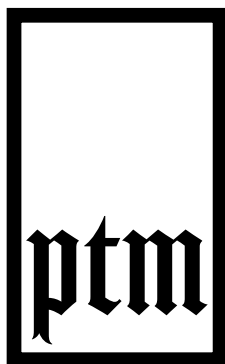




Privatise the Mandem
to Free the Ends

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Glossary

Privatisation

the transfer from public or government control or ownership to private ownership.

The Mandem

originates from Caribbean English, combining the words 'man' and 'them', and has been adopted in Multicultural London English. It refers to a diverse group of individuals, predominantly but not exclusively comprising racialised and/or working-class individuals.

Racialised People

a group of people classified as belonging to a particular categorised 'race' by others - for example, 'Black', 'Brown' etc. (n.b. Racialisation refers to the process by which societies construct and assign racial identities to individuals or groups based on perceived physical and cultural characteristics.)

The Ends / The Hood / The Block

refers to an area, neighbourhood, city, or space, often encompassing social housing estates that are owned by the state or public sector organisations.

Zero Sum Game

the Mandem wins and the Ends loses; or the Ends wins and the Mandem loses.

Non-Zero Sum Game

the Mandem wins and the Ends wins; a win-win situation.

Social Housing

housing which provides affordable rent levels, secure tenancies and is owned by a social landlord.

Commodity

a product of value that can be traded, bought, or sold.

Village

refers to a close-knit community; where shared identity, values, relationships, and collective practices create a strong sense of belonging amidst a city's larger environment.

Public Sector

a group of organisations that are usually owned and/or operated by government ("the state").

Local Authority

a devolved public administration responsible for public functions such as social care, education, waste and housing.

Housing Association

a not-for-profit organisation providing low-cost rental housing for social housing tenants. Although considered "private" entities, they are regulated by the public sector.

Private Sector (Developers)

a group of for-profit organisations that are usually owned and/or operated by private entities.

Austerity

the conditions a population experiences as a result of reduced public spending, justified by "reducing luxuries" and subjectively non-essential expenditures.

Managed Decline

a process where the Ends is allowed to deteriorate in a controlled and gradual manner. This often occurs due to a lack of investment in maintenance, services, and infrastructure over time, resulting in poor living conditions, a decline in population, and increasing vacancy rates. The idea is to reduce an estate's viability or desirability, oftentimes as a prelude to demolition and subsequent gentrification.

Gentrification

the process in which a space or city experiences a change that displaces existing inhabitants (people and businesses) and replaces them with wealthier newcomers.

Estate Regeneration

the process of attempting to improve a housing estate by re-building, investing in infrastructure, and engagement of the community.

Colonialism

the practice of taking full or partial control over another territory, occupying it with settlers, and/or exploiting it economically.

Migrant

an individual who moves from one place to another, especially in order to find work, opportunity, or better living conditions.

Capital

the resources and powers, includes economic (i.e. money), cultural, social, and symbolic capital.

The Right to the City

right to change and reinvent the city after one's desire.

Amenity

a desirable or useful feature of a building or place (e.g. local parks, transportation links, cultural venues)

Capitalism

an economic and political system in which a nation's trade and industries are controlled by private for-profit organisations, rather than by the public sector.

Tenant

an individual who occupies a property that they rent from a landlord, over a specified duration of time.

Leasehold

the temporary ownership of a property over a predetermined duration. Ownership of a leased property reverts to the freeholder once the duration of a lease has ended. Costs associated with a lease include ground rent, services charges and/or any other landlord charges.

Service Charge

the costs charged by landlords to cover the cost of services to leased premises. e.g. general maintenance, repairs, insurance etc.

Freehold

the absolute ownership of land or property. A freeholder is the owner of the freehold (aka landlord).

Ground Rent

a payment made by a leaseholder to their landlord for occupying space under their freehold.

Solicitor

a legal practitioner that deals with legal matters.

Property Management Company

an organisation that can own and manage a residential building.

Shareholder

an individual who owns a share of a company, otherwise known as equity in a company. Shareholders are essentially the owners of a company.

Articles of Association

the written rules on running a company agreed by the shareholders. A document which defines the responsibilities of members and the nature of the company.

Building Surveyor

a professional that advises their clients on the design, construction, valuation, maintenance and repair of buildings. They survey buildings and report findings to the client, providing them with recommendations.

Leaseback(s)

a legal agreement by which a new owner of a building provides the previous owner a leasehold on dwelling(s) of the building.

Outsourcing

bringing in external individuals/ companies to deliver a service and/ or goods.

Insourcing

using in-house individuals/ companies to deliver a service and/ or goods.

Asset Management

the management of an asset's ("building") operations and maintenance.

Revenue

the net income of an asset after expenses.

Building Maintenance

the process of keeping a building at optimum efficiency and at a good aesthetic.

Renovations

works undertaken to return an asset to a good or acceptable level of repair.

Placemaking

the design and planning decisions, that lead to creating an inclusive and functional place.

Lobbying

the practice of frequenting the lobby of a house of legislature to influence its members into supporting a desired policy and/or cause.

Free Estate

a term used to describe an asset(s) that an individual owns and can control and may pass onto others through their will.

Development

refers to an advancement through progressive stages (i.e. 'improvements'), - specifically in relation to land and property, it refers to a bringing out of latent possibilities.

Estate Remixing

the process of carefully adjusting and configuring the physical landscape so as to create an environment that best serves the Mandem.

Free Hood

a term to describe an estate that has been privatised and is in full control by the Mandem.

Utopia

first emerged in the 1516 book 'Utopia', written Sir Thomas More, which describes a utopia as an imaginary world that is in a perceived state of cultural and political perfection.

Hood Futurism

first emerged in 2013 as a subculture of Afro-Futurism. At its simplest, Hood Futurism is a genre that interprets the future of the Ends should it come under the ownership of the Mandem – a form of speculative fiction.



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Hear



Chapter One

me out

This was written for the Mandem. The "Mandem" being: the aunties, the uncles, the young bucks, the girls, the guys, the sisters, the akhis, the preachers and the sinners. Anyone and everyone that makes up our inner-city communities. Hear me out for a second...

The Mandem have been active. Against all odds our people are really out here doing bits. And it's oh so sweet to see.

When we do business, we make a pretty penny;
when we make music, we make it sound jumpy;
when we dress up, the whole country follows suit;
and when we speak, we make headlines.

We've been setting up shop across the country and have been dictating the direction of popular culture for a hot minute now. And it's no fluke either, our successes aren't accidental. It's in our nature to pioneer movements, to take the initiative and disrupting the status quo.

And still, the Mandem face prejudice. We are still continuously hungry. We are still maliciously ill-informed. We are still irrationally feared. We are still unreasonably hated. We are still economically excluded. And we are still labelled as monsters. Our forefathers protested and campaigned against this prejudice decades ago, and we still find ourselves protesting and campaigning against the very same prejudice decades later. At every election and referendum, the Mandem are the first to feel the effects of policy, due to our dependency on the state. We are constantly at the mercy of the ballot. This puts us at a permanent disadvantage, as it is near impossible to create a nurturing and functional community when operating under this form of political turbulence.

So, what is the remedy to our affliction? And, how do we utilise our strengths to our advantage?

The answer: **we privatise the Mandem.**

Privatisation /prɪvətɪ'zeɪʃ(ə)n/

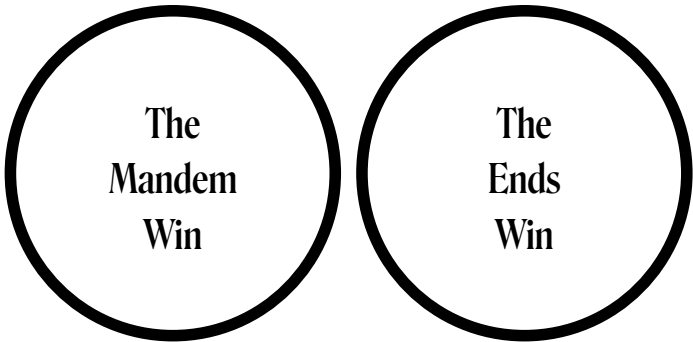
noun: the transfer from public or government control or ownership to private ownership.

To *privatise the Mandem* is to take control of our situation, to become independent of the countless variables that affect our lives. Privatisation grants us a seat at tables where important political decisions are made, and entitles us to a vote in the forums that shape the nation. It denationalises our communities, and gives us sovereignty and agency. It redistributes power into our communities and permits us to set our own economic agenda; an agenda that's informed by our own social needs.

This solution requires heavy endorsement and large-scale coordination from our communities. It also calls for internal investment from the Mandem, which is much easier said than done. How do you mobilise a community of individuals who have been in survival mode for years? To privatise the Mandem is no small feat, it's a big ask. The current condition of our communities doesn't leave a lot of room for this form of intervention. And why even privatise? The Mandem have had a pretty turbulent relationship with the Ends. Some of us have lost people to the soil because of the Ends, some of us have lost people to the system because of the Ends, some of us suffer from trauma because of the Ends. The strenuous relationship we have with the Ends can leave little incentive for investing, improving and developing such an environment.

Understandably it may seem counterproductive to even consider *privatising* a place that brings so much grief to its residents. The dynamic between the Mandem and the Ends has established an enduring belief that '*prosperity*' and '*the Ends*' are an oxymoron, creating what's known as a zero-sum game— either the Mandem win and the Ends lose, or the Ends win and the Mandem lose.

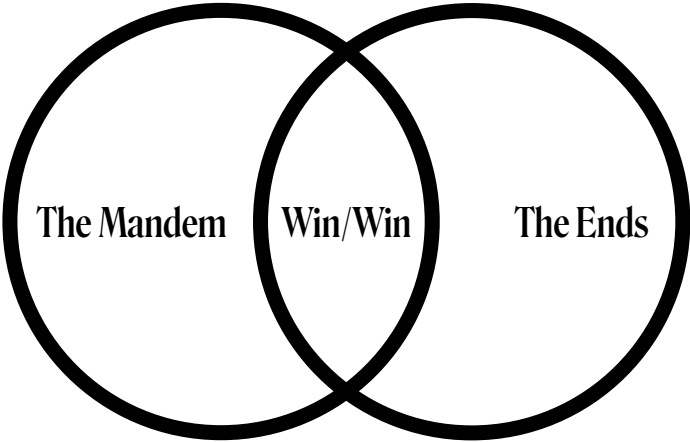
Status Quo
'Zero Sum Game'



To privatise is to challenge this belief. To encourage the consumption of our own domestic products, and to keep money circulating within the Ends. To privatise is to promote the investment and retention of homegrown talent, preventing a brain drain— as is usually experienced in the Ends.

Privatisation is a non-zero sum game where an individual's success is a contributor to the success of the collective. Currently, 'success' in the Ends is a zero-sum game. To privatise would mean to collectively redefine what 'success' means to the Mandem.

Privatisation
'Non-Zero Sum Game'



To privatise the Mandem, we have to change the game and you can't privatise without the 'power' to do so. There are three forms of power that are required for privatisation, with the first being...

1) The ability to ‘influence’

In recent years, numerous members of our community have been representing us on practically every single platform of communication. The Mandem are on all the screens; from international silver screens to primetime television. From your BBC’s to your ITV’s. Pirate radio to national radio. You’ll find us in Hollywood, and you’ll find us on YouTube. We’ve been voicing our opinions and sharing new perspectives on subject matters through literature, podcasting and film-making.

And when it comes to accolades in these fields— we’re cleaning up. There’s not one channel of communication the Mandem are not dominating. We create the slanguage and directly influence the way the nation communicates with each other. Our culture has led the fashion and music industry for decades now. The Mandem are independently charting with ease nowadays. And every time we speak, we make the papers. The nation listens to us attentively.

Naturally with every channel of influence, there’s the opportunity to earn some cash. Which leads us nicely to...

2) The generation of ‘capital’

The Wu Tang Clan said it best: “*cash rules everything around me*”. A common trait that all the Mandem share, is that we’re all bred hustlers — a circumstance of our upbringing. We’re society’s go-getters. Generating capital? That’s second nature.

When you think of music, who’s taking up the most space on the charts? When you think of sports, who’s holding all the belts, trophies, and medals? When you think of fashion, who is everyone trying to dress like? The common denominator here, is that the Mandem are dominating. And when you factor in all the restaurants, media platforms and businesses that the Mandem have constructed, there’s no choice but to recognise the hustle.

The relationship between influence and capital is symbiotic, as they both drive each other. Audiences are naturally inclined to support individuals or groups leading in their discipline— and this support can subsequently be translated into currency.

The Mandem are fluent in influencing audiences and capital generation, but it’s the third form of power that is the most important for privatisation. And it’s a form of power that is lacking in the Ends...

3) The acquisition of *'property'*

From being posted on a corner of South Central LA with the Rollin' 60s, to owning that very same corner Ermias Joseph Asghedom, better known as Nipsey Hussle, understood the value of property and the power it provides communities. Properties are the skeletal frames that house enterprise, family, creativity and, most importantly agency.

Privatisation isn't dependent on whether we have the ability to invest in property, it's dependent on *where* we choose to invest...

Brown Diamonds



Chapter Two

& Lobsters

The Ends are almost exclusively defined as an area of social housing where the landlord is either a local authority or a housing association (not-for-profit organisations offering housing to low-income communities). In the majority of cases, residents are charged a weekly or monthly rent which is often paid for through government welfare. This dependency on the state means that the Ends is always at the mercy of the ballot box. With every passing election, the newly-elected Government's housing and welfare policies directly impact our own housing and welfare services.

The purchase of property is where the zero-sum game is largely exhibited. Through no fault of our own, it's become increasingly difficult to purchase a house. An individual may purchase property out of the Ends and it'll be cheaper, but your friends, family and community would be out of reach. Couple that with the added complexity of being a migrant individual living outside of the safety of the Ends, and things get even more difficult.

You could buy property inside the Ends and you'll still be surrounded by everyone you love, but the hood politics don't stop when you get a mortgage. Furthermore, you'd likely be forking out hundreds of thousands of pounds on a lease which would only grant you tenancy for a limited number of years. Plus, it's difficult justifying the purchase of a flat in a poorly maintained area with a less than aesthetic backdrop.

And then, there's the potential of falling victim to...

“... the process of renewal and rebuilding, accompanying the influx of middle-class or affluent people into deteriorating areas that often displaces poorer residents.”

– Furious Styles, *Boyz n the Hood*¹ (1991)

Better known as, gentrification. These past couple decades have seen the landscape of the Ends changing dramatically. Its practise can be seen prominently in London Boroughs of Brent, Camden, Islington, Southwark, Hackney etc. but its not limited to London— it is a nationwide dilemma. Social housing blocks are being replaced with glossy gated-communities, complete with futuristic living facilities, logos and colour palettes to market a glamorous ‘inner-city living’ lifestyle experience at our expense. You’d have thought that they were specifically out to uproot us, but the reality is that it’s a lot more complicated than that; we’re collateral damage in an otherwise perfect storm.

Reduction of central government funding over the last decade has resulted in widespread changes in housing, including:

(i) expectations on local authorities to generate funds independently, in the absence of support from central government,

(ii) reduction of welfare for working-class communities in the Ends, and

(iii) social housing responsibilities becoming a drain on local authority resources.

The sale of land is one of many commercial decisions local authorities make in order to fill the funding gap left by austerity, which in turn has invited the private sector into spaces once reserved for social housing. The private sector isn't best suited to cater for social housing tenants as the private sector's economic model is designed to generate as much money as possible— and providing social housing is a drain on that model. Additionally, when private sector developers build full market value properties adjacent to the Ends, the Mandem are subsequently priced out (a form of indirect displacement).

So... what do private sector developers see that we don't see? Why would they look to purchase land that our communities try so hard to get away from?

From as early as the 16th Century and as late as the 20th Century, lobsters were known as the 'poor man's protein'. An essayist in 1876, once wrote that: "*Lobster shells about a house are looked upon as signs of poverty and degradation*". Fast forward to today, someone saw value in lobsters and decided to mark up the price. As a result, lobster has become a delicacy for the posh and the rich.

Similarly, a more recent phenomenon would be the rise of the brown diamond, also known as the '*chocolate diamond*' (trademarked by the Le Vian group). These diamonds are some of the least valuable and most commonly mined diamonds in the market.

Due to their high opacity and lack of shine, they were historically used for industrial purposes e.g. creating diamond drill bits for construction equipment. But similar to the story of the lobster, a name change and a marketing campaign was all it took for this otherwise worthless diamond to become commercially successful.

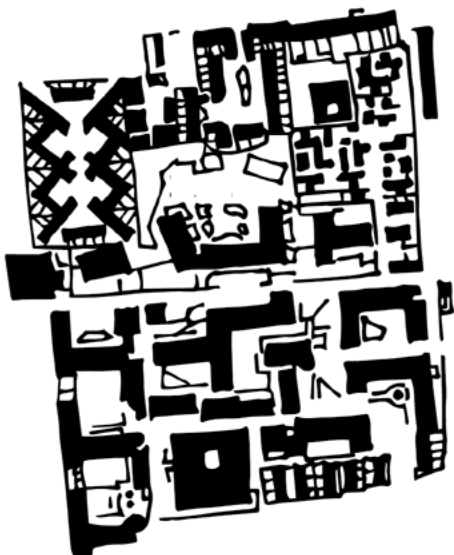
Through the eyes of the average man, the Ends is nothing to be desired, but the '*undesirable*' can look very different when viewed through the lens of a private developer:



St. Raphael's estate

London Borough of Brent, NW10

- Zone 3 fare zone on the TfL network
- Bakerloo, Metropolitan, Overground and Jubilee line stations within two-mile radius
- Chiltern Railway station within two-mile radius
- River Brent flows through the length of the estate, accompanied by mile long green space
- Adjacent to the North Circular Road (A406)
- Four Primary schools within a two-mile radius
- Five-minute drive or 15-minute walk to Wembley National Stadium
- Numerous local amenities such as IKEA, Tesco, BAPS Swaminarayan Temple and more



Broadwater Farm estate

London Borough of Haringey, N17

- Zone 3 fare zone on the TfL network
- Piccadilly, Overground and Victoria line stations within two-mile radius
- Greater Anglia, Great Northern, Stansted Express and Thameslink stations within two-mile radius
- Adjacent to the Lordship Recreational Grounds, Bruce Castle Park and Downhills Park
- 30-minute walk or 10-minute drive to the River Lea and Walthamstow Reservoirs
- 10-minute drive to the North Circular Road (A406)
- 10 Primary schools within a one-mile radius
- Six-minute drive or 25-minute walk to Tottenham Hotspur Stadium
- Numerous local amenities



Angell Town estate

London Borough of Lambeth, SW9

- Zone 2 fare zone on the TfL network
- Overground, Northern and Victoria line stations within two-mile radius
- South Eastern and Thameslink stations within two-mile radius
- Within one-mile radius of Slade Gardens, Max Roach Park and Myatt's Fields Park
- Clapham Common Park within two-mile radius
- 30-minute walk or eight minute drive to the River Thames
- 10-minute drive to the South Circular Road (A205)
- 14 Primary schools within a two-mile radius
- Four-minute drive or 20-minute walk to The Oval Cricket Grounds
- Numerous local amenities such as O2 Academy Brixton, Windmill Brixton, Electric Brixton and more



North Peckham estates

London Borough of Southwark, SE15

- Zone 2 fare zone on the TfL network
- Overground line stations within two-mile radius
- Southern, South Eastern and Thameslink stations within two-mile radius
- Within one-mile radius of Burgess Park and Surrey Linear Canal Park
- Numerous green spaces within two-mile radius, such as Brunswick Park, Lucas Gardens, Sceaux Gardens, Central Venture Park, Calypso Gardens, Camberwell Green etc.
- 15-minute drive to the River Thames
- 17-minute drive to the South Circular Road (A205)
- 18 local schools within a two-mile radius, as well as University of Arts London and Kings College London
- 12-minute drive to The Oval Cricket Grounds
- Numerous local amenities such as The Feminist Library, Peckham Library, Peckham High Street, Southwark Tigers Rugby Club and more



Holly Street estate

London Borough of Hackney, E8

- Zone 2 fare zone on the TfL network
- Overground line stations within two-mile radius
- Greater Anglia station within two-mile radius
- Numerous green spaces within two-mile radius, such as Stonebridge Gardens, De Beauvoir Square and Dalston Eastern Curve Garden
- Nine minute walk to the London Fields, 11-minute walk to Haggerston Park and 25-minute walk to Victoria Park
- 15-minute drive into City of London
- 17 local schools within a two-mile radius
- 15-minute drive to Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, West Ham United Stadium and the River Lea
- Local amenities include Dalston Junction, London Fields Lido, Shoreditch, V&A Museum of Childhood and numerous pubs/clubs

The story of the Ends is not too different to the story of brown diamonds and lobsters— our Blocks too, are a commodity. And the price is goin' up.



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Lowe



Chapter Three

Thyself

'Privatising' may seem a tad bit excessive. But when considering the trajectory and pace of changes being made in our urban spaces, it increasingly becomes the only way we can preserve our communities and the spaces they occupy. So, how did we reach this point? Why does privatisation seem like the only viable method of preservation? Let's set the scene...

As a result of a decade long austerity campaign initiated by the 2010 Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government,² local authorities have been strapped for cash.^{3,4} Everything from housing, health, policing and public services had their budgets slashed.⁵

Running concurrently, is the UK Housing Crisis. The UK has been experiencing a chronic shortage in housing, continually failing to meet housing demand. As such, pressure has been mounting for the market to quickly produce enough housing to meet housing demand. Social housing forms part of the housing demand in the UK, and can be delivered through three means:

Social Housing Delivered via the Public Sector

The overall supply of public sector-owned social housing has been steadily decreasing since the early 1980s.^{6,7} This decline in social housing stock is largely credited to the *Right to Buy* legislation first introduced in 1980, which allowed social housing tenants to purchase the homes they were occupying from local authorities at a discounted rate. The decline in social housing stock didn't necessarily pose an issue. After all, the more economically active individuals there are in a nation's economy, the healthier the economy. Therefore, allowing social housing tenants to become homeowners and to finally get on the property ladder, directly increased

their economic activity, and boosted the overall health of the economy. With government-subsidised grants and continuous house-building, public sector budgets were regularly replenished and public sector-owned social housing stock were maintained at healthy levels.

Then came the 2007/08 Global Financial Crisis, which produced the then-Prime Minister's Affordable Homes Programme which dramatically reduced government-subsidised grants for housing.⁸ To fill the funding gap created by the reduction, local authorities were left with no choice but to borrow funds from HM Treasury. The aforementioned *Right to Buy* legislation left local authorities with reduced housing stock to borrow against, resulting in astronomical interest rates imposed on loans by the treasury. Operating under these conditions had made borrowing from HM Treasury an unviable option.^{9,10}

Still expected to build quickly enough to meet housing demand— whilst spending minimally due to the constraints of austerity, local authorities end up compensating for these gaps in funding by compromising on design, affordability and quality when building new homes. Social housing is often a drain on local authority resources, as the majority of social tenants have their rent partially or fully covered by government welfare. Redeveloping existing social housing areas and compromising on the affordability of the newly developed homes reduces the number of social tenants. This reduces the amount of government welfare a local authority must spend, which in turn supports closing the funding gap created by austerity measures implemented by the central government.

Social Housing Delivered via the Private Sector

'Social housing' and the 'private sector' are two opposing terms. The first adopts a primarily not-for-profit model in order to provide tenancies with affordable low rents, whereas the latter adopts a for-profit model aiming to make as much money as possible.

In recent years, rather than bearing the brunt of the costs associated with house-building, local authorities are utilising legislative tools which permit them to use the private sector to meet their house-building targets. Legislative tools such as *Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990*, allow the public sector to harvest a percentage of the housing built by the private sector. This undoubtedly has its flaws, as the private sector's economic model is for-profit and providing social housing is a drain on that model.

Loopholes such as '*viability assessments*' are regularly exploited in order to reduce the amount of houses destined for handover to the public sector.¹¹ The less houses handed over to the public sector, the more housing stock becomes available for profit generating private rent. Furthermore, housing that eventually gets handed over to the public sector is usually of sub-standard quality. This malpractice is widely adopted by the private sector in order to save on material costs and maximise profits.^{12,13}

It's also common practice that homes, destined for transfer to the public sector and intended for social housing tenancies, are segregated from private tenants who pay full market rent rates. Examples of these forms of separation include denying social housing tenants access

to communal gardens and/or providing social housing tenants separate entrances from private renters, callously dubbed “poor doors”.¹⁴⁻¹⁶ Moreover, the private sector publicly admits that it doesn’t think that the responsibility of social housing should fall on them.¹⁷

Social Housing Delivered via Housing Associations

There once existed a set of hybrid-type organisations which was originally intended to operate between the not-for-profit public sector and for-profit private sector called ‘housing associations’.

These organisations would take on the responsibilities of housing social tenants from local authorities and would be funded and regulated by the public sector (all whilst remaining a private entity). They were originally socially-minded private organisations that built and managed social housing properties for low-income communities.

But over the last decade, housing associations have had to evolve and adapt in order to survive the dramatic changes experienced in the UK housing market. Housing benefit cuts and numerous reductions in government funding have meant that housing associations have less capital to spend on building more low-rent social housing. These market pressures, coupled with the increased housing demand borne from the UK Housing Crisis, resulted in the reclassification of housing associations as ‘private sector’ organisations. This shift allowed them to raise funds for house-building through issuing corporate bonds and participating in financial property markets.^{21,22} This reclassification has ultimately changed the nature

of housing associations, as they are now able to build full market value private housing for rent and sale to fill the funding gap created by withdrawn government funds.^{23,24} Operating in the private sector also means that these organisations are susceptible to mergers and acquisitions, which further changes the nature of these organisations.

Following the current trajectory of change, modern-day housing associations are increasingly operating as commercially-minded landlords rather than the socially-minded landlord they were originally intended to be.

So, what does this all mean for the Mandem?

The public sector sees us as a financial burden and isn't in a financial position to take care of us. The private sector sees us as a poor investment and cuts corners in order to save on costs. And housing associations are being pressured into acting more and more like the private sector. All these components contributes to the gentrification of our spaces. And the Mandem end up as collateral. We must recognise that *privatisation* is an act of self-love. It's a form of self-defence. It affords us the ability to insulate the Ends from *market trends*.

And why should we remove ourselves from this turbulent system?

Because we are beautiful.

There's an unparalleled and unique beauty that exists in the Ends. This beauty exists because **we** occupy the space— it's our collective cultures, characters and identities that create this beauty.

That being said, we shouldn't turn a blind eye to the troublesome activities that take place in the Ends. The baneful combination of road politics, over-policing, perceptions and prejudices drastically reduces our economic opportunities and quality of life. We need change. And in order to create change, we must harness the power of urban transformation, and transform the space(s) we occupy.

Many seek for positive change by having a change **of** environment, rather than changing **the** environment. The first solely benefits the self, the latter benefits the self *and* the collective within an environment (the non-zero sum game). Borrowing from a concept named the '*Right to the City*':

“The right to the city is ... [the] right to change ourselves by changing the city.”

— David Harvey, *The Right to the City*²⁵ (2008)

The *Right to the City* was a concept first proposed by a French Marxist named Henri Lefebvre, in his 1968 book *Le Droit à la ville*.²⁶ He believed that the people should have the right to shape the city, and by transforming the city people would be able to transform themselves — for the better.

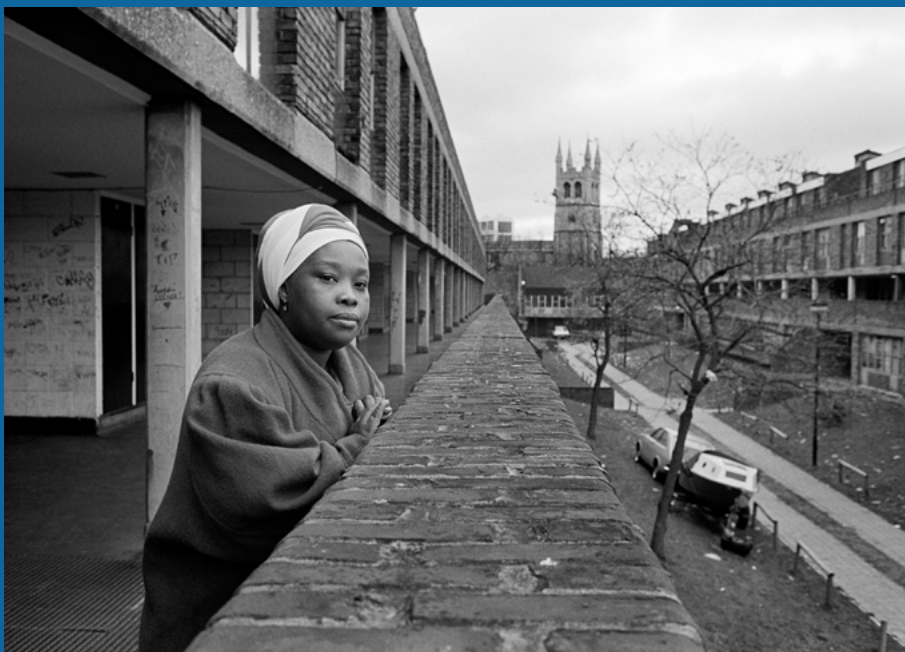
In essence, it's a socialist's response to the commodification of space driven by capitalism. Lefebvre understood the power that transformation of space has on a population, and called for control of urban spaces to be removed from capitalist entities ('*the private sector*') and into the hands of the people.^{25,27}

Regardless of politics, the reality is that the space we occupy ('the Ends') operates under a capitalist system. The *Right to the City* is a noble idea, but to achieve this right is to abolish the commodification of land — which is a cornerstone of capitalism. Therefore to grant the right to shape the city to the people, is to abolish capitalism. And abolishing capitalism a demanding and impractical mission.²⁷

Currently, the ability to change the city (or 'space') is only reserved for those who possess ownership of the space. Our spaces ('the Ends') are under the ownership of either the public sector (local authority or housing association) or the private sector, and in both cases the ability to change the city is outsourced strictly to either of them.

If we can't change the city ('the Ends'), we can't change ourselves ('the Mandem') for the better. But... once we acquire ownership of our spaces, we inherit the ability to change the city ('the Ends') and can subsequently change ourselves. We are, after all, products of our environments — by owning our spaces, we afford ourselves the '*Right to **our** City*'.

Chapter Four



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The Boatemah Way

Why aren't local authorities the only social housing landlord, and where did 'housing associations' come from?

Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government introduced the *Housing Act of 1988* which prompted the creation of entities known as *Housing Action Trusts* (also known as HATs). HATs were created to repair and improve the living conditions of social housing estates across the country that suffering from major housing and social issues.²⁸ Once a HAT had completed the regeneration of a social housing estate, it would be transferred from *local authority* ownership to *housing association* ownership. The Conservative government's then-Environment Secretary, Nicholas Ridley, had refused tenants experiencing HAT regenerations, the right to vote on the transfer of the ownership of their homes.²⁹ The legitimacy of HAT developments were largely contested by members of parliament at the time,³⁰ and tenants had no say in the matter of who ran their homes.

In 1987, HATs had set their sights on the Angell Town estate in the London Borough of Lambeth. And at the time, the Angell Town community had suffered with poor housing conditions for a number of years, and were desperately yearning for improvement. The then-Environment Secretary denied the Angell Town community the right to vote on the HAT proposals,³⁰ thereby denying the community the ability to influence the transformation of their urban space (denying them any *Right to the City*). Angell Town residents welcomed the redevelopment of their estate but

wanted their voice to be heard— to influence the transformation of Angell Town more after their own hearts’ desire. This denial did not bode well with Angell Town resident, **Dora Boatemah**.

Reluctant to concede community-control of Angell Town, Dora Boatemah set up the Angell Town Community Project (ATCP). She relentlessly campaigned for Angell Town’s voting rights on the transfer of their homes. Mobilising the 2,000-strong Angell Town community to successfully vote against HAT intervention and fought a 10-year battle to ensure that Angell Town experienced a community-controlled redevelopment.^{31,32}

“Don’t bring us any more of your fancy designs. Ask us to brief you first... we have our own ideas.”

— Dora Boatemah, speaking to Planning Consultants³³

Despite political inertia and legislative obstructions, Dora’s activism and ability to organise and form alliances with the residents of Angell Town allowed her community to be at the helm of Angell Town’s redevelopment. She helped secure the tenancies of her community on the estate— something that would have otherwise not been guaranteed.³⁴

“Angell Town people used to settle for anything, because anything was better than nothing. Now we insist on getting the very best possible.”

— Dora Boatemah, Director of ATCP³⁵

Dora was dubbed “*Difficult Dora*” due to her tenacity and fighting spirit. She may have been deemed difficult in the eyes of some— but in reality, she was a saint in the eyes of many others. Dora lobbied individuals from all walks of life and showed us that we’re capable of rallying together in support of a common goal.

She fought to grant Angell Town the *Right to **their** City*.

Born July 22nd 1957 - died January 23rd 2001.

We Run



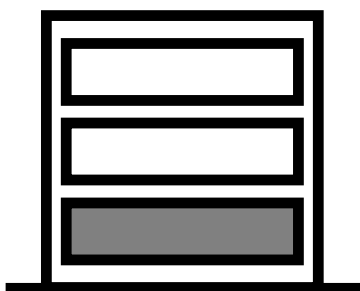
Chapter Five

the Block

As it currently stands, most of the Mandem are nothing more than tenants in these blocks. Even though we've invested more than most into our blocks and have lost more than most for our blocks, the Ends is not ours. But our sense of ownership over the Ends can be justified if we acquire legal ownership of the Ends.

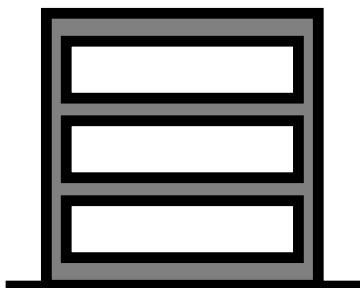
To do that, we need to understand that there are two main types of property ownership:

Leasehold is the temporary ownership of a property over a predetermined duration.



i.e. a property acquired under a lease (costs associated with a lease include ground rent, services charges and/or any other landlord charges).

Freehold is the absolute ownership of land or property.



i.e. a property owned outright. N.B. the "freeholder" is the legal owner of the freehold, also known as the "landlord".

The current landlords of our blocks (local authorities and/or housing associations) possess the freehold to the buildings that make up the Ends. In most cases, when attempting to purchase a flat in their building, tenants are only offered the option of purchasing a lease, where ownership of the property is temporary and reverts to the freeholder after the lease period has expired. The disadvantage of leasehold properties is that the building ultimately belongs to the freeholder, and leaseholders are liable to pay associated costs (such as ground rent and services charges). On top of this, leaseholders are not permitted to alter or improve the building they reside in without permission from the freeholder.

To own the Ends, is to own the freehold(s) of our buildings. Below is the blueprint to acquiring ownership of the Ends:

Legislation to use:

The Leasehold Reform Housing and Urban Development Act 1993

Name of process:

Collective Enfranchisement

Collective Enfranchisement is the right for leaseholders of a building to form a collective, and acquire the freehold of that building from the current freeholder.

Buildings only qualify for Collective Enfranchisement when:

- the building has no more than 25% non-residential use (e.g. shops, offices etc.)

Note: garages in the building are classed as residential.

- at least two-thirds (66%) of the flats in the building are owned by qualifying tenants.

Note: a qualifying tenant is a leaseholder whose lease is for a fixed term of more than 21 years. Tenants will not qualify if they own more than two flats in the building.

- the building must be a self-contained building, or part of a building, with at least two flats.

N.B. if part of a building, there must be a vertical division of the building(s), with services either independent to that part, or could be so provided without significant interruption to the remaining part.

- the building is not within an Anglican cathedral precinct, a National Trust property, Crown property or where the freehold includes any operational railway, e.g. bridge tunnel, track.

Collective Enfranchisement is broken down into a four-phase process, the following pages takes you through this process.

Visit **page 163** for a summarised timeline of the overall process.

Phase I: ROUNDING UP THE MANDEM

The first phase of *Collective Enfranchisement* is as follows:

(i) Identify the Mandem & Sell the Idea of Ownership

Socialise the idea of privatisation; slide it into your conversations, write it into your music, bring it to life on film, and identify the changemakers on your block. This is a collective process that requires the support of the local community.

(ii) Incorporate the Mandem

In order for a building to qualify for *Collective Enfranchisement*, the residents of that building must actively campaign and gather support from their neighbours. At least half (50%) of qualifying tenants in a particular building must come together and form a 'Property Management Company' (PMC). The PMC would be able to formally acquire the freehold of the building in question, and essentially become the 'new landlord'.

A PMC may be registered as a company limited by shares, where the company could issue one share to every participating leaseholder. Each share would equate to a nominal value and every shareholder would be entitled to voting rights as a member of the company. Every organisation requires a director(s).

The leadership structure may be limited to a single director, but it's recommended that two or more directors take leadership of a PMC, as the position bears a lot of responsibility.

The appointment of a director occurs through 'resolution', a democratic voting process between all members of the PMC. The main responsibilities of a director include, but are not limited to:

- responsibilities to the members of the company
- responsibilities to the property

An '*Articles of Association*' needs to be produced to communicate the purpose of the company and to govern voting rights and control of shares. The prescribed model of an *Articles of Association* can be found in the *The Companies (Model Articles) Regulations 2008*.

Solicitors specialising in Collective Enfranchisement or property law can support the production of the *Articles of Association*. These types of solicitors can be found via the Association of Leasehold Enfranchisement Practitioners (ALEP).

Phase 2: PLOTTIN' THE MOVE

It's crucial that a PMC recruits a professionally accredited **building surveyor** and a **solicitor** to act on its behalf.

Not only are they able to provide general advice and counsel throughout the *Collective Enfranchisement* process, but their expertise is required to effectively deliver on the process. It's good practise to establish a '*fighting fund*' to cover the financial costs of surveying the building, the costs of information gathering, and the legal costs of a solicitor (and the costs of any potential tribunal proceedings).

(i) Bringing in the Solicitor & Collecting Information

As previously mentioned, the solicitor specialising in *Collective Enfranchisement* or property law can support the formal establishment of the PMC by producing an *Articles of Association* and divvying up control of shares. One of the solicitor's primary functions is to prepare the necessary information required to start the *Collective Enfranchisement* process. The information gathered by the solicitor includes:

- identity of the current freeholder(s) person or company name and address;
- full names and addresses of all leaseholders and details of their leases;
- details of any flats in the control of the freeholder.

Some of this information may already be available to the PMC. Information that is not freely available can be obtained through using legislation:

Landlord and Tenant Act 1985

it is your entitled right to obtain details of the name and address of your landlord. When requested, the information must be provided within 21 days. Failure to do so is an offence.

A potential hurdle is that the landlord of a building may not be the sole freeholder of the building, but one of a group of people/companies that share the freehold of the building. The solution to this would be to run a Land Registry search, or send an 'Information Notice' to an identified landlord.

Land Registry

You are entitled to inspect the Land Register and obtain copies of the entry relating to the freehold in question. There's a small fee for copies of the register. The entry will provide the name and address of the registered owner(s) and details of any other interests in the freehold, including other freeholders.

Section 11 of the Leasehold Reform Regulations 1993 ('Information Notices')

Tenants have an entitled right to acquire information from the landlord, detailing any other freeholders or any intermediate leases, including the name and address of the lessee and the terms of the lease. The Information Notices can require sight of relevant documents (e.g. details of service charges or surveys). Recipients of the Notices are required to respond within 28 days.

N.B. Serving an Information Notice doesn't formally start the *Collective Enfranchisement* process or commit the tenants to the process in any way.

Acting as the representative of the PMC, solicitors will work in tandem with the building surveyor to respond to any landlord requests, challenges or counter-offers.

If the *Collective Enfranchisement* process succeeds, the solicitor conveys ('transfers') the property title from the previous landlord to the PMC, and amends the terms of existing leases of the building.

(ii) Bringing in the Surveyor & Assessing the Price

Building surveyors examine the existing condition of a building. In addition to identifying and analysing the structural condition (and its implications on future maintenance costs and/or service charges) of the building, a surveyor may draw up proposals for repair. Surveyors may advise on various building features such as:

- the energy efficiency of the building,
- preservation of historic buildings (Listed Buildings),
- management and maintenance of the building,
- health and safety concerns of the building.

It's highly recommended that the PMC commissions their surveyor to provide a preliminary valuation of the building in question. This would provide the PMC with a rough estimation of the final cost (and future associated costs) of the building before exercising the *Collective Enfranchisement* process. It's good practise to enlist the support of a 'chartered' surveyor who is part of a professional membership body, such as the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). These types of solicitors can be found on the RICS database.

Building surveyors calculate the 'highest and lowest' purchase price of a building's freehold through use of a formula cited in *Schedule 6, Part II of the Leasehold Reform Regulations act 1993*, along with their own professional judgement— valuing

from both the perspectives of the leaseholders (newly-formed PMC) and the freeholder(s). There are a number of variables that affect the valuation of the freehold, such as:

The Ground Rent

This is a relatively small charge paid by leaseholders to the freeholder (e.g. annual charge of £100 to £500 per lease). If the freehold is to be purchased, the freeholder must be compensated for the loss of future ground rent earnings on leases that they've issued (inflation is also considered in the valuation).

Years Remaining on Lease(s) 'Freehold Reversion'

Ownership of a flat reverts to the freeholder once the duration of a lease has ended. If Collective Enfranchisement occurs, the anticipated reversion no longer happens, and the current freeholder loses their property. Therefore, the current freeholder must be compensated for the future loss of their property. This compensation is known as the 'Freehold Reversion'. The lower the number of years left on the lease, the higher the value of the 'Freehold Reversion'.

Value of the Flats

An assessment of the market value of each flat with their current leases (along with their value if the leases have a share of the freehold). The flats must be valued as if the right to Collective Enfranchisement (or the "Leasehold Reform Housing and Urban Development Act 1993") doesn't exist. Leaseholders participating in the freehold acquisition may be granted a discount against the value of flat if they have made any improvements to their property.

Marriage Value & Hope Value

In the case that there is less than 80 years remaining on a lease, the increase in the value of the flat caused by acquisition of the freehold must be shared 50:50 with the current freeholder. This is known as the 'Marriage Value'. There remains a hope that leased flats which don't participate in Collective Enfranchisement may request extensions on their lease in the future. The freeholder must be compensated for the loss of any future financial income from this hope; hence this is known as the 'Hope Value'. Generally, the Hope Value is much less and more flexible than the Marriage Value.

Additional costs that must be considered include title registration fees at the Land Registry, and Stamp Duty Land Tax (calculated as a fraction of the freehold price). Further expenses may be included for potential repairs and maintenance work to the building, which must also be factored into the overall costings.

Phase 3: TAKING OVER

Once all the relevant information has been collated by both the appointed solicitor and building surveyor, the formal *Collective Enfranchisement* process may proceed.

(i) Serving the Section 13 Notice

The Section 13 Notice (also known as the '*Initial Notice*') is a formal notice sent to an existing freeholder which officially starts the Collective Enfranchisement process. The contents of the Initial Notice will be a compilation of information collected by the PMC's appointed solicitor and building surveyor, as well as a proposal on the purchase value and any other terms.

Once the PMC's solicitor serves the *Initial Notice* to the freeholder, the PMC becomes liable for the freeholder's legal costs from the date they receive the *Initial Notice*. Therefore the notice must contain no inaccuracies and must not be incomplete in order to avoid unnecessary expenses.

The required contents of the *Initial Notice* **are on the next page.**

Contents of the Section 13 Notice

Full names and addresses of:

- the freeholder(s) person or company name;
- all the qualifying tenants of the building and details of their leases;
- all the qualifying tenants submitting the Section 13 Notice;
- the Nominee Purchaser(s), in this case, the PMC.

Details of the flats and the premises you wish to acquire from the freeholder (complete with a plan and any relevant descriptions);

Rights inherited with acquisition of the freehold; e.g. vehicle access, rights of way, access to drainage, right to light, appurtenant property etc. (such matters must be described clearly and indicated using plan diagrams).

The grounds for Collective Enfranchisement claim; highlighting the eligibility of the claim; showcasing that the qualifications for *Collective Enfranchisement* are met, e.g. two-thirds of the flats in the building are owned by qualifying tenants, and the building is 75% residential use etc.

Details regarding any mandatory leasebacks; the current freeholder has the preserved right to mandatory leasebacks from the new freeholder. Therefore, the newly appointed freeholder is required to provide leasebacks of 'non-qualifying' flats to the social landlord (i.e. the local authority or the housing association). Mandatory leasebacks apply to flats: (i) let under a secure council tenancy, and (ii) let by housing associations under secure and assured tenancies. These leasebacks are charged at one peppercorn (£0.01) per annum ground rent on a 999-year lease.

Proposed purchase value of the freehold;

Date by when the Section 21 Notice must be served; Dated at least two months from the date of submission of Section 13 Notice, but no later than six months after.

Signatures of the Nominee Purchaser(s) and qualifying tenants.

(ii) Receiving the Section 21 Notice

The Section 21 Notice (also known as the 'Counter Notice') is subsequently served by the existing freeholder to the PMC, detailing their response to the *Initial Notice*. The *Counter Notice* outlines whether the freeholder:

- **accepts entitlement** to the freehold and the terms listed out in the notice (or provide alternative terms) or,
- **denies entitlement** to the freehold with justification (which can be assessed by a county court).

Additionally the *Counter Notice* may include other details such as:

Planned Redevelopment*

the freeholder may deny the sale of the freehold if there are plans for demolition and/or redevelopment of the building (either partially or the whole building).

*N.B. the freeholder reserves this right, only when at least two thirds (66%) of the leases in the building are within **five years of termination** from the date that the Initial Notice is served.

Mandatory Leasebacks

the current freeholder has the preserved right to mandatory leasebacks from the new freeholder. Therefore, the newly appointed freeholder is required to provide leasebacks of 'non-qualifying' flats to the social landlord (i.e. the local authority or the housing association). Mandatory leasebacks apply to flats: (i) let under a secure council tenancy, and (ii) let by housing associations under secure and assured tenancies. These leasebacks are charged at one peppercorn (£0.01) per annum ground rent on a 999-year lease.

If the existing freeholder accepts the entitlement to the freehold on the Section 13 Notice, but disputes the terms laid out on the notice, such as the proposed purchase value of the freehold, both parties have two months to negotiate terms.

In the event that terms aren't agreed, then either party may apply for a First Tier Tribunal (aka '*Property Chamber*') to rule on the terms.

Following application for a First Tier Tribunal, both parties have an additional four months to negotiate terms before a Tribunal hearing proceeds. In the scenario that a Tribunal hearing proceeds, the Tribunal would hear evidence from both parties—usually in the form of valuation evidence from each party's respective building surveyors.

Following the presentation of evidence, the Tribunal may be able to make a ruling and the parties may be able to enter into a legally binding contract. Each party is liable to pay their own legal costs of a First Tier Tribunal proceedings.

Phase 4: CLEANIN' UP

When the *Collective Enfranchisement* process is completed, the freehold of the building is then transferred into the ownership of the PMC.

In the scenario that mandatory leasebacks of non-qualifying flats has taken place, the former freeholder is granted a lease(s) of these flats for a term of 999-years at a peppercorn ground rent. In essence, the former freeholder becomes a tenant of the new freeholder, and sub-leases the flat to their own tenants. Even at peppercorn ground rent, the lease granted is still subject to service charges, which would help cover the costs of maintenance and repairs of the building, and costs of insurance policies taken out for the building.

- ✓ The advantage of mandatory leasebacks is that the PMC benefits from an overall purchase price reduction due the exclusion of costs of non-qualifying flats. When compared to the cost of a flat in a building, the cost of the common areas (spaces between 'flats'/'dwellings' e.g. corridors, staircases etc.) of a building may not be as significant. Every qualifying flat increases the total cost of the freehold by hundreds of thousands of pounds. By avoiding the costs of purchasing every single flat in the building, the cost of acquiring the freehold may be dramatically reduced.
- ✗ The disadvantage of mandatory leasebacks is that the previous freeholder becomes a leasehold tenant on a 999-year lease, where social tenants have the flat(s) sublet to them, and the leaseholder acts as their sub-landlord.

Should there be mandatory leasebacks, legislation exists which allows tenants living in these flats to purchase the lease owned by their sub-landlord. Purchasing the lease allows the tenants to join and incorporate into the existing PMC, thereby eventually creating a building that is wholly owned by the tenants living in that building.

(i) Buying back the leasebacks

If the lease is owned by a **local authority**.

Legislation to use

The Housing Act 1985

Name of process

Right to Buy

Derived from Schedule 5 of the Housing Act 1985:

"The right to buy does not arise unless the landlord owns the freehold or has an interest sufficient to grant a lease in pursuance of this Part for—

(a) ...

(b) where the dwelling-house is a flat, a term of not less than 50 years, commencing, in either case, with the date on which the tenant's notice claiming to exercise the right to buy is served."

Meaning: where the property is a flat, if the authority does not own the freehold of the block, the council tenant has the right to buy the leasehold only if the landlord is able to grant a lease of over 50 years.

If the lease is owned by a **housing association**.

Legislation to use

The Housing Act 1996

Name of process

Right to Acquire

Derived from Schedule 5 of the Housing Regulations 1997:

"The right to acquire does not arise unless the landlord owns the freehold or has an interest sufficient to grant a lease in pursuance of this Part for—

(a) ...

(b) where the dwelling-house is a flat, a term of not less than 50 years, commencing, in either case, with the date on which the tenant's notice claiming to exercise the right to acquire is served."

Meaning: where the property is a flat, if the housing association does not own the freehold of the block, the housing association tenant has the right to acquire the leasehold only if the landlord is able to grant a lease of over 50 years.

By tenants exercising their right to obtain the leases of these flats, local authority and/or housing association leasehold ownership of a building can be phased out over time.



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Thugz



Chapter Six

Mansion

Picture it. Every building in the Ends owned by a unique property management company (PMC). A mosaic of blocks owned by the Mandem — complete sovereignty. And with sovereignty, we inherit the control of services and functions of our spaces which can lead to an unquantifiable amount of change.

“The social needs of a community should inform its economic agenda.”

– George the Poet, “Have You Heard George’s Podcast?”
(2019)

The status quo has the talented members of our community providing services to people and places outside the Ends. The lack of space to accommodate this talent has had them relocating to spaces away from the Ends. Acquiring sovereignty in the Ends would afford the Mandem the ability to address *our* needs. We could create the space to accommodate *our* home-grown talent, bringing the Mandem back home to serve the Ends, and insourcing *our* talent to meet *our* own needs. Our needs would create demand for the Mandem to upskill in law, construction, design, security, finance, politics etc. By serving *ourselves*, we keep currency circulating within the Ends.

Possessing the freehold to the Ends creates new areas of opportunities for the Mandem, such as:

REVENUE & VENTURE

There are a multitude of ventures that may take place when the freehold of a building is acquired. Examples include the construction of additional storeys to a block of flats, thereby increasing the number of residential units within the building and increasing the vertical height of the building.

Another example of venture is the conversion of ground floor residential units into commercial units. These in turn may be leased or rented out to business occupants such as retail, food and beverage businesses. Alternatively, a PMC may decide to lease out a commercial unit to non-traditional occupants such as science labs, AV production studios, performing arts studios, cinemas, leisure facilities etc. Matching the use of spaces in the Ends with the talent and character of the Mandem.

The creation of new residential units has the capacity to generate income via rent and service charge collection.

N.B. it's highly discouraged for members of the PMC to allow the subletting of their flats out to private tenants to generate rental income. Alternative revenue streams where the talents of the Mandem are utilised is more rewarding and creates greater value for the building, as well as the wider community.

MAINTENANCE

The PMC would reserve the right to draw up their own contracts with businesses and tradesmen of their choice for the maintenance and upkeep of their building. Plumbers, electricians, cleaners, etc. may be contracted on the basis of their locality, expertise and relationship with the community.

The PMC would not only be able to decide who would be responsible for maintenance and upkeep, but when and how any work would take place.

Revenue streams would be cover the costs associated with building services such as:

- Repair works on the building structure
- Hygiene and aesthetic maintenance and/or improvements
- Insurance policies taken out on the building
- Management costs of running the building
- Utility (lighting, heating, cleaning) cost of common areas
- Costs of caretakers, receptionists and/or concierges

DESIGN & RENOVATION

Landlords reserve the right to redesign and renovate a building under their possession. Examples of renovation works include:

Cosmetic improvements such as repainting and replastering walls, installing new flooring, changing a series of light fixtures etc. (any work that improves spaces in a building without affecting its structural integrity).

Or, **structural improvements** such as installing new double-glazed windows in each flat, rewiring electrics, replumbing bathrooms, knocking down interior walls, extensions of parts of the building, removal of flammable cladding on block façade etc.

ESTATE MANAGEMENT

Once a series of buildings are owned and managed by a group, it becomes the responsibility of the group to maintain the upkeep of the place their buildings occupy. Management activities are ultimately dictated by the needs of the community, but can be generally categorised under:

Security of the space and safety of its residents. As owners of space, it's possible that freeholders may decide to hire a private security detail committed to ensuring the safety of stakeholders in and around the buildings that they own. In the context of the Ends, the concept of a security detail patrolling a particular space isn't necessarily foreign. Freeholders may potentially be able to put the Mandem who already patrol the Ends for free, on a payroll.

Formalising the voice, image and identity of a space by creating an in-house marketing and PR team. Similar to the practise adopted by private developers, freeholders would be able to commission logos and colour palettes that speak to the shared identity of the local community. This form of imagery can rally the community together by creating impactful representations of the people, values, rules and/or history of the Ends. Practises such as monthly newsletters, social media accounts, public art displays are some of the ways that a landlord is able to showcase a neighbourhood's identity and culture.

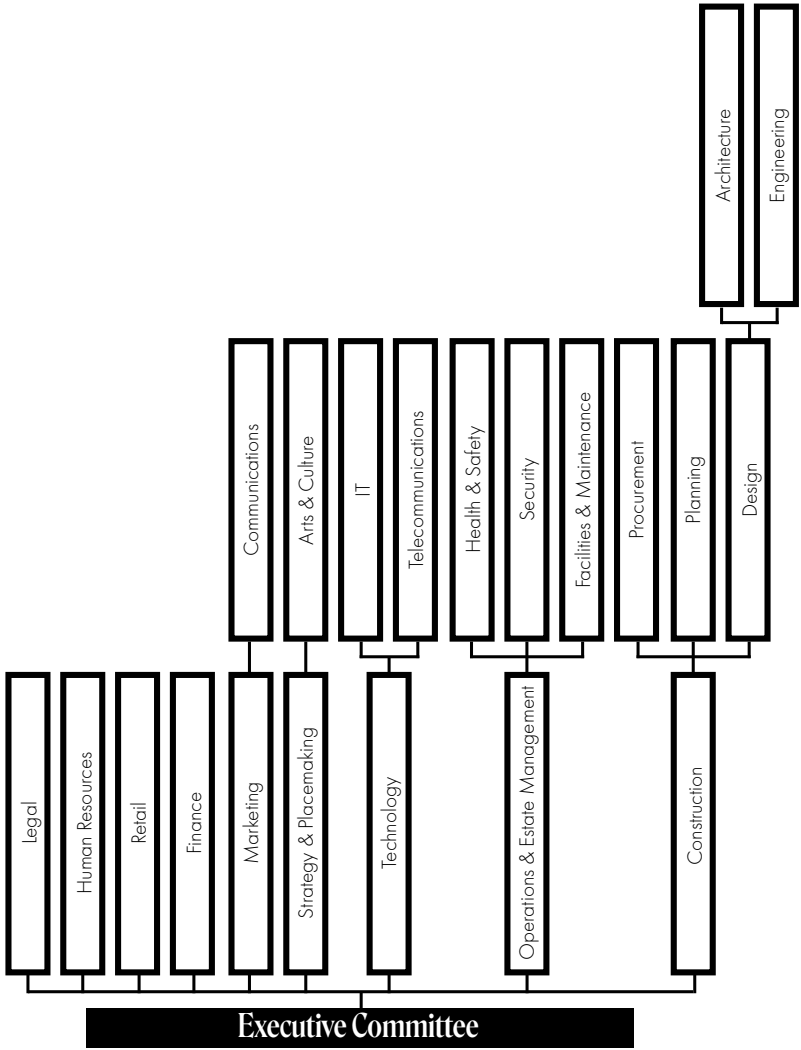
Ensuring the functionality and safety of the building(s).

It is good practise to assemble an in-house safety, health, environment and quality (SHEQ) team to ensure that the premises are safe to live and work in.

Asset managing non-residential units of buildings. A leasing team would be essential if a number of a businesses occupy non-residential units. Functions would include rent collection, fit-outs, safety checks etc.

Bookkeeping of income, expenditure and transactions is essential. An in-house accountancy and legal counsel team can ensure that bookkeeping is happening, legal contracts are being adhered to, and that all stakeholder organisations are operating within the law.

Adjacent is a general organigram highlighting areas of management that a landlord would allocate resources to. The '*Executive Committee*' represents the freeholder(s)— this may be a single property management company, or a group of property management companies operating under an umbrella organisation, and the lines of reporting all feed into this committee for decision-making. The number of individuals running a specific area of management will vary between different landlords.



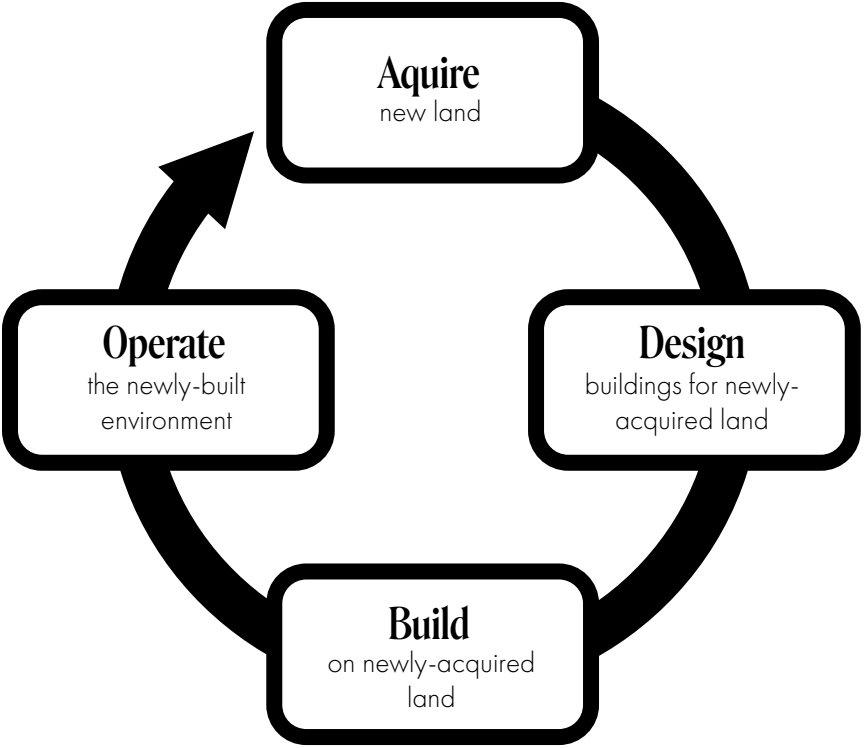
EXPANSION

The Ends are made up of a collection of blocks situated in a single geographical location. In the scenario that Collective Enfranchisement has occurred across a whole estate, numerous PMCs may exist across the estate. PMCs may be unionised under a single '*umbrella organisation*', where the umbrella organisation acts as the sole shareholder of the numerous PMCs across a single estate.

The advantages of this include the ability to share capital and revenue generated across different buildings on an estate, which would allow high income generators to support PMCs that may be dealing with a period of low income generation. Another advantage is the shared identity that comes with being under an umbrella organisation. Although the PMCs are separate, by assembling under one unified identity, they play to the strength of being part of a wider community.

These umbrella entities may have the capability to grow and extend outside of the boundaries of the Ends. With a portfolio of properties under their possession, access to finances may become available to umbrella entities (e.g. through borrowing against existing buildings, equity release loans etc.), providing them with access to capital which would enable them to acquire new land and expand the boundaries of the Ends.

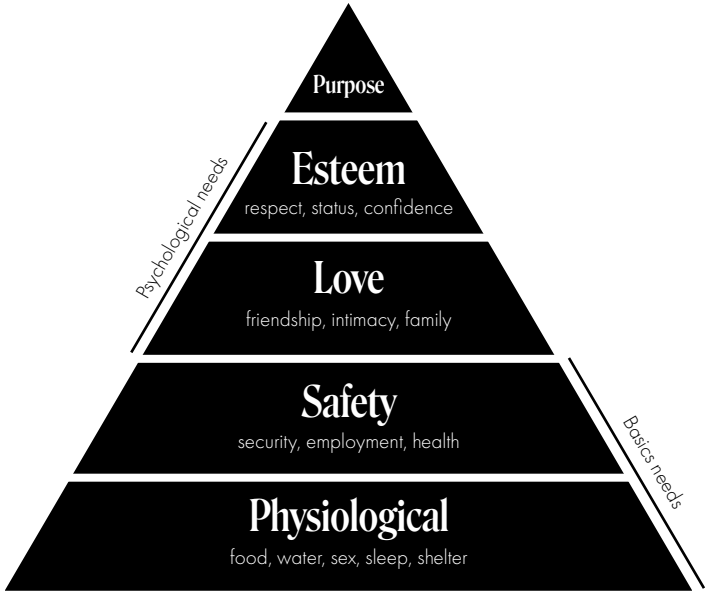
Adhering to the following business model:



Ownership allows us to change the Ends from a perceived space of destitution, indignity and crime, into a fully functioning city. A hub that retains its talent and creates opportunities for its future generations. Ownership allows us to change our cities, and changing our city allows us to change ourselves.

In 1943, psychologist Abraham Maslow famously developed a model for human motivation called the '*hierarchy of needs*'.³⁶ As you ascend the hierarchy, the needs become less materialistic and more emotional. In this hierarchy of needs, the lower order areas (safety, food, shelter etc.) need to be fulfilled before the higher order areas (love, self-actualisation or '*purpose*') can be achieved.

Owning our spaces allows us to have better control of the lower order areas ('*basic needs*') of the hierarchy. And solidifying the foundations of the hierarchy of needs allows the Mandem to achieve the higher order areas ('*psychological needs*' and purpose).





Interlude

Disclaimer: we will die before we see the fruits of our labour.

The Mandem must make peace with the reality that the privatisation of our communities will not happen in our lifetime. Privatising the Mandem isn't achievable within the next decade or two, it's a plan for the next century or two. If you want to create real long-term change, your long-term plans must outlive you.

By utilising the three forms of power:

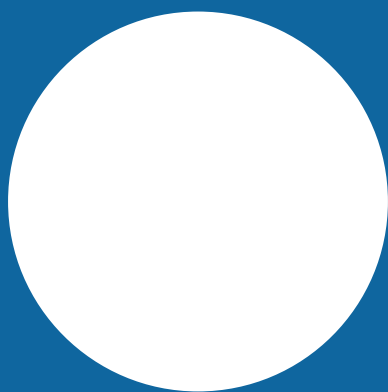
- (i) the ability to 'influence';
- (ii) the generation of 'capital'; and,
- (iii) the acquisition of 'property';

our lineage will live in abundance, removed from dependency.

One day there'll be new rules, new regulations and new laws, rendering this document futile. When that day comes, I pray that this acts as a reminder of our tenacity and commitment to our communities.

“I’m not saying I’m gunna rule the world or I’m gunna change the world, but I guarantee you that I will spark the brain that will change the world. And that’s our job, it’s to spark somebody else watching us...”

– Tupac Amaru Shakur, MTV Interview (1994)



On the Question of Privatising

Gerard Winstanley, the leader of the 1649 Diggers movement, once passionately declared that the Earth should serve as a “*common treasury for all*”. The Diggers were agrarian socialists who vehemently opposed the enclosure of land, which involved erecting physical barriers like walls, hedges, or fences around previously common land. Common land refers to land that is not under the ownership of a state (government, authority or council), or the market (private sector organisations or private citizens);³⁷ but one that is self-managed by a collective of individuals, known as commoners.

In the mid-1600s, commoners were deprived of their access to land that had previously been communal, along with all the natural resources it held. Access was now restricted exclusively to landowners and those they granted permission to.^{38,39} The Diggers adamantly resisted the privatisation of land and the transformation of shared resources into commodities. They called for the abolition of property ownership and disrupted the newly enclosed areas by engaging in practices such as land-squatting and planting their own crops on recently enclosed land.⁴⁰

Fast forward several centuries, and the act of staking claim to land has become strongly encouraged. Culturally, the acquisition of land and property is perceived as a symbol of success. Economically, the market assigns exponential value to land, categorising properties as highly lucrative capital assets within the realm of global financial capitalism.⁴¹

In the contemporary landscape, we find the Abahlali baseMjondolo movement, founded in South Africa in 2005, employing tactics reminiscent of the Diggers. They utilise methods such as land occupations, protests, and disruptions of transportation networks to address housing and land-related issues in Durban.⁴² The movement's core mission revolves around emphasising the social significance of land over its mere commercial value. In fact, both movements share the fundamental belief that land cannot be claimed by human beings, as it is inherently owned by a higher power. A representative from the Abahlali baseMjondolo movement once eloquently stated...⁴²

“It is a sin for anyone to own land. Land comes from God and it cannot be owned”

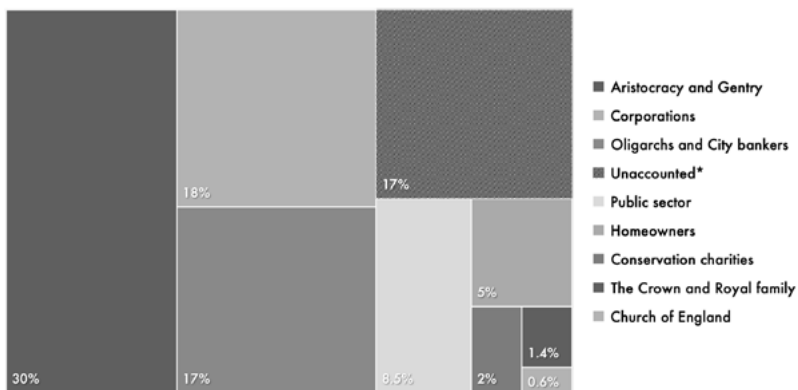
It is crucial to recognise that the concept of land ownership, as understood in modern society today, was non-existent in pre-colonial South Africa. This is not to suggest that individuals had unrestricted freedom to roam without adhering to any social norms or decorum. Instead, the relationship between humans and land had a different character. Pre-colonial South African communities did not follow the conventional hierarchical system where ‘landowners’ held exclusive rights and interests over a particular space.

Instead, emphasis was placed on the obligations people had toward a particular space, **in relation to** others who also occupied that space. Individuals were granted temporary rights to utilise resources in a given area only during the time of their utilisation, rather than asserting ultimate ownership over the property.⁴²

The shift of early humans from nomadic lifestyles to settler lifestyles had a profound impact on the commodification of common resources. As settlers established their presence on a piece of land, they automatically asserted exclusive '*rights over the property,*' effectively excluding others from accessing the resources within that land. This exclusivity led to a reduced overall supply of resources available to the broader community. This scarcity, in turn, provided an economic advantage to these '*landowners*' over others.⁴³ The process of commodifying land and property, through actions like colonisation and the establishment of settlements on new territories, ultimately led to the demise of the commons. Consequently, land that remains unclaimed by humans has become a rare phenomenon.

This reality is exemplified in England, as emphasised in Guy Shrubsole's book, "*Who Owns England?*" In England, the majority of land is owned either by the state (public sector, including the Crown) or the market (private sector organisations or individuals). However, an intriguing aspect arises in the form of the '*unaccounted for*' 17% of land, seemingly devoid of any owner.

Percentage of Landownership in England



Shrubsole suspects that this unaccounted for land* is, in fact, under the ownership of long-standing aristocratic families who have not formally registered their claims at the Land Registry, as these estates have been inherited for centuries, long before the establishment of the Land Registry in 1862.

In his 1968 book *“Le Droit à la ville”*, French Marxist Henri Lefebvre, describes the transformative power that an urban space (the ‘city’, along with its transformation) has on its inhabitants. He goes as far as to call for the control of urban spaces to be removed from the market and into the hands of the people – naming this concept, the *Right to the City*.

“The Right to the City is [...] far more than a right of individual or group access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change and reinvent the city more after our hearts’ desire.”

The right to transform urban areas was once held by commoners, where a collective right to land meant that the transformation of common land was shaped by its users. However, after centuries of enclosure and land appropriation, the modern landscape has become divided into parcels of land owned by both the state and the market, and it is now solely the landowners who possess the power to transform urban areas within their ownership.

It is essential to note that the nature of capitalism is the relentless pursuit of self-interest, as described by philosopher and economist Adam Smith:⁴⁵

“It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest.”

For the market, the primary interest is generating surplus capital, and any urban changes within their domain are shaped by this interest.

In contrast, state-owned land is expected to prioritize the people’s interests over profit. The state is theoretically bound by the Nolan Principles, a set of seven values upheld by all public servants and elected officials, emphasising “selflessness” as the first principle, defined as acting solely in the interests of the public.⁴⁶ Therefore, there is an assumption that a landowner bound by a principle of selflessness would not act in self-interest, thus providing its people with access to state-owned land and the resources it possesses.

But in practice, the state falls short of this ideal when exercising the transformative power it possesses over its claim. The source of the majority of these state failings is the subjective definition of the interests of the people.

In the context of New York, USA, notable state urban planner Robert Moses drastically transformed the city's infrastructure to prioritise motor vehicles while neglecting public transit systems like rail and bus services intentionally.

He believed that the people's interests lay in traversing America in motor vehicles and thus designed and constructed approximately 627 miles of motorways within the city. However, this design approach effectively excluded non-motor vehicle forms of transit, driven by Moses's racial and class biases. Consequently, it marginalised a significant portion of the population reliant on public transportation.⁴⁹

Moses held biases against the 'slum' areas of New York and cleared these areas to make space for expressways, viewing the demolished spaces and their inhabitants as collateral damage in the interest of the people he served. The damage caused by his actions has been documented through photography taken at the time, with countless images capturing the trenches cutting through the Bronx in the 1980s for the Cross Bronx Expressway, displacing approximately 1,500 families.



(Figure 1)



(Figure 2)

Robert Moses serves as a testament of the detrimental impact of state-driven urban transformation when not aligned with the interests of the communities it serves.

In modern-day London, the failures of state-sponsored urban transformation are evident in the gentrification of various city areas. Gentrification, a term coined by Ruth Glass in the 1960s and popularised by Professor Loretta Lees, refers to:⁵¹

“The transformation of a working-class or vacant area of the central city to a middle class residential and/or commercial use.”

Gentrification often targets working-class neighborhoods, particularly social housing estates known as the Ends. These estates, typically owned by public sector entities and supported by state welfare, are frequently earmarked for regeneration by state municipalities. This process mirrors the urban renewal initiatives carried out in the Bronx under Robert Moses and is driven by various factors, including economic pressures.

The 2010 UK General Election led to the formation of a Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government, which initiated a decade-long series of austerity measures across the nation. These measures resulted in significant budget cuts to housing, health, policing, and public services, reducing local authority resources. Simultaneously, a chronic housing supply shortage failed to meet demand, compelling the state to undertake social housing estate regeneration, often against the interests of the people.

So, why is the regeneration of London’s social housing estates not in the people’s interest?

In essence, such regeneration schemes do not meet the people's needs but rather displace them. The net loss of social tenure homes during estate regeneration projects stems from various economic constraints faced by the state. Many of these proposals are joint ventures with private sector organisations, known as public-private partnerships (PPPs),^{56,57} as the state alone cannot deliver on the housing supply needed to meet the market's demand. As private sector organizations' primary interest is in gaining the highest possible return on investment - this is achieved by influencing state policies and lobbying for regeneration projects. As a result, the boundary between the state and the market becomes increasingly blurred.

So, what about privatising the 'Ends'?

Allowing communities residing in social housing estates to gain ownership of their living spaces would transfer the power of urban transformation from the state into the hands of the people. As David Harvey expresses in his 2013 book "*Rebel Cities*":

“... through the exercise of private property rights, [...] when [...] collectively buy a building [a space can] be used for some progressive purpose. [...] they can establish a commune or a soviet within some protected space.”

If the Mandem are able to acquire ownership of their urban spaces, and collectively agree to a new way of governing their spaces (one focused on collective interests rather than individual self-interest) – privatisation has the potential to shape a new type of city.

One that is shaped by the Mandem.

Free the

Chapter Nine



Mandem

This was written for the Mandem. The “Mandem” being: the aunties, the uncles, the young bucks, the girls, the guys, the sisters, the akhis, the preachers and the sinners. Anyone and everyone that makes up our inner-city communities. Hear me out for a second...

The most powerful people in Britain are its landowners.

Think of a city as a complex mosaic of different land parcels, comprised of multiple villages, districts, and environments. In this urban mosaic, it is the landowners alone who have the power to change and transform the land they claim in accordance with their heart’s desires – their land becomes a physical manifestation of their ambitions, wants, motivations, and values.

Generally, landowners may be classified as either private or public entities, each with their own respective agendas.

In many instances, those who privately own land in our cities view it as a commodity – a product or an asset to trade with, in the interest of financial gain (“profit”). And any changes made to land or property within their claim is generally shaped by those interests.^{58,59}

In other instances, some parcels of land in our cities are owned by the state and are supposedly driven by the interests of its citizens rather than by profit. It is on these publicly owned parcels of land where we find the Ends - largely defined as Social Housing Estates, predominantly (but not exclusively) inhabited by the Mandem.

The gentrification of the Ends is one of the most pressing issues our cities face. In broad terms, gentrification is a market-driven process of the class remaking of urban areas. It involves the

'perceived rehabilitation' and transformation of the Ends by for-profit investors and developers, subsequently driving up property values - and pushing original residents out of the Ends, subsequently changing the social and cultural character.^{60,61}

“There were brothers playing motherfuckin’ African drums [here] for 40 years and now they can’t do it anymore because the new inhabitants said the drums are loud. My father’s a great jazz musician. He bought a house in nineteen-motherfuckin’-sixty-eight, and the motherfuckin’ people moved in last year and called the cops on my father. He’s not — he doesn’t even play electric bass! It’s acoustic! We bought the motherfuckin’ house in nineteen-sixty-motherfuckin’-eight and now you call the cops? In 2013? Get the fuck outta here.”

– Spike Lee, *On Gentrification*⁶² (2013)

Private lobbying of the public sector incentivises the state to exploit the huge reserve of capital value in the estates (“property assets”) under their ownership by selling it off at market rates, leading local councils to work alongside private developers - using policies, processes, and practices that displace the Mandem from their homes, in the name of regeneration.^{63,64}

By transferring publicly owned parcels of land to the private sector, successive governments - regardless of their political persuasions - have allowed the gentrification of the Ends to proceed under the pretence of regenerating “sink” estates.⁶⁵

For decades, our homes have been characterised by mainstream media narratives as uninhabitable and antisocial spaces. The term: ‘sink estates’ has become almost synonymous with the Ends, creating a narrative that the Ends is a place for the socially deviant and criminal.

To Sink /sɪŋk/

verb: descend to a lower level.

verb: to fall into a lower state, as of fortune; degenerate.

verb: to decline or deteriorate in quality or worth.

A Sink /sɪŋk/

noun: a drain.

noun: a sewer.

noun: pit for sewage or waste, as a cesspool.

This callous mischaracterisation and pathologising language can be traced back as far as the 1970s.⁶⁴ For instance, in the Labour government’s 1999 ‘Urban Renaissance’ strategy, aimed at revitalising various British cities, ‘sinking’ estates were identified

as a pressing issue that needed urgent attention.⁶⁶ Similarly, in 2016, former Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron referred to the Ends as 'sink estates' in a newspaper article. He vividly described them as "concrete slabs thrown down from brutal high-rise towers, with dark alleyways that become havens for criminals and drug dealers." He'd pledged to remove them and replace them with housing that is considered safe and attractive for residents.⁶⁷

The *sinking* narratives and deliberate 'managed decline' of the Ends - driven by government mandated austerity measures introduced in the early 2010s - has been a key catalyst for state programmes and public initiatives focused on "estate regeneration." Estate regeneration (or "urban renewal") in this context refers to the spatial and economic restructuring of the Ends through investment in neglected and underfunded areas. In most cities, these regeneration efforts are frequently accompanied by the process of gentrification.⁶⁸

In many cases, the term 'estate regeneration' is widely regarded as a euphemism for gentrification.^{60,64,69} Gentrification inflicts widespread and devastating damage, which can be summarised as:⁷⁰

SOCIAL DEGRADATION

As wealthier individuals move into gentrified areas, the Mandem are priced out due to rising rent or property costs. The intricate community network that organically develops over generations are disrupted as people are forced to relocate, often far from their Village – their established network of friends, family, and neighbours. This can lead to the Mandem experiencing increased feelings of isolation and

a loss of communal identity. Migrant individuals, in particular, often lose close proximity to others who share their cultural heritage, which manifests as a loss of access to culturally specific foods, businesses, and social systems essential for their survival and the preservation of their identity.

ECONOMIC EXCLUSION

Gentrification drives up the cost of living, making previously affordable areas unaffordable for lower-income residents. Displacement of the Mandem can mean losing proximity to their place of work, resulting in the need for longer commutes or, in some cases, losing their jobs entirely. The new, wealthier residents can often support higher rents and property prices, which leads to an economic barrier for those who originally lived there. Small, local businesses may also be driven out by rent hikes or replaced by higher-end establishments catering to a more affluent clientele, further marginalising the original residents economically.

CULTURAL CHANGES

Demolition of the Ends often erases the cultural heritage and character of the area, replacing it with an aesthetic that generally appeals to wealthier newcomers. The unique beauty and charm of the Ends are instead replaced by chain stores and luxury apartments, that cater to the incoming replacement population. This shift in culture and identity often alienates remaining residents, as they no longer recognise the place they once called home – creating a sense of cultural erasure.

NEGATIVE HEALTH IMPACTS

The mental and physical health consequences of gentrification are significant. The stress and anxiety associated with displacement, financial insecurity, and the breakdown of social networks can lead to increased rates of poor health among those that are affected. The sense of uncertainty that accompanies the threat of losing one's home and/or community is a severe psychological burden. Furthermore, the loss of one's village that once provided emotional and social support can leave individuals without a critical safety net, increasing their vulnerability.

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

Displacement often means that children have to leave their schools and adjust to new environments, which can disrupt their academic progress and social development. This instability can negatively affect a child's academic performance and overall well-being. Moreover, schools that serve gentrifying neighbourhoods may experience shifts in their demographics, with an influx of students depleting resources available and potentially leading to the marginalisation of students from lower-income backgrounds. As a result, the gap in educational opportunities and outcomes between wealthier and poorer students may widen, due to their lack of ability to supplement their education.

History has repeatedly shown that both public and private sector landowners consistently fail to address the needs of the Mandem and the Ends. Decisions about urban change made by

these landowners rarely reflect the interests of our communities. It often feels as if they are committed to a cycle of disinvestment, demolition and privatisation - where 'estate regeneration' programmes lead to the Mandem being forced out of the Ends, to live in far-away suburbs that diminish their social networks and sense of belonging.

This broken dynamic must end. The Mandem can no longer entrust the responsibility of the Ends to those who neither prioritise our well-being nor act in ways that protect our needs.

“[...] through the exercise of private property rights, [...] collectively buy a building [a space can] be used for some progressive purpose. [...] they can establish a commune or a soviet within some protected space.”

– David Harvey, *Rebel Cities*⁷¹ (2013)

So, how can we protect and preserve the Ends?

The answer: **We privatise the Mandem.**

Privatisation /prɪvətɪ'zeɪʃ(ə)n/

noun: the transfer from public or government control and/or ownership to private ownership.

To *Privatise the Mandem* is to inherit control of the land where our village stands, to become independent of the multiple agendas that impact our lives. Privatisation allows us to become landowners, thereby allowing us to become some of the most powerful people in Britain. It has the ability to turn the Ends into protected havens within our cities, and allows us to operate and exist on our own terms. When privatising, we're granted sovereignty and agency. It redistributes power into our communities and permits us to set our own economic agenda - an agenda that's informed by our own social needs. It is an act of self-love and self-defence, and provides us with the means to insulate the Ends from market trends and political negligence.

In short: **we are able to free the Mandem.**

By exercising private property rights (i.e. buying the Block through Collective Enfranchisement), the Mandem will not only be able to block and prevent gentrification efforts (since the state cannot sell land which is no longer theirs, and land which is not for sale cannot be bought by the private sector), but allows the Mandem to shape the Ends in accordance with our heart's desires (i.e. the Right to the City).

If we understand that the Ends across our cities are made up of diverse tribes and communities, each distinct in their own way with unique needs, then each tribe can address those needs in their own manner — by shaping the Hood using their own imagination and creativity.

[†] Refer to **Chapter Five: We Run The Block**

Privatising the Mandem affords us the freedom to be self-determining, the freedom to be self-sufficient, the freedom to be autonomous and sovereign, the freedom to restructure our environments, the freedom to imagine and dream, and most importantly, the freedom to make mistakes and to learn from them.

**“Land is the basis of all independence.
Land is the basis of freedom, justice,
and equality.”**

– Malcolm X, *“Message to the Grassroots”* (1963)

Castles

Chapter Ten



There's a beauty that exists in the Ends that's rarely communicated. Between the caged sports courts, chicken shops, concrete balconies, bookies, laundrettes, off-licenses and narrow alleyways, exists a people that are beautiful. This beauty is attributed almost exclusively to the Mandem – the fusion of all our different identities and cultures. The kinship one experiences in the Hood is unparalleled anywhere else. There exists a love and compassion that is derived from a shared geography and specific lived experiences. In spite of the hardships and challenges faced in the Ends, it is this very love that radiates and defines the Hood as beautiful.

Our beauty has been brought into question for decades - as the political classes and media outlets have continuously and unfairly portrayed the Mandem as gun-toting young people, with long-suffering mothers, absent of responsibilities. Traits that are often unfairly exhibited as typical for those in poverty. Many of these negative narratives come from entities and people who have not, and do not, exist or manoeuvre in Ends. Their narratives are often accepted as objective fact, despite rarely being based on verified information. Frequently, these negative accounts lean toward sensationalism, driven by the pursuit of readership or political agendas.

The vilification of the Mandem is shaped not only by negative attitudes towards race and racialised communities but also by the historical demonisation of the 'working classes.'

The danger of these false vilifications is that when they are misinterpreted, distorted, or deliberately falsified - they can have catastrophic consequences for the Mandem. Not only are negative depictions and stereotypes absorbed and internalised, but the constant exposure to these vilifications can also cause many of us to lose sight of our own beauty, eventually adopting

the caricatured versions imposed upon us. This constant barrage leads to fatigue and, ultimately, submission to the negative portrayals.⁷²

This constant vilification of the Mandem is a major contributor to the 'sinking' narrative imposed onto the Ends, and forms the bedrock of the argument for Estate Regeneration.

This can no longer run.

To suggest that the Ends requires '*regeneration*' implies that there is a need for *generation* or *genesis* – that 'life' must be introduced to it via urban renewal. Yet, the reality is that the Ends already serves as the epicentre of cultural, economic, and creative activity in modern Britain. The Ends has given rise to countless accomplished and successful artists, athletes, cultural icons, fashion trends, politicians, and more.

It is the Mandem who are the architects of creativity and innovation that is so revered by the global community – a creativity and innovation that originates from the Ends. To assume that our creativity is supposedly borne from a place of *death*, a place that is absent of *life*, is simply false. In reality the Ends is full of life. It's full of love. It's full of compassion. It is from this richness that our creativity and innovation is born.

Despite our beauty, the characterisation of the Ends as an '*unsightly and outdated*' urban environment has been popular among built environment professionals, including politicians, architects, and urban planners. Many of whom believe that the Ends is poorly constructed and needs to be made *beautiful*. This perceived ugliness of the Ends is a significant catalyst for the estate regeneration efforts observed today – in many cases the regeneration process follows this pattern...

Implicit Bias

1

Many individuals, including those in the ruling and political classes in Britain, harbour implicit biases against people from different racial backgrounds and lower income levels. These classes also wield substantial power over urban transformation, either through private ownership or high-ranking positions in the public sector.^{73,74}

Over-Policing

2

In Britain, implicit biases among the ruling and political classes result in over-policing, with Black and Minority Ethnic communities facing disproportionately more police attention than their White counterparts, as outlined in the Macpherson Report.^{75,76} This over-policing primarily occurs in Ends occupied by Black and Minority Ethnic communities.⁷⁷

Disproportional Crime Data

3

Crime statistics are published in public databases that log and record criminal activity by geographical location. The amount of crime data recorded in a specific area is directly proportional to the level of policing activity in that area.

Vilification

4

Profiling urban spaces based on crime data can create false narratives. These narratives, which associate high crime levels with a particular urban area and its inhabitants, can lead to the area being flagged for regeneration with the goal of reducing crime. However, the relationship between urban regeneration and crime reduction is tenuous and lacks substantial evidence.⁷⁸

Estate Regeneration

5

Scores of families are displaced, and communities are torn apart – frequently followed by gentrification.

One could argue that the vilification of the Ends serves as a convenient narrative to justify regeneration and gentrification efforts that prioritises profit, at the expense of the Mandem. The systemic issues driving the stigmatisation and challenges faced in Ends are often overlooked, allowing landowners to present 'regeneration' as a necessity rather than a choice. Rather than addressing the root causes of social and economic inequalities in Ends, landowners opt for superficial solutions that prioritise (supposedly) aesthetic improvements and property value increases over the well-being of the Mandem.

The focus on the *ugliness* of the Ends diverts attention from the underlying issues of structural inequality and racial discrimination that contribute to the challenges faced by the Mandem.

A common argument for estate regeneration is that the Ends have reached the "*end of their building lifecycle*", and that these Blocks were "*originally designed as temporary structures*". However, such claims are often speculative, sensationalist, and lack substantial supporting evidence.⁷⁹ While it is true that most urban structures have temporary lifespans, their longevity can be extended through investment, careful maintenance, and refurbishment.⁸⁰ This is evidenced by the extensive literature dedicated solely to maintaining and renovating aging Victorian, Georgian, and Edwardian buildings – structures far older than the post-war housing that typically makes up the Hood.^{81,82}

Our cities are shaped by the pursuit of beauty - whatever is deemed *beautiful* is often valued, preserved, and conserved. Whatever is considered ugly is often redeveloped, renewed, and regenerated into something perceived as having greater aesthetic value. However, the reality is that perceptions of 'beauty' in urban spaces are ultimately subjective (meaning influenced or based on personal feelings, taste, or opinion).

This subjectivity of urban beauty is illustrated by the differing fates of two Blocks – the Park Hill estate in Sheffield (built between 1957 and 1962), and the Chalkhill estate in London (built between 1966 and 1970).

Both estates have identical Brutalist architectural expressions, and feature elevated walkways connecting multiple Blocks, often referred to as *'streets in the sky.'* The Chalkhill estate's design was based on that of Park Hill, and both estates were built using Bison concrete systems, resulting in almost identical buildings.^{83,84}

In 2004, Sheffield Council transferred ownership of the Park Hill estate to private developers, Urban Splash, who recognised its value and chose to refurbish and retain its Brutalist features. Urban Splash's co-founder, Tom Bloxham, described the estate as "[...] (*dominating*) the Sheffield skyline like a castle on a hill and it's been a privilege – if quite a challenging one – to be able to work with this Brutalist masterpiece and bring it back to life".^{85,86}

In contrast, the Chalkhill estate in London was viewed as haunting, blighted, and in dire need of regeneration.⁸⁷ In 1994, the Metropolitan Housing Trust demolished 1,900 houses and flats across the estate as part of the regeneration programme, following the transfer of ownership from the state.^{88,89}

The contrasting fates of these two estates were heavily influenced by their landowners' perception of what looks *beautiful*. Each landowner's pursuit of beauty led to very different outcomes for the two estates.

Park Hill Estate, Sheffield



Refurbished, retrofitted, and, preserved.



Chalkhill Estate, London



Demolished and reconstructed.



The pursuit of beauty has been a major topic in British politics for generations, shaping the country's cityscapes according to the views of those in power throughout time. The concept of beauty has been debated since the earliest days of human civilisation, and in some cases, the pursuit of it can be destructive. For example, in November 2018, the British government set up the 'Building Better, Building Beautiful' Commission, a group of experts focused on promoting 'beauty' in the UK's built environment – where Roger Scruton, co-chair of the commission, famously said during a public debate on 24th January 2019:

“If it hadn't been so ugly to begin with, the whole problem would never have happened.”

He was referring to the Grenfell Tower fire that occurred on the 14th of June 2017.

Accounts and documents collected from the '2019 Grenfell Inquiry' highlighted that the cladding responsible for the spread of the fire was a low-cost method of improving the appearance of the tower and to insulate the building.

Planning documents for the façade works highlighted that: *“due to its height, the tower is visible from the adjacent Avondale Conservation Area to the south and the Ladbroke Conservation Area to the east”* and that *“changes to the existing tower will improve its appearance especially when viewed from the surrounding area”*.

Prioritising the tower's appearance for nearby residents over the safety of Grenfell's residents resulted in a decision to install

highly flammable cladding to its exterior, even at the cost of safety. The landowners of Grenfell Tower prioritised making the building appear more beautiful, over ensuring the safety and well-being of its residents.

In the case of Grenfell, the pursuit of beauty had tragic consequences. Grenfell Tower was labelled an eyesore, prompting efforts to enhance its appearance. However, in the pursuit of beauty, over 72 lives were lost.

Beauty and its perception are fundamentally influenced by an individual's tastes and values. In his work, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1979), French anthropologist and sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu argues that an individual's tastes and values are shaped by their social origins. These origins involve factors such as education, race, upbringing, heritage, lineage, and one's position within society's social hierarchy.

Bourdieu explains that an individual's perception of what is 'beautiful' is primarily shaped by their '*habitus*,' which he defines as "a subjective but not individual system of internalised structures, schemas of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class."

In other words, our habitus is a set of deeply ingrained beliefs and habits that are shared by people from the same social group. These beliefs and habits are not something we consciously think about; instead, we pick them up naturally through our experiences and upbringing.⁹⁰

When people operate within an environment that shapes their habitus, especially among others who share a similar habitus, they often become less aware of it. Bourdieu uses the analogy of a '*fish in water*' to explain this, contrasting it with the discomfort of

being a 'fish out of water' when outside one's habitus. The more ingrained our habitus is, the more we accept it as the absolute truth. As a result, anything outside our own habitus is often seen as wrong, illegitimate, or lacking in beauty.⁹¹

So, it begs the question: who decides what is considered beautiful? Whose habitus shapes perceptions of beauty within the city?

The Ends have often been labelled as ugly — a judgment rooted in the habitus of those who neither value us nor recognise our beauty. This judgement is shaped by people who do not have our best interests at heart and create false narratives about the Mandem.

It's time we redefine our narratives. We need to create a new story, one shaped by our own experiences, not by the biases of others. A narrative grounded in truth, not prejudice. We must affirm this truth:

The Ends are modern-day castles. And these castles are inhabited by Kings and Queens. And the Ends, along with its inhabitants, are nothing short of beautiful.

That is the truth.



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Gums &



Chapter Eleven

Butter

Once the Mandem take control of their land and privatise the ownership of their Ends, their Hood becomes protected under private property rights. This means that the state cannot interfere with the peaceful enjoyment of our property, deprive us of our possessions, or subject our property to external control. Furthermore, these private property rights ensure that there is no obligation to sell our freeholds to outside parties, like for-profit developers.

Essentially, our Hoods become independent and sovereign – they become *Free Hoods*.

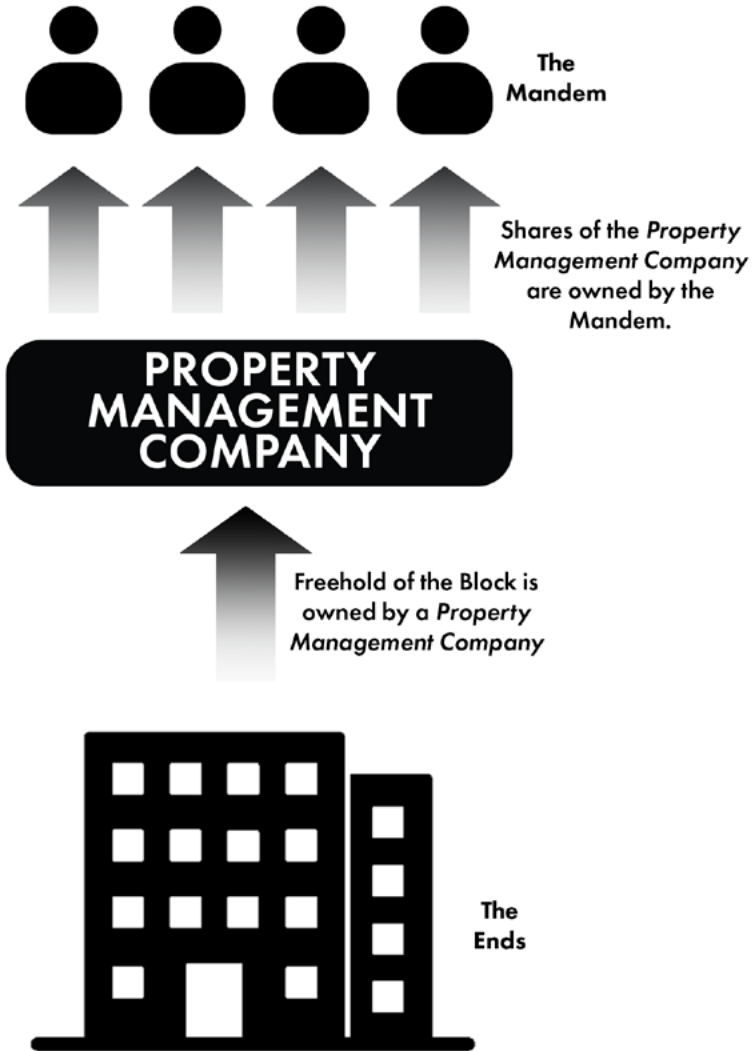
Free Hood /fri: hʊd/

noun: a term to describe an estate that has been privatised and is in full control by the Mandem.

The term “Free Hood” is fitting, as it echoes the concept of a *Free Estate*, which describes assets that an individual owns, controls, and can pass on to others through a will. When the Mandem acquire the freehold of their Block through Collective Enfranchisement[†], each one of the Mandem’s stake in the *Property Management Company* that owns the freehold becomes their *Free Estate*. This means their share in the Free Hood can be passed down to future generations, securing the legacy and autonomy of the Ends. See **page 108**.

[†] Refer to **Chapter Five: We Run The Block**

Ownership Structure of Free Hoods:



One of the first challenges a Free Hood will face as an autonomous, sovereign entity is figuring out the balance between “guns and butter.” This comes from a basic economics concept that represents the tough decisions the Mandem will face between investing in defence – “guns” – or in production – “butter.”

GUNS – *for defending*

“Guns” refer to the systems and practices that creates safety and security for the Ends and the Mandem. This could manifest as having security teams patrolling the Hood, or making sure we have a voice in political spaces that can protect our interests.

The main custodians of our “guns” are our **fighters** – where their primary objective is to defend their Free Hood.

The rise of Free Hoods across Britain will undoubtedly cause unrest and disruption – across all political, economic, and cultural spheres. Our fighters must be ready to protect the Hood, across all spheres at all times. The act of creating Free Hoods is in itself an act of dissent, and it will make many uncomfortable. We must be ready to defend ourselves, because our freedom will threaten those who benefit from keeping things as they are.

Many will argue against the autonomy of the Mandem. Some will question our right to control our own spaces, while others will attempt to undermine our progress, claiming that our independence threatens the status quo. But make no mistake – our freedom will be seen as a challenge to those who profit from keeping us disempowered. And it’s exactly because of this resistance that we must remain vigilant.

“Nobody in the world, nobody in history, has ever gotten their freedom by appealing to the moral sense of the people who were oppressing them.”

– Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*

Our fighters must protect the Mandem from ill will, from those who would rather see us divided than united in our pursuit of sovereignty. There will be those who aim to infiltrate, mislead, and deceive the Mandem for their own personal gain. These individuals will try to exploit our resources, our vulnerabilities, and even our sense of community. They must be stamped out – our fighters’ duty is to safeguard the Ends from exploitation and to ensure that our freedom remains untouchable.

Our fighters must be equipped to not only defend the Hood physically but also shield the Mandem from malicious intent. This includes recognising those who would harm us – whether through bad business deals, predatory policies, or manipulative tactics aimed at destabilising us. We must be wise to their methods and swift in neutralising any threats to the Mandems collective well-being.

Our fighters need to be well-versed in defending the Free Hood on all fronts – politically, economically, and culturally. Politically, they must engage with public institutions and government bodies to ensure that our voices are heard, our rights are protected, and our interests are considered. Economically, they need to guard against external forces that

might try to exploit our resources or undercut our economies. Culturally, they should preserve the integrity of the Hood, making sure that our traditions, values, and way of life are not diluted or erased by actors with their own agendas.

One of the strengths of a Free Hood lies in its ability to protect itself from all forms of attack — whether they come from within or outside our Block. We must remain alert and prepared, because the creation of Free Hoods is not just an act of independence but a direct stand against a system that was never built for us. Our survival and prosperity depend on how well we can defend ourselves, our land, and our people.

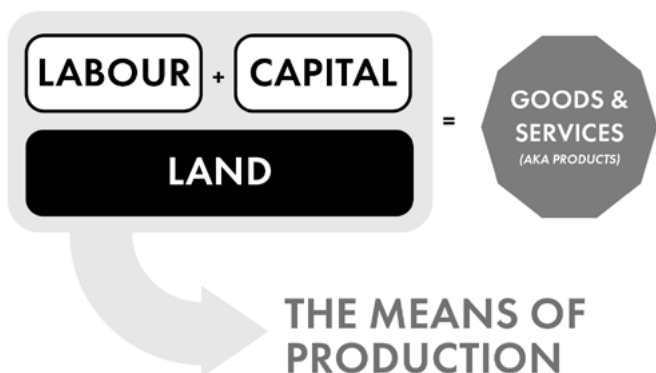
BUTTER — *for building*

“*Butter*” represents the physical infrastructure and services that meet the everyday needs of the Mandem. This includes things like education, healthcare, access to nature, and more. But “*butter*” also refers to the goods and cultural products created by the Mandem that contribute to the local economy, such as music, arts, sports, knowledge, and fashion. These outputs not only sustain the Ends but help build a thriving economy that reflects our cultures and identities.

The custodians of “*butter*” production in Ends are our **farmers** — where their primary objective is to nurture the Mandem and create prosperity. Our farmers are the creators, educators, healthcare workers, and local leaders who ensure that the Mandem have everything needed to thrive. They play a key role in building a sustainable and prosperous future for the Ends.

Modern economic systems rely on what’s called the “*means of production*,” which consists of the combination of land,

labour, and capital. Together, these elements are fundamental for producing goods and services.⁹²



Land, in particular, serves as the foundation upon which economies are built. In this way, whoever owns land holds immense power over what can be produced (i.e. owning the “*means of production*”) and how wealth flows through the Ends. This is especially true in metropolitan cities, where land is a key resource for generating productivity and economic growth.

Owning the Ends means owning the “*means of production*”. When our farmers harness their creativity (and “labour”), they are not only able to produce for the Free Hood, but also for neighbouring areas, the wider city, and the global community at large. This opens up the opportunity to generate capital that can be reinvested into the Hood, ensuring its ongoing success and maintenance. The creative and innovative potential of the Mandem is limitless, and it’s this power that will drive the Ends forward.

As interdisciplinary artist Daniel Oduntan put it:⁹³

“All of our major cultural moments and shifts have been built on social housing [...] We create it, shift the culture and push it out to the world [...] Ends becomes this Mecca and the way things are done becomes a bible [...].”

By tapping into this creative energy, new capital brought into our Free Hoods can be used to support and subsidise our “*butter*” infrastructures — such as heating networks, electricity, agriculture, healthcare, transportation, and telecommunications. It also includes cultural and creative spaces that help retain and support our farmers — places like museums, art galleries, theatres, libraries, music venues, rehearsal spaces, cinemas, creative arts centres, studios, production facilities, incubators, and more.

In short, the flow of new capital into the Free Hood will enable us to build and sustain the physical and cultural foundations that serve the Mandem, fostering a thriving, self-sufficient economy that’s free from outside exploitation.

Key Functions of Guns & Butter Infrastructures in Free Hoods:



It's important to emphasise that the Mandem are not limited to exclusively assuming the role of a **farmer** or **fighter**. We are not restricted to a single role — if someone primarily acts as a farmer, they can still step into the role of a fighter when the situation calls for it, and vice versa. At times, an individual may need to assume both roles, or they might choose to focus on just one. What's essential, however, is that each Free Hood holds both farmers and fighters.

Striking the right balance between guns and butter is crucial for the survival and prosperity of the Ends. In times of peace, there may be less need for fighters, as the focus shifts toward building, creating, and nurturing the community. During those moments, farmers — those who provide vital services and infrastructure — become the backbone of the Hood. They support the economy, culture, and soul of the Ends.

However, when war or conflict arises, the need for fighters becomes undeniable. In those moments, defending the Hood takes priority, and our fighters step up to protect what the farmers have built. During these times, the fighters safeguard the space where the Mandem live, ensuring that the Hood remains safe from external threats.

Both roles are equally important and rely on one another. Farmers create the foundation upon which the Mandem thrive, and fighters protect that foundation when it's under attack. Without farmers, the Hood cannot grow or sustain itself; without fighters, the Hood cannot defend what has been created.

In short, the Mandem need both farmers and fighters to maintain balance, because the strength of a Free Hood comes from having the ability to both build and defend in equal measure.

Hood

Chapter Twelve



Futurism

By taking control of the Ends through private ownership and remixing them, we not only stop outsiders from imposing their visions of a 'regenerated' estate — a vision that often leads to dispossession, displacement, and gentrification — but we also open the door to a new future for the Hood.

Privatising the Mandem can be a game-changer, sparking the imagination of new possibilities for the Ends as the power shifts from the state to the Mandem.

It is inevitable that each community, with its unique identity and needs, will come up with its own vision for the future of its Hood. When we ask, '*what could we do if we controlled the Ends?*', the answer would look different depending on the imagination of each collective. This means we'll see a variety of futures unfold across the city, each one a reflection of the community it serves.

These futures are not some distant, utopian fantasy. The word '*utopia*' comes from the Greek words *ou* (meaning "not") and *topos* (meaning "place") — implying a future that doesn't really exist. But when we talk about 'Privatising the Mandem', we're talking about real, achievable futures. These are practical, possible futures, where the freedom to shape the Ends can lead to continuous improvement and positive change.^{94,95}

With this freedom, anything is possible. We'll have the freedom to try new things, make mistakes, and learn from them. We will undoubtedly fluctuate between good times and bad times. When we get it right, we can build on those successes. And when we make mistakes, we'll learn from them, adjust, and keep moving forward. It's a process of growth — some changes we introduce will be good, sometimes not — but overall, we'll be moving towards something better than what came before. Over time, with this freedom, we'll develop a deeper understanding

of ourselves and what it means to become better; not just for ourselves, but for wider society.

Mistakes will happen, and when they do, charge it to the game, learn from them, and move on. Progress will also happen, and when it does, we'll celebrate it, share it, and keep building.

It's important to remember that as we improve and evolve the Ends, we might have to let go of some old beauties and comforts, and will undeniably face new problems — but this is the cost of freedom.⁹⁵ But the freedom to be self-determining is worth that cost.

To ensure our Hoods thrive and succeed, the Mandem must have a clear vision for their Hood, and make conscious decisions about who they are, what they want their Ends to achieve, and how their Block serves them, the wider city, the country, and the world. Our success can only be realised if we have a clear vision, guided by strong and inspiring direction. Without it, the Ends will remain vulnerable to those who seek our downfall.

“If we don't handle our independence well, colonisers will return in the form of investors.”

– **Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe, Zambian politician, and contributor to Zambia's liberation from colonial rule**

To support in achieving this, we need to create memories for our future selves — reminders of the world we wish to bring into being. These dreams and aspirations form the foundation of **Hood Futurism**.

Hood Futurism first emerged in 2013 on Tumblr through an account called 'YungFuturist'. It is a visual style that fuses the vibrant energy of contemporary Black art, performance, and culture with the imaginative aesthetics of science fiction and futuristic elements. Hood Futurism has carved out its own identity as a subculture within the larger realm of Afrofuturism.[‡]

In the context of land and space, Hood Futurism describes a vision of the future shaped by the lived experiences and perspectives of those in the Ends. It focuses on how design, investment, technology, and innovation can be used to improve the lives of the Mandem, addressing both challenges and opportunities faced by the community.

At its core, Hood Futurism is a genre that imagines the future of the Ends when the Mandem take ownership.

Hood Futurism can be expressed through countless mediums — music, film, photography, painting, animation, literature, theatre, etc. It also extends to architectural renderings, estate management strategies, planning minutes, contracts, etc. Though it is a form of speculative fiction, Hood Futurism does not stray far from reality, unlike other forms of speculative fiction or alternate histories. Instead, it is grounded in the present history of the Ends and envisions a possible future shaped by the Mandem following privatisation.

Hood Futurists are individuals who use their skills, creativity, and discipline in new and imaginative ways in order to serve the future of the Mandem and the Ends.

[‡] Tumblr accessed 15th April 2024 [hoodfuturism.tumblr.com]

It is imperative that Hood Futurists abide by the following code:

WHO A HOOD FUTURIST MUST BE:

A servant to the Mandem.

You ain't benevolent, and ain't doing nobody no favours. You're a servant, nothing more.

An individual who loves all the Mandem.

Yes, all of them. The 'bless' ones and the 'not-so-bless' ones.

Someone who listens attentively to the Mandem.

You don't always know best. Listen to what your people have to say. They have the answers.

An individual who wants to protect the Mandem from badness.

You have to cast out badness - on a physical, spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and social level.

Someone who's committed to delivering changes that are in the interest of the Mandem.

The only change that is welcome is change that benefits the Mandem.

Someone who's open to collaborating with others and welcomes new thought.

Allow the solitary ting. The link ups have to run regularly.

Someone who possesses the audacity to try new things.

Stay audacious. Stay dangerous.

An individual who is bound by their word.

No lying. No euphemisms. No dishonesty.

Someone who recognises the various personalities and identities that make up their hood.

The Mandem are not a homogenous monolith. Have you considered everyone?

Someone who recognises the power, beauty, and authority of the Mandem.

We don't need no external validation. We trust in us.

Someone who understands the Mandem's pasts.

You have to know where you come from, to know where you're going.

An individual who moves with grace and forgiveness.

Kindness, consideration, and compassion is the name of the game.

WHO A HOOD FUTURIST CAN'T BE:

An individual who does not honour women, men, and everybody in their Hood.

Sort out your issues – because you cannot serve those you do not honour.

Someone who is willing to offset the responsibility of their Hood onto another.

Palming off your duties to someone else? Dead. You don't handle business.

Someone who acts alone and cannot be held to account by the Mandem.

Can the Mandem check you? Do they know who you are?

Someone who expects to be loved in exchange for their love.

This ain't transactional. Don't be a beg.

Someone who seeks to make economic profit from the ends.

Exploitation ain't it.

Someone who's unforgiving and resentful.

Heal yourself before you try heal the hood, because hurt people hurt people.

Self-interested.

It is not about you.

An individual who seeks retribution and revenge for historical pains.

You can't allow others to inherit your beef. You have to take yours with you to the grave.

An individual who does not place the YGs on a pedestal.

The village has to embrace the next gen. Non-negotiable.

Believes that the mandem are a homogenous monolith.

There's more to the Hood than meets the eye. Chat to your neighbours more

Someone who speaks the business of their hood unnecessarily.

Don't be loose lipped. Don't be a chatty patty. And obviously, no snitching.

Someone who is complacent.

Never get gassed. There's always work to do.

Someone who believes they are incapable of making mistakes.

Humble yourself. Ediat.

Believes in the superiority of a given race, gender, and/or class.

Kmt.

WHAT A HOOD FUTURIST VALUES:

Love

Integrity

Honour

Respect

Loyalty

Dignity

Humility

Prosperity

Autonomy

Life

Following the Hood Futurist Code is a commitment to uplifting the Mandem, fostering love, integrity, and loyalty - while actively working towards creating a prosperous future driven by respect and self-determination.

Ultimately, Hood Futurism is about reimagining the Blocks we live in through the eyes of the Mandem — not as passive inhabitants, but as active architects of our own future.

Remixing



Chapter Thirteen

Ends

Landowners hold a unique power: they can physically transform the land they own, turning it into a reflection of their values and ambitions. This ability gives them significant influence over the world around them, as the land becomes a way to express both individual and collective ideals. Only landowners hold what's known as the '*Right to the City*,' (the right to change and reinvent the city after one's desires) meaning they have the authority to shape their surroundings and, in doing so, directly impact the future of cities across the world.

In other words, it is our landowners who decide what the city looks like.

And it is these landowners who have left the Ends blighted with no maintenance and care.

According to writer Adrienne Maree Brown, the world we live in is shaped by someone's imagination — people build the world around them based on their vision of it. However, the values driving this imagined reality aren't absolute truths.⁹⁶ Historically, these imagined values have rejected the worth of the Mandem, labelled the Ends as ugly, and turned land into a commodity to be bought and sold to the highest bidder. All of which when combined, leads to the displacement of the Mandem, and gentrification of the Ends.

We currently live under the influence of White patriarchy, a system built on capitalist and supremacist values — a system that dates back to the 16th Century.⁹⁷ This system systematically marginalises and oppresses the Mandem, not only by restricting access to resources and opportunities, but also through urban renewal projects that further displace and isolate our communities.⁹⁸

The Ends and the Mandem are trapped within a capitalist system that values profit above all else. In capitalism, what doesn't make money or become a business is often dismissed. Morality, ethics, and fairness can be overlooked, while greed and individualism are prioritised. Silence and obedience can be bought.

Many cities across the globe are being shaped by for-profit developers who are limited by capitalist values, stifling the creation of equitable cities. Urban change, driven by speculation, maintains the status quo and ignores the needs of the Mandem, perpetuating social inequalities.^{60,99}

“The place in which I’ll fit will not exist until I make it.”

– James Baldwin, from a letter to Sol Stein (1957)

But if the Mandem followed the tenets of ‘Privatise the Mandem’ and gained the means to transform the Ends, a new vision for the city could emerge — one built on the collective imagination of the Mandem, rather than that of outsiders. Imagining ‘*what might the Ends be like*’ through the eyes of the Mandem opens the door to many possible futures. By claiming ownership of the Ends, and creating Free Hoods, the Mandem could envision futures free from oppression — by dismantling violent systems and building structures focused on prosperity, integrity, and healing.

When the Mandem become landowners, we gain the power to imagine, create, and shape the Ends according to our imaginations. And rightfully so, because the ability to imagine what the Ends could be like should belong to us, the inhabitants.

And although, we must avoid idealising or romanticising the Ends, as that would ignore the real challenges we face – we simply cannot depend on solutions for the Ends from outsiders who are disconnected from our experiences, and who bring cultural biases, conflicting values, and preconceived notions about us. Many of whom imagine the Ends without the Mandem. The Mandem must lead the way in shaping these solutions, as no one is better positioned to address the problems we face than the Mandem themselves.

While others have used their power to “regenerate” the Ends, we may use our own power to meet our needs and tap into our creativity to transform the Ends into something new. After all, we are no strangers to creativity — it’s widely acknowledged that the Ends is the birthplace of British culture and creativity in all its forms.^{100–102}

Mixtape culture, for example, is a cornerstone of British creative and cultural production — born in the Ends and driven by British Black culture.^{101,103} Musical genres like grime, trap, road rap, garage, and others have provided a vital outlet for the Mandem in Ends, offering a lifeline to those often excluded from economic and social opportunities.

It’s common for these musical genres to **remix** popular and chart-topping songs, creating new musical renditions. Through this creative process, the Mandem craft their own versions of mainstream tracks — often without the benefit of the significant investment, top-tier A&R expertise, and professional production that typically back the originals. Remixing provides a vital creative outlet for the Mandem, who often lack access to such resources.¹⁰⁴ In some cases, a single song can inspire numerous remixes — each unique and reflecting the specific Hood’s aesthetic and shared vocabulary.

While remixing can sometimes extend the continuity of the original work, in most remixed music emerging from Ends, there's a deliberate break in continuity. The original track is often mined or stripped for components to create something entirely new. In the end, the remix distances itself from its predecessor, placing more emphasis on the creativity of the remixer rather than the original piece.¹⁰⁵

When it comes to transforming and reshaping the Ends, an opportunity emerges for the Mandem to apply the same logic and principles to land as we do to music – where, like remixing, we can create our own version(s) of the original.

Through privatisation, the Mandem can apply the concept of “remixing” to land (i.e., remixing Ends), moving away from terms like “estate regeneration” and rejecting the notion that the Ends is a place without life.

By remixing the Ends, we can break the continuity of how the Ends are currently experienced, reimagining the present-day Hood to create a new one. This remixed Hood distances itself from its predecessor – a space shaped by the imagination of former landowners – and instead highlights our vision of the Ends, rather than the original.

By remixing the Ends, we can adjust and reconfigure urban elements to create an environment that better serves the Mandem. Our approach must prioritise minimal new construction, favour the refurbishment of existing structures over demolition, and focus on strategic interventions to maximise improvements. We may be able to create places for amenities that promote our talents and skills, whilst supporting local jobs and creating a local economy that serves our economic agendas – informed by our needs. This may entail focusing on creating infrastructures for talents

related (but not limited) to food, fashion, sports, and music. As the Mandem remix the Ends, they are able to craft their own vision of how the land under their ownership looks and functions.

“[We] need a spot where we can kick it, a spot where we belong, that’s just for us, [...] where we can drink liquor, and no one bickers over trick shit, a spot where we can smoke in peace, and even though we G’s, we still visualise places, that we can roll in peace.”

– Tupac Amaru Shakur on his posthumously released 2002 song *“Thugz Mansion”*

There are three key rules that must be followed for estate remixing to be successful:

- 1** Act in the interest of the Mandem as a collective.
- 2** Support the creation of an environment that reflects the Mandem and their values.
- 3** Unlearn societal norms and conventions to foster new norms and practices that better suit the Mandem.

Remixing estates is guided by the aforementioned principles, but the outcomes will not be uniform. Each Hood will interpret estate remixing in its own way, shaping it around the unique values and identities of its community. By prioritising local knowledge and lived experiences over a top-down, “cookie-cutter” approach, this process will create a dynamic city – a city reminiscent of a complex urban mosaic that recognises and celebrates the rich diversity of the Mandem.

In addition to the core remixing rules, estate remixing can be further guided by the following principles. While these are not strict mandates (except for those marked with an asterisk*, which are mandatory), they serve as provocations for consideration:

- **Renovation and refurbishment of buildings should take precedence over demolition.***
- **Displacement of the Mandem is strictly prohibited.***
- **Create infrastructures and economies that serve the Mandem, both in new and current ways.**
- **Celebrate the lineage and pay homage to the Mandem.**
- **Protect and ensure the safety of the Mandem.**
- **Safeguard the authority and sovereignty of the Mandem over the Ends.**
- **Strengthen relationships between nature and the Mandem.**
- **Inspire love, joy, and beauty for the Mandem through culture and creativity.**

The potential unlocked by land under our ownership is vast, and the possibility for our cities to reflect our beauty is one of boundless promise. With such promise, we would rather live in the imagination of the Mandem.



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Making

Chapter Fourteen



Ends Meet

Our world is divided into two major economic regions: the Global North and the Global South. This divide was first introduced by former West German Chancellor, Willy Brandt in his 1980 report, *'North-South: A Programme for Survival'*, often called the 'Brandt Report.' The report highlights the 'Brandt Line,' which clearly shows the stark economic differences between these two regions.

World Map illustrating the Global Divide:



In simple terms, the Global North, which makes up about 1/5th of the world's population, controls roughly 4/5th of the world's wealth. Meanwhile, the Global South, home to the remaining 4/5th of the population, holds only 1/5th of the world's income.¹⁰⁶⁻¹⁰⁸ The distribution of wealth across the North and South is extremely disproportional, and a key feature that connects many countries in the Global South is their shared history of colonialism — as most were once colonies of Northern nations.

These colonial pasts continue to affect these nations today, as many still struggle with the long-lasting impacts of resource theft and unfair economic trade carried out by their former colonisers. Many of the economic challenges faced by the Global South in the 21st Century can often be traced back to these historical injustices.¹⁰⁹⁻¹¹²

You might think this information has no relevance with freeing the Mandem, but it's more relevant than it seems...

Many of the Mandem are descendants of immigrants, the children of former colonies who came in search of better opportunities and a more prosperous future. We now reside in the multicultural pockets of Britain's major cities, and our presence in the Global North is a direct consequence of the exploitation, extortion, and destruction of our ancestral lands.

The movement of people from the Global South to the North is complex, shaped by both "push" and "pull" factors. Push factors — such as prejudice, war, and persecution — often stem from decisions made in the Global North and drive people away from their homelands. On the flip side, pull factors, such as economic opportunities, draw people toward cities in the North in search of a better life.^{113,114}

Migrants from the Global South often end up in the countries of their former colonisers — not necessarily by choice, but due to pre-existing travel routes, policies, and infrastructures established during the colonial period.¹¹⁵⁻¹¹⁷ A key example is the British Nationality Act of 1948, which granted British citizens entry to Commonwealth nations (previously colonies of the British Empire) — this policy was mainly designed to preserve what was left of the British Empire. However, what wasn't anticipated was that racialised Commonwealth citizens would

use it to gain entry into Britain. Over the following decades, many others sought refuge in Britain, fleeing conflicts like wars of independence (e.g., Bangladesh in the 1970s), expulsion (e.g., East African Asians in the 1970s), and failed uprisings (e.g., the 2011 Arab uprisings). Many were invited by Britain, such as in the 1950s, when the Windrush generation were invited to rebuild the country, providing much-needed labour following the end of World War II.¹¹⁸

The Mandem are concentrated in large metropolitan areas because these cities are hubs of economic activity, especially in the Global North. It's in these urban centres that the Mandem seek and find capital. As they settle, they contribute to the rich cultural diversity of these cities, creating a vibrant blend of traditions that shapes the modern multicultural city. The Mandem, whether first-generation immigrants or descendants, inherit this cultural fusion, living and thriving in the Ends. This urban dynamic is not unique to Britain; it can also be observed in cities like Paris, Berlin, and Madrid.¹¹⁹

“Whether in England or France, we do not deal with the feds. Whether in London or Paris we do not sit on the fence.”

– **Headie One and Koba LaD, in *Link in the Ends* (2022)**

As a result of this potent multiculturalism, the Mandem have become some of the most influential creators of cultural capital in the world — and cultural capital can be exchanged for economic capital. And “capital” goes beyond just economics

— sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu’s 1986 theory on *The Forms of Capital* breaks it down into four categories: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic.^{120,121}

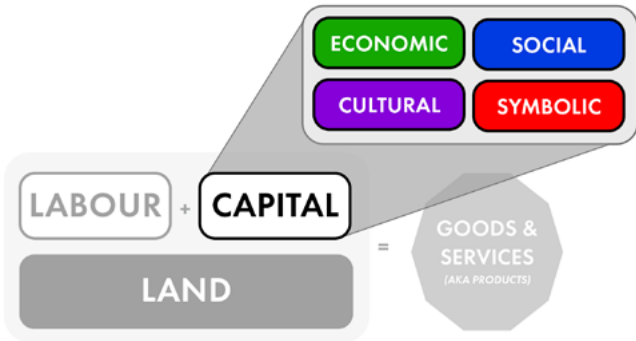
Summarised below...

Economic Capital Represents income, commodified assets, intellectual properties, savings, and pensions	Social Capital Represents relationships, friendships, networks, and alliances
Cultural Capital Represents cultural practices (and the skills that arise from them), culturally specific goods, cultural knowledge, and cultural traditions	Symbolic Capital Represents accomplishments, prestige, reputation, awards, diplomas, and recognition

These forms of capital are interconnected and can be exchanged — for example, cultural capital can be traded for social capital, and cultural capital can also be exchanged for economic capital. A full table of examples detailing these exchanges can be found in the appendix (**page 164**).

Modern economic systems are built on what’s known as the “*means of production*” — the combination of land, labour, and capital. These elements are fundamental for producing goods and services, which when traded, generate new capital (whether cultural, social, symbolic, or most often, additional economic capital).¹²² The key is that control over these *means* determines who benefits from that wealth.

Illustration of the Different Forms of Capital in relation to the Means of Production:



Historically, the capital and labour of the Mandem have been exploited by landowners who controlled the *means of production*. But when the Mandem gain ownership of the Ends, creating Free Hoods, they tap into one of the most powerful levers for building economic capital: land ownership. Having control of the land directly connects to owning the *means of production*.

By combining our land (the Ends), labour (our talent), and capital (cultural, social, symbolic, and economic) into productive, culturally significant, and profitable ventures, the Mandem can generate economic capital that benefits not just us, but also for neighbouring areas, the wider city, and the global community at large. This frees us to live on our own terms, free from external interference.



The economic success of our Free Hoods relies on collaboration, and success is unlikely to be achieved in isolation. No organisation, city, or nation has ever developed entirely on its own, and Free Hoods are no different. To thrive, we need to build relationships and partnerships with others - in other words: **to make ends meet, we have to make Ends meet.**

One way we can build these partnerships is through a commonly used agreement structure adopted by numerous cities across the world called: *Sister Cities*.

Sister cities are partnerships between towns, cities, territories, or districts — often across different countries — aimed at fostering friendship, cultural understanding, and economic cooperation. These relationships may be formal, legally binding agreements or symbolic partnerships, but they almost always arise from a desire to exchange resources and support mutual growth.

The benefits of a sister city relationship include the introduction of policies that promote economic exchanges (such as reduced tariffs on imports and exports, preferential agreements to encourage exclusive trade, investment incentives, and joint ventures) along with opportunities for cultural, symbolic, and social exchanges (these might include educational exchange programmes, shared cultural festivals and celebrations, creative exchanges in the forms of artist commissions and exhibits, language learning programmes and diplomatic gestures).

Free Hoods, functioning like cities within larger metropolitan areas, can establish sister city relationships with other Free Hoods that share similar principles and values.

By following the sister city model, Free Hoods across Britain could exchange resources and knowledge, strengthening the

Mandem and supporting mutual success. Additionally, sistering Free Hoods would allow us to formalise and scale up informal systems of cooperation that are already ingrained in our cultures, such as interest-free saving schemes such as the Arab '*silfah*', Jamaican '*pardner*', Latin American '*tanda*', etc. However our sister city connections don't have to be limited to Britain — they can extend across the globe.

New sister city relationships can be formed between Free Hoods in the Global North and cities in the Global South, becoming global infrastructure that helps bridge the economic divide between them. By enabling the exchange of social, cultural, symbolic, and economic capital from the North to the South, wealth can be redistributed with the goal of creating a more equitable global society. This effort can also support economic reparations for the crimes of colonial theft and inequality that persisted into the 21st Century.

The overall process for wealth redistribution is outlined in the appendix, on **page 165**.

The success of this process depends on the collaborative efforts of different diaspora communities across Free Hoods in the Global North — working towards achieving privatisation and establishing sister city relationships with cities in the Global South.

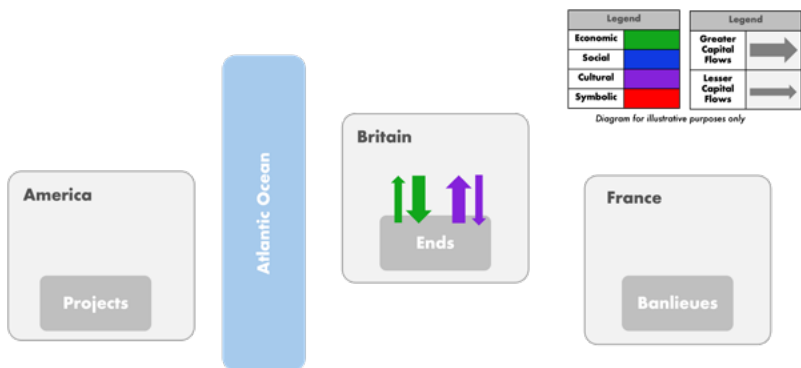
The overall process of wealth redistribution through sistering Free Hoods can be broken down into four phases...

Phase I: ALL MONEY IN, NO MONEY OUT

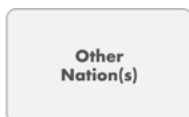
Free Hoods above the Brandt Line can extract economic capital from Northern economies by trading cultural capital unique to the Ends. This exchange must be unequal in a way that benefits the Free Hoods, but without harming the wider public.

The late and great Ermias Joseph Asghedom, also known as Nipsey Hussle, summed up the goal of this phase perfectly: *"all money in, no money out."* His vision was for his Hood in South Central LA to become economically self-sufficient, emphasising financial responsibility, internal investment, and wealth accumulation. In short, spend less and stack more.

Illustration of Phase 1:



.....**Brandt Line**.....



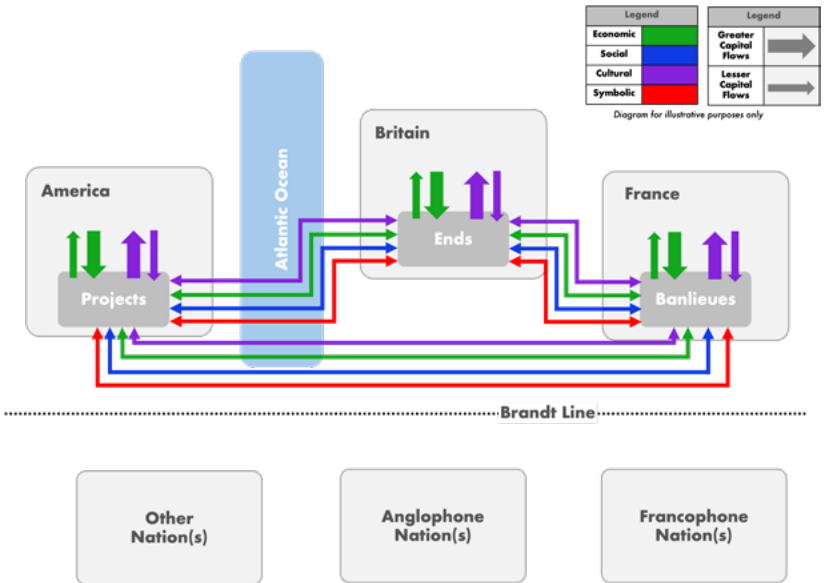
Phase 2: BREAKING BREAD

As time goes on, Free Hoods can support similar Hoods across the Global North (like the 'Banlieues' in France or the 'Projects' in the United States) in becoming privatised and forming their own Free Hoods. These Free Hoods can further the mission of extracting economic capital in their own respective Northern economies.

Forming sister city relationships between these Free Hoods opens up new opportunities for capital exchange, boosting the extraction of economic capital from Global North economies. This ongoing extraction, combined with the exchange of various forms of capital facilitated by these partnerships, allows for cross-subsidisation among Free Hoods – further enabling the continuous production of goods and services ('products'), driving further economic growth and economic extraction.

The sistering of Free Hoods and the consistent exchange of social capital between them help unify our voices, amplifying our influence on political agendas. For example, multiple Free Hoods in the United Kingdom may simultaneously lobby for new legislation or the repeal of existing laws, with the aim of benefiting the Mandem. Similarly, Free Hoods across both France and Britain can join forces to push for changes to regional legislation.

Illustration of Phase 2:



Phase 3: TIPPING THE SCALE

At this stage, Free Hoods across the Global North will control significant portions of the economy within their regions - the Mandem will experience abundance as a result of economic surplus. The main challenge for Free Hoods during this phase will be to give up this surplus, by building sister city relationships with cities in the Global South and transferring substantial economic capital across the Brandt Line.

Free Hoods will undoubtedly face challenges in executing this phase, because prior prolonged exposure to scarcity and denial of opportunities, will make it difficult for us to divest from abundance, furthermore feelings of entitlement to the benefits of privatisation may prove challenging when trying to incentivise the transfer of wealth across the Brandt Line. We must overcome such temptations of greed.

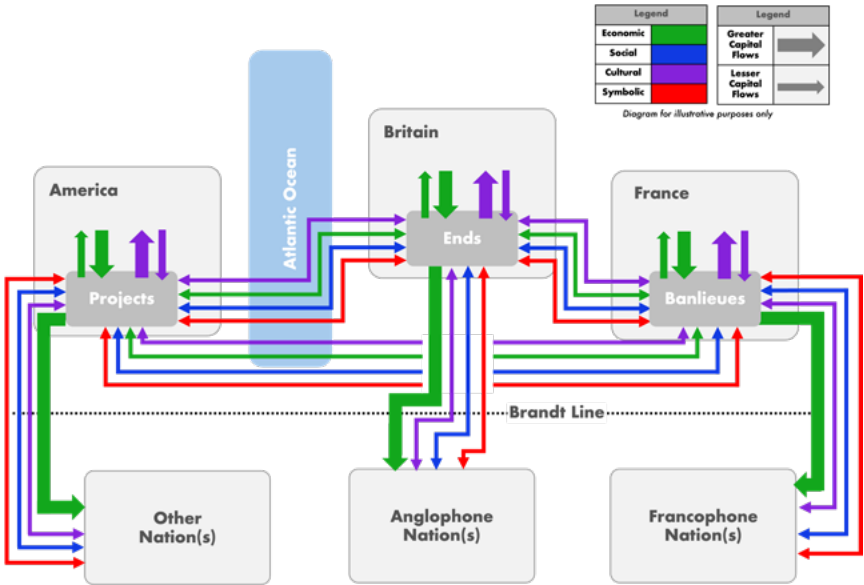
Another challenge our Free Hoods will face is the possibility that cities in the Global South may be hesitant to engage with the diaspora in the North. While we may share aspects of genetic heritage - significant cultural, economic, and political differences could create barriers to forming sister city relationships across the Brandt Line. But, again we must overcome.

Another key issue is how the South exchanges capital and products with the North. It is crucial that imports and exports are conducted ethically, ensuring they are produced by choice and

not under exploitative conditions. We must consider how new demand from Free Hoods in the North impacts the South's supply chain. Capital exchanges should be structured to guarantee equitable trade, ensuring; (1) the South is not exploited for the North's benefit, and (2) the South experiences a net gain in their local economies.

It is paramount that Free Hoods avoid repeating the "saviour" complex exhibited by colonisers in the past. We must not replicate the hierarchies we experience in the North, where subjugation of others is often seen as necessary for success. To build prosperous sister city relationships, we must rid ourselves of any superiority complex that may have developed while living in the Global North.

Illustration of Phase 3:



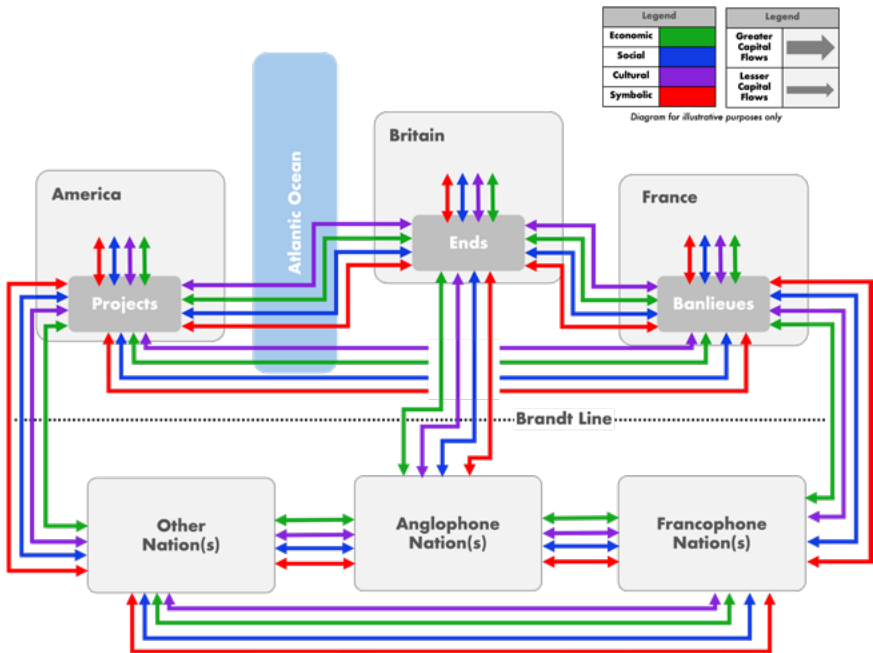
Phase 4: ALL GOOD IN THE HOOD

As Phase Three progress and the global economic balance begins to shift, the economies of the Global North will lose economic capital while those of the Global South will gain. Eventually, a pivotal moment will be reached where both economies are proportionally equal, achieving equilibrium - this moment will be crucial and must be approached with great care and caution.

Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire, in his work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, warns that the 'oppressed' — in this case, the Global South — may be inclined to become the 'oppressor' due to their experiences.¹²³ This implies a risk that the Global South might repeat the historical mistakes of the Global North by exploiting them in return. There is a danger that the extraction of economic capital could continue past the point of equilibrium, becoming exploitative and causing harm to the populations of the Global North.

This cannot happen. To prevent this, we must overcome the urge to repeat the practices of the oppressor - this requires us to be mindful of repeating behaviours and making a conscious effort to avoid them.

Illustration of Phase 4:



Free Hoods not only grant the Mandem autonomy over their land and resources, but also provide a platform for wealth redistribution and fostering solidarity across global divides.

To many, this global scale of intervention might sound utterly unrealistic — even mad. The idea that Free Hoods could contribute to an ambition of redistributing wealth worldwide may seem far-fetched. Yet, it is possible. The potential of making Ends meet is immense and unpredictable, with consequences that could have a profound impact. True, it does sound mad — but sometimes, bringing about positive change requires a little madness.

“I would like to leave behind me the conviction that if we maintain a certain amount of caution and organisation, we deserve victory [...] You cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain amount of madness. In this case, it comes from nonconformity, the courage to turn your back on the old formulas, the courage to invent the future. It took the madmen of yesterday for us to be able to act with extreme clarity today. I want to be one of those madmen. [...] We must dare to invent the future.”

– Thomas Sankara, during an interview with Jean-Philippe Rapp (1985)

Sister cities are but one of the many tools and infrastructures at our disposal should we succeed in transforming our Ends from ‘perceived’ sink estates into free estates (i.e. Free Hoods).

Not for

Chapter Fifteen



Sale

21st Century contemporary society prioritises the *individual* (i.e., the 'self') over all else, often at the expense of the *collective*. In today's world, society incentivises and rewards the pursuit of personal success, wealth, and status above everything. The status quo fosters a culture where individual ambition is king, and the collective good is overlooked. While the desire of personal success can drive progress, desire without a vision to serve others threatens collective prosperity. When privatising the Mandem, we run the risk of being blinded by our own success at the cost of the success of the collective. If our individual interests outweigh the needs of the Ends, the very essence of the collective will be undermined.

This cannot be allowed to happen.

Many will argue that the Mandem have no rightful claim over the Ends, and that our identities are not intrinsically tethered to geographical locations. They may assert that the physical spaces we inhabit are just that — mere locations with no lasting impact on our sense of self or community. However, this perspective overlooks the profound value of human experience; as it is within these very spaces that our culture, values, relationships, and unique social symbols emerge. These elements are the bedrock of identity, shaping how the Mandem see themselves and their place in the world.

For many of the Mandem, the Ends is not just a physical place, but a source of status, belonging, and identity. It is here that generations have built their sense of community, developed shared practices, and forged bonds that transcend the physical space itself. The cultural significance of the Ends is inseparable from the lives of those who live there. Thus, to claim that the Mandem have no ownership over the Ends is to misunderstand the deep connection between identity and place. The Mandem derive not just status, but their very identity from their Ends —

an identity shaped by lived experiences, shared struggles, and collective aspirations.

Many will argue that our successes are purely our own, and that we owe nothing to anyone else. This is a lie. We owe the communities that built us – after all, it takes a village to raise a child. We are all, in one way or another, products of our environments – mere amalgamations of the people who shaped us. We are patchworks of those who came before us, and those who walk beside us today. Our success is not ours alone – it’s the culmination of the efforts and influence of the people around us. We must not believe the fabrication that our success occurs in isolation; and it is for that very reason that we must always remember that we are accountable to our village. We are responsible to the aunts, the uncles, the young bucks, the girls, the guys, the sisters, the akhis, the preachers and the sinners. Each one of them plays a part in shaping who we are, and we, in turn, shape them. In this interconnected web, we owe it to each other to build with the very people that have been instrumental in making us who we are.

Many will argue that we should abandon the Ends and seek prosperity elsewhere. They will argue that once we own it, we should sell the Ends and treat it like any other commodity, cashing in on the capital from its sale. And while one can understand where this sentiment comes from – especially given the challenges of managing land and buildings that have suffered from years of neglect and decline – selling it would mean giving up the power that comes with owning land. Because whoever holds land decides how it’s used, from how we grow our food to how much space we reserve for nature, and even controls the means of production. This isn’t just about owning a piece of property; it’s about holding the keys to influence over nearly every aspect of life. It’s essential to remember that the

foundations of Britain's political system are built on the protection of landowners — the lords of the land. The history of land ownership in Britain stretches back to the 11th century, when William the Conqueror's Norman invasion of 1066 ended with him declaring that all land in England belonged to the Crown. William parcelled out large swathes of land to his barons and the Church, while keeping a significant portion for the monarchy. This is how the power dynamics of land were cemented, with the Domesday Book in 1086 marking the first official record of land ownership. For nearly 800 years following this, land continued to be enclosed — meaning land that commoners once used for grazing and subsistence was seized by the aristocracy and the gentry. By the early 20th Century, what used to be around 30% of England's land accessible to the public was reduced to just 3%. Many of today's largest landowners can trace their holdings back to William's distribution of land nearly 1,000 years ago.¹²⁴ Selling our land would mean surrendering our power, just as William's allies gained power through his allocation of land. In short, land is inherently scarce, and giving it up voluntarily means giving up control over our future.

Many will argue that we should lease or rent our newly acquired buildings to the highest bidder to maximise profits. But here's the problem: by doing so, we'd be commodifying our Hood and displacing ourselves in the process. To chase the biggest profits, we'd have to cater to those with the most disposable income — the gentry. This would lead to the Mandem essentially gentrifying their own Ends, pushing themselves out in the pursuit of capital. When we replace the people who make the Ends what it is with outsiders, the soul and essence of the Hood is lost. Our homes risk becoming nothing more than profit-generating machines. But let's be clear, this doesn't mean we can't put our buildings to work. There are countless ways for the Mandem to generate wealth without displacing ourselves.

Remember, when we couldn't get on their radio airwaves, we built our own stations. When we couldn't break into their fashion houses, we created our own brands. When they wouldn't publish our stories, we printed our own books. If there's one thing we know how to do, it's hustle. We're the go-getters of society. But our homes, our community, our village, our power — those things are not for sale.



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Epilogue

This future is not a distant fantasy — it's real and within reach, because the Ends has always been the birthplace of real change across the world. Look no further than Somers Town, a small Hood in northwest London. From a humble flat there, George Padmore, a key Pan-Africanist, journalist, and revolutionary, helped change the course of history. Padmore was instrumental in the creation of Ghana — previously the Gold Coast — as the first self-governed African state to emerge from colonial rule, freeing West Africa from British imperialism.¹²⁵

When Kwame Nkrumah came to London in 1945 to study law, Padmore welcomed him into his flat in Somers Town. This meeting sparked a lifelong friendship that would go on to shape the future of an entire nation. Nkrumah returned to Ghana in 1956 and led his people to independence in 1957 as the country's first president - and Padmore joined him, helping guide the political path that led to Ghana's liberation. And all of this started from a small flat in a Hood in northwest London.^{126,127}



George Padmore (1903 - 1959)



Kwame Nkrumah (1909 - 1972)

Our Hoods have always been home to some of the world's most brilliant minds — minds that have and will continue to change the world.

All it takes is one Block — just one. The moment that one Block is successfully privatised by the Mandem, a chain reaction will sweep across Britain. The birth of the first Free Hood will act as a catalyst, setting off a domino effect that will reverberate through our cities, towns, and neighbourhoods - inspiring the Mandem from other Hoods to follow suit. With each Block that follows, our cities will start to transform — shaped by the Mandem, for the Mandem.

The future belongs to us. It's coming — maybe not overnight, maybe not as quickly as we hope — but make no mistake, the Mandem will be free. One Block at a time.



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Appendix

Percentage of Building owned

Detailed Breakdown of Collective Enfranchisement

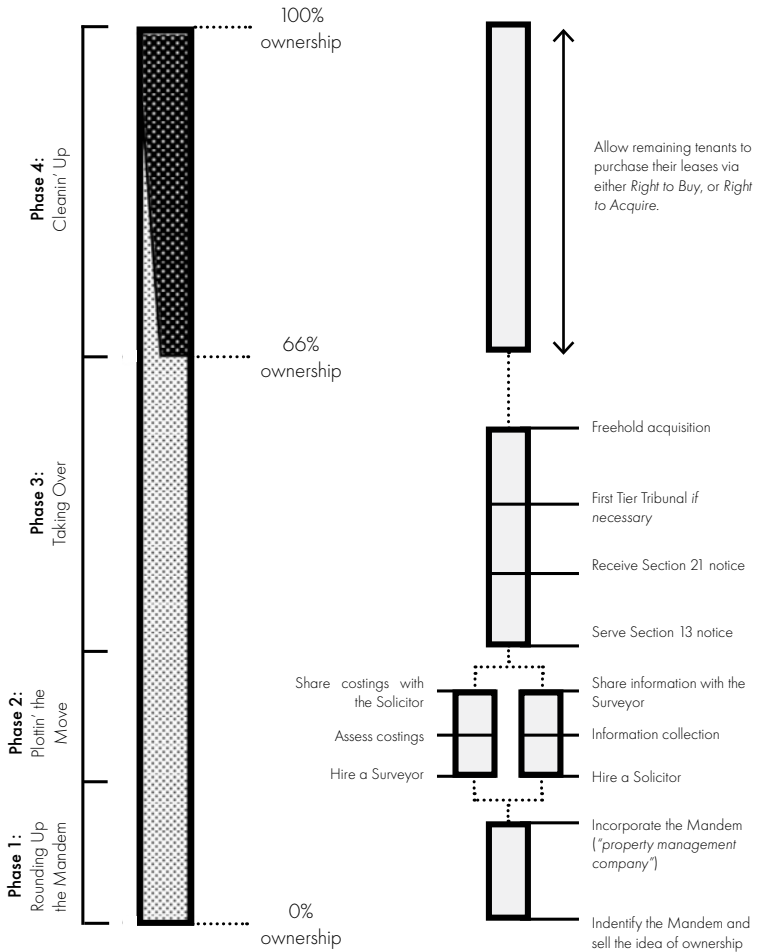
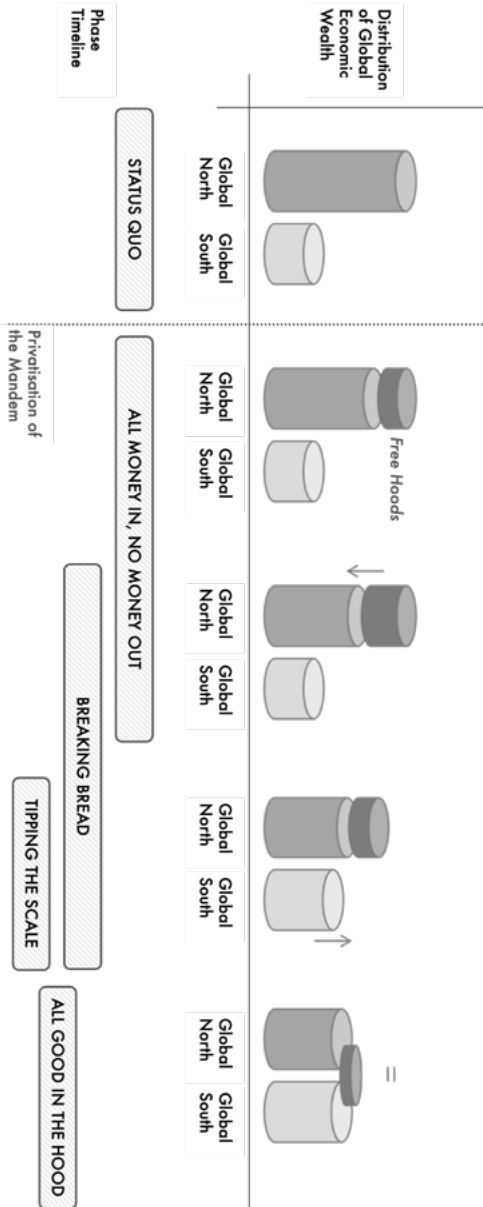


Table of Exchanges of the Different Forms of Capital:

Economic	Economic	Social	Cultural	Symbolic
Economic	<p>Membership at institutions and professional networks may provide access to shared resources.</p>	<p>Sponsoring the Mandem to pursue further education and gain access to new professional networks.</p>	<p>Funding training initiatives that give the Mandem new creative skills.</p>	<p>Donating time and resources can significantly boost the Mandem's social standing and public image.</p>
Social	<p>Exposure to cultural practises facilitates the creation of cultural products that may hold financial value.</p>	<p>Individuals who are culturally competent are granted more access to more social networks.</p>	<p>Individuals who share disciplines/trades will hold stronger bonds as they create communities of practise and/or unions.</p>	<p>Assumptions about individuals who are considered reputable are often based on their associations.</p>
Cultural	<p>Showcasing accomplishments and successes can establish credibility and result in exposure to new economic opportunities.</p>	<p>Professional recognition(s) can help establish connections and build networks.</p>	<p>A positive reputation can present opportunities for individuals to be invited to participate in cultural networks.</p>	<p>Having extensive experience within an industry or network can aid in the creation of a positive reputation.</p>
Symbolic				

Overall Process of Redistributing Economic Wealth:





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Figure 1: Lehman College Library, CUNY. (Unknown) Cross Bronx Expressway Under Construction (2 of 2) [Photograph]. Place of publication: Bronx Chamber of Commerce Collection.

Figure 2: de Leon, P. (1980) *My Playground* [Photograph]. Place of publication: Smithsonian American Art Museum.



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Designed by:

**FREEDOM
& BALANCE**

These past few decades have seen the UK's cityscapes changing at an increasingly rapid rate. Where the Ends are replaced with shiny buildings, complete with futuristic living facilities, logos and colour palettes that market a glamorous '*inner-city living*' lifestyle— all at the expense of the Mandem.

So, how do we combat gentrification and preserve the Ends?

The answer: we privatise the Mandem.

And, how do we '*privatise the Mandem*'?

The answer: we buy the block.

To privatise is to own the Ends, to run the Hood, and to control the Block. Nobody can buy the Ends, if it ain't for sale. Nobody can sell the Ends, if they own it no more.

Privatising the Mandem affords us the freedom to be self-determining, the freedom to be self-sufficient, the freedom to be autonomous and sovereign, the freedom to restructure our environments, the freedom to imagine and dream — and most importantly, the freedom to make mistakes and to learn from them.

In short:

we are able to free the Mandem.