Consultation with Residents in response to the plans for structural improvements, new homes and general estate enhancements proposed by Manaquel at the consultations held at Tutor Stacks, Herne Hill, London, February 2017.

A public consultation to publicise the plans for changes to the Estate was organised by Manaquel for the residents and other interested parties in February 2017. After the consultation, the Dorchester Court Residents Association (DCRA) created and distributed a questionnaire to ask residents their opinions on a variety of issues relating to the plans, in order to help the DCRA develop their formal response. The questionnaire had two versions: the first had questions under the following headings:

- You and Your Flat (questions about numbers of people in the flat, numbers of bedrooms, etc.)
- Parking (number of cars, traffic etc.)
- Services (garbage collection, recycling, etc.)
- The Estate (questions about the Estate staff and their availability, helpfulness, etc.)
- Security (how one felt walking around at night, lighting, etc.)
- Gardens and their use
- The Estate community (socialising with other residents, feeding pets, etc.)

The second version of the questionnaire had the same structure but included questions as to whether residents used the roofs (to gauge opinions on losing access/having restricted access to the roofs as proposed by Manaquel.) As of May 2017, 82 questionnaires were received, 21 'first version' questionnaires and 61 'second version' questionnaires. This was an estimated 25% return.

The full responses are reported in Table 1, at the end of the document. Some highlights of the responses, grouped in categories, are provided here. As there were different versions of the questionnaire and a respondent did not have to answer all of the questions, the totals for each question will be different. However, one can get a sense of the feelings of the respondents.

1. The person responding:

- A majority of those who answered had seen the proposed plans (47 vs 12)
- More tenants than owners (45 vs 13) responded, which reflects the make up of the Estate

2. Parking/services/the Estate

- Most of those who answered did not own a vehicle (56 vs 22), while 24 of the vehicles reported were cars, showing that some of the 22 owned more than one.
- There was an even mix of those who had trouble parking and those who did not (12 v 14)
- Many respondents had bicycles and a majority (57 vs 10) would like bike storage, although some who did not want it noted that there might be insurance issues if their bicycle was left outside.

- Most people who responded did not want the rubbish bins to be moved to the side roads (15 vs 3), and a majority felt that the garages were the best place for them (16 vs 2)
- A vast majority were appreciative of the administrative team supporting the Estate with 77 of 82 responses being positive
- Most people felt safe at night (46 vs 12) with a small majority wanting improved lighting on the Estate (34 vs 22)
- A majority did not want the Estate to be gated (with a front gate providing approved access) (35 vs 21)
- Every respondent who chose to answer (61) said they valued the Estate gardens
- A majority responded they had been on the roofs (44 vs 27)

3. The community

- A large majority (70 out of 81) said they socialised with others in the Estate, and 79 of 82 respondents said they knew their neighbours by name.
- This feeling of community made 76 respondents feel more secure, as opposed to 22
- Many people would use a community space if there was one (45 vs 13) but were not asked if they would be willing to finance and/or run it
- Residents showed that they looked out for each other; 80 out of 82 people said they took post and deliveries in for their neighbours and 76 of 84 said that neighbours had done the same for them
- Neighbours watered residents' plants about half the time (40 vs 39), while half of the respondents said they did the same for their neighbours (39 vs 42)
- Many residents said they looked after the properties of others (58 vs 21), while others baby sat children (21 vs 28) and fed their neighbour's pet (30 vs 44)
- A majority of residents attend the annual Dorchester Court summer party (62 vs 18)
- Many residents are members of the Dorchester Court FaceBook group (65 vs 16) with 60 saying they actually used it and 56 saying that they had been helped by it

<u>Open-ended responses</u>

The questionnaire also included open-ended questions, which allowed people to give more information in their own words. Not all of these have been analysed; those that have are grouped into categories summaries below:

1. What did you think of the plans?

Of those who gave us their opinion, some were positive about the plans and some felt there was insufficient detail provided. The majority felt that the plans would result in an over-development of the Estate and that it was a redevelopment and not a renovation. There were also concerns that the

penthouses and new houses would “overcrowd the Estate” and that it was an opportunity for profit before benefiting the residents.

> “They seem to be targeting profit first, with little consideration of residents and no respect for an architectural jewel like the Court is.”
>
> “Issues with the existing flats need to be dealt with first.”
>
> “Some improvements are needed although the penthouse solutions aren’t great. I think there are too many changes that won’t necessarily benefit the residents.”

The other overriding concern was what would happen to individuals, especially renters, during the works as this was not mentioned in the plans.

> “Concerned about losing our flat or unaffordable rent increases.”
>
> “Not happy. We know it means we will have to move because rent increases. Unfair to such a great tight high spirit community. We know we may not be able to find anywhere else affordable enough in Herne Hill.”

2. Concerns regarding extra population

People voiced differing specific concerns around having more people around the Estate. Some feared it would affect the way they currently live, doing the things that make them enjoy living at Dorchester Court.

> “Yes, worried about getting less space in the common areas, not to find also the usual quiet spot to read a book when it is sunny”
>
> “The original design of DC did not allow for an extra 30% in terms of capacity. The only way I can see this happening is to sacrifice current community spaces”
>
> “The probability is less privacy, which is something I found at Dorchester Court”

Noise was a particular concern and the ability to curb anti-social behaviour important. Several people noted that currently it could get noisy, for example on summer evening, and the additional people would only make that worse. Yet because it is a close-knit community, dealing with noise and other activities can be done without stringent methods, which might disappear with the increased population.

> “I find most of the noise that causes a disturbance to me come from late night balcony use, which has increased in recent years. Also the ability to spot ‘familiar face’ become more difficult”

This increase in ‘outsiders’ and whether the ‘feel’ of the Estate will change was evident in my responses.

> “How will the type of people who can afford penthouse apartments fit in with residents who have lived here for many years and helped make the Court what it is?”
>
> “I feel the Landlords don’t want us here and are trying to make it feel as uncomfortable as possible. Priority is given to those who can pay high priced rents”

> "The more people – the less accountability for shared space people feel!"

> "I like to know most of my neighbours by sight/name"

The increase in rubbish and difficulties with parking were also mentioned.

> "Space for rubbish is a concern"

> "The extra rubbish problem: the space is important"

> "The appearance of the Court may not be as nice, overcrowded (too few parking spaces/ small amount of garden space)"

3. Suggestions to improve the community

Suggestions vary widely across the questionnaires and included improved service roads and new windows. There were several comments showing the importance of the roof space to residents.

> "Don't build above us! Give us a rooftop garden instead"

> "A better use for roofs could be a community vegetable space and garden, rather than more flats"

> "Access to the roofs"

> "Make the roof safe to be on and make it available to residents only"

Some respondents were concerned with the future for renters and what the impact of the works would be on all residents.

> "To stop having tenants getting kicked out would help a lot, as the constant turnover is slowly destroying, or rather quickly destroying what took years to build"

> "Re-house people during/after building work – more 'stable' rent"

> "Stronger guarantees for tenants, flat rent increases will not be substantial after the redevelopment. More communication about the impact. More info on relocation"

In general, though, people felt the best way to improve Dorchester Court would be to fix the Estate, but not at the expense of the community.

> "Stop the speculation! It is important that the buildings are sound and well maintained, and it looks like they have been neglected for too long"

> "Giving the Court a much needed upgrade is a good thing as long as it is not at the expense of the many residents/tenants who have lived and still enjoy living at DC"

> "The buildings definitely need upgrading but not at the expense of the community that has made the Court their home"

4. How to use a community centre

One specific suggestion that arose was that as part of the works, a new community centre could be given to residents. This idea was picked up by many who thought it would be a positive idea. Suggestions for use included:

> "An area for adults to be able to chat socially, maybe have a drink/occasional entertainment arranged. Whilst children can play and be safe as part of this."

> "Tea & meetings, jumble sales, kids' activities after school, workshop to help each other fixing things/advise"

However, in subsequent discussions held after the questionnaire was circulated, it became clear that the residents would have to take financial responsibility for a centre, as opposed to it being something that was funded and maintained by the Landlord as a benefit to the community. As this possibility was not a part of the questionnaire, it is not known how people might feel about these options.

Table 1: Results from 82 questionnaires (as of 15 May 2017) 21 'Old' questionnaires 61 'New' questionnaires, of which 18 asked 4 additional questions		
Seen plans (only on new Q)	Yes	47
	No	12
	DNA	2
	Total	61
Owner or Tenant (only on new Q)	O	13
	T	45
	DNA	3
	Total	61
Age Group	18-25	5
	25-35	35
	35-45	18
	45-55	10
	55+	14
	Total	82
#Yng Adults		3
#Under 16		23
Child born	Yes	13
Living as (some answered more than one)	Family	23
	Couple	18
	Sharers	19
	Friends	30
	Single	6
Bedrooms shared	Yes	33
	No	45
Years lived here	<1	17
	1-10	42
	11-20	12
	>20	8
	DNA	3
	Total	82
Work in London	Yes	69
	No	7
	N/A	6
	Total	82
Children attend local school	Yes	12
Vehicle	Yes	22
	No	56
Vehicle type	Car	24
	Van	2
	Motorcycle	2
Easy to park	Yes	12
	No	14

Bicycle	Yes	51
	No	22
Like bike store	Yes	57
	No	10
How many times do you put out refuse per week	<1	0
	<3	34
	3	32
	>3	14
	DNA	2
	Total	82
How many times do you put out recycling per week	None	1
	<1	1
	<3	49
	3	23
	>3	7
	DNA	1
	Total	82
Move bins to slip roads	Yes	3
	No	15
Garage best place	Yes	16
	No	2

Garages renovated	Yes	17
	No	1
Garages best place for team	Yes	9
	No	2
	DNA	3
	Not sure	4
Min times would you like pick up refuse per week (only on new Q)	<1	1
	<3	24
	3	30
	>3	0
	DNA	6
	Total	61
Willing to take to common bin	Yes	43
	No	17
Recycling to common site	Yes	46
	No	14
Value cleaners	Yes	77
	No	3
	Not sure	1
	DNA	1
Heating/water issues	Yes	74
	No	6

Pest issues	Yes	53
	No	27
Mobile phone reception	Yes	30
	No	49
Been on roof	Yes	44
	No	27
Estate team considered in future plan (only on new Q)	Yes	60
	No	0
	DNA	1
Keep Estate team	Yes	61
	No	0
	DNA	7
Priority	1	0
	2	1
	3	9
	4	15
	5	47
	DNA	10
Keep garages (only on old Q)	Yes	12
	No	0
	DNA	9

Garage best place for team (only old Q)	Yes	21
	No	4
	Not sure	4
	DNA	10
Feel safe at night (only on new Q)	Yes	46
	No	12
Lighting improved (only on new Q)	Yes	34
	No	22
Gated community (only on new Q)	Yes	21
	No	35
	Not sure	4
Use Compost pile	Yes	19
	No	60
	DNA	3
Value gardens (only on new Q)	Yes	61
	No	0
Socialise with others in DC	Yes	70
	No	9

	DNA	2
Children socialise with DC comm	Yes	16
	No	13
	N/A	53
Know neighbours by name	Yes	79
	No	2
	DNA	1
Number of people	0-10	36
	11-20	22
	>20	19
	DNA	5
Make you feel more secure	Yes	76
	No	22
	DNA	4
Sheltered accom	Yes	10
	No	14
	N/A	58
Take post/deliveries	Yes	80
	No	2
Neighbours taken in post/deliv	Yes	76
	No	6

Watered neighbour plants	Yes	39
	No	42
Others watered yours	Yes	40
	No	39
	N/A	3
Neighbour looked after your prop	Yes	58
	No	21
Babysat your children	Yes	21
	No	28
	N/A	28
Fed neighbour pet	Yes	30
	No	44
Neighbour fed your pet	Yes	27
	No	33
	N/A	17
Attended DC party	Yes	62
	No	18
Use a community space	Yes	45
	No	13

Member Facebook group	Yes	65
	No	16
	DNA	1
Use Facebook group	Yes	60
	No	19
	DNA	3
Group helped you with problem	Yes	56
	No	24