

# common ground?



The Freedom to Roam

*playgrounds of the imagination*

Joanna Jones

Spongey Neighbourhoods

*flood resilience for St. Johns*

Marcus Gayle

Gifts to the Street

*better homes & gardens make better streets*

Create Streets







A red-tinted photograph of a residential street. The street is lined with brick houses on both sides. Several cars are parked along the street, and a tree is visible in the background. The overall scene is a typical urban residential area.

# Introduction

## Who we are



# Who is Create Streets?

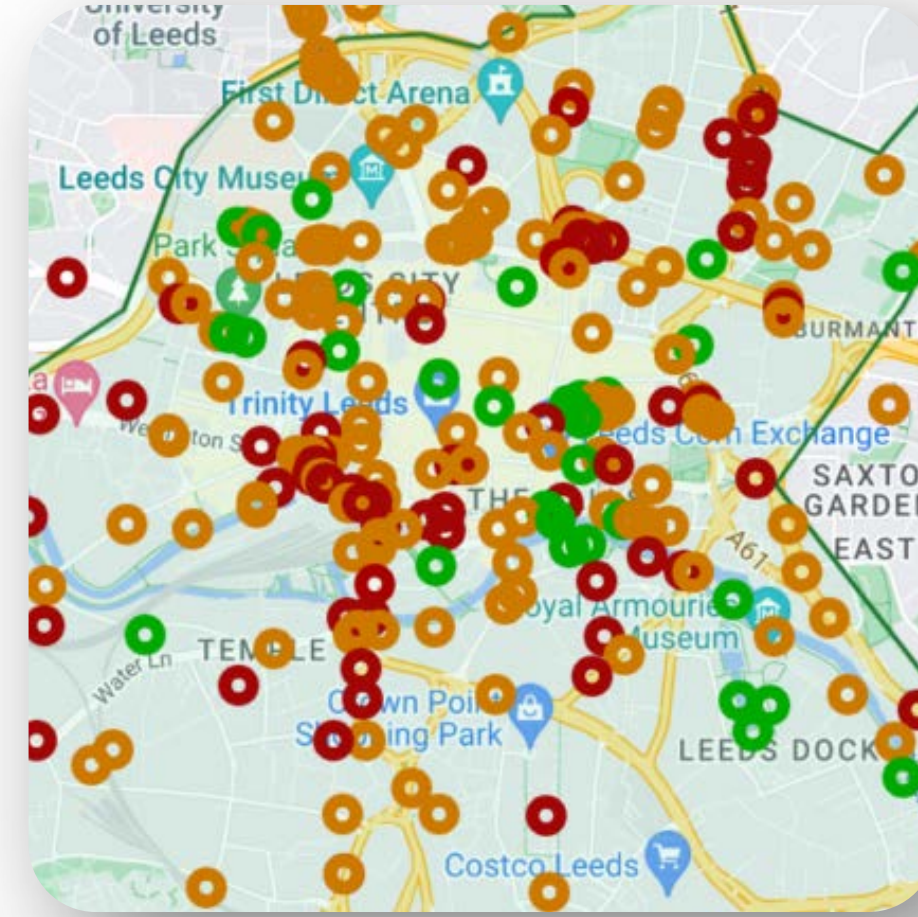
A London-based social enterprise with an associated charity, the Create Streets Foundation

Create Streets is a London-based social enterprise with an associated charity, the Create Streets Foundation. We exist to make it easier to develop high density, beautiful, street-based developments, with strong local support. Places that are socially and economically successful and which residents will love for generations. We work *top down* and *bottom up* to achieve this.



## Design & Consult

We are primarily a design consultancy providing master-planning, co-design, street-design and design-coding



## Engage & Support

Meaningful community and stakeholder engagement is key to everything we do. Our *Create Communities* platform is key to this.



## Research & Advocate

What developments will people support, where are people happy, where will they pay to be and why?



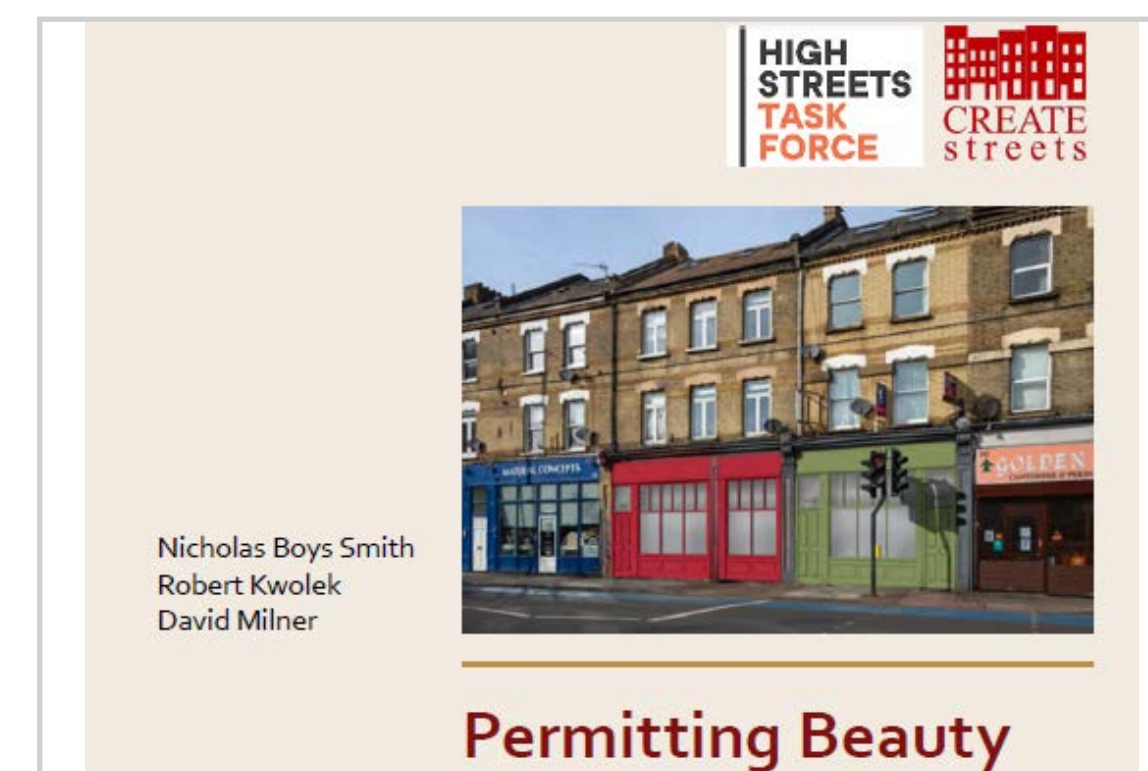
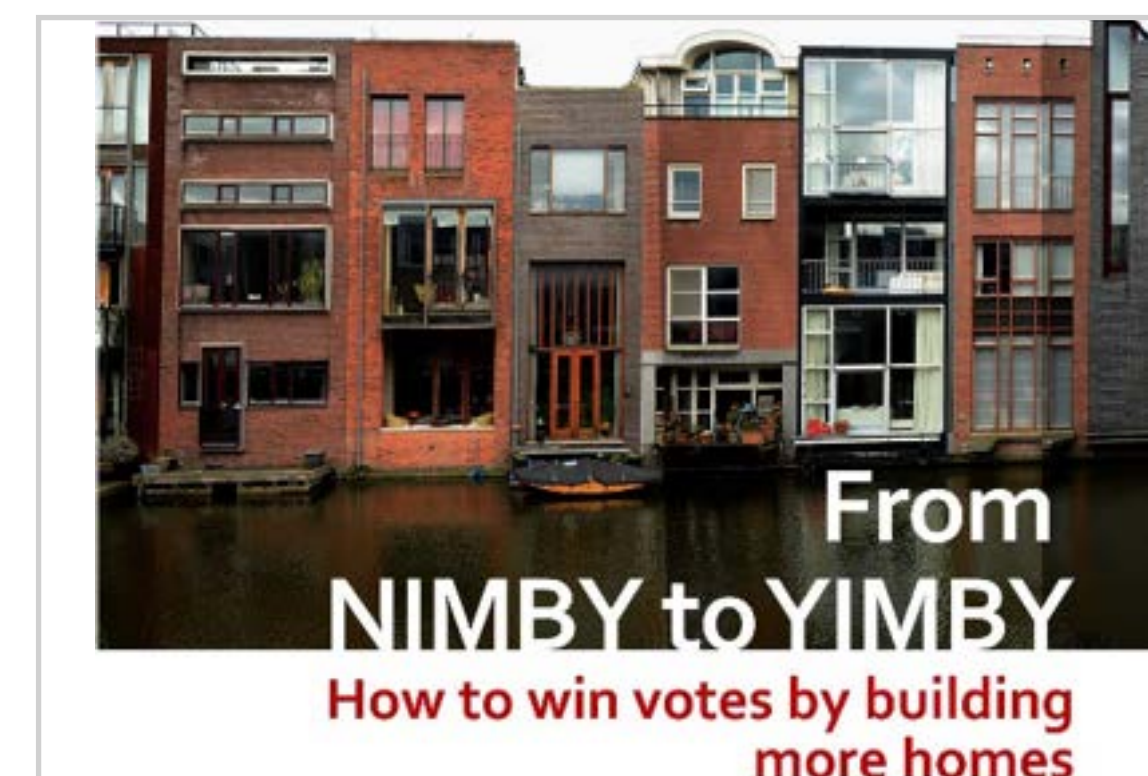
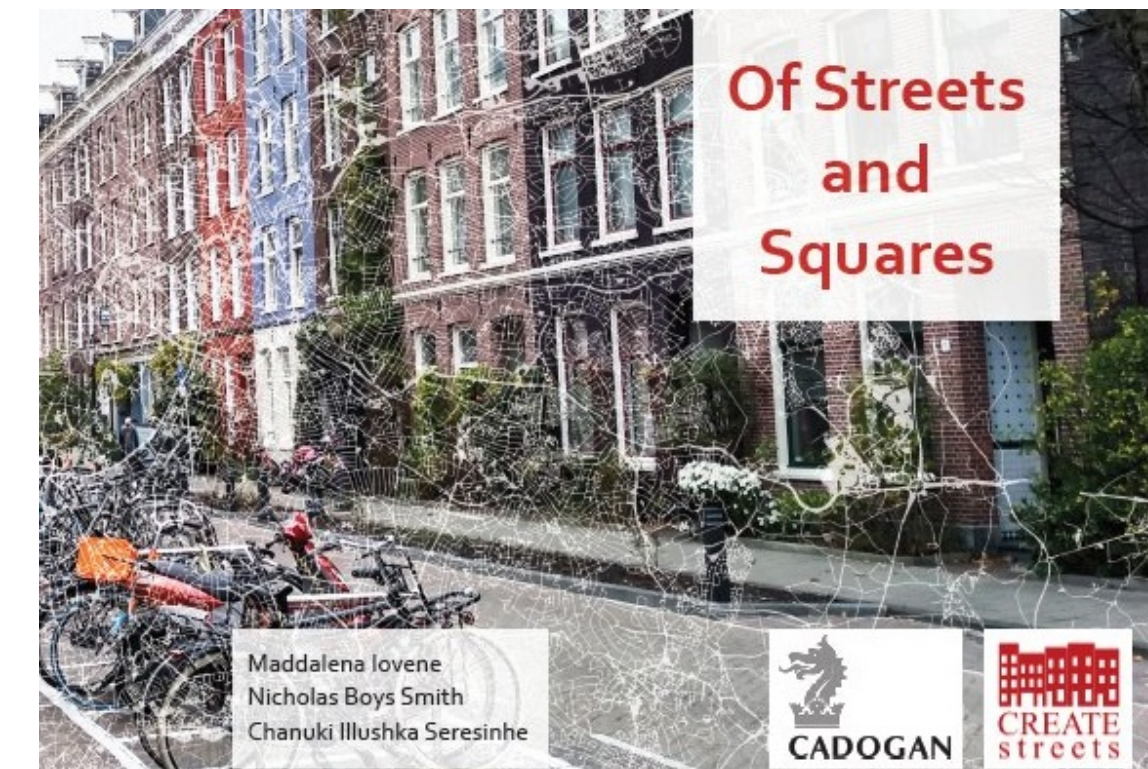
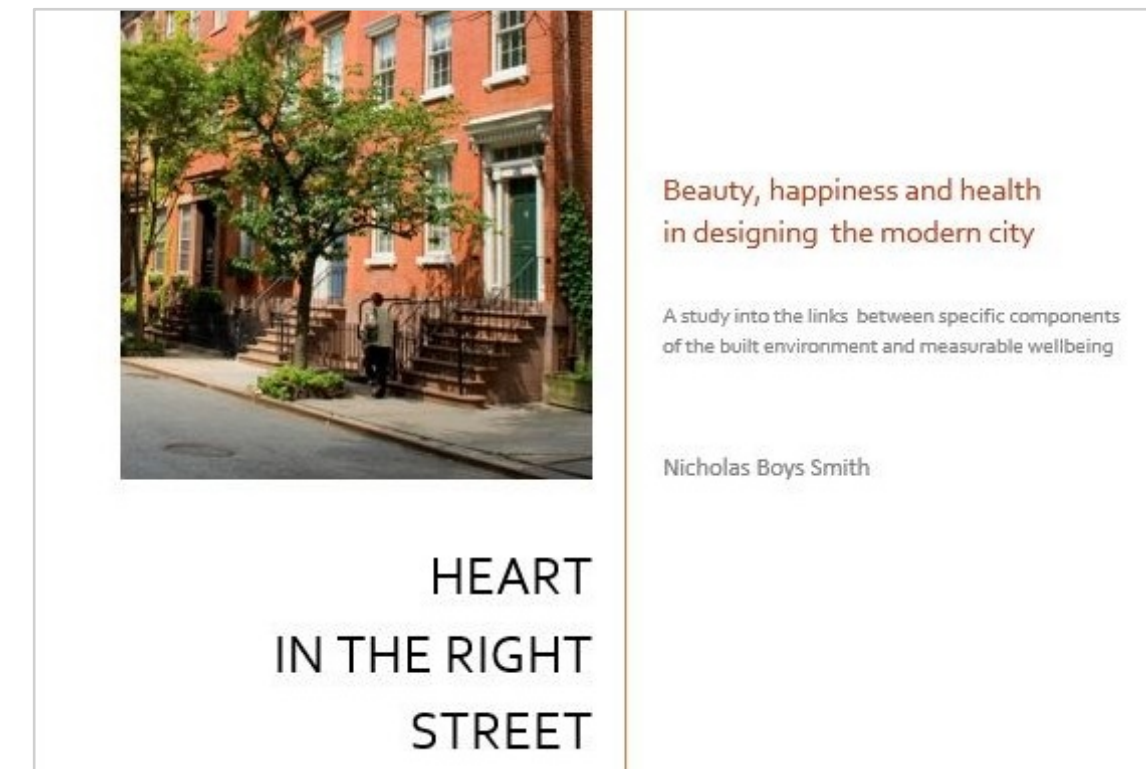
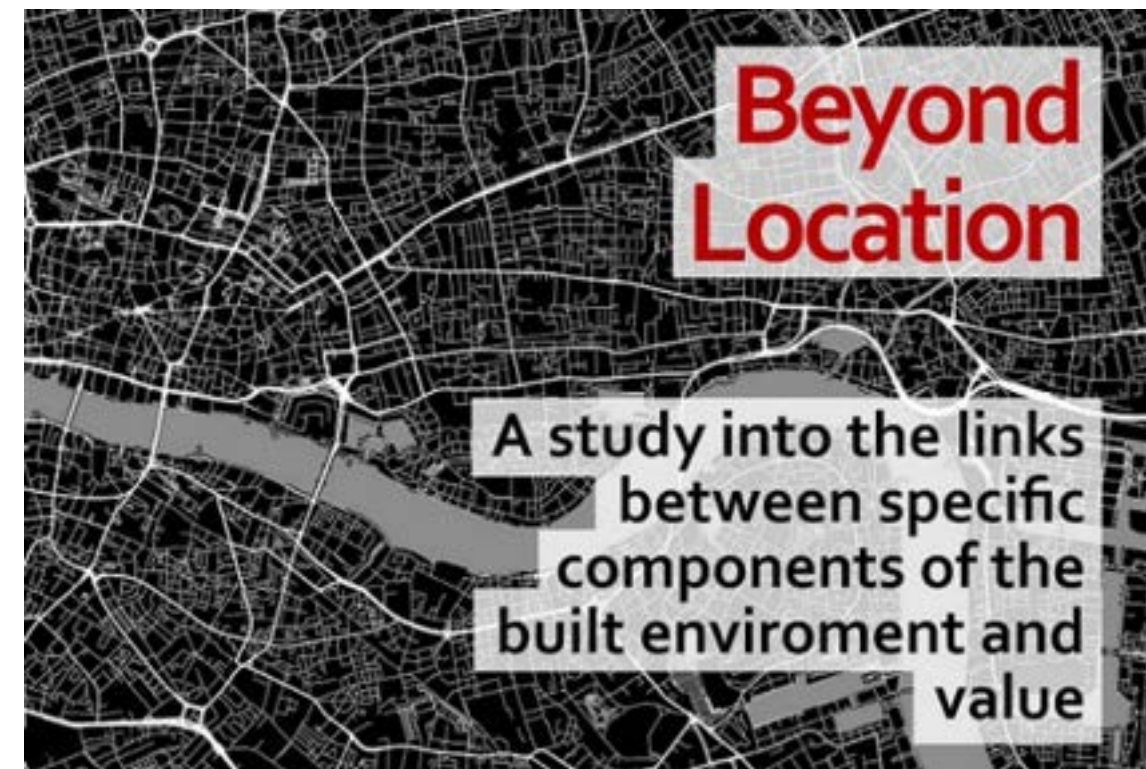
## Educate & Empower

We provide training for the public and professionals on how to create better, more popular places



# Research & Advocate

Research the outcomes between place, health, well-being and beauty







# Greening Up

**From fights to rights:**  
making it the default to re-green our  
streets and squares

[www.createstreets.com/greeningup](http://www.createstreets.com/greeningup)



**Berkeley**  
Group





# Rubbish Refuse

How to fix our rubbish commercial waste system



## Nine recommendations

Providing short, medium, and long-term solutions to the issue of commercial waste







# Greening Up

For people, place and planet



## Background

Our research shows that greenery can one of the most effective interventions...

...but it really isn't as easy as it should be



# "The urban wonder drug"

Good for Planet, Place, and People



## Good for the *Planet*

1. Prevention: sequestering carbon
2. Mitigation: cooling cities
3. Mitigation: stopping flooding and sewage spills
4. Mitigation: tackling air pollution
5. Mitigation: restoring biodiversity.



## Good for *Place*

6. Calmer and safer roads
7. Closer knit places
8. Less street crime
9. Better for business
10. Adding value to properties

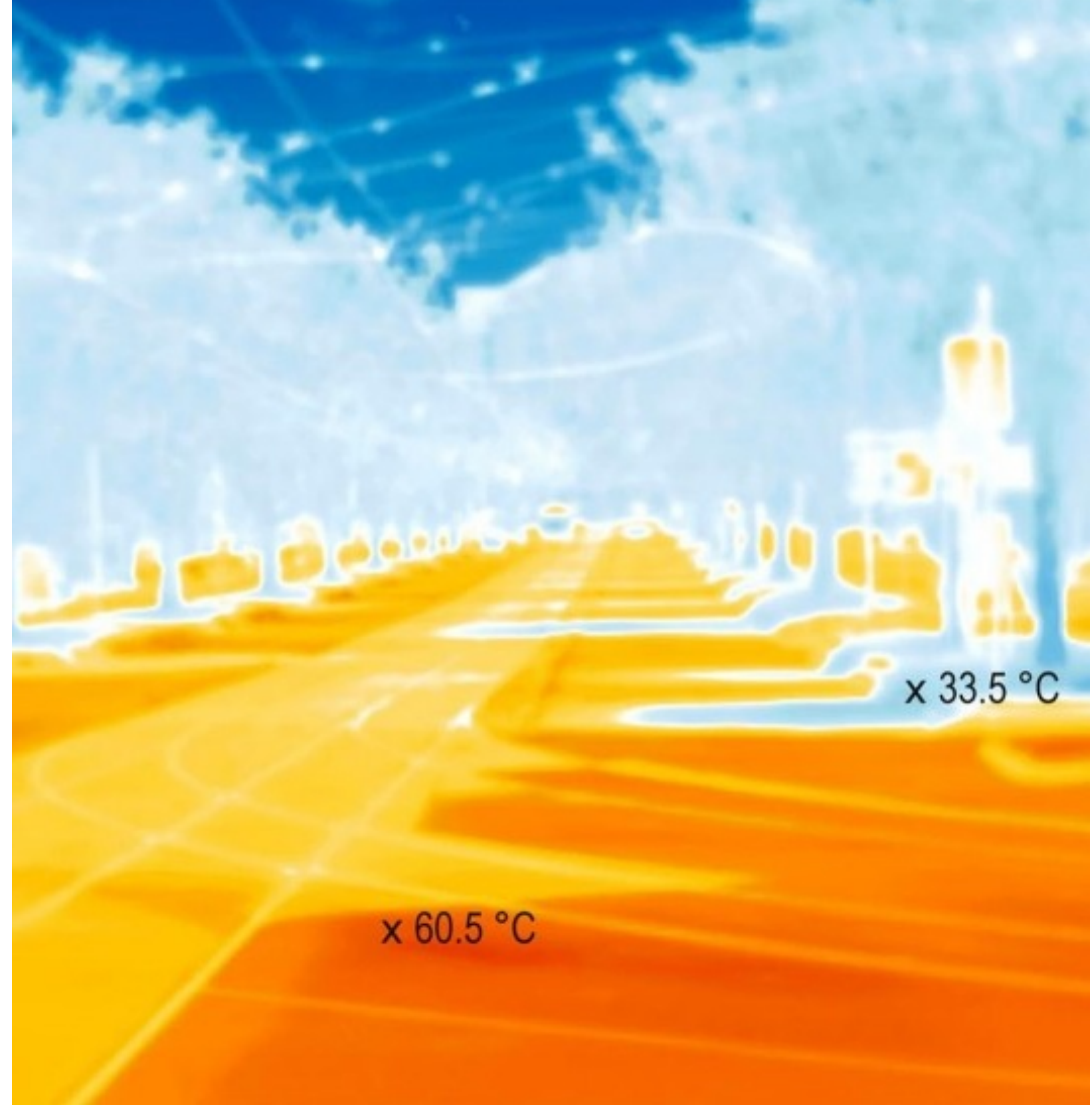
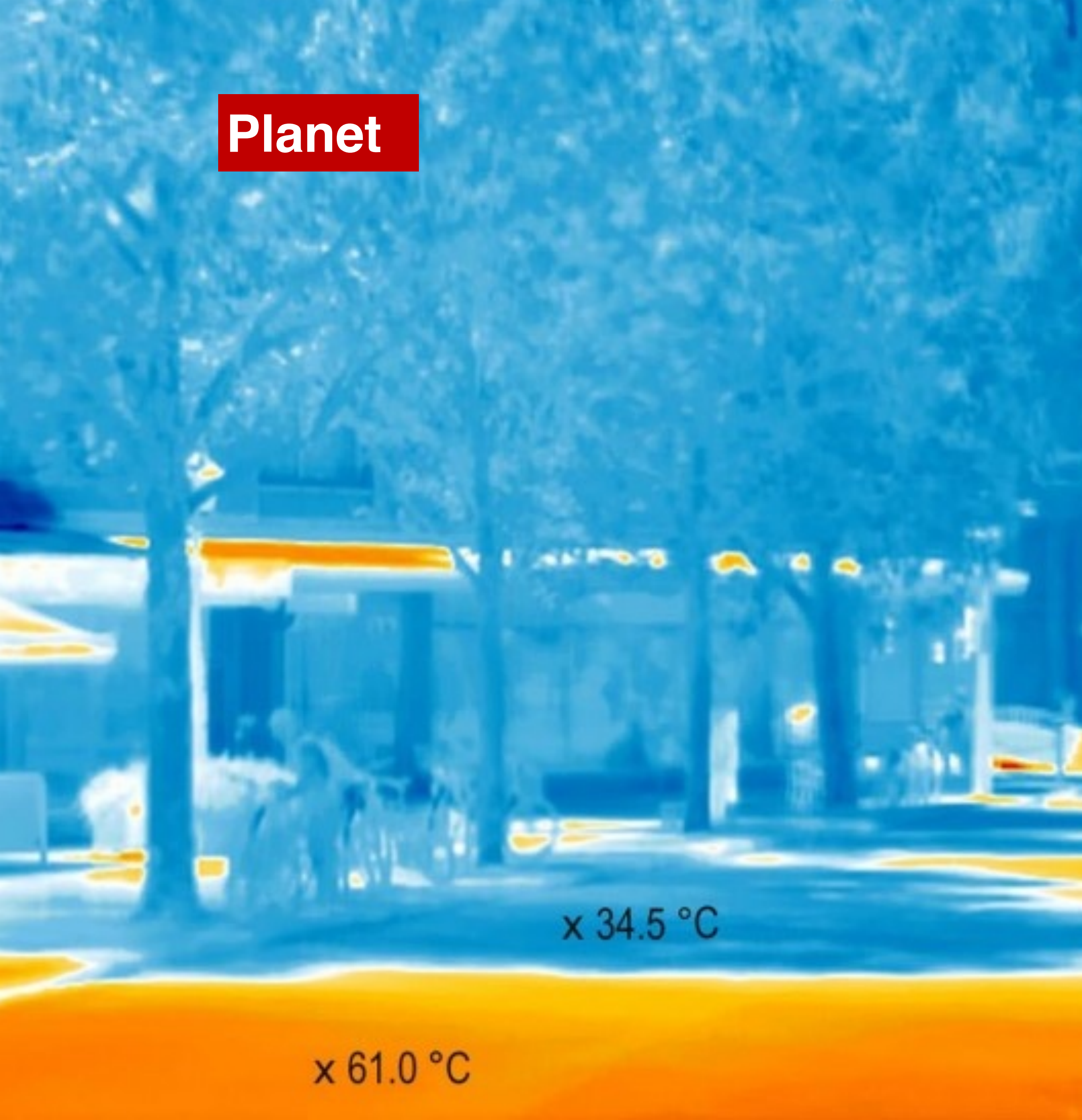


## Good for *People*

11. Happier people (mental health)
12. Healthier people (physical health)
13. Increasing our interest in and connection with Nature



Planet





Place

*Greenery bringing people together in previously unloved spaces*



People



*Active travel and greenery go hand in hand*



# Biodiversity Net Loss



*Before*



*During*



*After*



# Why do front gardens matter?

For the planet

- *Estimated 46% of London gardens now paved over*, largely due to car ownership
- *From 1991 to 2011, there was a 22% increase* in the impermeable surfaces in front gardens
- National Infrastructure Commission notes *that paving over front gardens has added up to 65,000 properties to high-risk flood areas*. Currently, 325,000 English properties are already at high risk from surface water flooding.

## Nine football pitches

*The area lost in Edinburgh each year to urban creep*



*“New survey published today by Arup has found that the urban centre of London is the least “sponge-like”, or naturally able to absorb rainwater, of seven major global cities. London emerges with a “sponge” rating of just 22% - far behind Auckland, which ranks top with 35%.”*

***Global Sponge Cities Snapshot, Arup 2022***



# Why do front gardens matter?

For places and people

- *Of the street , but not in the street.* Front gardens need more attention, they are where public meets private, where interaction happens.
- We think of them as a *'gift to the street'*

**Friendlier** - 12 times as much neighbourly activity in street with front gardens

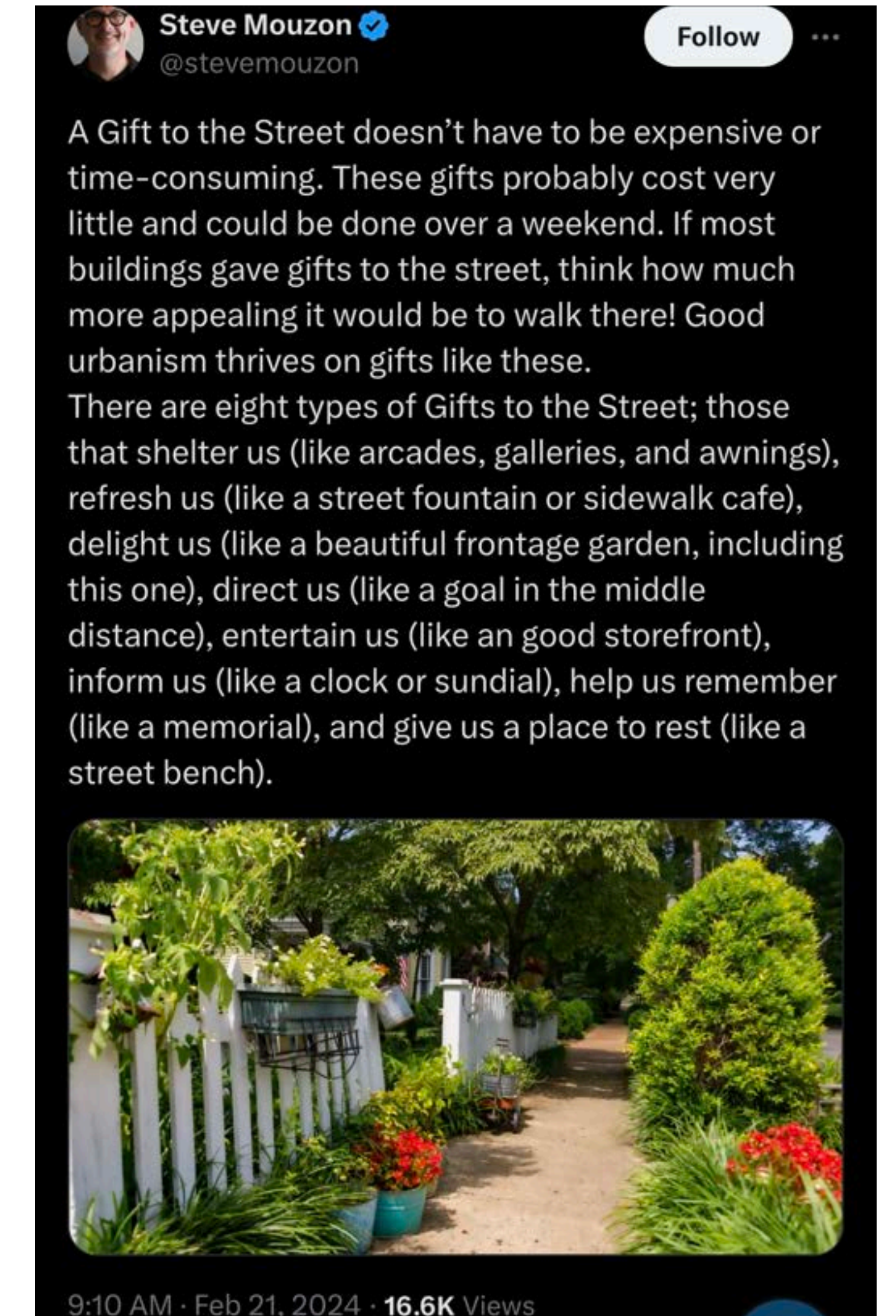
**Happier** - being surrounded by greenery makes us happier. (10% lower rates of depression)

**Safer** – Less vehicles crossing, no need for children to share the pavement with cars.

**Communal** – 1 private driveway space means 1 less on street space.



Responsive environments (1985)





More of this?





*Greening our cities is urgent; it is our duty; it is our obligation. This splendid report champions greening our cities and it offers solutions to the barriers that stop them from achieving their potential as humane and beautiful places where we can live happy and healthy lives.*

**Carlos Moreno, initiator of the '15-minute city' concept, Professor at Sorbonne University – IAE Paris**

**Read the report here:**

*<https://www.createstreets.com/greeningup/>*







# Growing up streets

*Why gentle intensification is best*



# The humble Mansard roof

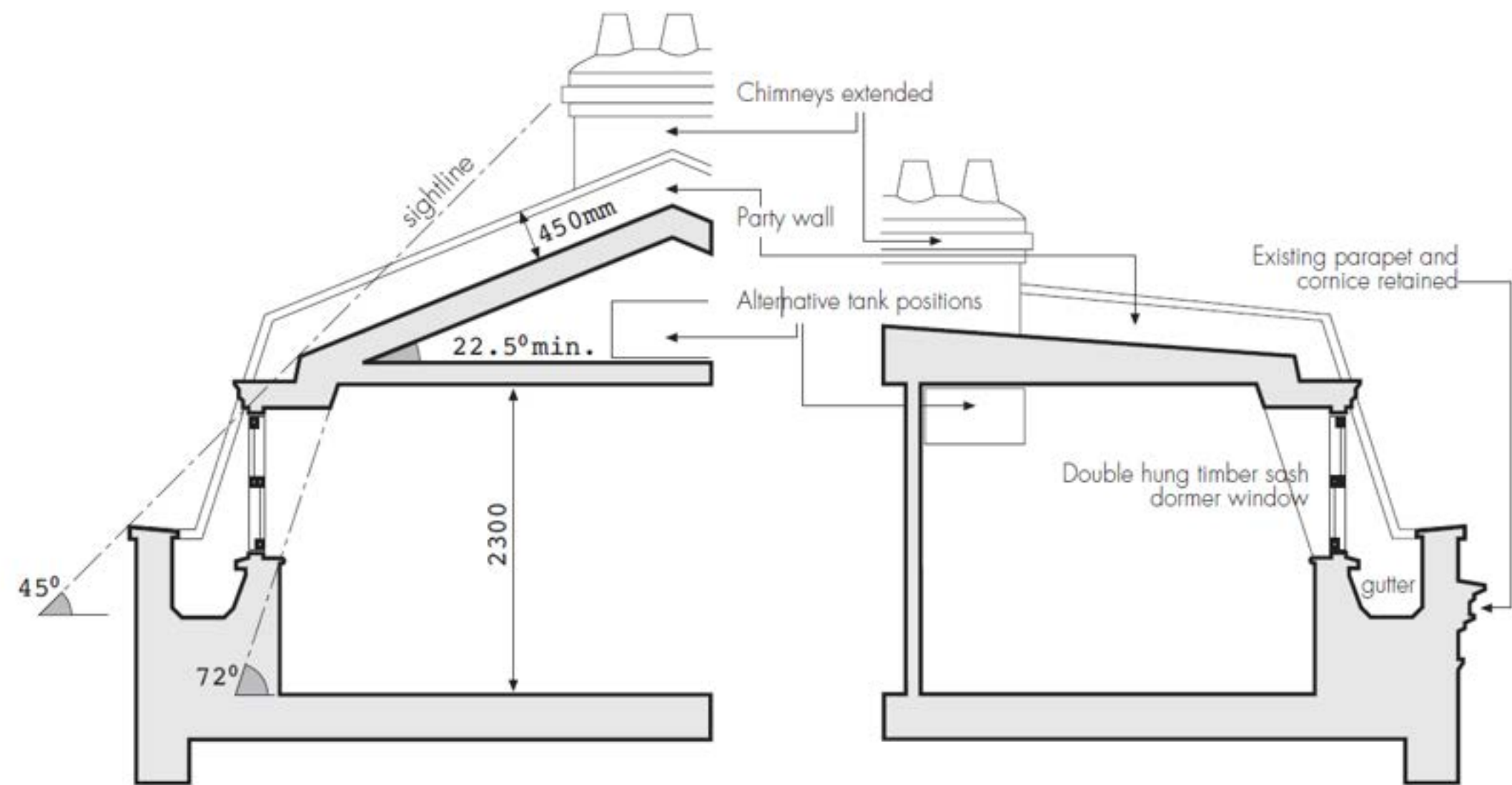
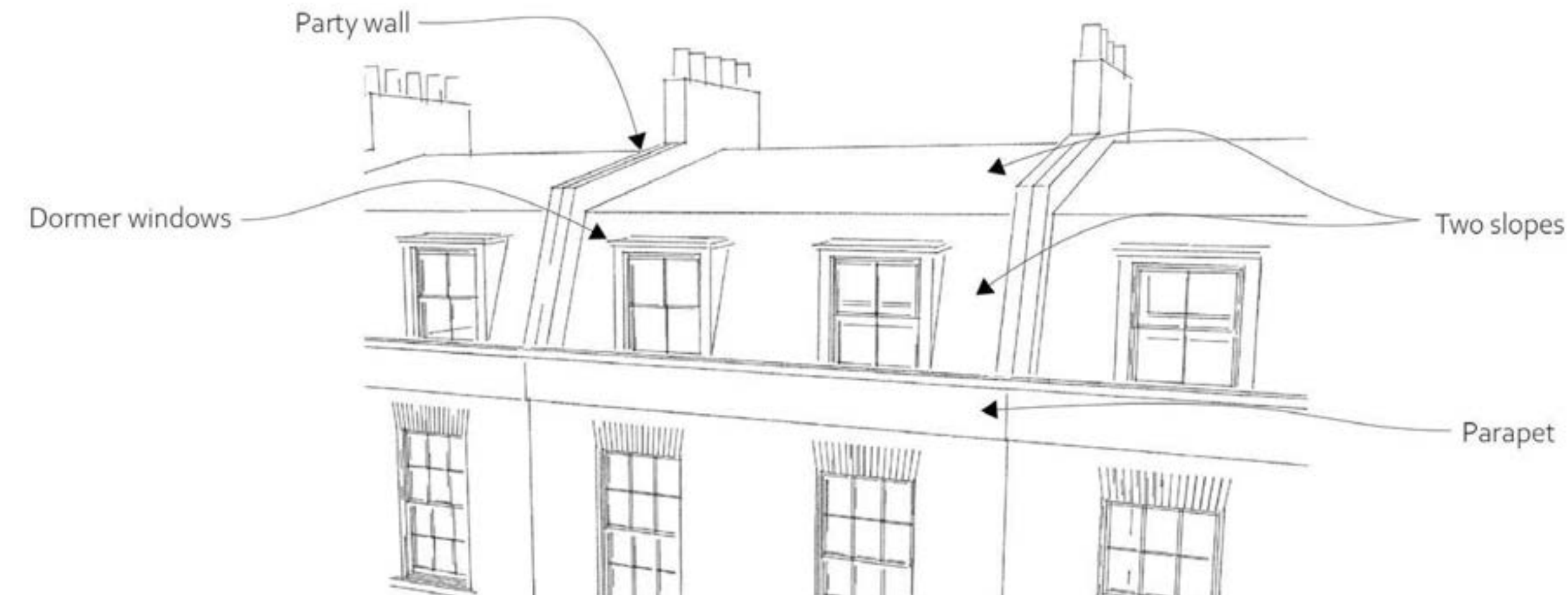
The simplest way of growing our streets





# What makes a Mansard a Mansard?

## Key characteristics



**True Mansard**

**Flat topped Mansard**

Source: RBKC



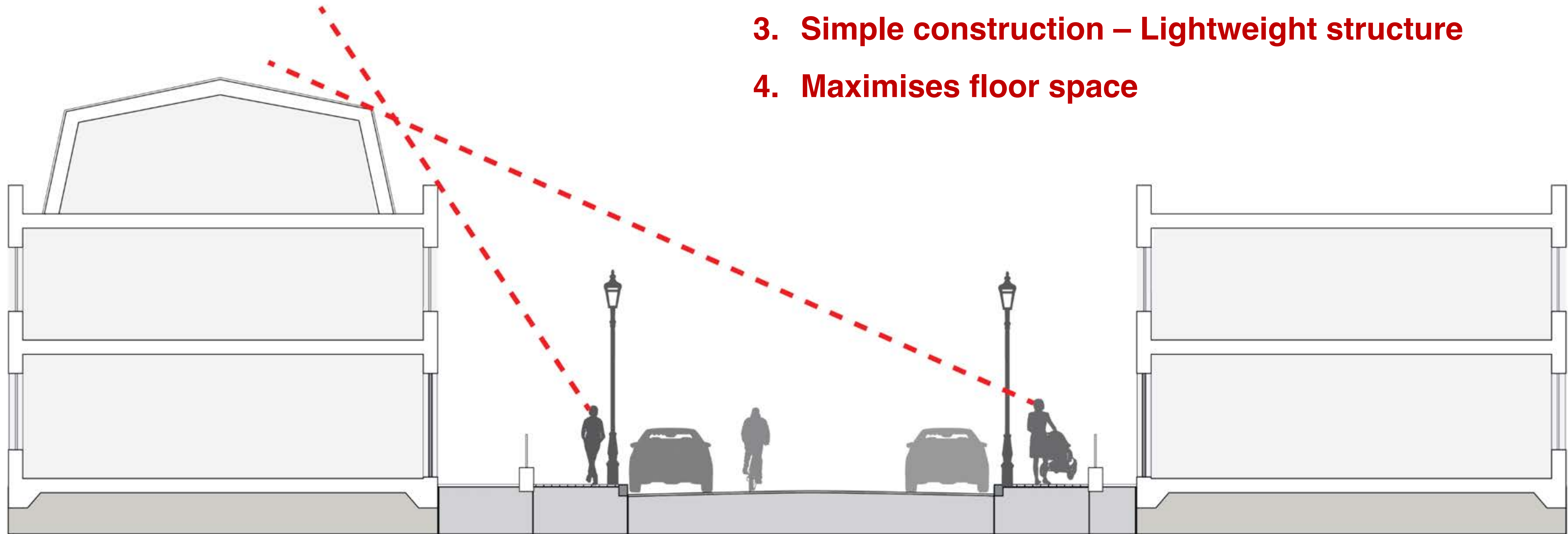
Source: Tower Hamlets



# Why it works well

## The advantages of Mansards

1. Minimal visual impact from the street
2. Historically appropriate form
3. Simple construction – Lightweight structure
4. Maximises floor space



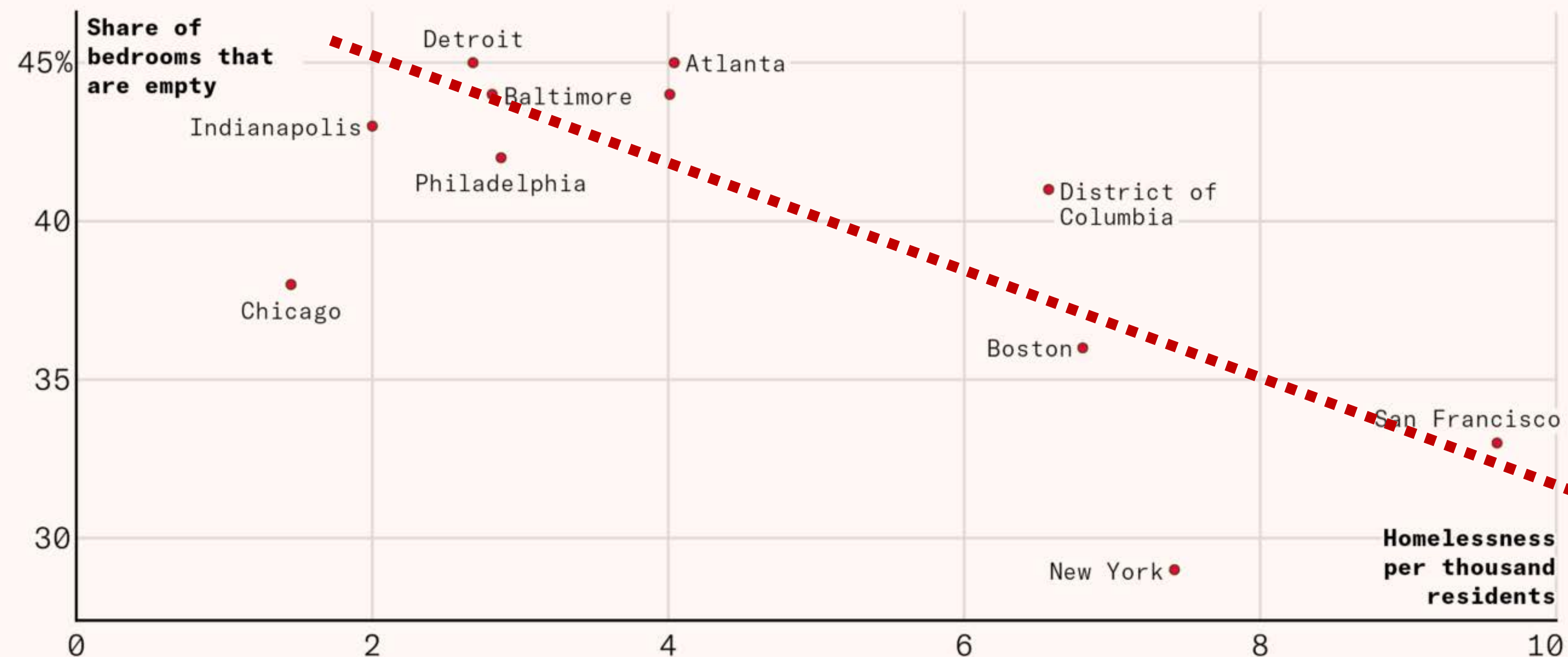


# The main advantage – More bedrooms

Solving the housing crisis isn't just about new homes

Homelessness tends to be less common in cities and counties where more households have empty bedrooms

## Cities



What would  
100,000's of extra  
bedrooms in London  
deliver?

How many council  
owned homes would  
benefit from  
extension?

Salim Furth (2024) *Why housing shortages cause homelessness*. Works in Progress (Line added)  
[worksinprogress.co/issue/why-housing-shortages-cause-homelessness/](https://worksinprogress.co/issue/why-housing-shortages-cause-homelessness/)



# Why don't we see more of them?

We stopped..





# Planning changed (for the better)

But not without consequences

## Planning

10 & 11 GEO. 6. *Town and Country Planning  
Act, 1947.*

CH. 51.



### CHAPTER 51.

An Act to make fresh provision for planning the development and use of land, for the grant of permission to develop land and for other powers of control over the use of land; to confer on public authorities additional powers in respect of the acquisition and development of land for planning and other purposes, and to amend the law relating to compensation in respect of the compulsory acquisition of land; to provide for payments out of central funds in respect of depreciation occasioned by planning restrictions; to secure the recovery for the benefit of the community of development charges in respect of certain new development; to provide for the payment of grants out of central funds in respect of expenses of local authorities in connection with the matters aforesaid; and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid. [6th August 1947.]

## Conservation



### Civic Amenities Act 1967

1967 CHAPTER 69



### Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990



# What are we trying to conserve?

## Butterfly, or London roofs





# Typical example

Refusal on character grounds



*The proposed mansard roof extension would introduce an uncharacteristic form of development, thereby harming the roofline of the terrace and the appearance of the property and entire group from a number of perspectives. It would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Oxford Gardens Conservation Area*

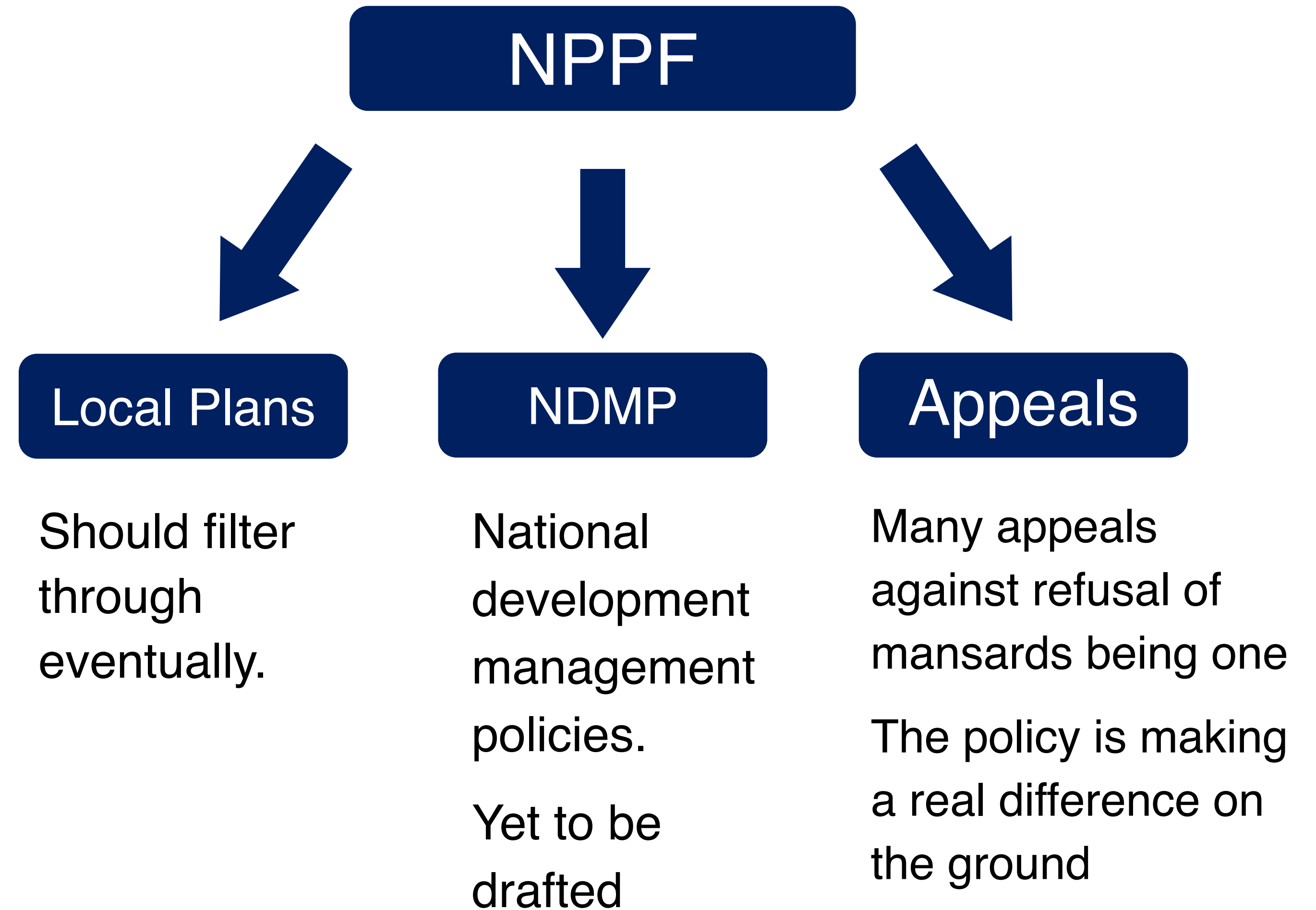


# Things are changing

Updates to national planning policy

## Updates to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2023 and updated 2024

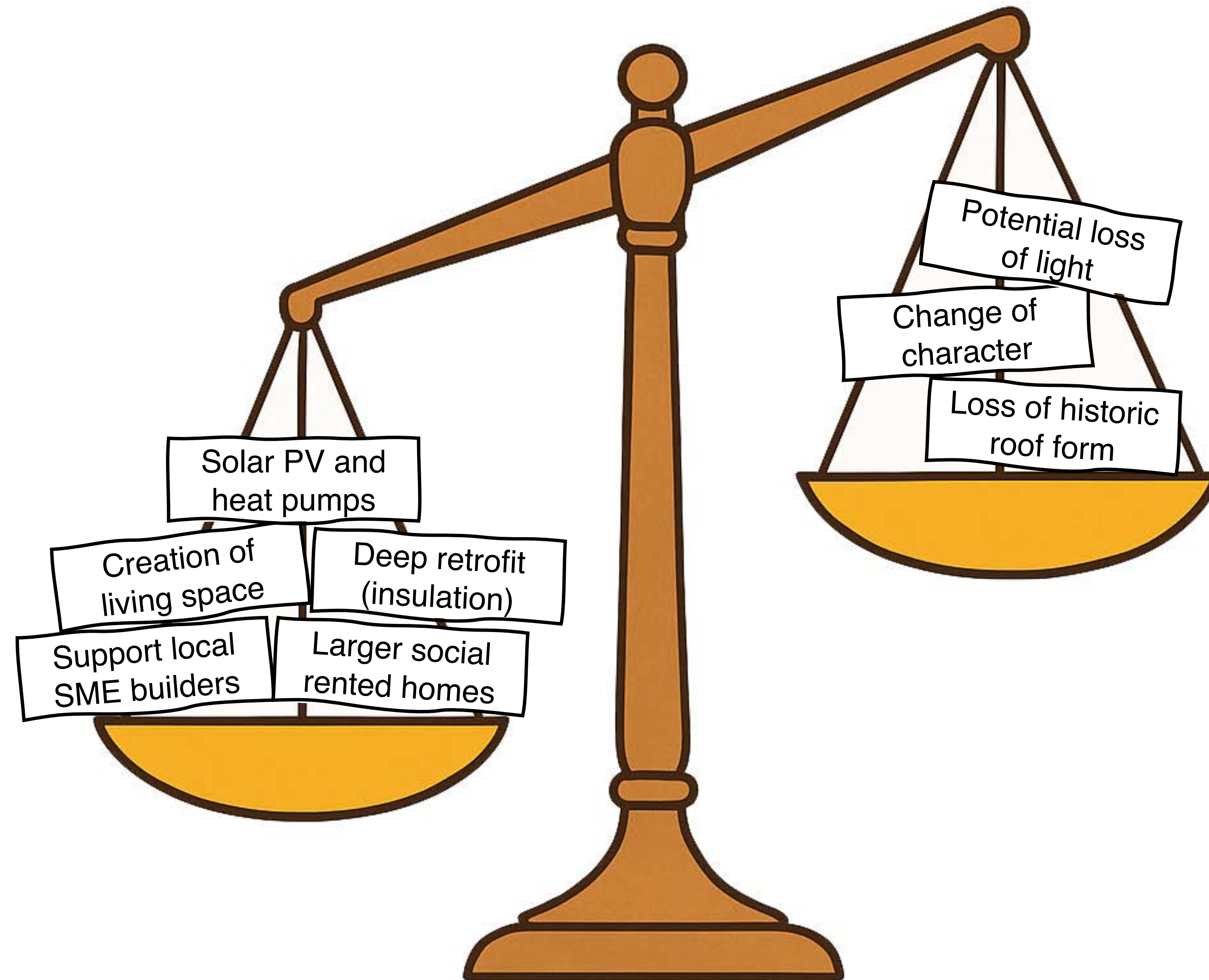
- Paragraph 125(e)
- *Planning policies and decisions should:*  
*(e) support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions – including mansard roofs – where the development would be consistent with the prevailing form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well-designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards) and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers. A condition of simultaneous development should not be imposed on an application for multiple upward extensions unless there is an exceptional justification.*





# Tipping the balance

The case is very strong





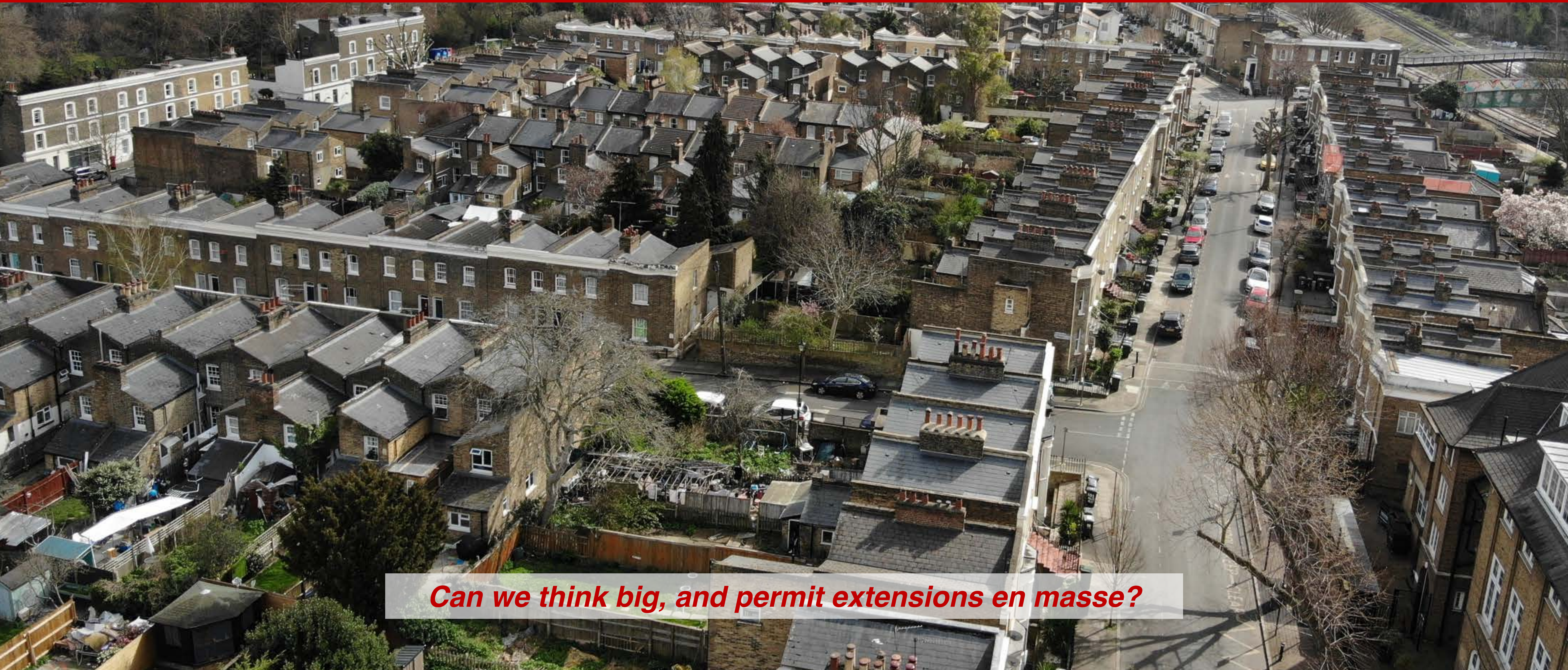
# How do we link the two?

Capturing value



# An area wide approach

Individual applications aren't an efficient approach



*Can we think big, and permit extensions en masse?*



# Capturing the value

What mechanisms could we use?

## Section 106 Developer Contributions

- Developer contributions allow planning authorities to capture value from development to pay for infrastructure and affordable housing
- This is alongside Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) (not applicable here)
- Any obligations must satisfy strict legal tests: they must be *necessary*, *directly related to the development*, and *fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind*.
- Any planning application for en masse extensions could offer contributions through a **unilateral undertaking** that will be used to fund street improvements

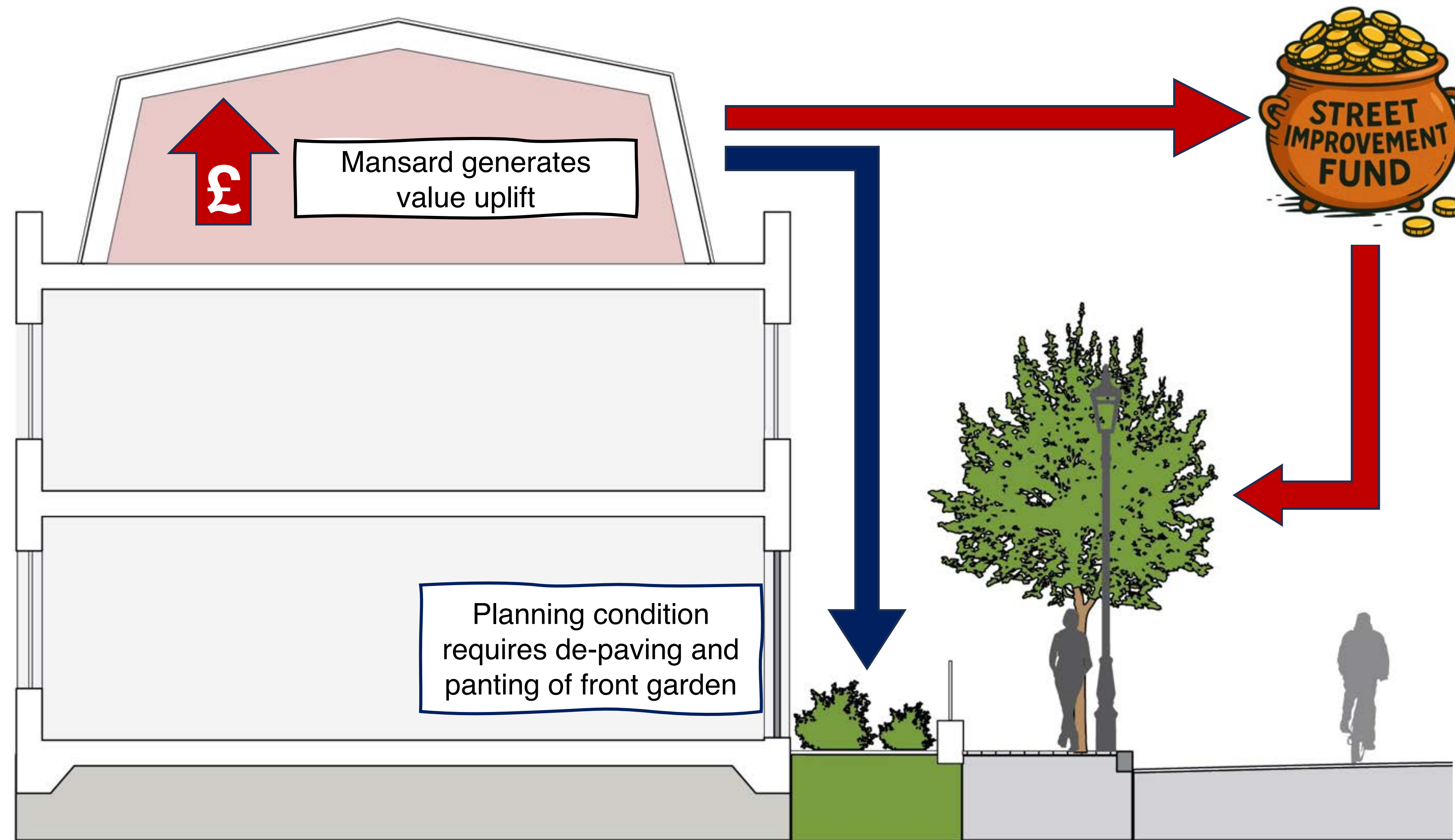
## Planning conditions

- Planning conditions are imposed on developments after permission is granted.
- They can require certain works to be carried out, and conditions must be discharged to make the development lawful.
- Conditions could require applicants to make improvements to front gardens, for example, or to install PV.



# Capturing the value

What mechanisms could we use?

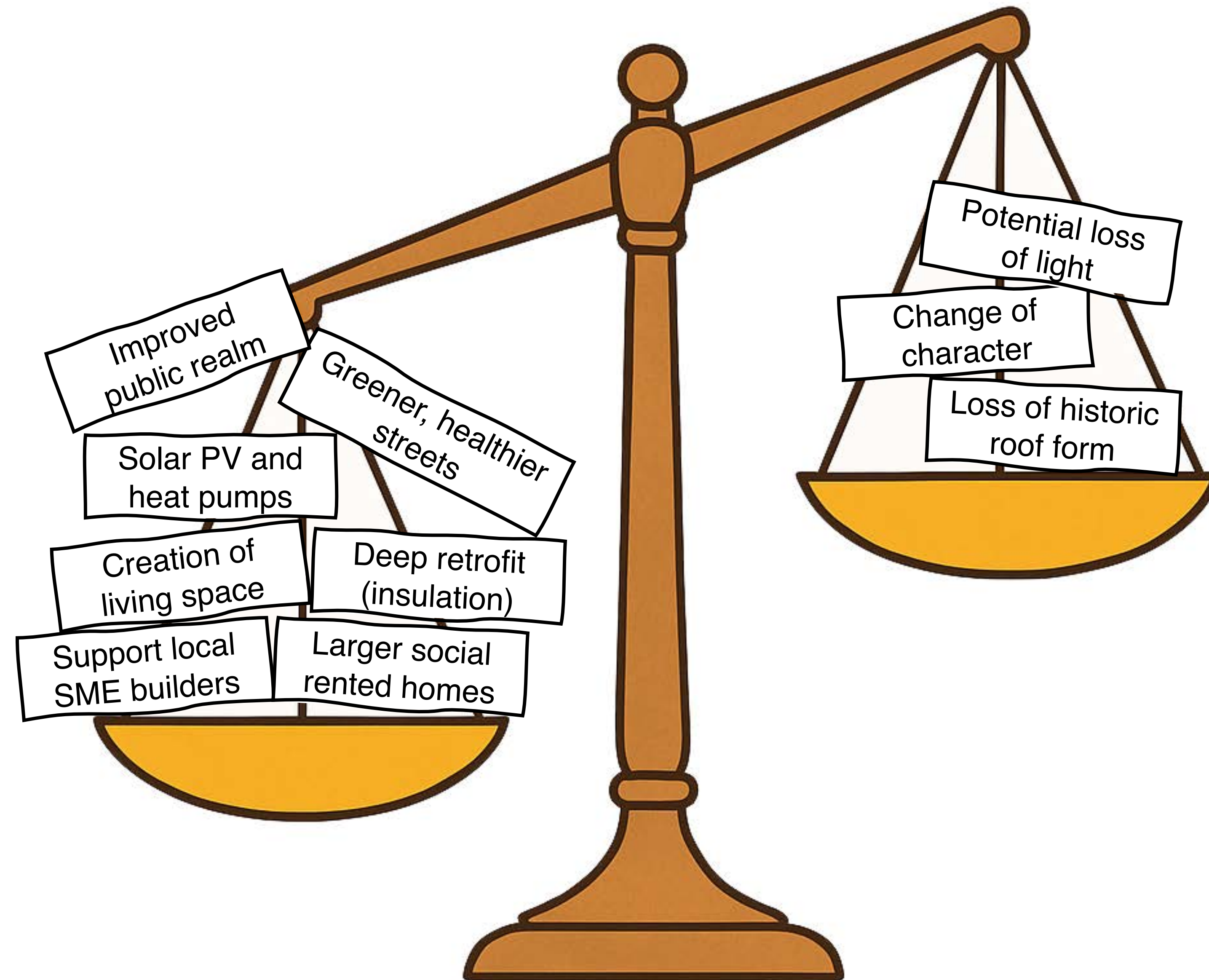


Section 106  
contributions  
fund street  
improvements  
(trees, bin, bikes,  
paving, SuDS,  
etc)



# Tipping the balance

Ever further





### Joint Planning Application (conventional route)

- Funded by applicants
- No guarantee of permission.
- Cost per home would be relatively low, if everyone agrees to pay in. )
- Can negotiate contributions to street improvement works.
- Could include simple design code for wider improvements and changes (windows, shutters, etc)

*Pros:* Easier to start, more control.

*Cons:* Riskier, harder to fund

### Local Development Order

- Order made by council who would fund and lead the work.
- Would give automatic permission for people to build mansards, with conditions.
- Council retains more control, but potentially a quicker process and easier to comply with.
- Could include simple design code for wider improvements and changes (windows, shutters, etc)

*Pros:* Harder to get buy in for, less control.

*Cons:* Less risk, no upfront funding needed





# A vision for St Johns

Bringing it all together



# What could we achieve?

And what do people want to see?





# What could we achieve?

And what do people want to see?



**Underground waste storage**  
Fewer bins on the street



**Mansards**  
More living space for all



**Green homes & lower bills**  
With PV and retrofit



**Greener streets**  
More street trees and planting



**Rain gardens**  
For flood resilience



**Greener front gardens**  
For greener streets



**External shutters**  
Climate resilience



**Better pavements**  
Better quality materials



**Any questions?**  
Thank you for listening!



**Keen to learn more?**

**Friday 11<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> July** *Create Streets Urban Design and Architecture Summer School*

*Three-day course with Adam Architecture in beautiful Sherborne, Dorset.*

<https://www.createstreetsfoundation.org.uk/creating-places-academy/summer-school/>

***Get in touch:***

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THANK  
YOU