

Feedback summary of co-design workshop 2: what makes a good home?

Introduction

In October 2021, Brent Council and Karakusevic Carson Architects held the second series of co-design workshops on the St Raphael's Estate. Residents were invited to give their views on what makes a good home. This document gives a summary of the two drop-in events and the feedback received through discussions with residents.

Two sessions were held at Sufra:

Session 1: Thursday 14 October 4-7pm

Session 2: Saturday 16 October 1-4pm

Residents were notified about the event with flyers and an email newsletter as well as posters displayed around the estate. There were 26 attendees.

Outdoor spaces

Residents shared their preferences on types of outdoor spaces including gardens, private balconies and terraces. Front gardens with raised planters and terraces connected to living spaces were the most popular preferences amongst residents. A few residents had concerns about gated shared space between private gardens as some thought this could attract anti-social behaviour.

Comments included:

- 'Prefer low garden walls with shared garden in front to socialize.'
- 'Blinds need to be installed.'
- 'Raised beds for elderly or wheelchairs is good.'
- 'Likely to be taken care of if semi-private.'
- 'Privacy = freedom.'
- More open railing = benefit of a balcony.'

Private bin and bike stores

Most residents preferred private bins stored in front gardens, though some residents stated that they would prefer bins stored away from houses to prevent pests. In regards to bike stores, most residents preferred to have cycle storage within flats.

Comments included:

- 'Bins away from bedrooms.'
- 'Area away from houses for bins to prevent pests.'

Bathrooms

Shower rooms for family homes was the most liked bathroom example, on the contrary, residents did not favour bathrooms with lino floor and white walls. Residents also wanted wheelchair and disabled bathrooms to be considered and windows in bathrooms.

Comments included:

- 'Windows in bathrooms and shower baths.'
- 'Consider wheelchair or disabled bathrooms and large floor space.'

Kitchens

Several residents preferred kitchens separate from living and dining spaces as opposed to open plan layouts.

Comments included:

- 'Prefer wall and door to kitchen with table.'

Storage

The preferred storage location amongst residents was in the corridor. Many residents preferred to have several small storage spaces as opposed to one large storage space. The utility was the preferred location for washing machines for the majority of attendees.

Comments included:

- 'Washing machine by bedrooms.'
- 'Lots of storage! One big store and many smaller ones.'
- 'Should be different areas.'
- 'Drawers for storage.'
- 'Linen cupboard in bedrooms.'
- 'Space for drying.'
- 'Wardrobes built in.'

Doors and windows

Residents expressed a liking of both full height windows, Juliet balconies and windows with sills. Residents also liked timber front doors to houses with the colourful front doors example receiving a few dislikes.

Comments included:

- 'Fire escapes from windows.'
- 'I like wooden staircases.'
- 'I like big windows. I love light!'
- 'Bathroom windows!'
- 'Prefer windowsills than full height.'

Summary

Talking to residents about their preferred housing layouts at the two workshops was very insightful.

Karakusevic-Carson Architects will use the feedback received as a 'community brief' - meaning that alongside policy requirements and budget we will focus on designing spaces that meet the expressed needs and aspirations of residents and the local community.

Brent Council will also look at the feedback to inform the 'plus' aspect of infill + development.

The community brief

Outdoor amenity:

Inset or semi-protruding balconies, and large terraces with metal railings were generally preferred by attendees. Front gardens with raised planters for privacy and accessibility. Communal gardens with low fences to ensure it feels safe.

Private bin and bike stores:

Safe cycle storage, incorporated into flats or front gardens where possible. Bin stores need to be safe and designed to prevent pests.

Bathrooms:

Accommodate a level of choice of specification if possible. Additional shower room desired for family homes.

Kitchens:

The option to close the kitchen and living room was generally preferred.

Storage:

Maximise the amount of storage. Have several storage spaces for different needs.

Doors and windows:

A mix between full height windows and windows with sills.