



"It's the jewel in the crown of Finchley that no one knows anything about."

Artist impression of The Wildside: Boardwalk across the lake

The Vision

Finchley Lakeside offers the opportunity to:

- create a unique, mixed-use neighbourhood with a focus for people and nature around the beautiful lakeside environment;
- bring benefits to the surrounding community and connect with nearby amenities, including Finchley Central and local shops and restaurants;
- provide high quality, energy efficient homes, with a mix of affordable and for sale apartments and houses in attractively landscaped settings of different characters;
- provide for enterprise and leisure space including investigating the viability of repurposing the eastern office building with a vibrant mix of ground floor maker, community and cultural uses with lakeside café and homes above;
- incorporate safe, new pedestrian and cycle routes through the site and a car club serving local residents.

These are just some of the ideas to emerge at the Finchley Lakeside Community Co-design Event held on Friday 13 and Saturday 14 June 2025 at the former Pentland lakeside campus.

The event, attended by around 500 people, was run by JTP on behalf of Pentland and gave the community the opportunity to share local knowledge and help co-create a new Vision for Finchley Lakeside. There were a range of activities for all ages, including site tours, and workshops facilitated by the JTP-led design team. There was also a staffed exhibition explaining the background of the site.

"Finchley Lakeside could provide a stepping off point for lots of shared activities!"

Vision Report Back

Following the public workshop days, the JTP-led team analysed and summarised the outcomes and drew up a Vision for Finchley Lakeside, including an illustrative masterplan. The Vision was reported back to the local community on the evening of Tuesday 1 July with an exhibition the following afternoon and evening, Wednesday 2 July. This newsletter summarises the Vision and key themes from the co-design process and was handed out to the audience after the Tuesday evening presentation. The exhibition is available to view on the project website finchleylakeside.co.uk



Background

Last year, Pentland moved from its Lakeside Office Campus, Squires Lane to new offices in Central London. The former office campus now offers the opportunity to create a unique place for living, commercial, community and cultural activities, all within a beautiful lakeside setting, bringing positive benefits to the wider community.

Having been deeply rooted in the Finchley community since the mid-1980s, Pentland is committed to engaging with local neighbours and partners to shape the exciting next chapter for the site.

To ensure the community is fully and meaningfully involved, Pentland appointed architects and urban designers JTP to facilitate a community planning process. There have been a variety of ways to take part including the online JTP Engages online interactive map, and the in-person Co-design Event in mid-June.

Next steps

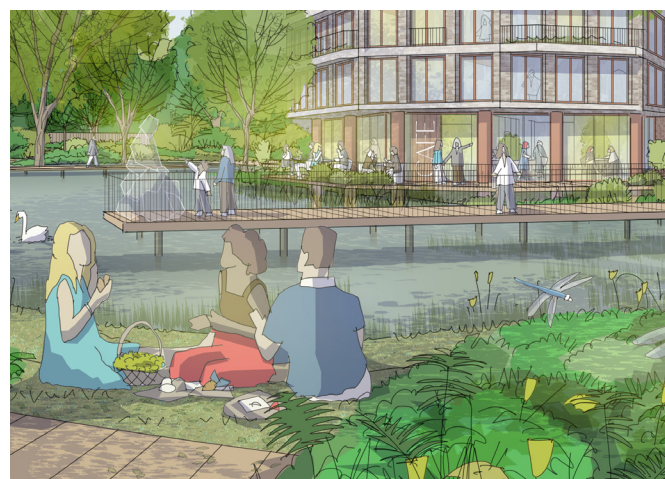
Following the report back of the Vision for Finchley Lakeside, the Pentland design team will continue to have ongoing discussions through the summer with Barnet Council and GLA on the masterplan proposal. In autumn, 2025 the project will pause to enable Pentland to decide on the next steps.



Artist impression of The Works



Artist impression of The Lakeside Connection



Artist impression of The Hub: The Pier and Lakeside Cafe



The Masterplan

A New Neighbourhood in Finchley

- 1 Retention & enhancement of the Lake
- 2 Lakeside Cafe / Exhibition Space
- 3 The Pier: A place to connect with nature and exhibit art
- 4 The Lakeside Walk: A new route through the site
- 5 The Wild & Natural Northern Bank
- 6 The Boardwalk
- 7 The Works: Creative and workshop spaces
- 8 The East Building Site: Options to be explored for retention or redevelopment
- 9 Opening up onto Squires Lane
- 10 Opening up onto Hervey Close
- 11 Opening up onto Oakfield Road
- 12 Opening up onto Vineyard Grove
- 13 Vineyard Walk: New route through the site
- 14 Enhanced Green Edges
- 15 Marking the new Entrance
- 16 Townhouses
- 17 Wellbeing Spaces
- 18 Coutyard-based Green Living



Key Themes

The following key themes are a synthesis of the views and aspirations of participants from the community articulated and drawn through the Co-design Process so far.

Early Community Engagement

Pentland has had a long-standing presence in Central Finchley, although many local residents have had little awareness of the site and its assets, in particular the lake and mature landscape. With the business having relocated to Farringdon, a rare opportunity has emerged to reimagine the site. The Finchley Lakeside Co-design Event provided a valuable platform for locals to explore the site first-hand and share ideas and concerns. Participants expressed appreciation for both the event and the inclusive approach early in the process and there was strong support for continued community involvement.

"I think what you're doing now is an excellent start - engaging with people."



Creating a Unique, Sensitive, Designed, New Neighbourhood

The site's scale and quality offer potential to create a unique, new neighbourhood, integrated with and contributing positively to the existing physical and social fabric of Finchley. Whilst many voiced the need for new homes, there was concern that additional housing could place more pressure on local services and infrastructure. There was discussion about building height, density, and the need for a sensitive design approach that respects the local context and neighbours. Most participants supported the demolition of the 'blue' 1960s office building, while favouring the opportunity to retain and repurpose the more recently built 'east block' as a "creative hub" with a vibrant mix of ground floor uses with housing above. Hosting the Co-design Event in this building helped spark ideas for its future use.

"There's a million and one uses that could come here - it's a fantastic facility!"

Character and Identity

The site should evolve its own character whilst respecting, connecting with and complementing with the surrounding area. Finchley's rich history and green assets, such as Stephen House and Garden and Victoria Park, offer inspiration for place-making and stewardship. There were differing views on the site's role: a peaceful haven for locals or a destination attracting people from further afield, but a balance of both could likely be struck. Most agreed on the need for inclusive, nature-based, and socially connected spaces that promote community, well-being, and recreation.

"It could become a destination, not just a "drop-in" space. It will be so fantastic that everyone will want to come here."

Linkages

Opening the formerly closed site presents opportunities to improve local movement, particularly enhanced pedestrian and cycling access to Finchley Central station and Ballards Lane high street. Access to and from Hervey Close should remain non-vehicular. This increased permeability must be carefully planned with safety and potential antisocial behaviour in mind, including a sensitive lighting strategy.

"A new route to the station would benefit local people, otherwise you have a massive great hike to get there."

Getting Around

Designing from scratch creates possibilities for active and inclusive travel with ideas for car clubs, covered cycle storage, and cargo bikes being welcomed. There was acceptance that the impact on the local road network from the new development would likely be less than the existing employment allocation. However, neighbouring residents are concerned about parking overflow and congestion, issues already felt, particularly during peak school hours. Access for services, emergency vehicles and those with disabilities is essential.

"Finchley has the highest percentage of pedestrians of all the London boroughs. We walk a lot!"

Lake and Landscape

The lake is the site's defining feature - both beautiful and beneficial. The natural setting and ecology should be protected and enhanced with sustainability options explored e.g. water harvesting, heat pumps, etc. Views on lake usage varied - some envisioned calm and contemplative spaces; others wanted opportunities for recreation and activity. A site-wide masterplan should accommodate diverse character zones to meet multiple needs.

"The lake is the gem which makes the site."



Key Themes cont.

Housing Mix and Tenure

As part of the repurposing of the site there was the desire for affordable, family-oriented housing to meet the varied needs of Finchley residents of all ages, rather than a predominance of investor-owned flats. A mix of tenure and sizes will help foster a strong, supportive community. Participants expressed interest in sustainable housing models, including self-build, eco-housing, and co-housing, ideally co-designed with future residents.

"We need local family housing so that people can stay connected to their parents and grandparents without having to move away. This would help retain a sense of community."

Building Community

The co-design event demonstrated an active, engaged community with a strong interest in heritage, arts, wellbeing, and creative practice. However, there was concern that intergenerational activities are declining and that efforts should be made to reverse this. Community spaces including a dedicated community hub - potentially within the retained east block - was widely supported, including spaces for young people. Residents proposed numerous ideas: café, art studios, soft play, a nursery, library, indoor performance and activity space, and even a food van and table tennis area. This combined with ideas for enterprise and cultural space could build a vibrant creative hub for all generations.

"Have a library for kids to read. Spaces for kids to perform, to take classes. Something for them to do when it's raining. Inside stuff. A creche facility too."

Creative Hub

Repurposing the site for mixed-use development received broad support. As a key part of this, participants envisioned part of the east block repurposed as flexible enterprise and maker spaces for start-ups, studios, and workshops emphasising access to shared tools and sustainability. The uses could spill out onto spaces outside with markets and cultural activities. There were also calls to support existing local groups and provide a curated commercial offer. A "Way Finder" space could act as a hub for discovering what's happening across Finchley.

"Fill it with small businesses and individual traders that like to keep their businesses personal."



Eating, Drinking and Social Spaces

The event location - in the former staff restaurant overlooking the lake inspired ideas for a lakeside café/restaurant with indoor and outdoor seating and multifunctional social space. Other ideas involved food growing (perhaps linked with local allotments), outdoor kitchens, rooftop cafés, and a family-friendly pub.

"In Finchley people have to sit on pavements in heavy traffic - a decent café here would make a fortune!"

Exemplar of Sustainable Development

The new neighbourhood should be an exemplar of sustainability across a range of criteria including the construction process, building and landscape design, movement strategy and the use of water and renewable energy. Enhanced green and blue landscape and green roofs will reduce the heat island effect, deliver sustainable drainage and provide space for nature and community well-being.

"Water harvesting has always been part of the site. Let's make sure it continues."

Next Steps: Partnership and Collaboration

Whilst understanding of the practical challenges around viability, participants were enthusiastic to remain part of the journey. There was discussion about community engagement running in parallel with the site planning process to develop ideas around ground floor uses and community stewardship of various site activities and assets. Suggestions included themed co-design workshops (on housing, enterprise, or culture), audits of existing provision, and ensuring new activity complements rather than competes with what already exists.

"Local people have enormous knowledge and experience - use it!"

