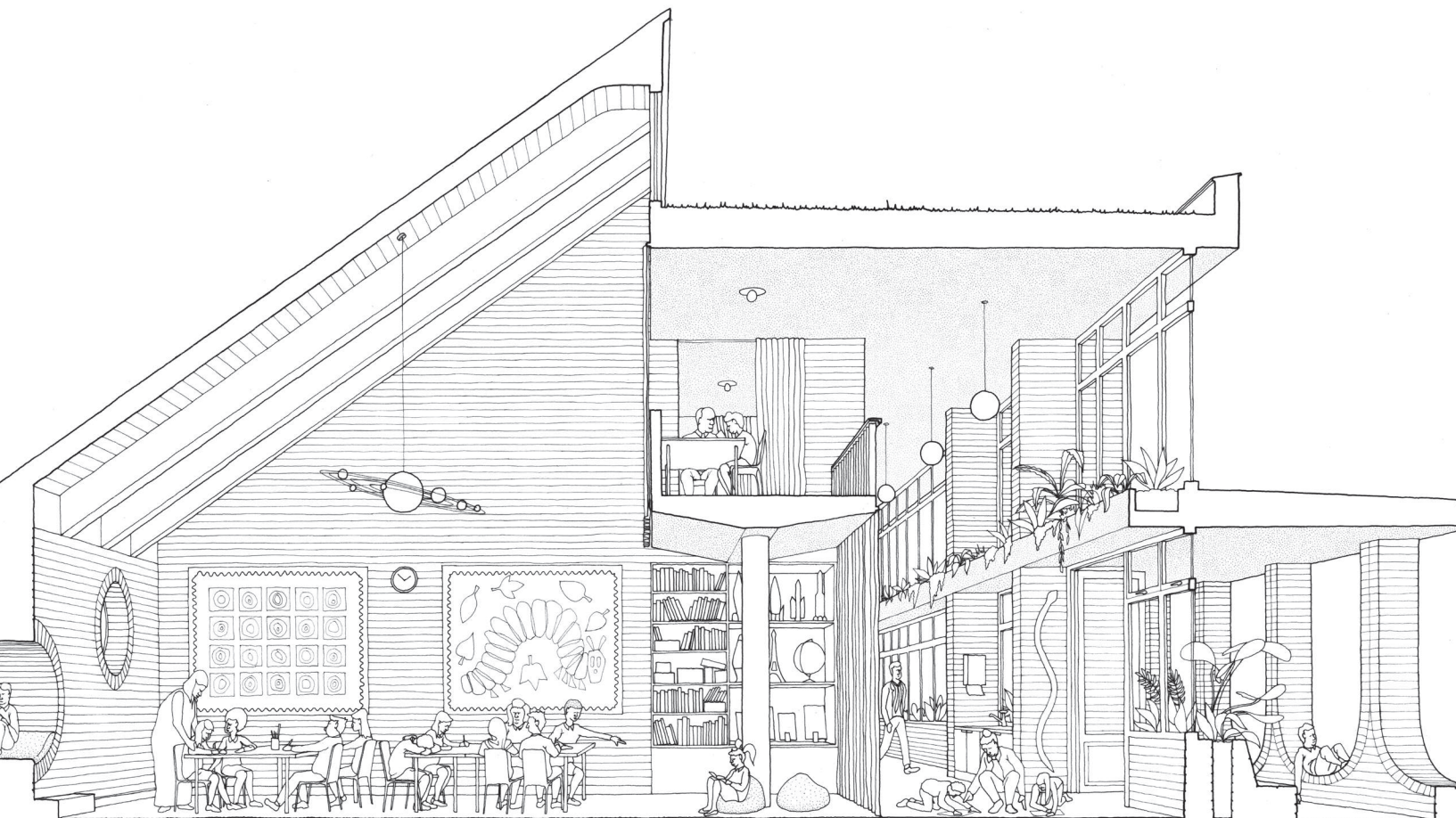
Education is what empowers us all to realise our full potential. When it fails, it isn't just the individual that is held back, but all of us. When we invest in people to develop their skills and capabilities, we all benefit from a stronger economy and society.

At a time when working lives and the skills our economy needs are changing rapidly, governments have the responsibility to make lifelong learning a reality by giving everyone the opportunity to access education throughout their lives.

To meet this responsibility, Labour will create a unified National Education Service (NES) for England to move towards cradle-to-grave learning that is free at the point of use. The NES will be built on the principle that 'Every Child ñ and Adult ñ Matters' and

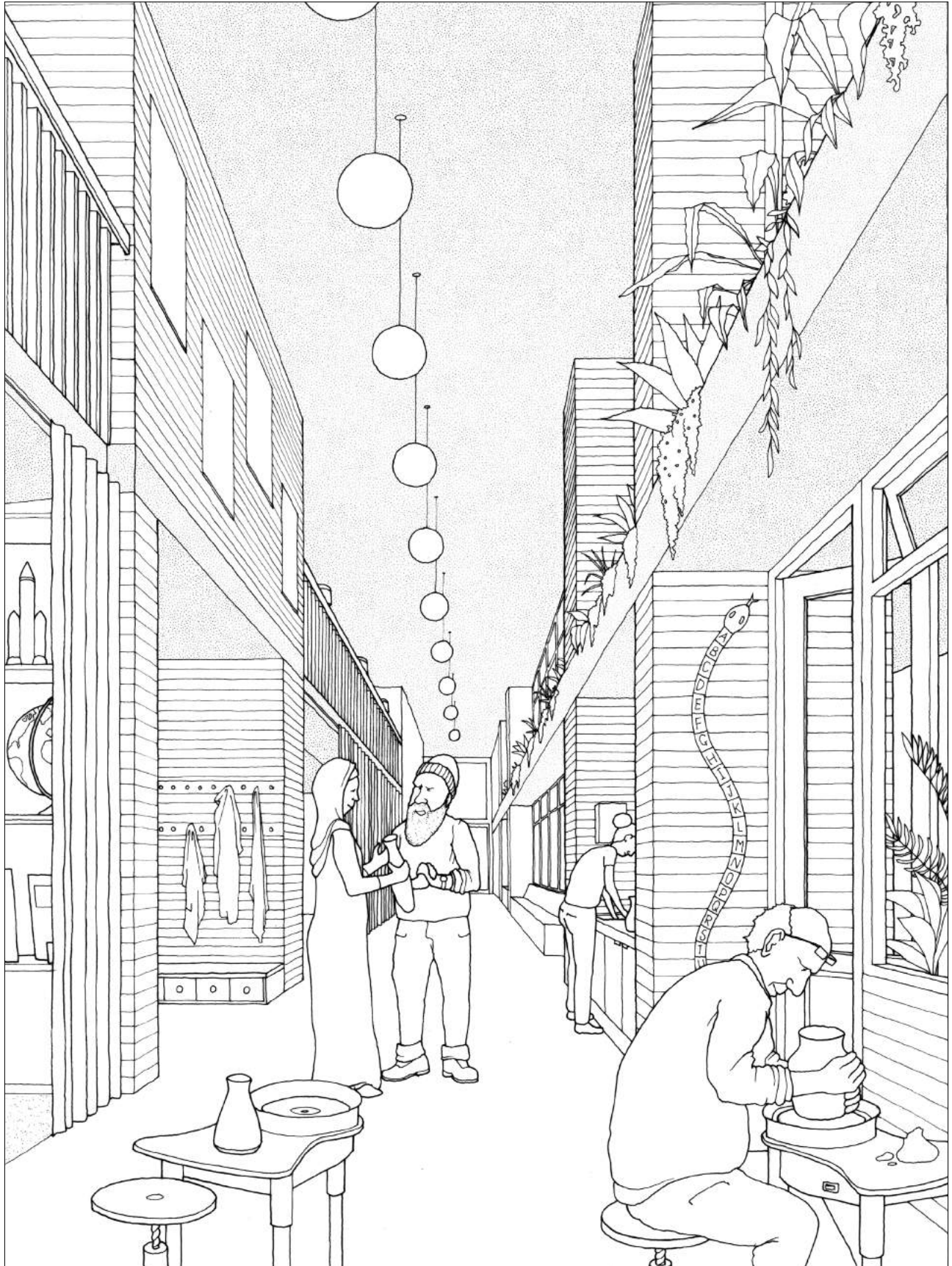
will incorporate all forms of education, from early years through to adult education.

When the 1945 Labour government established the NHS, it created one of the central institutions of fairness of the 20th century. The NES will do the same for the 21st, giving people confidence and hope by making education a right, not a privilege, and building bridges where the Conservatives build barriers.

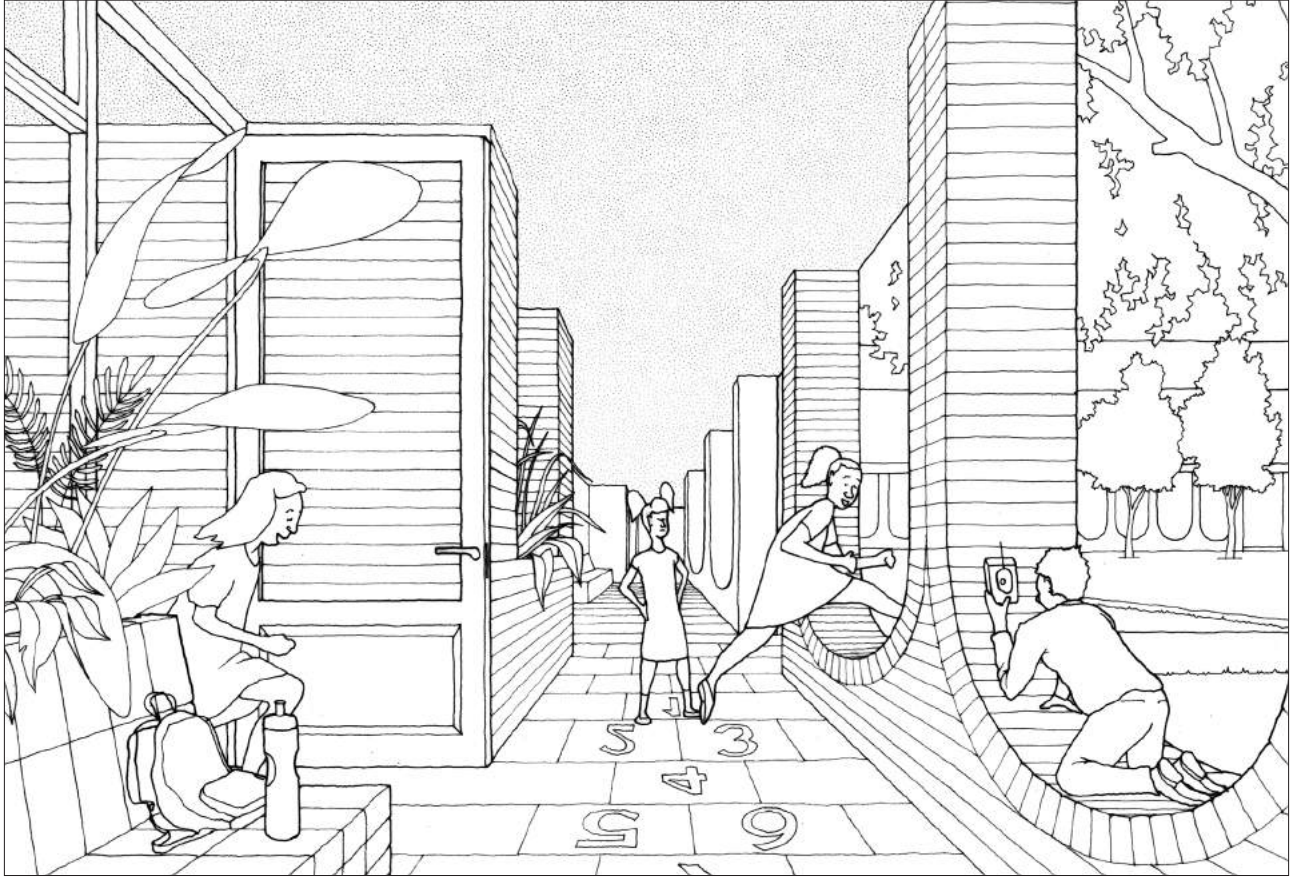


The NES will...

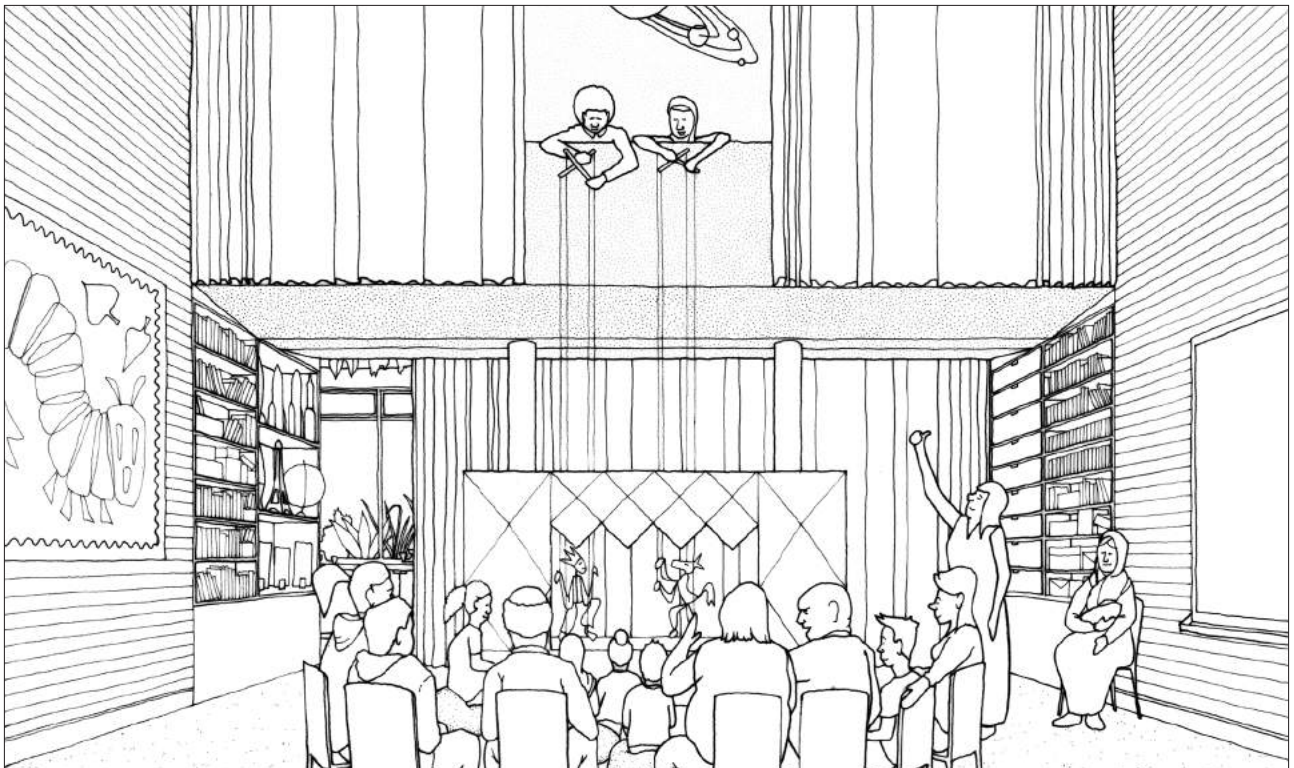
Provide life-long learning opportunities



Encourage learning through play

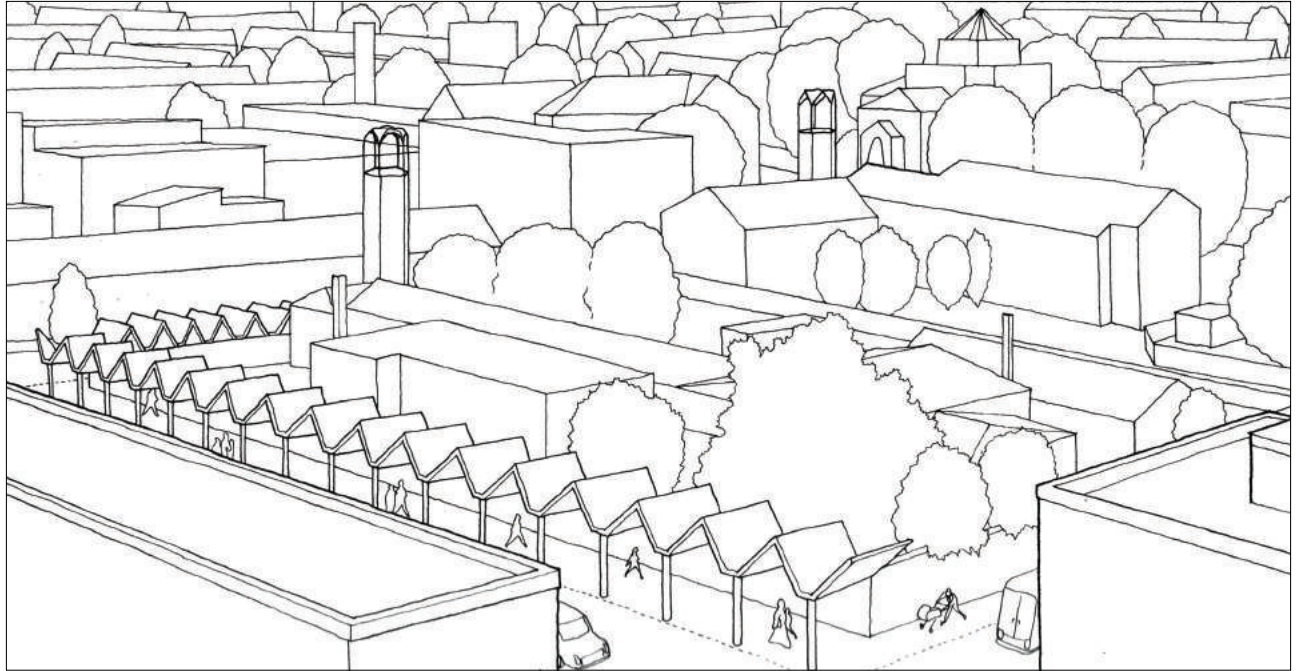


Use education to bring communities together



The NES will...

Create a civic presence for education



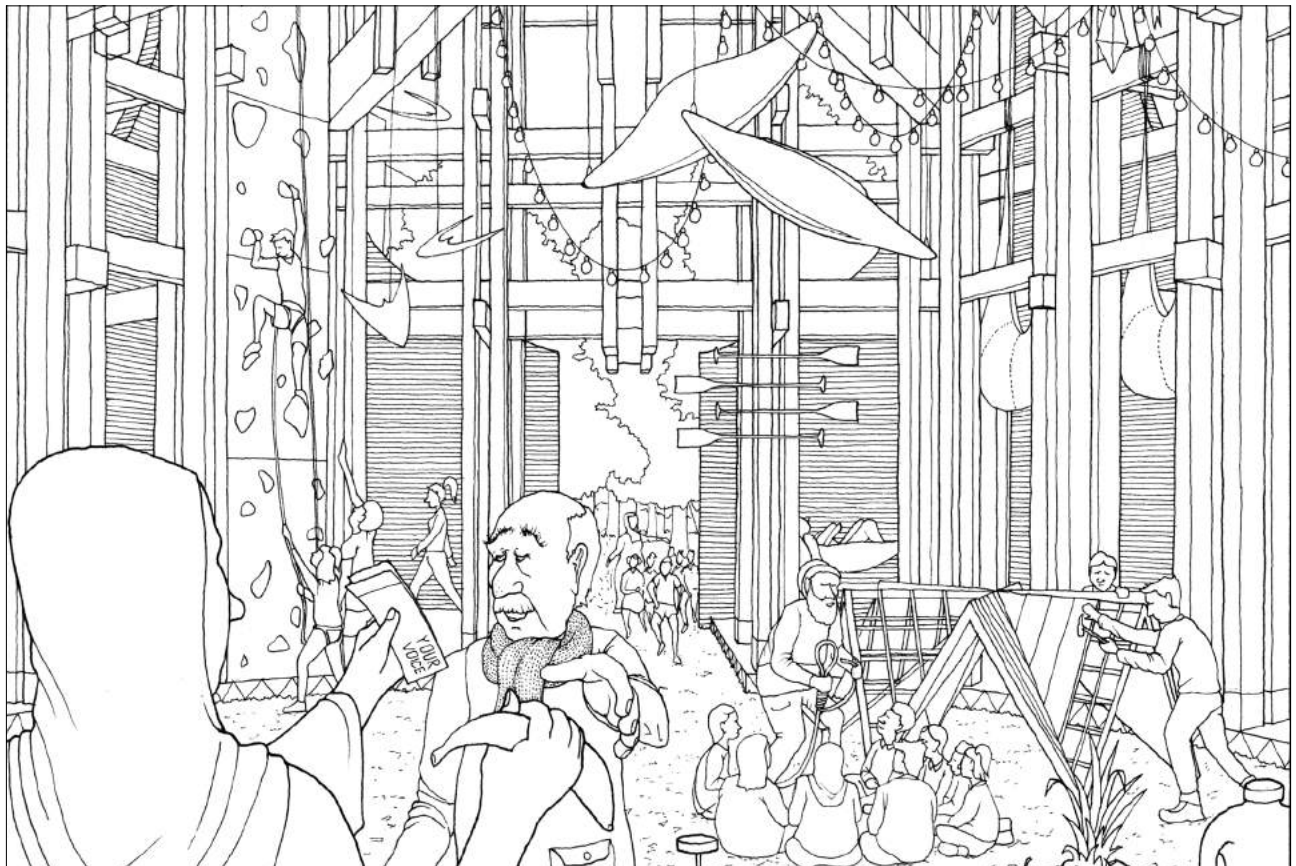
Make schools exciting places to learn and play



Encourage Learning in Nature



Bringing together all generations



The NES will...

Provide vocational training for young and old



Appropriate the public realm as educational space



Bring shared educational resources into the heart of every community.

