

Aylesham Centre

historic character analysis

nimtim
a r c h i t e c t s

history

Aylesham Centre & surrounds

Placing the Aylesham Centre in the context of Peckham's history of (almost constant) change helps us to understand and contextualise its future.

Rye Lane has evolved from rural lane to Victorian high street, to early 20th century urban centre.

Postwar decline led to the introduction of large scale retail and development behind Rye Lane: the reinvention and re-purposing of which in the 21st century has been central to Peckham's emerging importance as a centre of creativity.

The Aylesham development presents the opportunity to continue this without disrupting Rye Lane's importance as a vibrant focus for the area's diverse communities.

The Aylesham Centre is noted in Southwark's Rye Lane Peckham Conservation Area as 'opportunity exists to redevelop the indifferent post World War II buildings'.



View of Rye Lane from Peckham High Street

history

early 19th century

In the early 19th century Peckham was a rural hamlet. Peckham derives from Old English words (peak and ham) meaning by a peak or hill.

The area contained some residential with large houses dotted in the landscape.

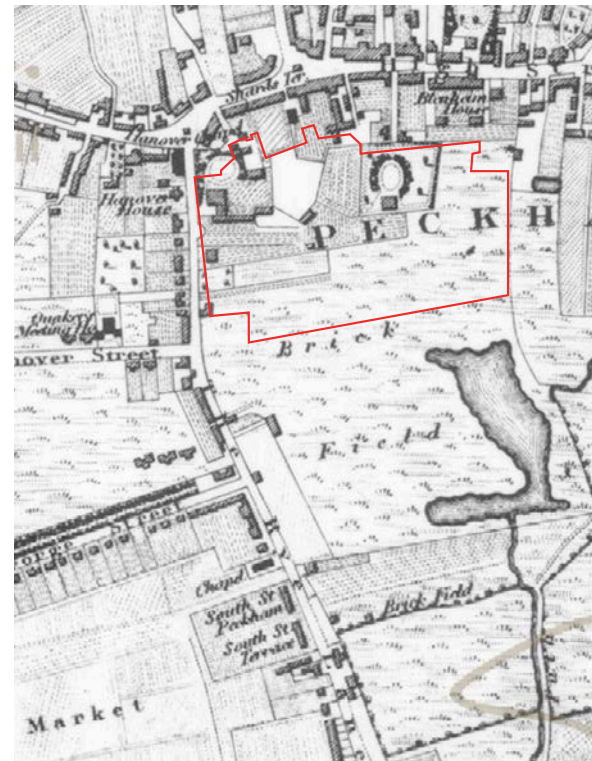
Most of the land was used as arable land and market gardens supplied London with fresh fruit and vegetables.

Peckham included an annual fair, a theatre, public houses, schools and non-conformist chapels. These created an area that had a 'cosmopolitan and leisure-based local ambience, socially mixed and as licentious in its architecture as in its activities'.

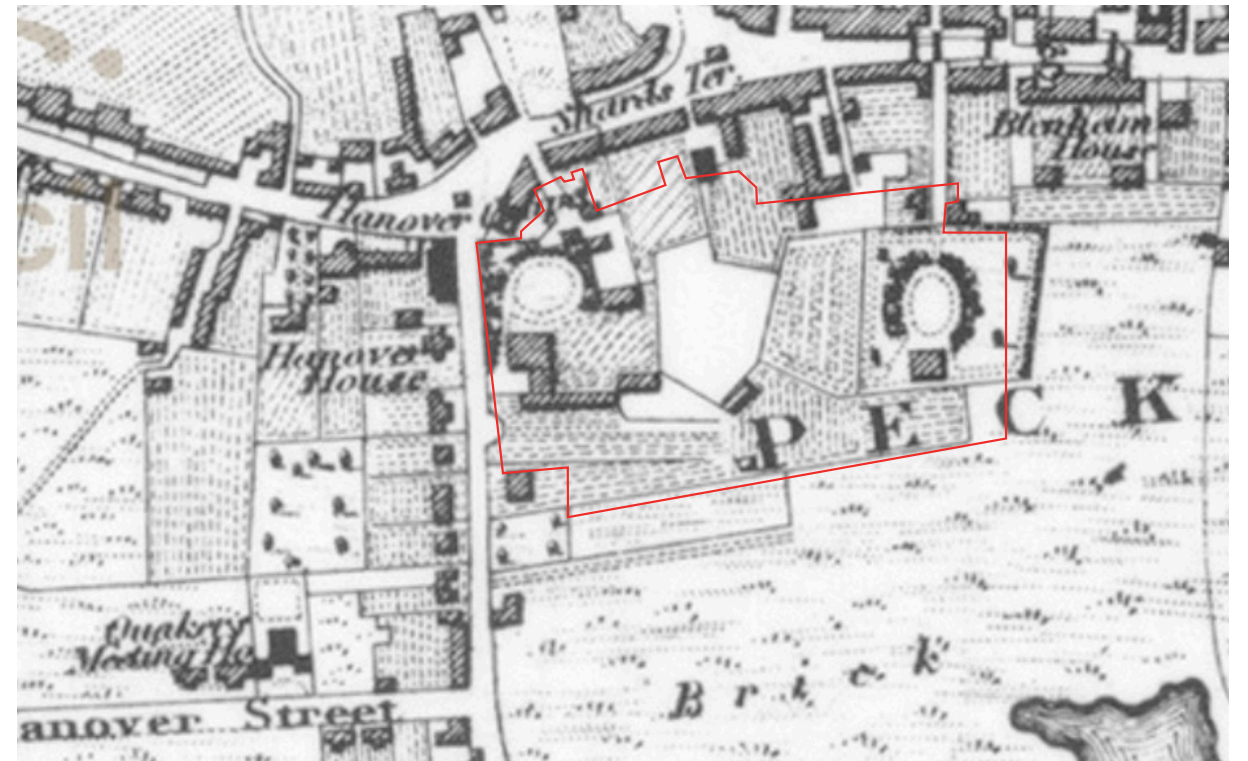
The principal roads at this time are the High Street and Rye Lane with most of the buildings facing these highways.

By 1871 separate characters develop in the surrounding streets such as:

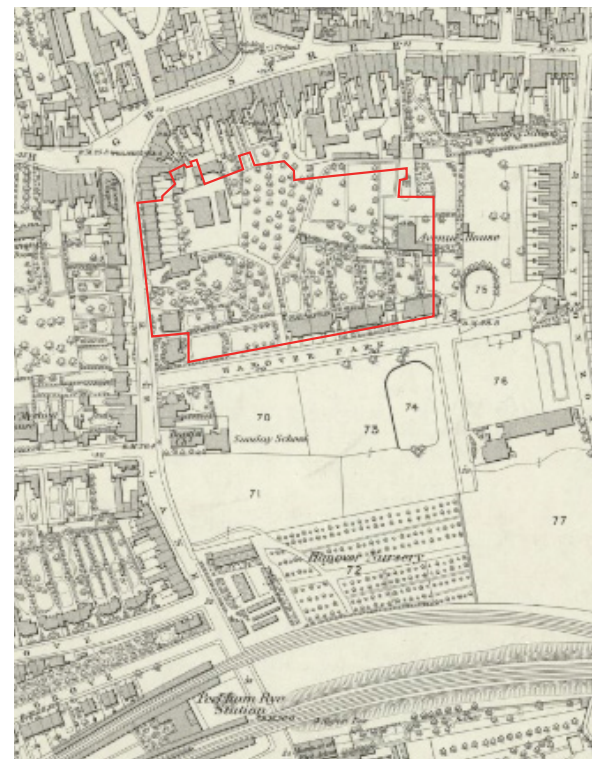
- commercial density along Peckham High Street with narrow openings back to the Aylesham site
- large semi detached houses set back along Rye Lane with generous back gardens
- a main Avenue House on the existing petrol station site



1830 - zoomed out



1830 - zoomed in



1869 - zoomed out



1871 - zoomed in

history

retail growth/ consolidation

By the late 19th Century Peckham had become a retail hub. The large department store Jones & Higgins at the junction with Peckham High Street and Rye Lane on the Aylesham site increased the retail activity.

A large tramway depot servicing the horse-drawn tram service along Peckham High Street. The trams allowed Peckham residents to connect easily with the city.

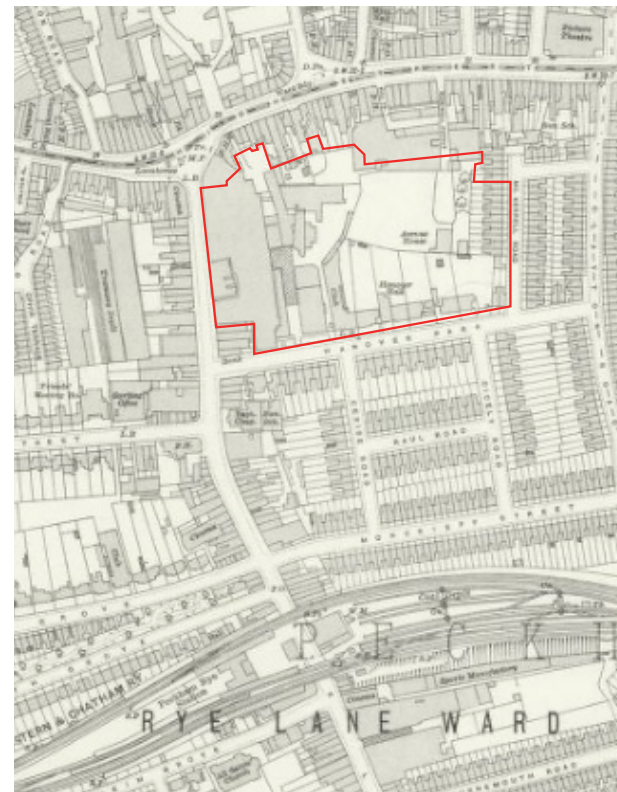
The High Street was widened to allow for a double line of tramway. The widening of the road caused disruption to the High Street and increased footfall to the retail along Rye Lane.

This led to Rye Lane eventually become the area's main shopping parade. The early part of the 20th century was a period of stability rather than significant change in Peckham.

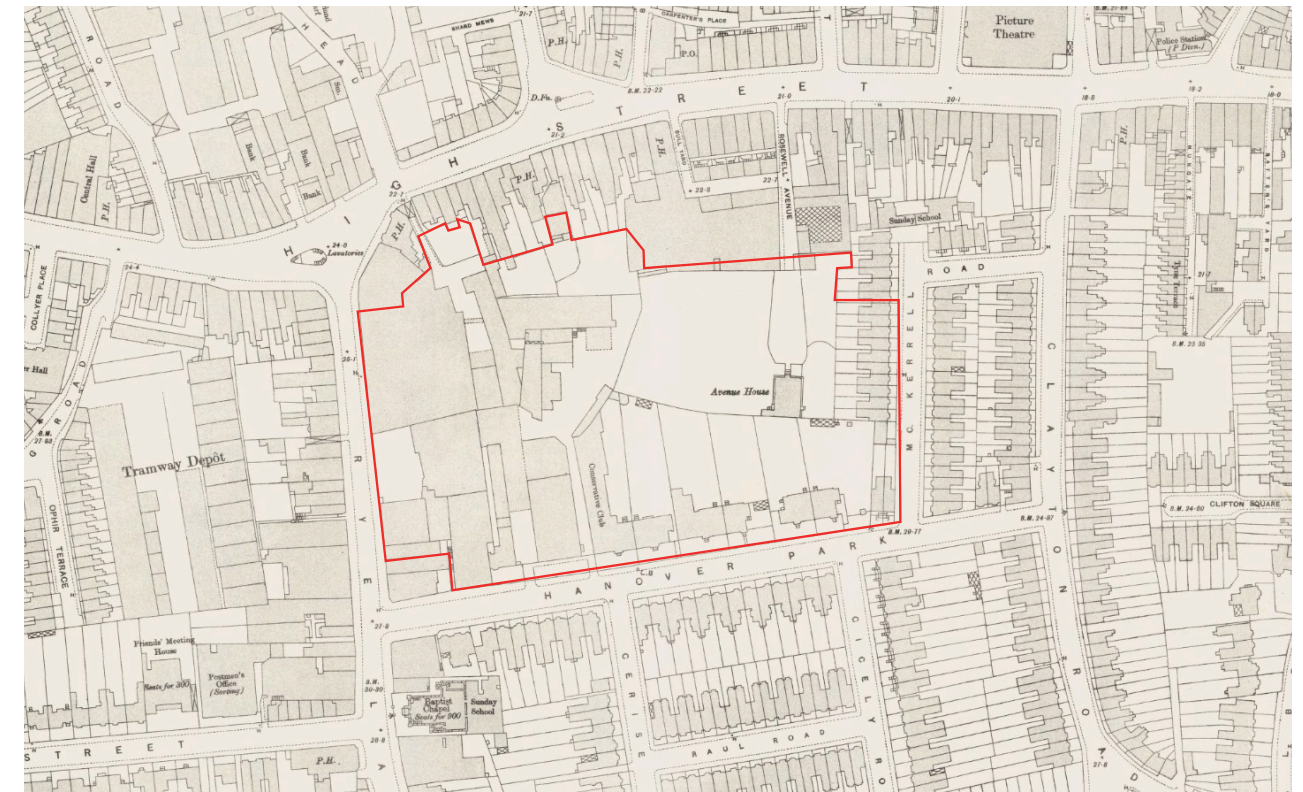
Rye Lane and Peckham High Street prospered as a shopping centre, which resulted in commercial redevelopment, as retail premises sought to maintain their fashionable status or gain advantage over their competitors.

A number of arcades and covered markets were built during this period.

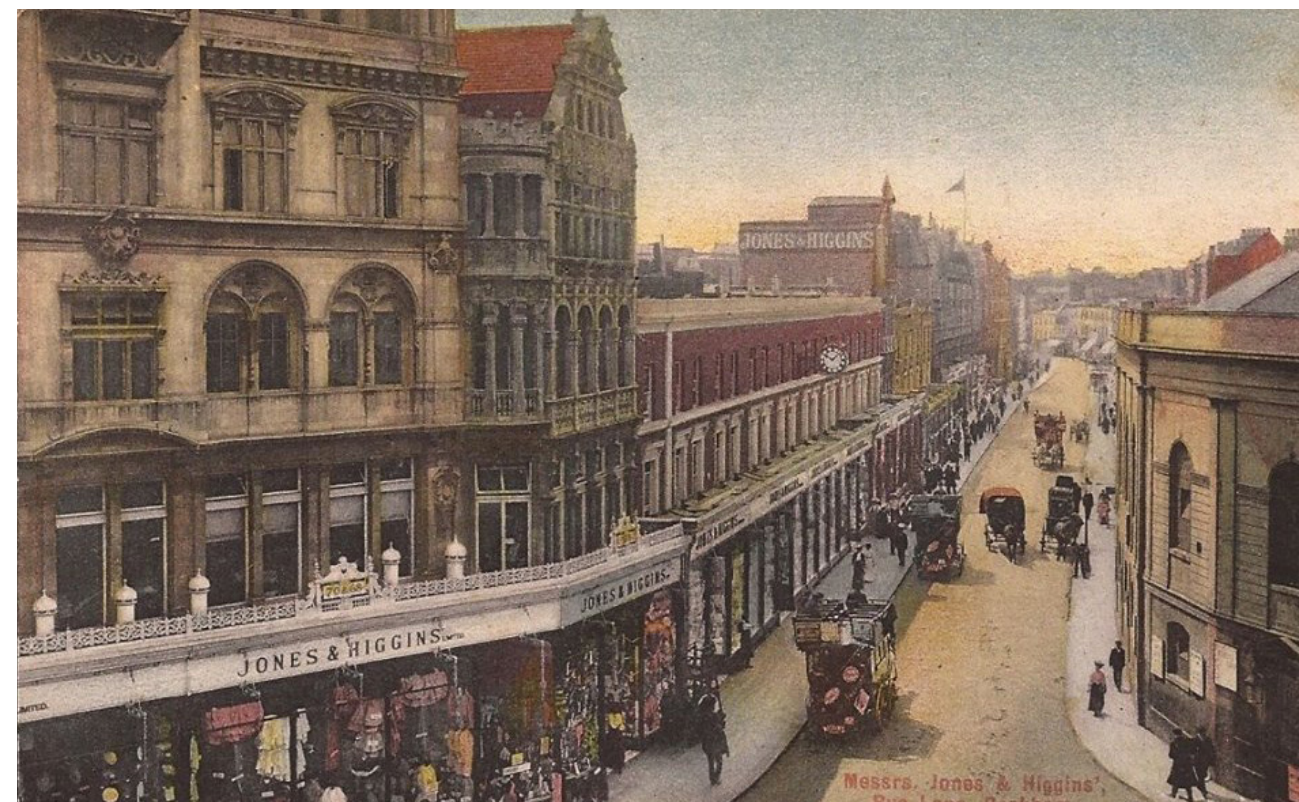
In 1911 the first purpose-built cinema was built. Following on the 1930s saw two grand picture palaces on Peckham High Street.



1916 - zoomed out



1894 - zoomed in



View of Rye Lane from Peckham High Street

history

WW2/ 20th century

During World War II the north east of Rye Lane suffered bomb damage with several buildings damaged beyond repair.

Post-war buildings such as large London Transport garages at the north end of Rye Lane were developed.

Retail continues to develop in the area and spreading to many of the streets intersecting Rye Lane such as a market building on Elm Grove and Tower Cinema between Rye Lane and Choumert Grove.

For central Peckham, the second half of the 20th century was a period of economic decline. This was a result of:

A decreasing and changing population, as older residents moved out they were replaced by a younger population, which included significant ethnic minority communities.

Later 20th Century was marked by industrial decline, which was exemplified by the closure of the Peckham Branch of the Grand Surrey Canal (1971).

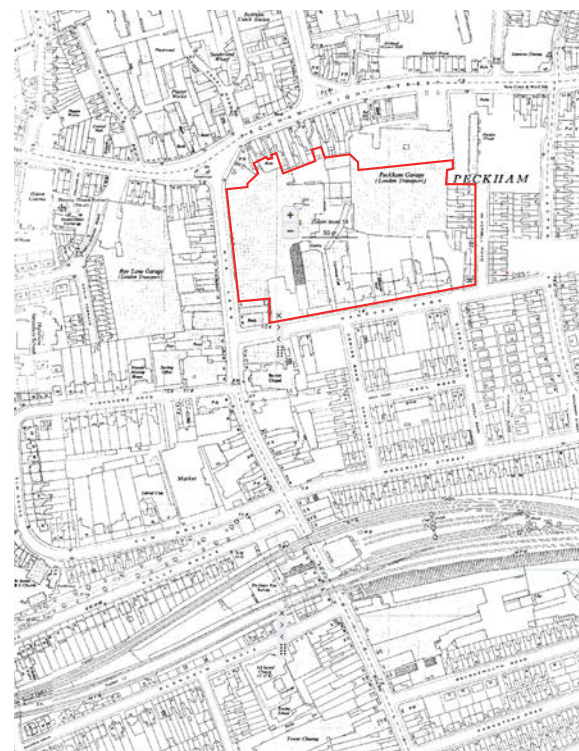


1945 - zoomed out

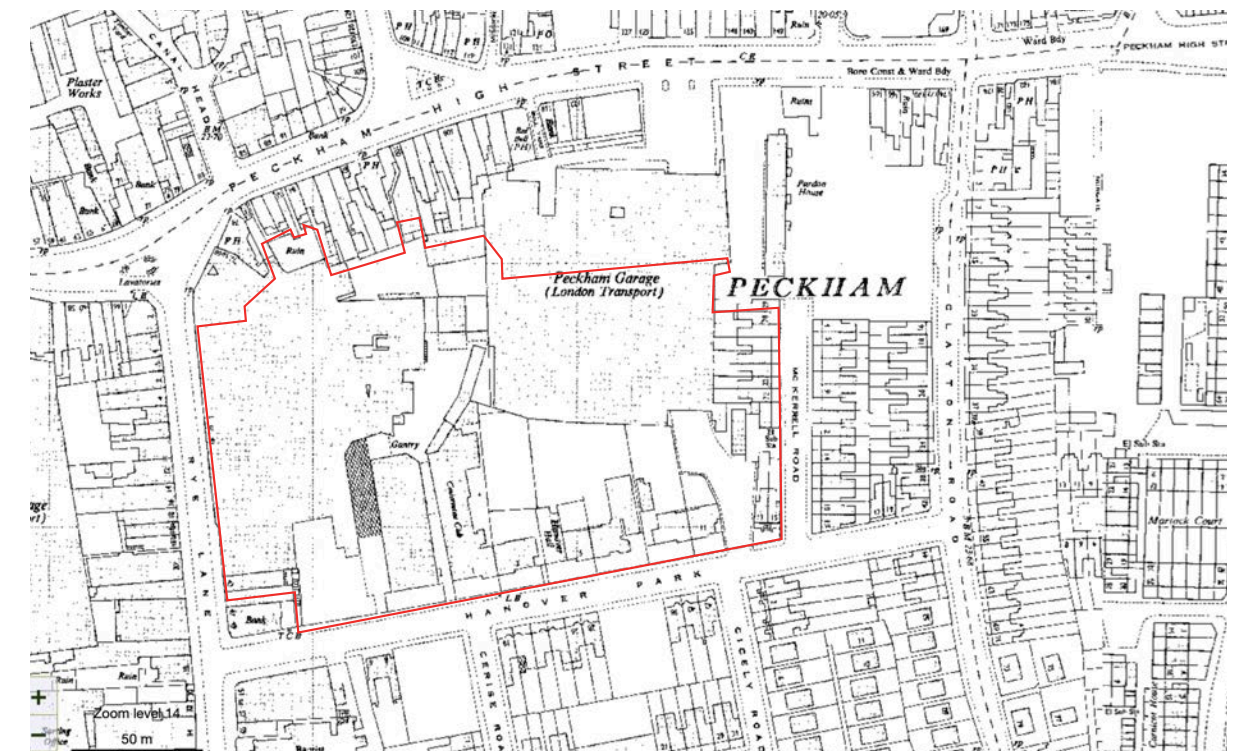


1945 - zoomed in

- total destruction
- damage beyond repair
- most seriously damaged,
- seriously damaged
- general blast damage
- blast damage minor
- clearance areas
- V1 / V2 bomb



1964 - zoomed out



1964 - zoomed in

history

Jones & Higgins

Jones & Higgins: opened in 1867 as a single store and over 30 years grew to encompass much of the high street. It soon became a local landmark.

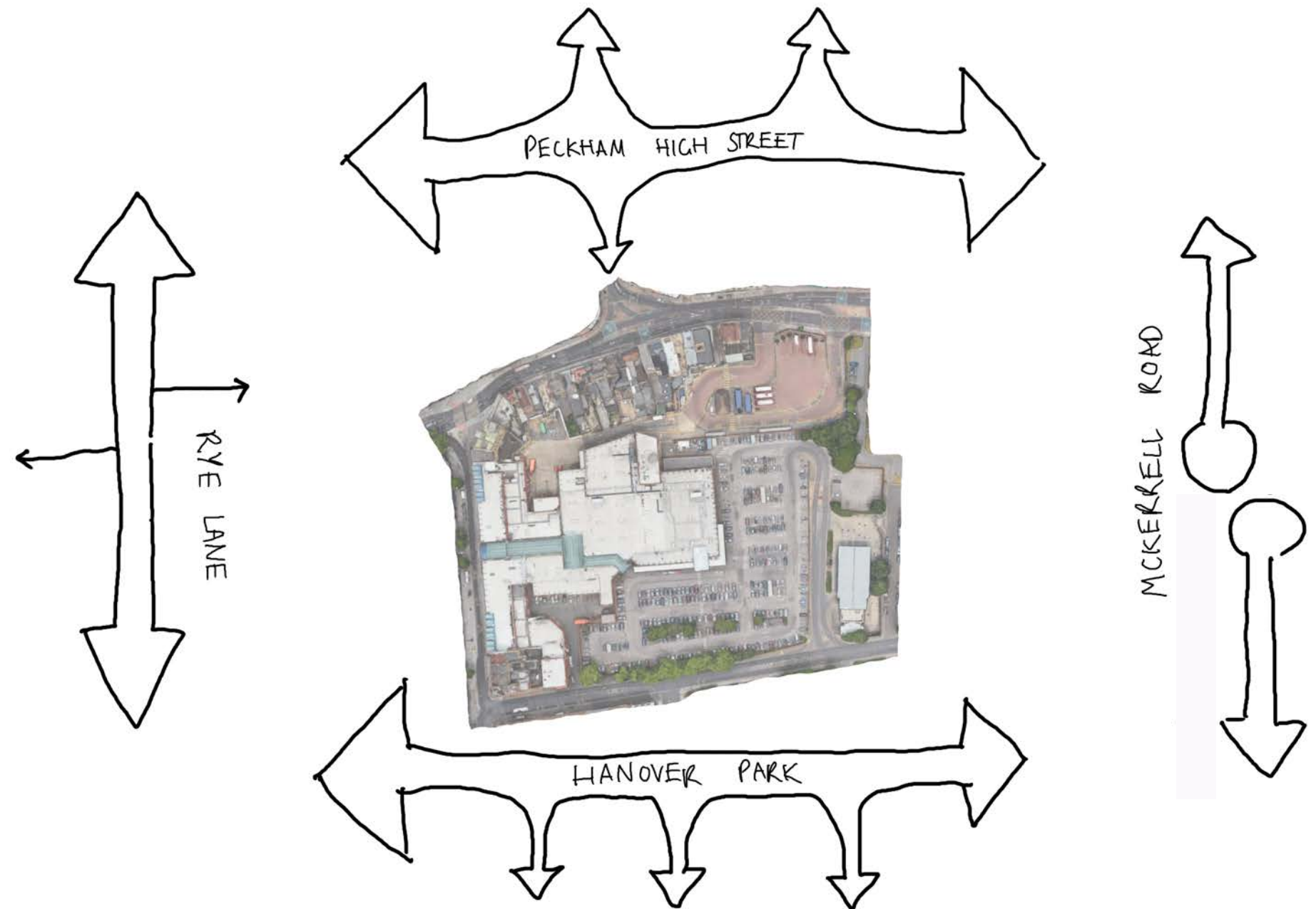
In 1894 Henry Jarvis designed the new clock tower building at the junction of Rye Lane and Peckham High Street. This building was based on a clock in Venice's Piazza San Marco.

Jones & Higgins included an ironmongery department, carpet shop, delicatessen, a furniture store and a glass and china department.



urban character

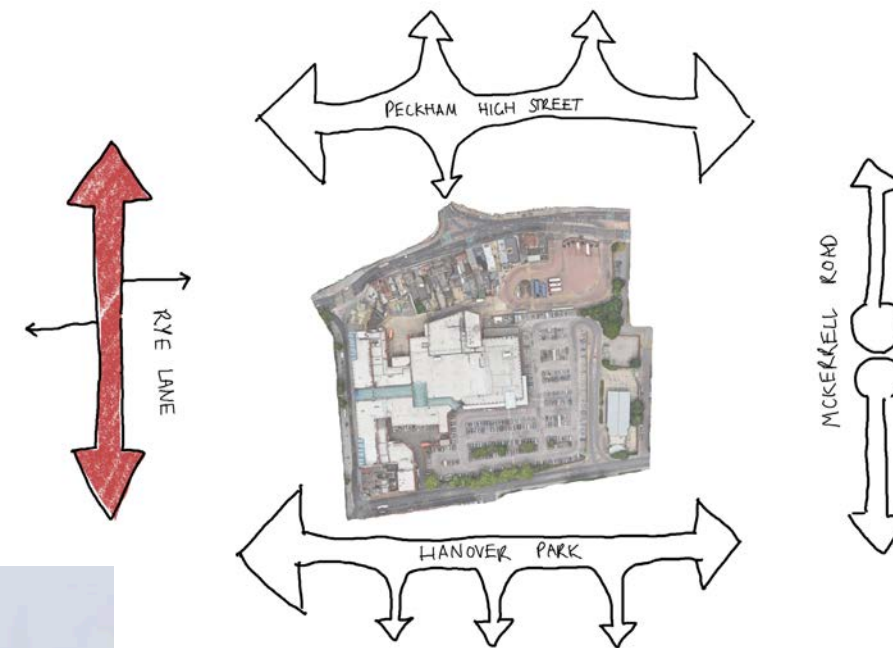
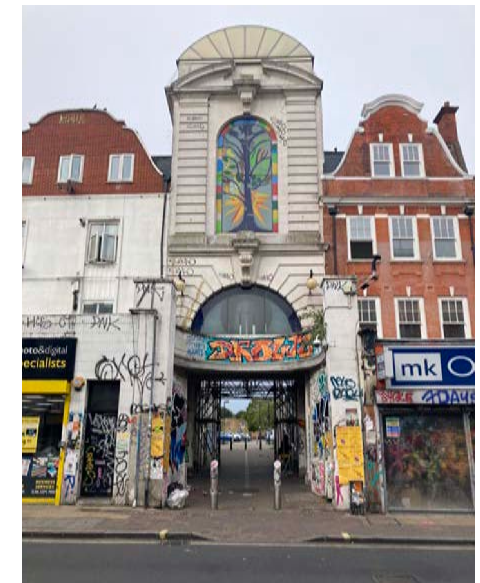
- The streets surrounding the Aylesham site - Rye Lane, Peckham High Street, Hanover Park, Mckerrell Road, each have a very different character.
- This is evident in the 'feeling' of each street as well as by directly comparing building heights, scale and grain, typologies and activity.
- Carrying out the same consistent form of analysis four times for each edge helps to highlight the differences.
- These differences speak more widely to the character of the site and Peckham as a whole - which has a variety and diversity of characters.
- 'The character of the Rye Lane Peckham Conservation Area is attributed to the eclectic architectural styles and materials' extract from Southwark Conservation Area.



Rye Lane

character

- Rye Lane is a spine road running along the north-south axis and focal point for the Peckham area.
- There is a clear hierarchy of this main road with all intersecting side streets clearly subordinate to Rye Lane.
- Only one or two examples of retail continue along these intersecting side streets e.g. Elm Grove, Holly Grove, Choumert Road
- 'Rye Lane is a fusion of development over two centuries. The eclectic mix of 19th century properties, in a variety of architectural styles and materials but with a consistent vertical emphasis and the inter-war buildings, with their simple lines and palette of materials, with a contrasting horizontal emphasis' extract from Southwark Conservation Area Assessment.
- Along Rye Lane the building heights vary however there is more consistency along the horizontal with storey heights, parapet levels and building eaves often broadly aligning within each urban block.
- Most buildings, which have a retail / trade presence, face the street including discreet residential entrances.



Rye Lane West

grain

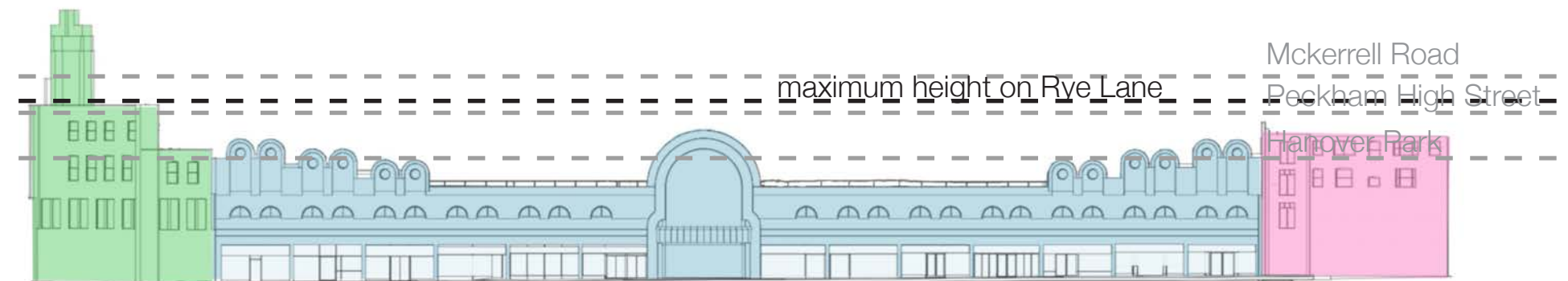
- There is a fine grain along the western elevation of Rye Lane opposite Aylesham Centre
- There is a variety of building period typologies - specifically the residential set backs above the retail
- There are few gaps between the buildings which contribute to the fine grain - where there are gaps these are often to the residential functions above/ beyond
- Heights of buildings vary however, the maximum height along the street roughly matches that of Peckham High Street



Rye Lane East

grain

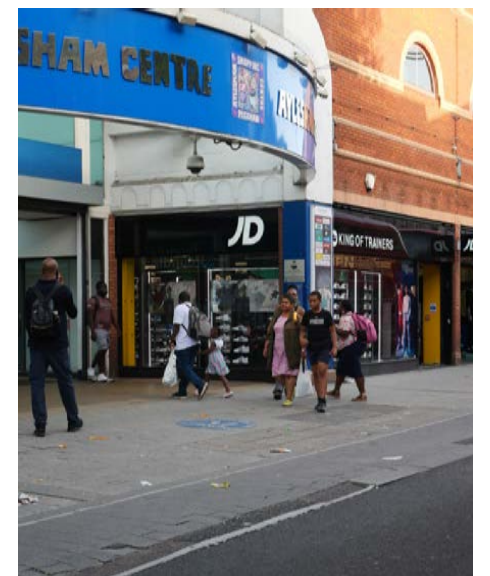
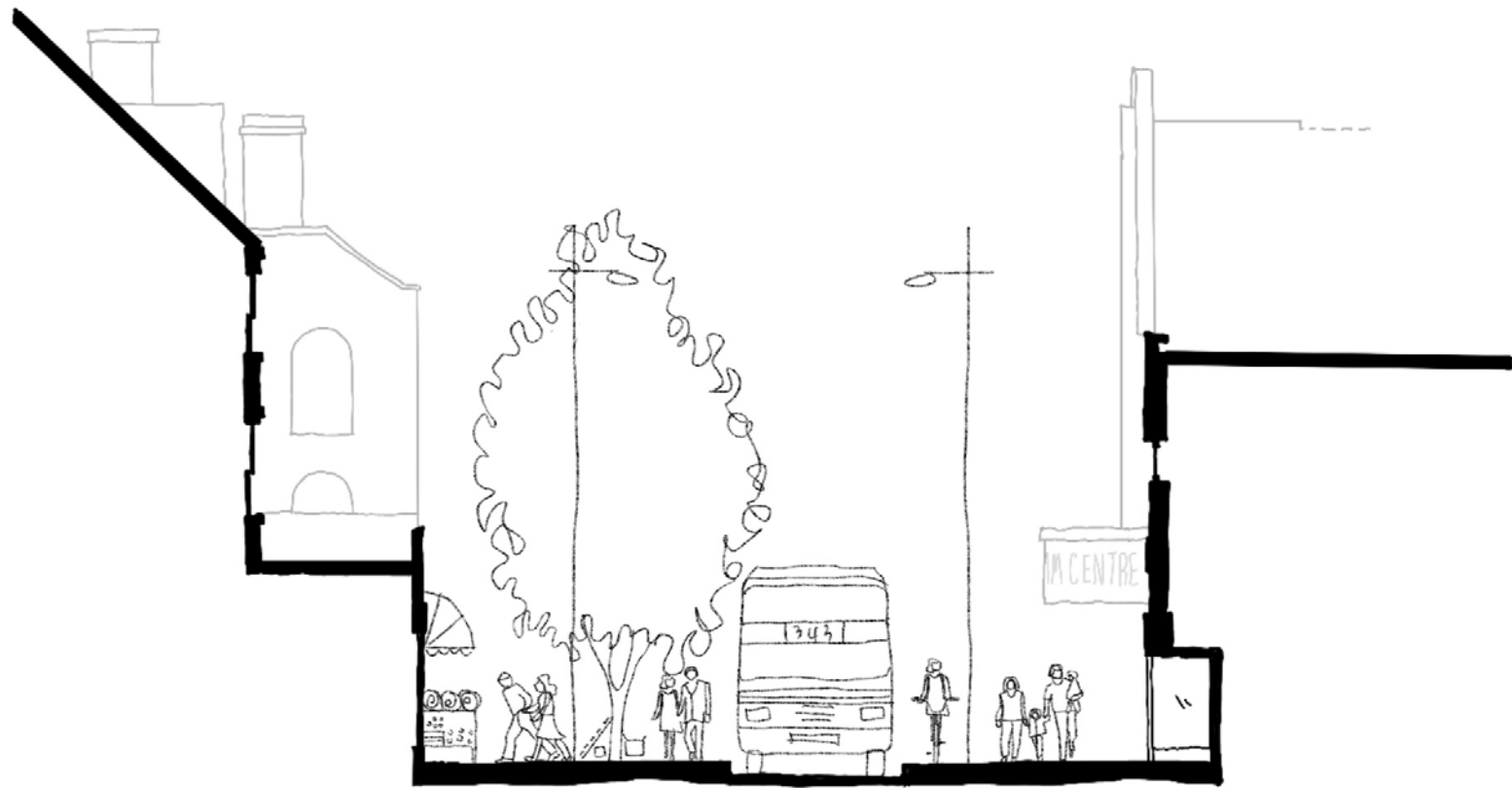
- There is a larger grain along the eastern elevation of Rye Lane - this is largely due to the length of Aylesham Centre which is something of an anomaly for the street
- The building period typologies vary less than the elevation opposite. The Aylesham Centre being one type and the corners either end (old bank & clock tower) another.
- There are no gaps between the buildings other than through Aylesham Centre.
- The height is fairly consistent except on the corners (and leading up to this) where the Aylesham centre form rises to stitch into the existing higher elevations of Peckham High Street and corner of Hanover Park



Rye Lane

proportion

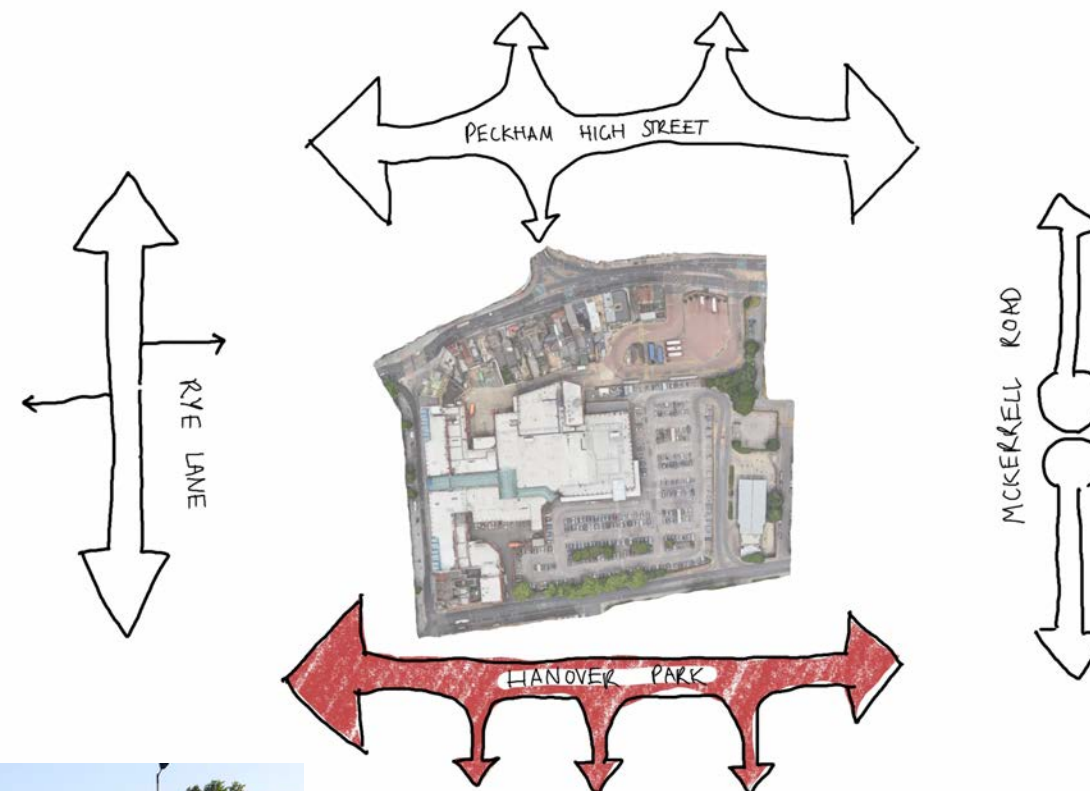
- 3-4 storey buildings with single storey retail meet a generous pavement along both the east & west elevations of Rye Lane
- Retail along the west is mostly protruding with set back residential above. Retail along the east is flush with more retail space above
- Generous pavements accommodate 'retail spillage' - mostly from the retail on the west. This is during deliveries, during opening hours and packed away outside of opening hours.
- Lamp posts line the single bus lane and cycle path on both west and east elevations - other street furniture includes bus stops & bins.
- There are a few trees only on the west elevation
- Amongst the retail are front doors to the residential beyond/above



Rye Lane West

grain

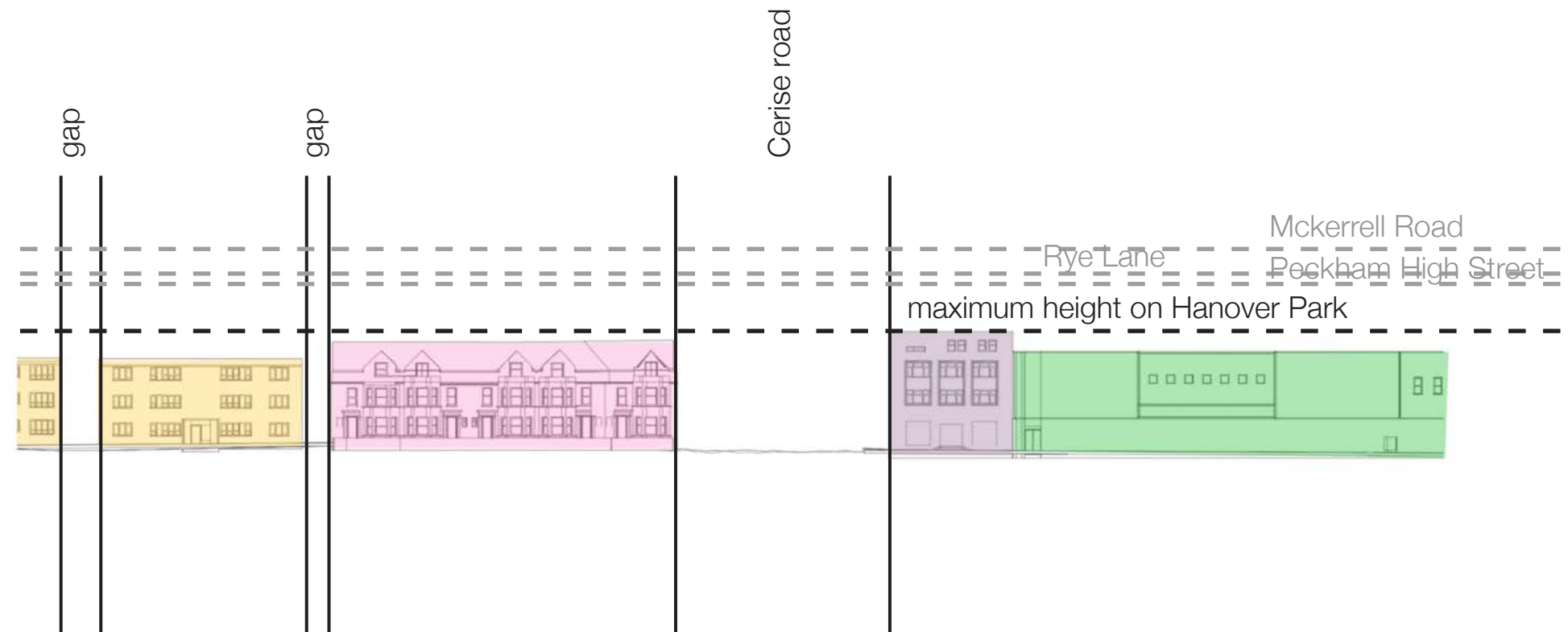
- Hanover Park feels like a 'side street' due to the reduced ground floor activity, despite it's width and prominence.
- Retail presence at corner with Rye Lane however, Primark blank facade reduces footfall.
- Primark building was built in 1956 originally as a British Home Stores. The building was constructed on a former bomb site and was designed by George Coles, who is better known for his inter-war cinema buildings.
- Residential entrances face onto the road.
- This road has wide corners allowing for bus and car traffic. This gives a more 'open' feeling.
- There is mainly a residential and public transport presence to this road.



Hanover Park

grain

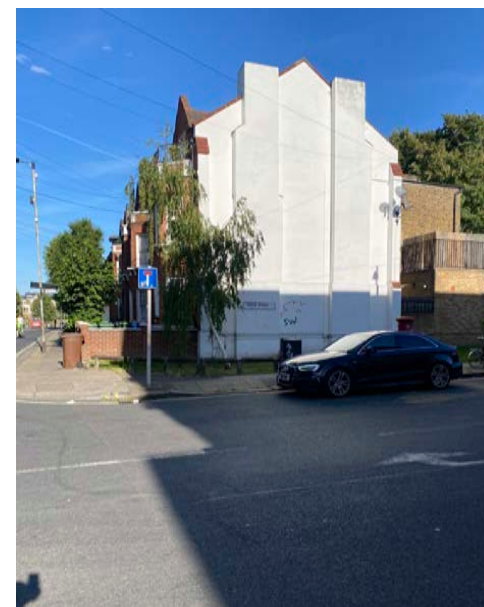
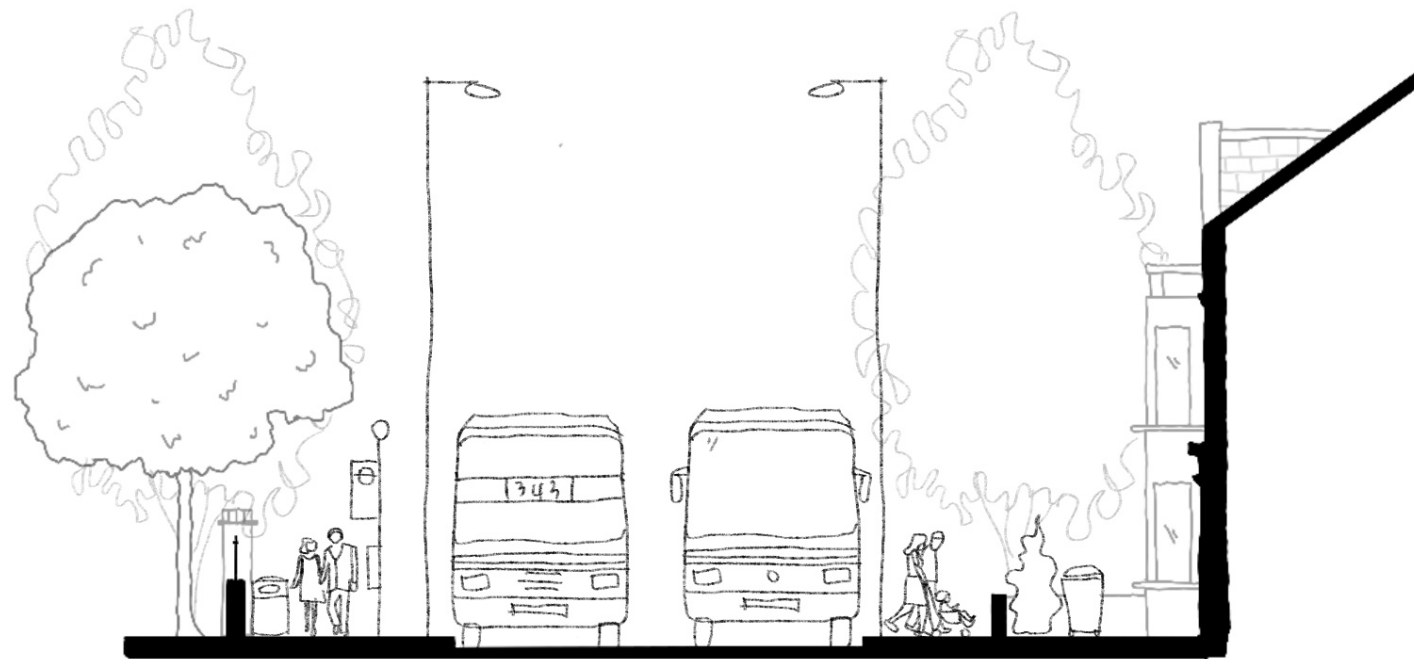
- There is a large grain along Hanover Park made up of both front & side elevations of retail and residential
- The building period typologies vary
- There are large gaps between buildings that are either streets or merely gaps that offer views to greenery beyond.
- The height is fairly consistent however, smaller than all other surrounding streets



Hanover Park

proportion

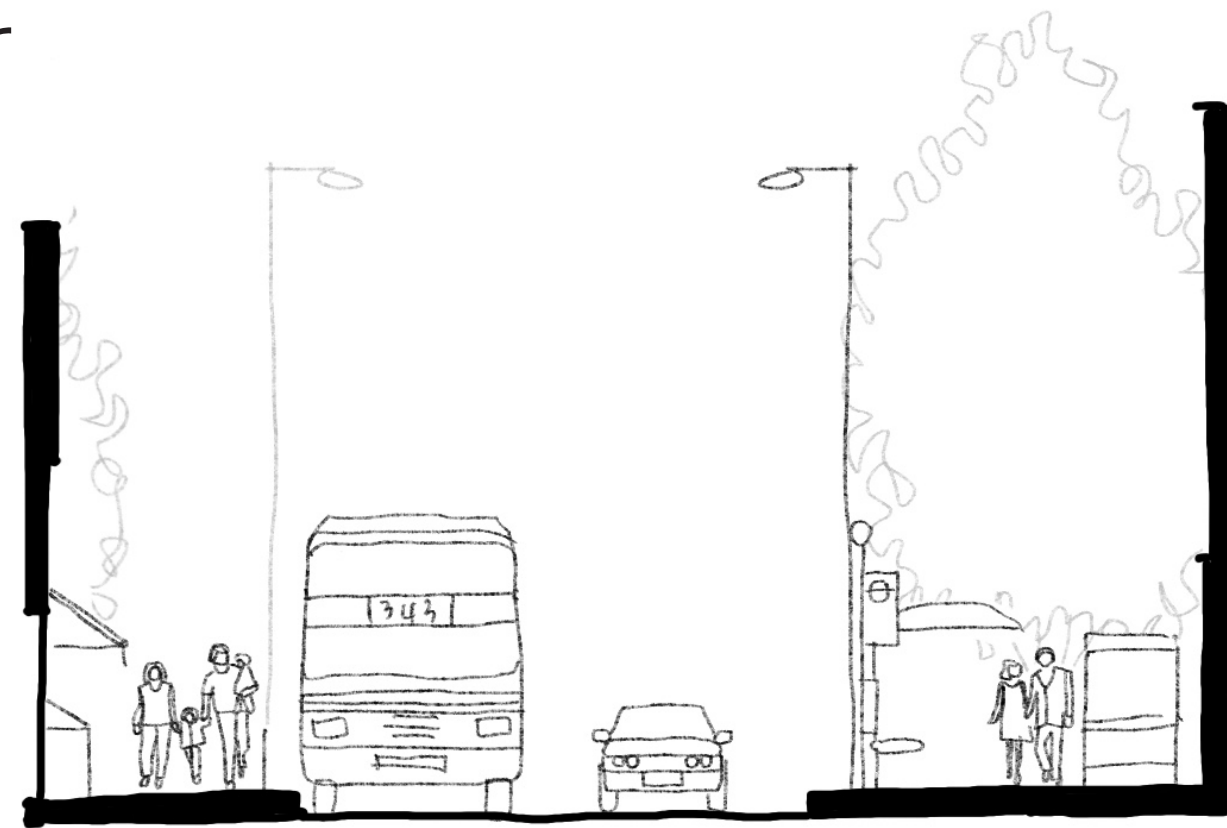
- 2-3 storey residential flat blocks and rows of terraces line the south elevation of Hanover Park with a car park on the north elevation
- The residential homes are set back from the street with private front gardens. This allows some privacy to the ground floor windows on the street.
- Pavement widths are narrower than Rye Lane however, still generous to accommodate waiting for, entering or exiting a bus.
- Lamp posts line the dual carriage way. Other street furniture includes bus stops & bins.
- There are a number of trees along Hanover Park and some greenery to residential front gardens



Corner of Hanover Park & Rye Lane

proportion

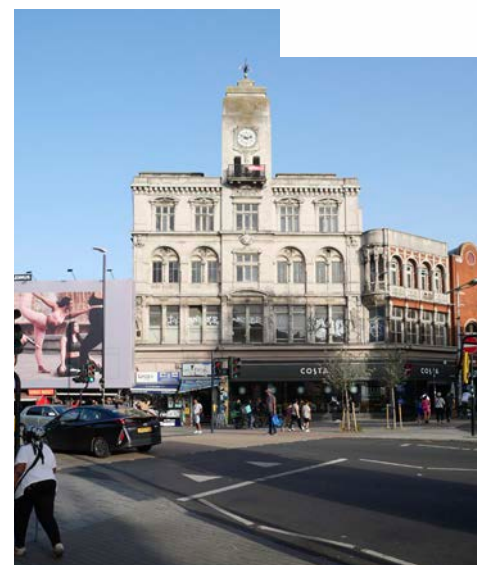
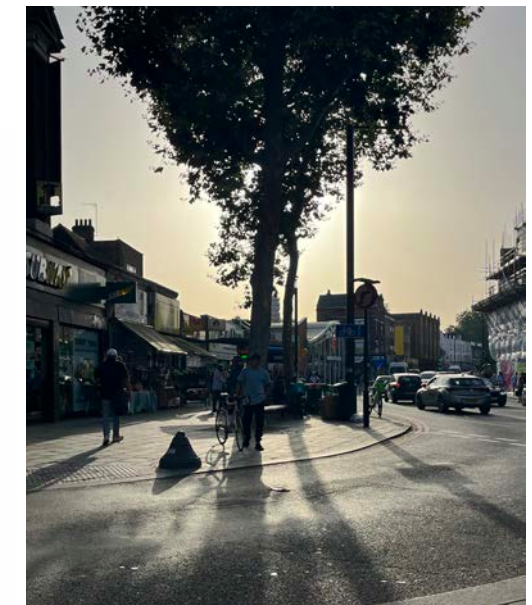
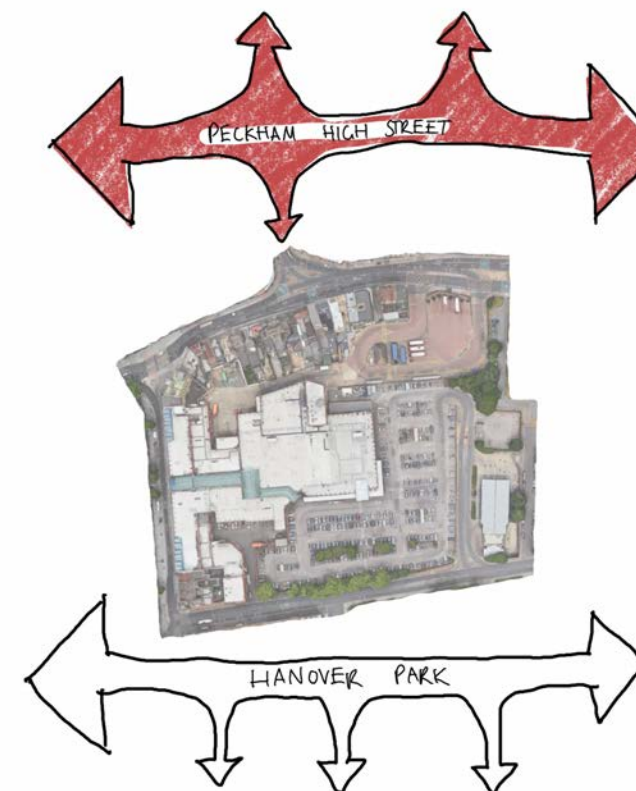
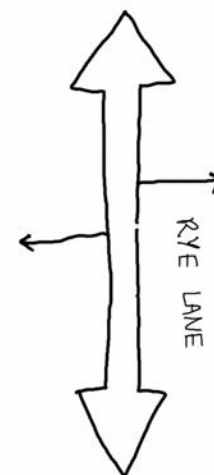
- 2-3 storey retail buildings wrap around from Rye Lane and Aylesham Centre to Hanover Park.
- The corner on the north elevation consists of the old bank and a small portion of Aylesham centre retail
- The corner on the south elevation consists of a continuation of the retail on Rye Lane - Primark. This stretches most of the block up to Cerise Road.
- The building on the northern corner sits in line with the adjacent car park low wall - creating a consistent pavement width along this elevation
- The building on the southern corner sits in line with the residential houses adjacent and therefore has a wider pavement without the front gardens.
- Bollards line the corner on the northern and southern elevation.



Peckham High Street

character

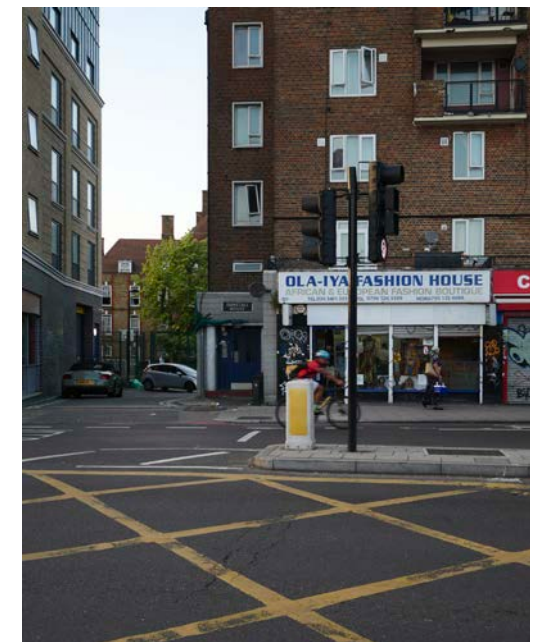
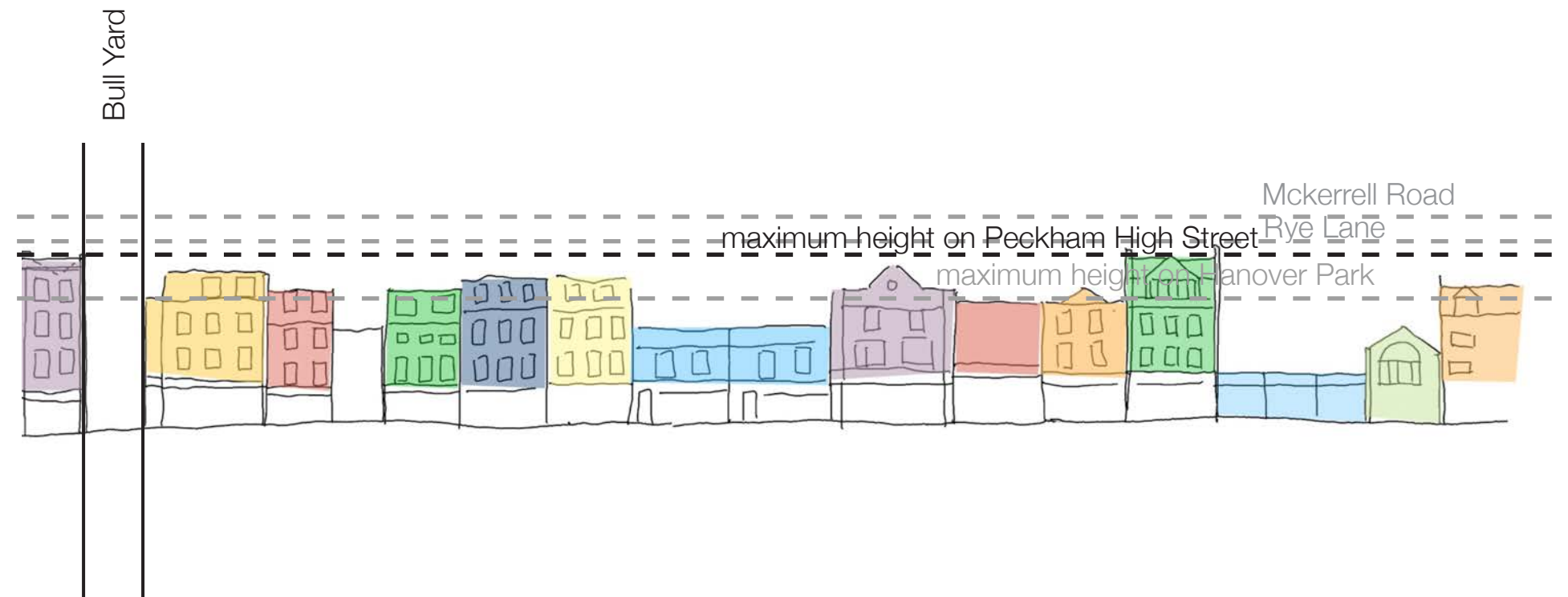
- Peckham High Street is a 'connecting' road with side streets of equal importance.
- This main road also has 'wider' corners.
- The buildings are mainly retail or trade use.
- Peckham Pulse and Peckham Library at the northern end of Rye Lane are within LB Southwark's conservation area. These are taller buildings and stand at a height of four storeys.
- The clock tower building, part of the original Jones & Higgins store, and the library public realm give this area a civic quality.
- The wide road is a main transport route, busy with buses, cars and cycles.



Peckham High Street

grain

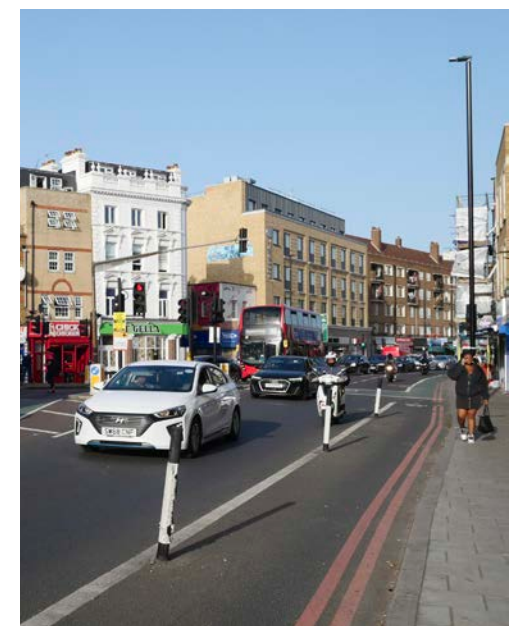
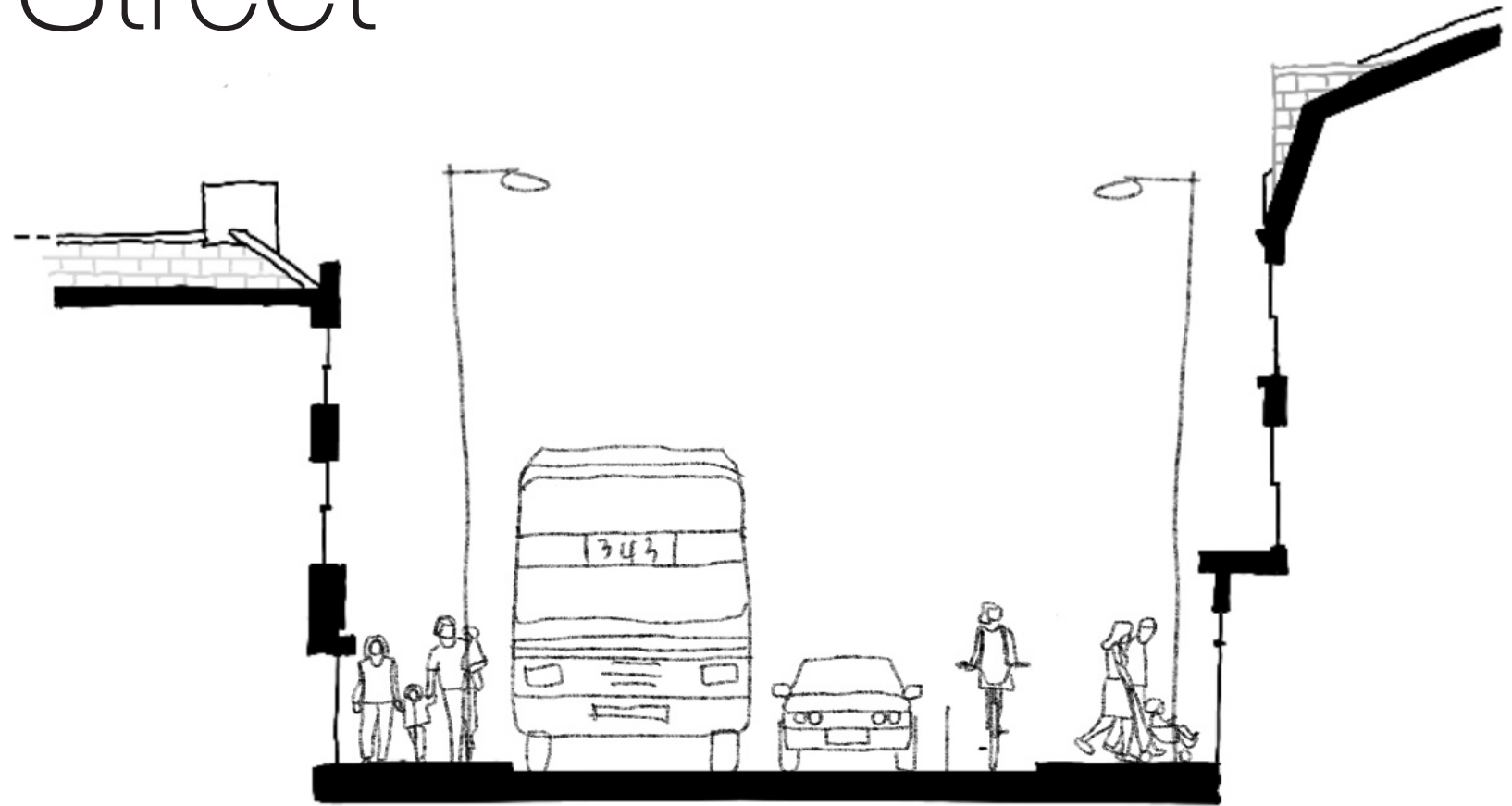
- There is a finer grain along both sides of Peckham High Street
- The building period typologies vary as much as on Rye Lane (or maybe more!) This is specially evident in the residential above/beyond the retail
- There are some gaps between the buildings. Mostly wide streets other than the Bull Yard which is reminiscent of a old street to residential mews beyond.
- Heights of buildings vary the most along Peckham High Street - with dramatic height differences adjacent to one another.



Peckham High Street

proportion

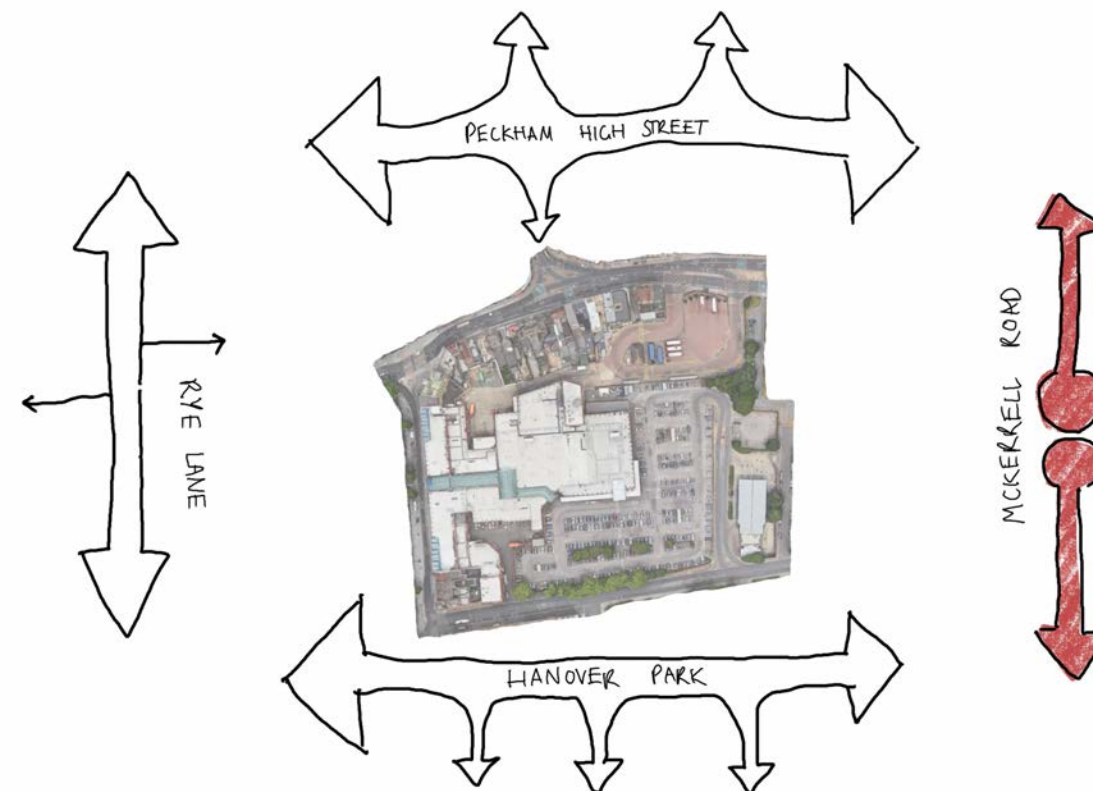
- 2-5 storey buildings with single storey retail meet a pavement along both the north & south elevations of Peckham High Street
- Retail on the ground floor vary in depth (both flush and protruding) with set back residential above/beyond.
- Narrow pavements don't accommodate any 'retail spillage'.
- Lamp posts line the large dual carriage way and single cycle path - with very little other street furniture other than the bollards that separate the cycle path from the car lanes.
- No trees line this section of Peckham High Street
- Peckham Square allows for gathering along Peckham High Street



Mckerrell Rd

character

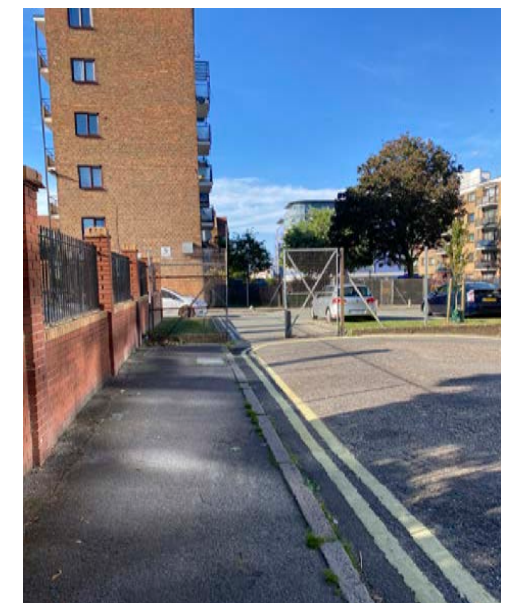
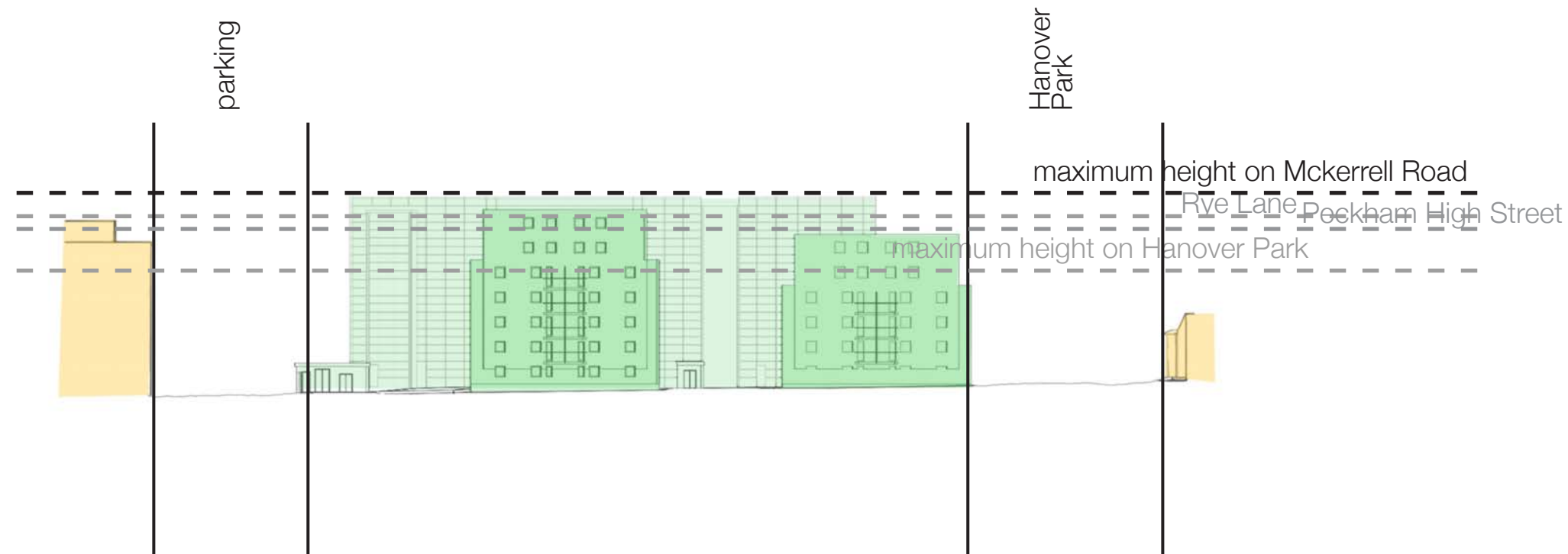
- Mckerrell road is off Hanover Park.
- The road has a dead end / back of house feeling with the road leading to an open wire gate and door with a car park beyond.
- Most buildings along this road are residential flat blocks with blank façades and habitable windows facing directly onto the pavement.
- Residential entrances are set back from the road.
- Green spaces feel quiet, private and uninviting.
- There is a lack of ground floor presence along this road and the pedestrian activity is low.
- The Morrisons petrol station is at the corner of Mckerrell road and Hanover Park.



Mckerrell Rd

grain

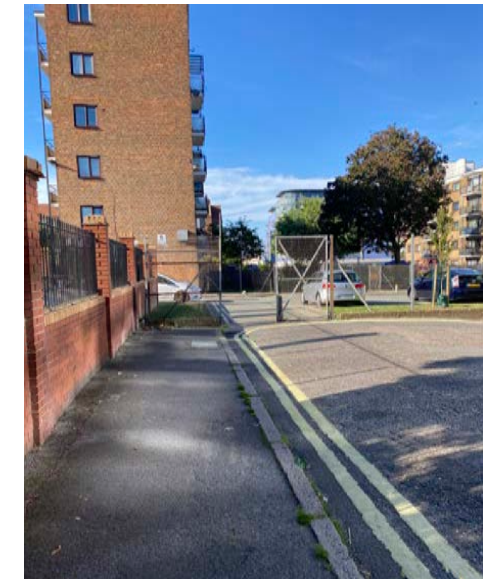
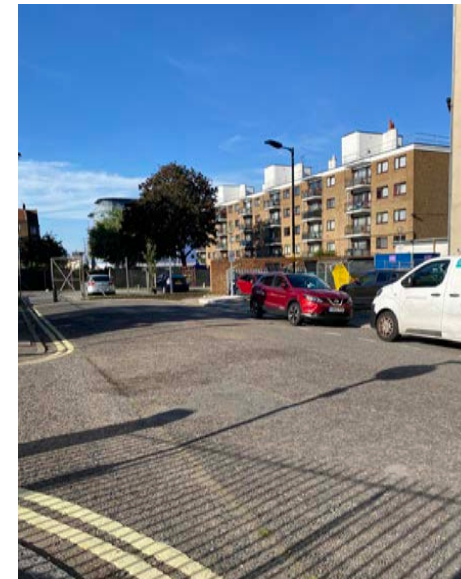
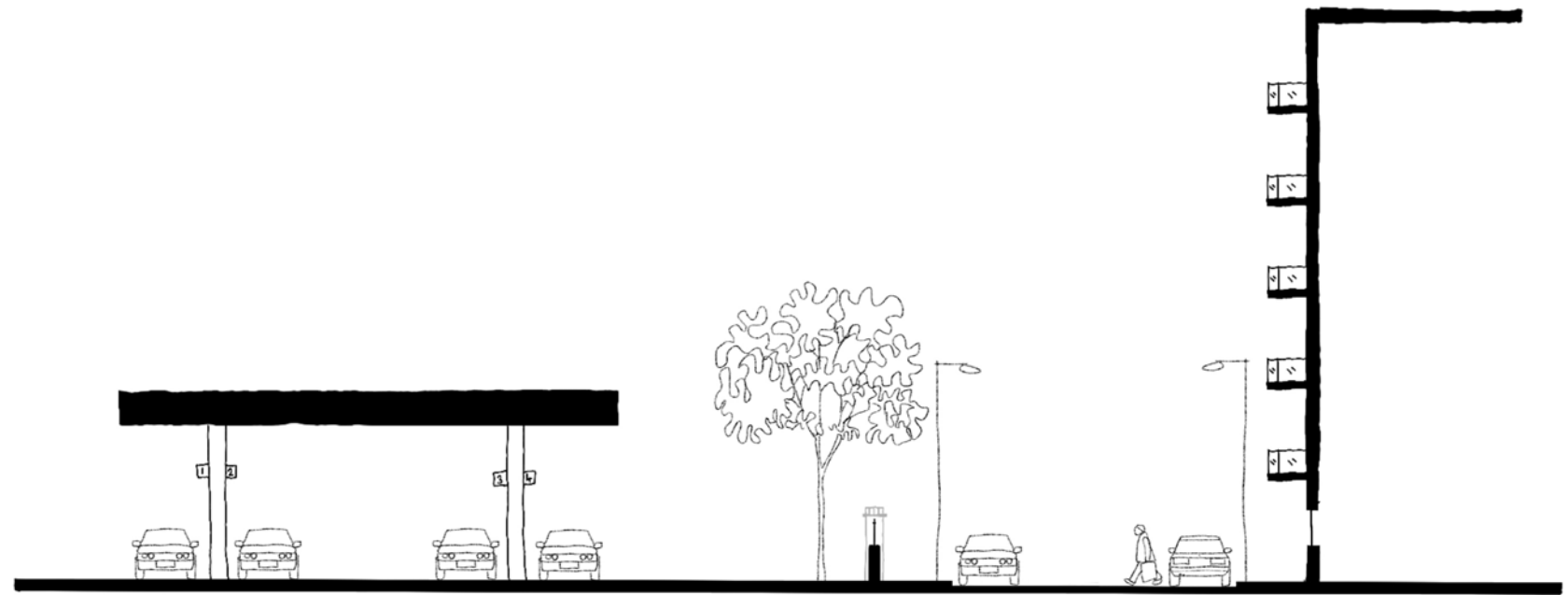
- There is a large grain along Mckerrell Road made up of large blocks of flats within a landscape
- There is little/no variation in the building period typologies
- There are large gaps between the buildings. Mostly wide streets or perceived gaps formed by courtyards/building set backs.
- Heights of buildings are the same. These are the highest buildings in the surrounding streets



Mckerrell Rd

proportion

- A 6 storey block of flats line Mckerrell Road along the east elevation with a petrol station and parking lot lining the west elevation.
- The road is lined with parked cars and gated at the end of road where this meets adjacent private residential car parks and gardens.
- There are windows at ground level along the eastern elevation with balconies over-looking the road above
- A low wall with transparent railing lines the western elevation to the petrol station
- Lamp posts line the residential road - with no other street furniture.
- A few trees line the road on the western elevation



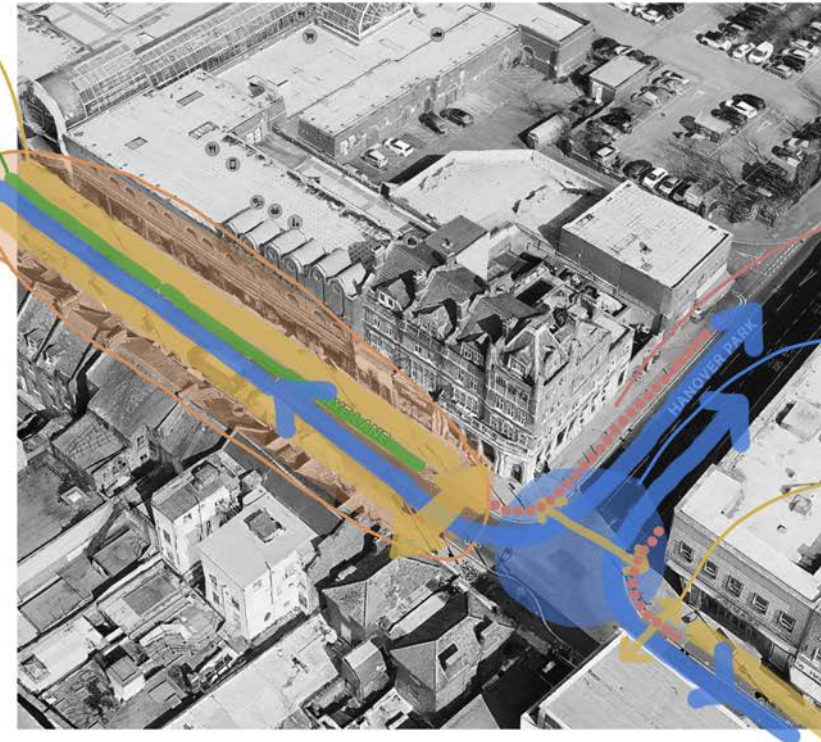
site corners

local context

Pedestrian Pavements

Cycle lane
BVs only

Overlapping
between buses,
cyclists +
pedestrians -
chaotic!



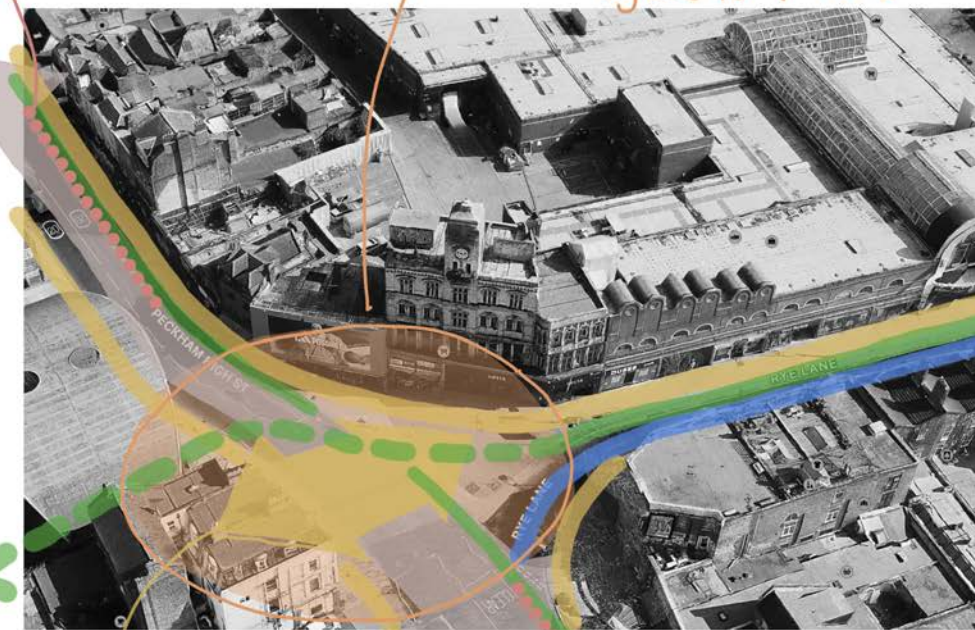
Bollards at
corners between
pavement + road

Buses turning
sharply at corners

Pedestrian crossings
not well used/ignored.
J-walking more
common

Bollards
between
cycle lane +
road

Crossing problematic
- no dedicated cyclist crossing
- cars stopping on crossing due to
congestion
- pedestrians need to navigate around
cyclists + cars



Pedestrian
Pavements

Cycle lane

Bus only

Continuation
of cycle path
not aligned +
shared with
pedestrians on
Peckham
square

Pedestrian crossing
shared with cyclists

Dual carriage way
road with cars, buses
+ cyclists