

Drapers' Almshouse Charity
Edmansons Close, Bruce Grove, Tottenham

September 2022

Statement of community involvement

1. Background

For over 400 years, the Drapers' Almshouse Charity has been providing accommodation all over London, and many thousands have benefited from the homes and facilities at Edmansons Close since the almshouses were built there in 1869.

Originally designed for married couples, they were built when needs and expectations were very different. Despite improvements made over their lifetime, they now fall short of modern standards of accommodation. As more than two-thirds of the properties are no longer occupied there is a unique opportunity for the Charity to improve accommodation across the site, which plays an important part in the history of the local community, while continuing its charitable aims.

Proposals include refurbishing the almshouses so they are fit for modern use, providing a variety of new accommodation suitable for a wide range of residents long into the future, and offering the few remaining residents more suitable new homes on site.

The Charity's professional team has worked closely with council planning officers and advisors to develop proposals that can effectively deliver its plans for Edmansons Close, in line with the national, regional and borough policies that help guide and control developments of this kind.

While technical plans have advanced in line with customary planning approaches, the accompanying community engagement programme needed to reflect and promote not only the future opportunities the redevelopment provides, but crucially also take account of the Charity's philanthropic aims. The priority throughout has been considering the distinctive needs of the current beneficiaries still living in Edmansons Close. Although already involved in general discussions about the future for the site, it was imperative that residents and their families heard about the emerging detailed plans, the timetable for redevelopment and the implications for their circumstances before any other public audience – and directly from the Drapers. It would have been inappropriate for any information to be published more widely beforehand.

Plans to engage and consult more broadly to build awareness and understanding of what was being proposed, share an understanding of the potential benefits for the community, gather ideas, and address any concerns were also carefully coordinated with any existing or planned refurbishment on the site. All communication with residents, stakeholders and the

community was considered in the context of the distinctive challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic – for both the wellbeing of the people involved, and the practical process for engaging with anyone in such uncertain and constrained times.

2. Consultation and engagement

The communication programme aimed to build awareness of the Drapers' plans and explain the need for redevelopment in the context of the Charity's philanthropic aims, its ongoing commitment to beneficiaries and the opportunities for future residents. It gave the opportunity for residents, local special interest groups, the neighbouring community and other key stakeholders to contribute their views while proposals were being developed, before plans were finalised.

The programme included a briefing for residents before any information was more widely published, and community engagement featured a newsletter, website, public exhibition and survey.

2.1 Briefing for current residents

Existing residents have been regularly consulted over several years as proposals were being developed, to understand their views, help shape the plans and address any concerns.

The most recent engagement was on Monday 4 July 2022, when senior representatives of the Drapers' Almshouse Charity and the professional team presented proposals to 14 of the 17 remaining residents at Edmansons Close. The remaining three residents were invited but were unable to attend, through illness.

Feedback was very positive and residents were very happy with the proposals. They thought their interests were being properly considered and they were happy with the level of consultation.

2.2 Stakeholders, newsletter and invitations to the public exhibition

A newsletter with information about the proposals was hand-delivered to 200 residences on the streets surrounding the Edmansons Close site and the remaining residents on-site, on Wednesday 6 July. This included an invitation to the public exhibition and details of the website. See Annex A for the newsletter.

Individual invitations to the exhibition, in the form of the newsletter and a personalised covering letter, were also sent to a variety of key stakeholders with a potential interest in the proposals. These included:

Councillors

Bruce Castle Ward

Councillor Ibrahim Ali

Councillor Erdal Dogan

Councillor Sue Jameson

Chair of Planning

Councillor Barbara Blake

Leader of the Council

Councillor Peray Ahmet

Council Officers

Elisabetta Tonazzi – Conservation Officer

John McRory – Planning lead

Suzanne Kimman – Sustainability Officer

Richard Truscott – Design Officer

Local groups

Tottenham Civic Society

Tottenham Conservation Areas Advisory Committee

David Lammy MP, in whose constituency the site is situated, was invited both by email to his constituency office, and by hard copy to his House of Commons office.

The professional team separately consulted the Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust who occupy 68E Bruce Gove, the closest property to the proposed new apartment building other than the almshouses. This building is leased from the Drapers' Almshouse Charity who were keen to ensure the Trust was aware of the proposals and to address any concerns they might have had. Feedback was positive and the Trust had no objections to what was being proposed.

2.3 Public exhibition

A public exhibition was held in the chapel at Edmansons Close on:

Thursday 14 July, 4pm–7.30pm

Saturday 16 July, 11am–2.30pm

Members of the professional team were available throughout, to provide more detail about the plans and respond to any queries, and a feedback form was available for visitors to complete at the time, return by post or drop off at the site at a later date. Exhibition boards were on display, providing further details of the proposals – See Annex B.

Thursday's session had 5 unique visitors – 3 current residents, 1 with her daughter, and 1 local resident from Elsdon Road to the rear of the site. The existing residents all confirmed they were happy with the proposals and completed positive feedback forms. The daughter confirmed her mother was very pleased with the proposals and the positive manner in which the Drapers and the professional team were considering their needs.

The Elsdon Road resident was relieved that the scheme was modest in scale and did not involve high-rise flats, and was informed no decision had yet been made about whether the houses would be sold.

Saturday's session had 1 first-time visitor, with a few of the current residents who had visited on Thursday making a return visit. The new visitor was a member of the Tottenham Conservation Areas Advisory Committee, stayed for half an hour, was particularly interested and left very positive feedback. She took information away to share with other committee members and the Tottenham Society.

As local residents and stakeholders had been able to see the proposals in the newsletter and online, the low attendance at the public exhibition is likely to reflect how little concern there is about the nature and relatively modest scale of the proposed development on the fairly self-contained site, with no adverse impacts for surrounding residents.

2.4 Consultation website

A dedicated website www.edmansonsclose.org was available from the opening of the exhibition on 14 July, featuring an introduction to the consultation, the newsletter, exhibition boards and a summary of next steps, with multiple opportunities to complete the feedback survey online.

2.5 Survey

The feedback survey was available in printed form at the public exhibition and was live online from 14 July. To date, there have been four hard copy responses, none online.

The survey provided the opportunity for respondents to record the extent to which they agreed with six statements about what the proposals would deliver, along with space to write additional comments. The statements were:

1. improve the standard, appeal and sustainability of housing across the site, while fully respecting the needs of current residents
2. preserve the character of the listed almshouses, while upgrading all accommodation to meet modern standards
3. provide a variety of housing, from starter properties to family houses, suitable for a wide range of residents long into the future
4. provide more suitable homes for those current residents choosing to remain, in a new purpose-built and sensitively designed apartment building
5. improve landscaping, biodiversity and environmental sustainability across the site
6. maximise accessibility and convenience and minimise the impact on the environment and the neighbourhood for traffic, transport and refuse management

Three of the four respondents recorded strong agreement with all six statements and one current resident strongly agreed with all but one (No. 3), with which she agreed.

One current resident and the Conservation Areas Advisory Committee member left additional comments:

Current resident:

Personally, I am thrilled that the almshouses are going to get a much needed revamp in the next few years. I have known them for much of my life – looking through the iron railings as a child, thinking of how lovely they were, and then, fate allowed me to move into one of the flats, on my retirement in 2003.

I am glad, and so relieved, that the almshouses are Grade II listed, and will not be pulled down, so that they can be modernised up to today's standards, for new people to move into and enjoy.

How many of us residents remaining, remains to be seen, but personally I am looking forward to having a bit larger place in the new block, which of course would take time (like so many other things) to build. All this time and effort from the Drapers Company over the last few years should not be forgotten, and I, for one, am extremely grateful.

Tottenham Conservation Areas Advisory Committee member:

Very good to see this wonderful building restored

See Annex C for the feedback form.

3. Conclusions

The Drapers' Almshouse Charity has worked closely with council planning officers and advisors to ensure that its plans for developing the accommodation at Edmansons Close meet the requirements of national, regional and borough policies that help guide and control developments of this kind.

A communication programme to build awareness of the plans and explain the need for redevelopment in the context of the Charity's philanthropic aims, prioritised the needs of current residents to hear of plans first, and gave them the opportunity to contribute their views while proposals were being developed, along with local special interest groups, the neighbouring community and other key stakeholders.

The proposals to refurbish the almshouses, provide a variety of accommodation suitable for future residents and more suitable new homes on site for current residents wishing to remain. The proposals have been met with wholesale support from those visiting the exhibition and completing the survey. The absence of any objection from any quarter means the Charity should feel confidently able to reassure the planning authority that its proposals have met with local approval.

Annex A: newsletter



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A FITTING FUTURE FOR EDMANSON'S CLOSE



Celebrating the heritage and respecting the residents

The Drapers' Almshouse Charity is currently preparing proposals for the future of its almshouse properties at Edmanson's Close in Bruce Grove, Tottenham

For over 400 years, the Charity has been providing accommodation all over London and many thousands have benefited from the homes at Edmanson's Close since the almshouses were built there in 1869.

But they were built when needs and expectations were very different and, although they have been improved over their lifetime, they now fall short of modern standards of accommodation.



As many are no longer occupied there is a unique opportunity for the Charity to improve accommodation across the site, which plays an important part in the history of the local community, while also continuing its charitable aims. Proposals include refurbishing the almshouses so they are fit for modern use, providing a variety of new homes suitable for a range of future residents long into the future, and offering the few remaining residents more suitable new homes on site.

While deciding how best to use the site, the Charity's priority has been considering the distinctive needs of its current beneficiaries, and the residents and their families have already been involved in discussions about the future.

The Charity has also been consulting with the Council and other special interest groups to build awareness and understanding of what is being proposed. But before going further we want to hear local people's views on our proposals while we are developing them. This newsletter is the first step, and on 14th and 16th July we will be holding a public exhibition to show you more of our ideas and plans.

See over for details of the public exhibition ...

Homes that are fit for purpose and fit for the future

The aim is to improve the standard, appeal and sustainability of housing across the site, while fully respecting its rich heritage and the needs of current residents, providing 48 high-quality homes for a broad range of future occupants.



How the upgraded almshouses and open spaces might look in future

Proposals include:

- preserving the character of the listed almshouses, as viewed from the front garden space
- upgrading all accommodation to meet modern standards
- providing a variety of housing for a wide range of residents, from starter properties to family houses, including homes in a new purpose-built apartment building for residents choosing to remain
- demolishing the poor-quality laundry building
- retaining and restoring the chapel
- improving landscaping, biodiversity and sustainability

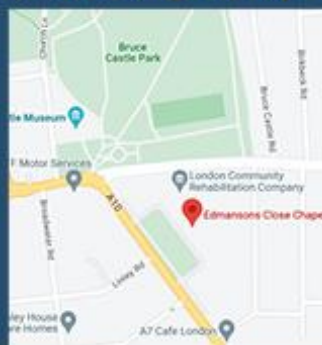
We are aiming to submit our planning application before the end of the year and hope to have a decision in early 2023.

Public exhibition – come and have your say

Thursday 14 July
4 pm – 7.30 pm

Saturday 16 July
11 am – 2.30 pm

The Chapel
Edmanson's Close
Tottenham
N17 6SD



From 14 July, the exhibition and a brief survey will also be available online at:
www.edmansonsclose.org



www.edmansonsclose.org

Annex B: Public exhibition boards



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Welcome

Welcome to our exhibition about the Drapers' plans for its almshouse properties in Bruce Grove.

For over 400 years, the Drapers' Almshouse Charity has been providing accommodation all over London, and many thousands have benefited from the homes and facilities at Edmansons Close since the almshouses were built there in 1869.

Originally designed for married couples, they were built when needs and expectations were very different. Despite improvements made over their lifetime, they now fall short of modern standards of accommodation.

As more than two-thirds of the properties are no longer occupied there is a unique opportunity for the Charity to improve accommodation across the site, which plays an important part in the history of the local community, while continuing its charitable aims. Proposals include refurbishing the almshouses so they are fit for modern use, providing a variety of new accommodation suitable for a wide range of residents long into the future, and offering the few remaining residents more suitable new homes on site.

We hope to submit an application for planning permission by the end of this year, but before finalising our plans we want to hear local people's views on our proposals while they are being developed.

This exhibition provides you with the opportunity to take a look at those proposals, and ask any questions. As we would welcome your views, we have provided feedback forms for you to fill in once you've taken a look around.





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The Drapers and Edmanson's Close – a brief history

The Drapers' Almshouse Charity is an amalgamation of various trusts and charities dating back to the sixteenth century – a philanthropic enterprise, incorporated by Royal Charter in 1365, initially set up to regulate the trading of woollen cloth in the medieval City of London. It is no longer primarily responsible for trading standards and has instead become increasingly involved in charitable and philanthropic activities.

The almshouses have been occupied since 1869 when they were designed initially for married couples by the Drapers' Company's architects Herbert Williams. The Close included a chapel for residents and a gatehouse for the warden. These and the almshouses are Grade II listed, and the buildings and their setting make a notable contribution to the character of the Bruce Castle Conservation Area, one of the largest in the borough.



This will not be the first time in its history that the Close has seen changes, as almshouses were refurbished to meet the modern expectations of residents in the 1930s, and several were rebuilt or repaired following damage during the Second World War.

Although additional accommodation was built on vacant parts of the site and the almshouses converted into smaller units during the late 1970s, the overall layout of the Close and the fabric of the buildings has remained largely unchanged since the nineteenth century.

Although initially well-built and still externally architecturally attractive, the conversion of many of the houses into small studios and one-bedroom flats 50 years ago – when demand for charitable housing grew – means that the nature and internal arrangement of the accommodation falls some way short of modern standards and expectations.





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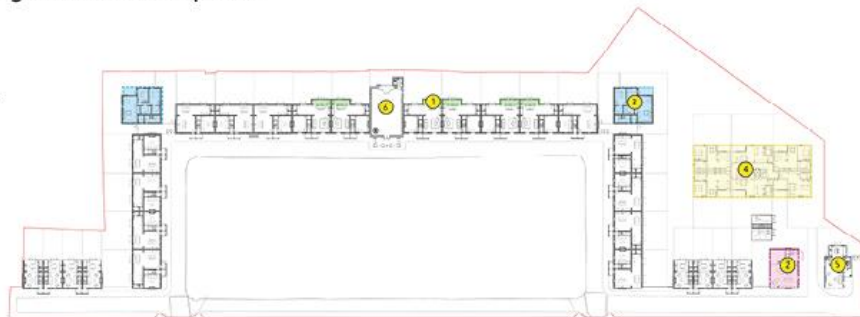
Our proposals – in outline

The mid-nineteenth century almshouses were designed and built when people's needs and expectations were very different. Despite improvements over their lifetime, the buildings have become increasingly less suited to their purpose.

With the overall aim of ensuring that accommodation across the site is suitable, sustainable and attractive for any potential future occupants, the Charity has been developing plans for a combination of refurbished and new accommodation that is sensitive to the history and heritage of the site, but which is more fit for purpose and fit for the future.

Housing is currently provided by 61 units of accommodation – primarily small studio and one-bedroom flats. The aim is to improve the standard, appeal and sustainability of housing across the Close, while fully respecting its rich visible heritage and the needs of current residents, providing 48 high-quality homes for a broad range of future occupants.

- ① Extended almshouses
- ② New build family house
- ③ New build apartments in corner pavilions
- ④ New build apartments
- ⑤ Family house within the gatehouse
- ⑥ Chapel
- REAR EXTENSIONS ~2 BED HOUSES
- 3 BED MEWS HOUSE
- 2 BED APARTMENTS
- STUDIO AND 1 BED APARTMENTS



The proposals include:

- preserving the architectural character of the listed almshouses
- upgrading all existing accommodation to meet modern standards and the requirements of future residents
- providing a variety of suitable housing for a wide range of residents, from starter properties to family houses, including accommodation in a new purpose-built apartment building on the site for residents choosing to remain
- demolishing the poor-quality laundry building
- retaining the chapel
- improving landscaping, biodiversity and sustainability



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The proposals in more detail – the almshouses

The plans will ensure that the original nineteenth century almshouses at the heart of the estate can be kept in active use long into the future. The only alteration planned for the front of these listed buildings will be a sensitive restoration, so they can continue to contribute most to the visual appeal of the Close.

Although the almshouses were originally well-built and remain attractive outside, little remains unchanged inside. None of them now provides a suitable size or standard of accommodation that meet modern needs.

Of the original 44 almshouses, 8 will be converted to one-bedroom houses and 18 will be combined with their neighbour to provide 12 houses with two/three bedrooms, and 6 larger three/four bedroom houses with sensitively-designed rear extensions that will not be visible from the communal gardens to the front. These 26 houses will provide more modern and attractive homes for a diverse community of future residents – single people, couples and families.



How the upgraded almshouses and their rear gardens might look in future

A new two/three-bedroom almshouse-style home will also be built, and the existing gatehouse will be sensitively restored and refurbished, bringing it into sustainable use as a two-bed house.

All new brickwork will be matched with what already exists, and new rear windows and doors will be in proportion to current architecture. All external features will be painted with heritage colours to maintain consistency and appeal.

All the houses will have private gardens, access to the communal garden areas, and an allocated parking space. Visitor parking will also be available.





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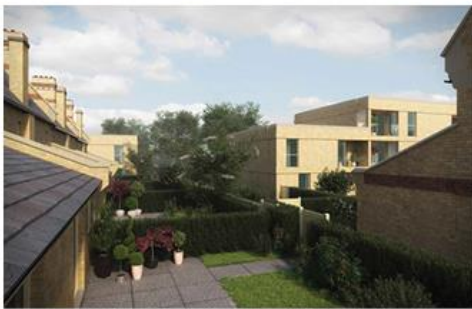
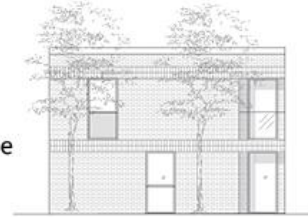
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The proposals in more detail – new buildings

Alongside the restoration and upgrading of the housing in the almshouses, new sensitively-designed pavilions and an apartment building will help provide the right quantity and mix of homes that will meet the needs and expectations of a wider range of future occupants – including those few remaining residents who wish to remain living on site.

Pavilions

The two new pavilions will each provide a pair of two-bedroom apartments, and occupy the currently empty corners at the end of the longer terrace of almshouses at the back of the quadrangle. They will use bricks, doors and windows that reflect the architectural style of the almshouses. Flat green roofs will contribute to the biodiversity on site.



Apartment building

Sixteen new homes will be provided by a new building on the most private part of the estate – a mix of seven studio and nine one-bedroom apartments. Ground floor apartments will also have their own private garden spaces. It will have flat green roofs and will be built in proportion to existing and other new buildings, and complement the historical architecture of its neighbours.

New almshouse-style home

The poor quality and unsightly 1970s properties that were built to fill a gap in the range of original Victorian almshouses will be demolished, not only providing access to the new apartment building but also enabling a new single almshouse-style property to be built. This will be a modern interpretation of the existing almshouses, with similar features, and provide a two-bedroom home.



*Proposed new almshouse-style home (centre)
and gatehouse (right)*





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Landscape, environment and sustainability

Our plans are the latest in a series of developments at Edmanson's Close through time, that have reflected how accommodation needs and concerns about environmental impact have evolved since the almshouses were first built. These new proposals are designed to meet the needs of a very different community of residents from the one it was originally built to serve, and will provide an appealing environment, features and facilities for people of all ages, long into the future.

The layout of the site will be more accessible and convenient to move around. Improved landscaping, a new play area for children and a boules court for adults will enhance the communal green areas. Private gardens will be introduced for all houses and some of the new apartments, and all apartments will have private balconies.



Existing buildings will be re-used and upgraded, and all new accommodation will be designed to meet the latest sustainability standards, minimising any impact on the environment and climate, while enhancing biodiversity.

Sustainability measures include:

- air source heat pumps and bio-diverse green roofs for all new buildings
- solar panels hidden from view below the parapet line on the new apartment building
- sustainable drainage systems
- encouraging more sustainable travel and public transport use:
 - secure cycle storage
 - electric car charging points
 - local car club subscriptions

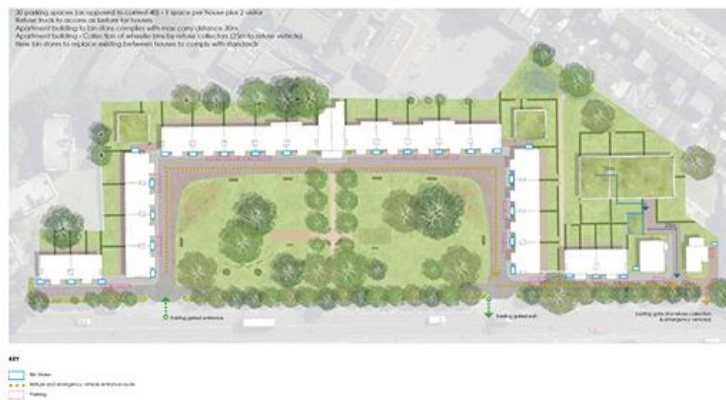


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Traffic, transport and refuse management

You will see elsewhere in the exhibition how the proposals are designed to meet the needs of a very different community of residents from the one it was originally built to serve, and how it will provide a wider variety of homes in an appealing environment, with features and facilities for people of all ages and lifestyles, long into the future.

The aspirations to deliver a highly-sustainable development are reflected not only in the measures to reduce the environmental impact of buildings and those living in them, but also in the approach to accessibility, traffic and transport.



Proposals aim to maximise accessibility and minimise the impact on the environment and amenity of the neighbourhood:

- maintaining existing car parking around the front green, with allocated spaces for residents
- electric car-charging points
- secure cycle storage
- local car club subscriptions
- new bin stores
- access for refuse trucks and emergency services
- construction work will be contained within site boundaries, minimising disruption to residents



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Next steps – let us have your views

Thank you for your interest in our plans for Edmanson's Close and for taking the trouble to contribute to this important stage in the development of our proposals.

Throughout the development of our plans we have worked closely with Council officers, and had introductory and more detailed discussions with a number of representative organisations and special interest groups.

We are now keen to take into account the views of local people, and we will be considering all the feedback we receive during this exhibition along with responses directly to the Charity.

Please take a few moments to fill in a questionnaire before you go.

We are aiming to submit our planning application before the end of this year and hope to have a decision early in 2023.



Annex C: Feedback form



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We hope you enjoyed our exhibition and finding out more about the Drapers' plans for Edmansons Close.

The Charity has been consulting with the Council and current residents of the Close. Before going any further we want to hear local people's views on the proposals while we are developing them – we would really welcome your feedback in this short survey.

Anything you tell us, including any personal details, will only be used for this consultation and will not be shared with any other party or for any other purpose.

Name:

Postcode:

Not to identify you, just to give us an idea of where responses are coming from

Email:

To hear about the results of this survey and next steps in the development, please provide an email address

The proposals will:

1. improve the standard, appeal and sustainability of housing across the site, while fully respecting the needs of current residents

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>

2. preserve the character of the listed almshouses, while upgrading all accommodation to meet modern standards

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>

3. provide a variety of housing, from starter properties to family houses, suitable for a wide range of residents long into the future

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>

4. provide more suitable homes for those current residents choosing to remain, in a new purpose-built and sensitively designed apartment building

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>

5. improve landscaping, biodiversity and environmental sustainability across the site

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>

6. maximise accessibility and convenience and minimise the impact on the environment and the neighbourhood for traffic, transport and refuse management

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>



Please use this space for your thoughts and comments about the proposals:

Please hand your completed survey to a member of the team at the exhibition, or post it to:

The Drapers' survey
9 Beaufort Road
Kingston upon Thames
KT1 2TH

The exhibition and survey are also available at www.edmansonsclose.org,
and you may send any further thoughts and comments to comments@edmansonsclose.org.

Thank you.