

12. London Community Land Trust (London, United Kingdom)



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Author(s)	Levente Polyak, Daniela Patti, Bahanur Nasya (Eutropian)	
Contributor(s)	Zsófia Bod (Eutropian)	
Reviewer(s) (if applicable)	Markus Kip (UBER); Alessandro Piperno (LUISS)	
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Executive summary

[London CLT](#) is London's first Community Land Trust established in the former psychiatric hospital of St Clements, in the Mile End area. The CLT provides affordable housing, allowing long-term residents who would be priced out to stay in the area, countering the tendencies of displacement and housing unaffordability. Supported by the Greater London Authority to work with a private developer and a social housing association, the CLT was allocated 23 homes that are dispersed throughout alongside privately owned and social housing units. Besides these homes, the CLT also promotes community engagement and is actively working on the creation of a community centre at the St Clements site.



Picture 1. The Clocktower of St Clements under renovation. Photo (cc) Eutropian

1 Timeline

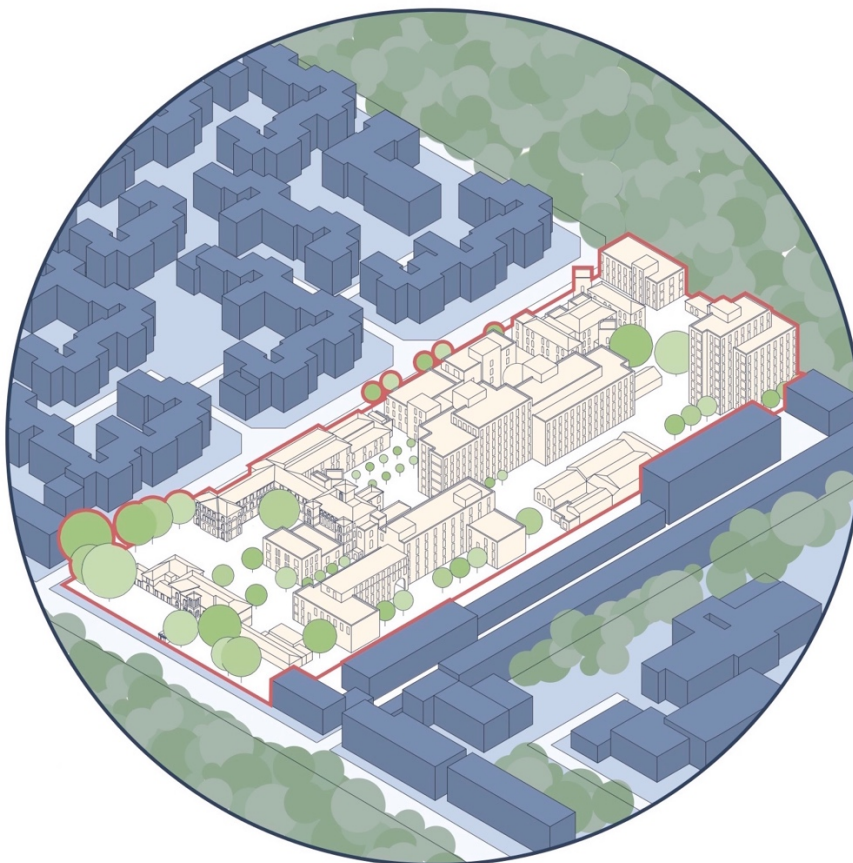
- 1848 – A workhouse is constructed at the St Clemens site
- 1849 – The workhouse opens
- 1909 – The workhouse closes
- 1912 – The complex reopens as a hospital run by the London County Council
- 1944 – A part of the complex is destroyed during WWII
- 1948 – The complex reopens as a hospital run by the NHS
- 1959 – The complex becomes a psychiatric hospital
- 2005 – The St Clements site is closed in a deteriorated state
- 2005 – The Mayor's Office asks Citizens UK to support the city's Olympic Bid
- 2007 – East London CLT (later London CLT) is established to bid for a site in Tower Hamlets
- 2009 – The St Clemens site becomes the focus of London CLT
- 2010 – London CLT, as part of a consortium with Igloo Regeneration, bids for the site
- 2011 – The bid for St Clements is won by Linden Homes, Galliford Try and architects John, Thompson and Partner (JTP)
- 2012 – Community consultation events with JTP Architects (November)
- 2012 – The Meanwhile Mixed-Use working group is formed within the CLT
- 2013 – Shuffle Festivals take place at St Clements
- 2013 – Planning applications for the site submitted
- 2014 – Shuffle's exhibition is organised at St Clemens (January) and Shuffle moves the festival to the adjacent Cemetery Park
- 2014 – Planning applications for the site are approved and construction begins
- 2015 – Unsuccessful application to the National Lottery Fund to fund the renovation of the John Denham building
- 2016 – Community share offer
- 2016 – CLT residents scheduled to move in
- 2017 – First CLT residents move in
- 2017 – Last Shuffle Festival at the Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park
- 2019 – Last CLT residents move in
- 2020 – Construction is scheduled to finish

2 The story of the building complex

Located on an important road connecting the City of London with East Anglia, St Clements was built in 1848 and opened in 1849 as a workhouse: a place where poor people were sent who had no means of supporting themselves. The establishment of the Bow Workhouse was prompted by the parliament's Poor Law Amendment of 1848 that required areas to institutionalise their relief efforts towards the poor: St Clements was built by the City of London but outside the City itself.

Many of the people put here to work were too young, too old or sick, therefore they could not work as planned. As a result, in the 1860s, the workhouse's function shifted towards being an infirmary. In 1909, the workhouse closed and reopened in 1912 as a place run by the London County Council, hosting over 600 people who were chronically ill – a hospital in today's terminology. During WWII, a part of the site was destroyed, and after the war it became a fully-fledged hospital. In 1959, the complex became a psychiatric hospital under the NHS and was closed down in 2005, staying empty for about ten years, reaching a derelict state.

“When we were doing a listening campaign around the area looking for sites, St Clements was a large derelict site in a fairly central area but it also had a lot of stories connect it to the local residents.” Hannah Emery-Wright



Picture 2. The St Clements complex. Image by Jorge Mosquera

3 The initiative

In 2005, the Olympic Park Legacy Company (later [London Legacy Development Corporation](#)) of the London Mayor's Office asked [Citizens UK](#) to support the city's Olympic Bid. Citizens UK agreed to work with the Mayor's Office but asked for a series of promises, including building Community Land Trust homes on the Olympics site after the Games. Before this promise could be delivered, the Mayor's Office wanted to see the CLT model working in practice, and asked for a test project. Community organisers at Citizens UK began a listening campaign across Tower Hamlets and identified housing as a key priority and St Clements as a potential site for a CLT. Once the site defined, Citizens UK ran a political campaign to secure it and established London CLT in 2007 in order to bid for the site. In 2009 St. Clements was chosen by a unanimous vote by members to be the focus of the campaign for London's first CLT.

In 2010, the site was opened up for competitive bidding by the Mayor's Office. London CLT presented a bid with [Igloo Regeneration](#), an ethical real estate company, proposing a community-led design process. London CLT's consortium was outbid by [Linden Homes](#), a brand of [Galliford Try](#), a leading construction company, and [Peabody](#), a social housing association. Despite the failure of the bid, there was significant political support from successive mayors (Ken Livingstone and Boris Johnson) for the CLT model and London CLT was brought into the winning project with the agreement of all parties. As part of the agreement with the GLA on winning the land, Linden Homes were required to enter the agreement on including the CLT, as well as passing the land ownership on to a specially established community-led charity, the [Ricardo Community Foundation](#) after the development is ready. In this way, St Clements was chosen as a pilot project to test the CLT model in an urban setting.

"A key thing to come out of the consultation process was the desire to ensure that St. Clements remains at the heart of the community. As a prominent site with such a rich local heritage, it's important that it remains accessible and resident-led." Hannah Emery-Wright

Once the new alliance with Linden Homes was formed, London CLT began working with the architecture office JTP to develop ideas and a vision for the site that could serve as a basis for the planning applications. This included a series of community consultation events and meanwhile use organised by the CLT's Meanwhile Mixed-Use working group that later gave birth to the not-for-profit organisation [Shuffle](#).

Starting in 2013, Shuffle, with support from various cultural institutions and film director Danny Boyle, organised a series of festivals in and around the St Clements site, inviting people to experience the area differently, to share their memories and feelings about the site as well as to explore its potentials. Despite all the difficulties of acquiring permissions for cultural events at the site, Shuffle's events became a great success.

"That sort of awareness about how a site fits in to the community and how it can have functions even before it's redeveloped is really important."
Charles Campion

In 2014, planning applications for the site were approved, and demolitions began on the site. Plans were later amended to include the John Denham building as a

community centre. Since 2015, London CLT has been working on finding way to renovate the building and converting it into a community venue.



Picture 3. St Clements in London. Image by Jorge Mosquera

4 The site and the area

The St Clements site includes 19 buildings and building parts, a combination of old and new. The site reveals a distinct progression of buildings, starting with a reception block at Northern part of the site, followed by a chapel and two major wings for the wards, then the kitchens and the workshops, the infirmary and the fever ward. At the Southern end of the site there is the mortuary on a little alley now called Hamlet's Way, and beyond this, the cemetery. St Clements occupies a long site stretching from a major road (Mile End Road) to the Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park. Originally the complex was built to face the street, while today it is better connected with the cemetery.

“St Clements reveals a very symmetrical and orderly way to dealing with the poor. Almost an industrial process where you enter off the main Bow road into the reception wards and then move into the site with the chapel, the workshops and then the fever wards, the mortuary and the cemetery. Some people see it as a trajectory.” Nicola de Quincey

St Clements is situated in East London, 5 kilometres from the City of London, a very central location within the London agglomeration. The neighbourhood has witnessed radical transformations in the past decades. From being a relatively deprived area with working class families, it became a centre of immigration in the 20th century. In the past decade, the financialisation of real estate also reached East London, raising housing prices and pushing out less affluent residents. The gentrification and affordability problem of East London has been one of the main motivations to develop a CLT in the area.

5 Activities in the complex

The renewed St Clements site has 252 homes, 53 of which are social rent homes provided by the Peabody social housing association. Corresponding to the idea of integrating the CLT in the community and avoiding the separation of social and private housing units, the CLT's 23 homes are dispersed throughout the site: 13 homes are in the central blocks that also have private units, 5 homes in a block with social housing units and 5 in stand-alone duplexes.

“The idea was to integrate into the community, we didn't want a social housing/private housing dichotomy.” Hannah Emery-Wright

Besides securing affordable homes, the CLT has been active also in creating a community centre. For the past years, the CLT has been leading a campaign to turn the John Denham building, a listed building at the front of the St Clements site, into a community space. This is a building with many constraints and large spaces that limited its potential use for residential units. The building was also listed as an [“Asset of Community Value,”](#) referring to its significance to the wider community, giving the community additional time to raise funds and purchase the building.

Asset of community value is land or property of importance to a local community. Under the Localism Act of 2011, assets of community value (ACV) are subject to additional protection from development. When the owner of an ACV wants to sell the property, they have to inform the local authority and if a community group wants to buy the asset, they can trigger a moratorium for 6 months, allowing them to raise funds to purchase the asset. The ACV status can be used by the local planning authority as a factor to refuse planning permission for full or partial change or demolition, or can force the local authority to buy the asset if it is under threat of long-term loss to the community. ACVs across the UK include over 800 pubs, sport facilities and stadiums as well as parks.

The campaign has involved setting up a formal residents' commission and lobbying towards politicians for funding to purchase the building, as well as to explore the needs and opinions of local residents in relation with the site. As for

the commercial space below, there have been talks with [Poplar Harca](#), an East London-based Housing and Regeneration Community Association to potentially run the café. Reusing the John Denham building as a community space would allow the area to have a focal point where all the different types of people who live in the area could meet.

“Originally the whole site was planned to be residential, then we applied for a change of planning, to set aside a part of the John Denham building at the front for community use and the bungalow for commercial use. The idea was that there are so many people on site, there really needs to be something for them.” Nicola de Quincey



Picture 4. The John Denham building under renovation. Photo (cc) Eutropean

6 The renovation

6.1 The role of heritage

In the new urban design proposal by JTP Architects, **heritage research** played a significant role. This research, conducted by Nicola de Quincey, aimed at establishing not only the different phases of the evolution of the complex, but also to understand the significance of each historical layer and addition to the complex. The findings of this research informed the decisions on which buildings to keep and which buildings to demolish to open space for new volumes, as well

as on where to place new structures to correspond to the original layout of the site.

“There are many ways to look at the buildings on the site. They could be studied in terms of the changing medical history, or their place in East London and the needs of the local area, determining their historical significance and value. Besides the individual buildings, the historic pattern of the complex was respected when we tried to think of opportunities for new build between the old buildings.” Nicola de Quincey

The original St Clements site consisted of listed Victorian buildings and ancillary buildings of a more recent era. Many buildings at the northern part of the site, organised around the Clocktower, are original designs. There were many alterations between the original construction of the complex and the moment when it closed down in 2005. When the workhouse closed in 1909, its main building reopened in 1912 with additional shafts and altered windows. In 1920, adjusting the complex to its new role as a hospital, sanitary extensions, designed at 45 degrees to the blocks in order to maximise light penetration, were linked by narrow passages to the North and South Blocks. By the 1930s, when the London County Council was running the hospital, responding to the challenges of respiratory diseases like tuberculosis, two extensions were built on the side, with metal horizontal shaped windows that allowed more sun and light in the interiors. During the WWII bombing, the Women’s Block and the Chapel were destroyed. In the 1960s, under the auspices of the National Health Service, a series of low-grade buildings were built between the historical buildings, some of which had been later demolished.



Picture 5. The interior of the John Denham building. Photo (cc) Eutropian

The indoor spaces of the community facilities were designed with brick, painted below waist height. In the 1930s, the London County Council started to put plaster on and NHS has put dropped ceilings: these alterations are revealed by the different layers in these spaces. In the John Denham building, a paint analysis is done to understand the original paint scheme, before a complete restoration or evocation of the original is done.

Research into the layers of demolitions and additions at the site was conducted to inform decisions about which structures to prioritise, what to save and where to open space for new constructions. Erecting new volumes of buildings were necessary to cover the renovation costs on one hand, and to save some other structures, on the other. In the urban design scheme proposed by JTP, there was an intention to give back the symmetry to the site and build on the precedents of previously existent but demolished buildings: therefore, a new building was designed to fill the gap created by the WWII bombings.

The **heritage protection structure** of the St Clements site is complex. Three structures of the site (the Boundary Wall, the John Denham building and the Administration building) are Grade 2 listed monuments. The whole site is curtilage listed, meaning that every single building on the site is protected. In addition, the site is located within the Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park conservation area that means that any demolition has to be approved and special attention has to be given by the local authority. These layers of protection signify that every single structure on the site had to be treated as though it was a listed building. The organisations Historic England (Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England) and English Heritage (English Heritage Trust) demonstrated a keen interest in the site and worked closely with the architects, the developers and the council's conservation officer. There is a monthly meeting organised with the participation of these stakeholders.

"The key thing for the authorities was that we really studied the historic nature of the site, worked out what we thought is the most significant and then worked with them on a shared vision." Nicola de Quincey

6.2 Design concept for adaptive reuse

Designing the adaptive reuse of St Clements was done by JTP Architects, part of the original bidding consortium with Linden Homes. The focus of the reuse process was to create a predominantly residential-led development to provide over 230 homes: most buildings were turned into apartment complexes except the John Denham building at the front. The main design challenge was to decide which buildings to keep, which ones to demolish and where to place the new buildings. Besides historical research, the design decisions were also based on studies of the view of the Clocktower from different parts of the site. Moreover, there were a series of other regulations in play when designing the adaptive reuse of the St Clements site. Some of them are of logistic nature, like how to get fire engines in, and how to get the waste out, significant challenges for a long, thin site, only accessible by vehicles at the Northern end. Despite efforts by Historic England to keep as many workshops as possible, some of them had to be sacrificed in order to assure emergency access. Another key aspect of the

urban design of the site was to allow free access to the site through Mile End Road in the North and the Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park in the South. As for the design of the housing blocks, it was important to not distinguish between CLT homes, privately owned apartments or social housing units.

“An important thing was that this site was closed, and we wanted to make it more open. People wanted to use St Clements as a route through to the park without having to use the sidewalks. We worked very hard to get consent to lower one of the walls. That was an important gain for the local community.” Nicola de Quincey

JTP’s approach to the bid for the site was to run a charrette or community planning process, inviting local stakeholders to “come, co-design St Clements” with them. Understanding the importance of local attachments to and stories about the site, the architects joined the local research conducted by the CLT and Shuffle in involving the community in the design process. Preceded by a campaign inviting the press, local stakeholders, schools and community groups, the charrette was organised in November 2012, including an exhibition with historical materials, dialogue workshops, hands-on planning workshops and walkabouts. The ideas collected and the consensus developed during the workshops by over 350 participants led the design team to create a vision for the area, feeding into a planning application that got unanimous approval at the Tower Hamlets Planning Committee about a year after the planning weekend.

“We were working through co-designing with the community and a lot of consensus emerged quite quickly through the workshops which we took away, analysed, distilled and created a vision. We reported it back to the community a few days later, we took them through the history of the site, the co-design process and that led us to create the vision. Instead of designing something and then asking people what they think of it, we get a lot of extra social and economic value by involving communities who have a great knowledge and expertise.” Charles Campion

About a third of the site today consists of existing, retained buildings, and two-thirds of new built, resulting in a variety of building styles, combined with open spaces, some of them semi-private gardens, others publicly accessible.

6.3 The construction process

The construction process began in 2014 by clearing the site: getting rid of asbestos and other kinds of contamination. During the construction process, the CLT has experienced significant delays, ranging from one to three years. While residents were originally scheduled to move in in 2016, the first residents could only move in in June 2017 and some residents were still waiting for their turn in 2019. Some residents had to drop out of the programme, others had to be reallocated, causing significant stress for the concerned families.

“From our side it seemed like there was one issue after another in the building process. Lots of delays. I think this was partly due to the complexity of the site and the heritage elements, as well as the priorities of the developer.” Hannah Emery-Wright

7 Regulations and policies

British cities, especially London, have experienced high pressure on land prices that led to a chronic unaffordability crisis and housing emergency. This has a strong impact on the feasibility of not-for-profit, community-led initiatives and especially on their **access to land ownership or lease**. The property industry in the UK is highly centralised: more than half of the homes in the UK are built by ten companies, therefore it is very hard for any new entrant to the housing market to succeed. **Accessing finance**, whether subsidy or loans, equity or investment is crucial to help these projects to succeed. In the 1970s and 80s, there was significant public support to housing cooperatives, a large part of today's housing stock was built then. Many of these cooperatives continue to exist but they have been completely professionalised, their direction has no longer contact with local communities, no participation among their residents, and they have no influence on the wider property market, nor do they interact with their broader neighbourhoods. The ambition of CLTs is to operate differently, and not close themselves into islands of affordability.

"The main issue in London remains land, as it is an incredibly expensive city. Public landowners have a potential to provide sites and consider the social value, when they think about the price they sell the land for. They also suffer terrible cuts from central government so they want to sell land for as much as possible. So there are lot of challenges for communities in getting ownership of land in London." Tom Chance

The St Clements site is a field where real estate pressure as well as various public policies are in play, regarding the sale of public land, housing provision, heritage protection as well as natural ecosystems. One of the key dimensions of public policy at St Clements is related to **housing**. The St Clemens site is subject to a Section 106 agreement that means that new developments should have 30% affordable housing. In such cases, the developer is obliged to build affordable homes as well, and then looks for a housing association or similar organisation to take on those housing units. The CLT homes are part of this 30% that could otherwise be shared ownership homes.

Section 106 agreements are planning obligations based on the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act. They are private agreements made between local authorities and developers and can be attached to a planning permission to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. The land itself, rather than the person or organisation that develops the land, is bound by a Section 106 Agreement, something any future owners will need to take into account. Section 106 agreements are drafted when it is considered that a development will have significant impacts on the local area that cannot be moderated by means of conditions attached to a planning decision.

The London CLT, providing a part of the obligatory affordable homes, has been established following the model of **Community Land Trusts** (see at Governance). Similarly to the US, London CLT was born with the help of community organising, more than supporting policies. As a result of community

organising and campaigning mostly by Citizens UK, there has been a growing ambition to give frameworks to local governments and other public landowners to engage and strategically think about their opportunities to provide land for affordable and community-led housing.

“In the US, a lot of the earlier CLTs came out of community organising and part of the ethos is that it’s not just about affordable housing but organising the community assets. Giving them power, getting them become empowered to give them the feeling they have the opportunity to shape their local area.” Tom Chance

Ideally, municipalities can play a more active role in the creation of CLTs. They can help with their own land or through their planning policy that can release sites for CLTs. Many of the sites offered to CLTs are awkward, complicated sites, often in sensible areas that councils do not expect to sell to commercial developers for the market price; but most CLTs come up with very innovative uses for these sites. The GLA created the [Small Sites, Small Builders](#) programme to dispose of land owned by Transport for London with specific conditions like 100% affordable housing and limited price, in a way to make it accessible to community-led organisations and to small and medium size enterprises. The programme lists sites open for bidding at its website, with a lot of useful information that helps smaller actors to prepare a bid that have no resources for land surveys. Besides offering land, municipalities can also provide policy support and small amounts of funding. Despite all this potential from the side of public administrations, many CLTs have succeeded without significant public support.

“The particularity of heritage sites is that local communities might feel very strongly about how a particular building is used, and a community-led approach can deal with that.” Tom Chance

The regulatory environment determines to a large extent what is feasible for CLTs. In the UK, unlike in other European countries (like in Germany) it is impossible to separate the ownership of land from that of buildings, that would help a landowner community to **assure the affordability** of the properties on it. Therefore, a leasehold structure is used for a similar purpose, but such arrangements were often abused by mainstream developers to make their clients pay increasing ground rents after buying properties. In order to prevent such abuses, the government banned leasehold for houses, endangering the CLT model. In June 2019, as a result of lobbying by the National Community Land Trust Network, the government gave exemption to CLTs. Similarly, the NCLTN has also campaigned against policies to enable tenants of social housing providers to buy their homes, or for CLTs’ exemption from leasehold disenfranchisement, the leaseholders’ right to buy the freehold of their property, both policies undermining CLTs.

The emergence of CLTs also corresponds to **efforts of decentralisation**: to devolve control from the state to local governments and to local communities. The [Localism Act](#), introduced in 2011 by the Tory government to support devolution towards communities had no significant impact on CLTs. For instance, the Localism Act introduced the *community right to bid*, meaning that communities can campaign for a particular building to be designated as an asset of community value. This designation means that if the building is sold, the community has a window of six months to make its own bid. However, six months are a very short time for a community to mobilise itself and put it a

credible bid. As the property owner has no obligation to sell the building to the community, the community's offer has to be competitive.

"The Localism act was brought in, it has all these interesting ideas and powers most of which have been no help at all for CLTs because they misunderstand what the barriers are for CLTs. It would be interesting to see if we can mobilise interest for a more effectively second Localism Act."

Tom Chance

In the past years, several policy items have been introduced to help CLTs: the National Community Land Trust Network had campaigned for the creation of a **Community Housing Fund** before the 2015 elections and now campaigns for its extension to give initiatives longer term certainty and a perspective for the sector to grow. In the past years, demand for CLT homes has exponentially grown, increasing the number of potentially deliverable homes with the fund from 5,000 in 2016 to 15,000 in 2019.

8 The financial model

In general, there are different ways to **fund CLTs**. In the most typical case, CLTs act like normal developers, they go to a charity or a socially minded bank that lends money at a low interest rate. In addition, CLTs get subsidies or grants from the government for affordable housing. Afterwards the CLT builds the homes and sells or rents them, using these revenues to refinance the mortgage. In other cases, more classical housing providers like housing associations develop homes in partnership with CLTs: the housing association in these cases finances and builds the homes and then transfers the freehold to the CLT and leases back the homes from the CLT. In some cases, public finance in the form of affordable housing subsidies can lower the costs of establishing a CLT.

In the atypical case of the London CLT, the developer is granted planning permission according the Section 106 policy, and is required to deliver a certain amount of affordable housing, and look for organisations like CLTs to take on these units. According to the requirements of the GLA, London CLT has a turnkey arrangement with Linden Homes. London CLT purchases the properties from Linden, however not with London CLT's own money but with the money of the residents who will move in. It is a **back-to-back payment scheme** where the resident pays London CLT and London CLT pays Linden.

The main costs of the CLT are construction finance that should normally come through social investment from large donors or community shares. The London CLT's first revenues came in 2016 from a **community share** offer with [Ethex](#), a not-for-profit Positive Investing organisation. The minimum investment was £100 each with a return on investment of about 5%. About 130 investors – some of them from the surrounding communities, some of them big donors – participated with £450,000, used to pay architects and planning preparations for London CLT's Lewisham site. These investments have to be paid back after a few years, until then they allow the CLT to gain time and raise additional funds.

The most important source of revenue for the London CLT was from the **sales of the first homes** at St Clements. Due to the changing property prices, a margin between the purchase price paid to Linden Homes at a time of lower home values

and the price paid by the homeowners later allowed the CLT to have some income. CLT home prices at the beginning of the process were about half the market prices, now they're about one third. On the long term, however, such profit margins will not likely to be a source of income.

Mortgages are another important source of funding for CLTs, on the buyers' side. Initially, in the case of the St Clements site, it was difficult for prospective CLT homeowners to build relationships with the right mortgage lenders. London CLT managed to engage lenders who understand the specificity of a CLT: the [Ecology Building Society](#) and [Triodos Bank](#) were the first to offer mortgages. In the meanwhile, the NCLTN was working on getting on board other mainstream lenders. Usually, such lenders want to see that the value of the property bought with mortgage is a percentage of the open market, so even in the case of shared ownership or affordable property, they base their evaluation on that percentage of the market. CLT homes, with their value connected to the median income cannot demonstrate its relation with values on the open property market. In order to assure lenders, the CLT added a mortgagee-in-possession clause to the mortgage contracts, that elaborates that if a CLT homeowner wants to sell a home, the CLT has 6 months to find a new tenant, after which the council has 7 months to find a tenant, and in case both attempts were unsuccessful, the property can go back to the open market.

"As a network, we have been pretty successful in growing the numbers of banks and social investors that are interested in the sector and are able to invest. There is a lot of debt finance now available for communities to develop housing or to renovate an existing house. Our aim is to break into more mainstream, larger scale equity finance so that CLTs can deliver at scale." Tom Chance

Unlike other Community Land Trusts, land at the St Clements is not community owned by CLT residents, however the freehold is held by a charity whose trustees are a number of local stakeholders. Nevertheless, with the CLT having a 250-year lease on the property, it is protected from speculation. CLT owns the head lease for these properties and it can sell and underlease to the residents. The CLT sells properties at prices that are linked to the medium income rate of the borough. When a resident wants to move on, they have to sell their property back to London CLT at a rate that is linked to medium wages in the borough.

"The idea behind this model is that wages are the best way to determine if something is affordable for the people living in the area. Our houses are affordable in perpetuity." Hannah Emery-Wright

Besides funding the planning and construction process, in order to set up a CLT, a core team also needs to **establish and finance the work of an organisation** that can carry out the project. In the case of the London CLT, its parent organisation Citizens UK initially invested some staff time in the CLT's work, some of which was covered by Oak Foundation grants. In addition, the National CLT Network gave the London CLT a £10,000 catalyst grant for capacity building.

Besides financing the CLT homes, the quest to turn the John Denham building into a **community space** has also presented a financial challenge for the CLT. In 2015, London CLT made an unsuccessful application to the National Lottery Fund to finance the renovation of the John Denham building as a community venue. In the meanwhile, although expected to give the building to the CLT for free, Linden

Homes turned around and made a demand of £1.5 million for the building. In the past years, the CLT, residents and local communities have been lobbying the GLA and the Tower Hamlet council for funding with a series of public campaigns.

9 Community involvement

Despite being derelict for a long period, the St Clements site had a strong presence in the community, and a strong role in local memory. Many people in the area would know it from visiting their relatives in the psychiatric hospital, but an author also collected memories of children growing up in the workhouse, through the recollections of their children and grandchildren. Similarly, St Clements played an important role in defining East London identities. According to some local mythologies, one is a Cockney if one grew up hearing either the bells of Whitechapel or of the St Clements Clocktower.

“A lot of people on the board were church leaders or local parents; we needed to make sure that this site is for the community. Not just as housing but also as facilities and the place. It needs to be not just about housing but a place you want to live in, that represents the kind of place we should be building.” Lizzy Daish

After years of vacancy and decay, one of the ways to reconnect the site with the neighbouring communities was to open the site for various activities. This idea was implemented by the CLT’s Meanwhile Mixed-Use working group established in 2012, aiming at bringing events to the site before and during some phases of the construction. When the events and festivals organised at St Clements grew out of their original scale, the not for profit community enterprise Shuffle was established in 2013 to carry out the activities. Members of Shuffle began speaking with ex-patients of the hospital about their experiences and the things they wanted to do at the site to reclaim their stories. Shuffle’s focus was on a mixture of high calibre art and film and serious community programming and curation, always based on themes around mental health.

“There was a lot of interest because we had this big old psychiatric hospital but we also wanted to make sure whatever we did on the site set the tone for the community housing. St Clements a lot of stories and a lot of those weren’t good stories. It was a very important place for generations. We wanted to do something that would involve people.” Lizzy Daish

Culture had an important role in building relationships and support for the St Clements redevelopment project. The film director Danny Boyle, who grew up in a tower block overlooking St Clements, and was chosen to design the opening ceremony of the London Olympics. Boyle became very interested in the CLT, and helped create a series of festivals, promoted by the organisation Shuffle, with film screenings and other events at the St Clements site and the adjacent Cemetery Park.

In order to place its events in the St Clements site, Shuffle cleaned a variety of spaces of the site, organising cinema screenings in the old patients’ social club and outside, working with gardeners to plant a flower garden from seeds donated from the Cemetery Park and with edible plants to be used in the café opening on

the site. Shuffle organised two large events at St Clements in 2013, a several-month summer festival and a 10-day winter festival in November.

“That kind of small-scale development was really important for us, it was what we had taken from the community planning sessions to try things that could happen in the long run, different ways of using the buildings.”
Lizzy Daish

Shuffle also conducted an oral history research among the local communities, concentrating on the last iteration of the complex as a psychiatric hospital, including the testimonies of people who had been patients of the old institution: the last user group of the building still living around. The oral history recollection was organised into an exhibition in January 2014, using the gardens and the John Denham building. Soon after the exhibition, demolitions began at the site and Shuffle moved its festival to the Cemetery Park where it organised four seasons.

“We started off at St Clements with a rumour which we heard that people would always say to their children, ‘if you don’t eat your greens you would go to St Clements.’ And we then met people who were service providers and their stories about being in St Clements were very nuanced. For us It was about changing the narratives, hearing those stories. I constantly had to turn down all those ghost tours: that was not going to happen here as we were looking at the human aspect of all this.” Lizzy Daish

While the site is up and running, and the CLT has achieved its goal of providing affordable housing in perpetuity, not all the results of the community involvement activities were used to shape the site. Some people are concerned with the site turning into a gated community, the direct opposite of what the community was aiming for. The envisioned community space in the John Denham building can be key in opening the site for the neighbouring communities.

“We always saw that everything we did at St Clements is an example of what can happen in a community space once the site is redeveloped. We constantly fed in to the GLA, developers, architects, landscape architects and back to the CLT all the findings. Unfortunately, we weren’t really taken seriously. Maybe people just took a while to see the value in it. While it’s all about money and assets, it’s difficult to be at the forefront. I think there are more opportunities now that the CLT is working hard on securing the front building for a community space.” Lizzy Daish

Besides its connections with the neighbourhood and its communities, the London CLT keeps its closest ties with the residents of the CLT homes. The CLT’s **communities manager** continues to work with residents through allocations and supports them in the process of accessing their new homes. She also develops specific training for the residents and campaigners about what being a CLT resident means. Once the new residents are in their homes, the communities manager works with them to look at ways to transform the neighbourhood, by building up community leaders, developing community spaces or by other means.

“We want our residents to be involved in the governance of London CLT.”
Hannah Emery-Wright

10 Governance

The St Clements site is governed by a cooperation between a variety of actors. From the viewpoint of non-speculative, community-led heritage reuse, the most relevant actor is the London Community Land Trust. The London CLT follows the format first developed in the US, where community organisations had been engaged with safeguarding community assets and housing from gentrification and financialisation. Triggered by dissatisfaction with traditional housing providers in the UK, CLTs have gained a lot of popularity and recognition in the past years. The first CLT in England was established in 1983 in Oxfordshire. In the following decades, many CLTs were created and also many initiatives that – with their community ownership of land and properties – could match the definition of CLTs but do not consider themselves as one.

“Communities often feel that traditional housing providers have lost touch with their communities, they tend to trample over them. Many people feel they are being ignored or do not have control over their housing assets. Many local communities have a desire to get involved and to do something positive, and CLTs are a way they can do it.” Tom Chance

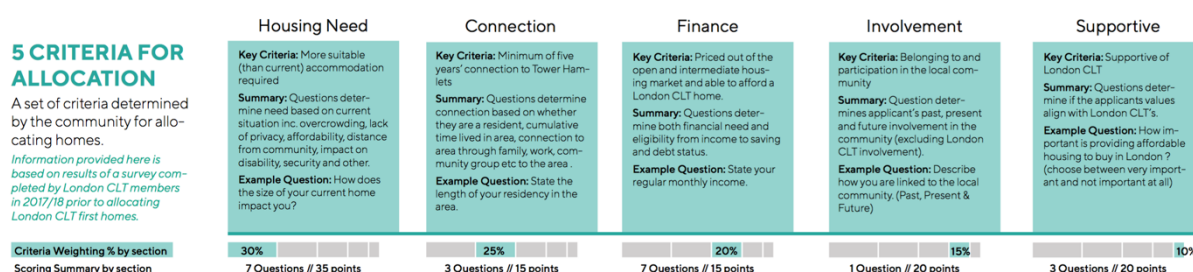
Community Land Trusts are a model of community-led development, where local organisations develop and manage homes and other assets important to their communities, such as community enterprises, food growing or workspaces. In the Anglo-Saxon context, and spreading to the European continent through Belgium, France and the Netherlands, the format of Community Land Trusts (CLTs) has been instrumental in helping residents create inclusive economic ecosystems and sustainable development models. By owning land (or leasing it from public owners) and leasing apartments, entire buildings or other types of properties to individuals, families or community groups, CLTs can control the use and price of such properties. CLTs therefore can use this leverage to guarantee that spaces in their management remain affordable, based on the income level of the locals living in the area. Each CLT has a different governance system but they all share some characteristics: they are controlled by local residents in a democratic fashion. CLTs are described in the Housing Regeneration Act of 2008: any legal format that complies with that act can be considered as a CLT. The first CLTs were set up as companies limited by guarantee, and their members added to their rules how their assets can be used: they have to be locked for the use of the company. Some other CLTs are set up as charities. Nowadays most CLTs are established as community benefit societies, a legal format updated in 2014 that refers to membership organisations open to anyone in the local community just for the benefit of that community and that matches best the CLTs’ ethos. The National CLT Network has developed a set of rules: most CLTs use these rules and it is up to their own decisions to define how their board should function and how they should involve their members and residents.

Until recently, CLTs have been predominantly established in rural areas where land prices are cheaper and real estate pressure is lower: the CLT operating at

the St Clements site, London CLT is one of the first urban CLTs. **London CLT** is a community benefit society, a not for profit limited company – a model widely used by community land trusts. People join the CLT as members either because they are interested in buying a home on the long term, or because they like the project and would like to support it. Others have an academic or professional interest in the project. The London CLT has about 3000 members made up of residents who own CLT homes, the communities and campaigners from areas around CLT sites and stakeholders who might invest their expertise in the CLT. These membership classes are all represented in the board of trustees consisting of 15 people. Besides the board, the CLT also has subcommittees, focusing on Finance and Risk, Development, Human Resources, Impact Measurement and allowing more in-depth discussions about these issues. Members have the right to vote and stand for elections. Membership requires the payment of a nominal sum of £1.

“Lots of people ask us if we would consider doing social rent as well, but the priority right now is to focus on getting our sale model right first.”
Hannah Emery-Wright

Positioning the CLT in the housing market is a sensible issue: there are various different social groups in urgent need of housing. There is discussion about CLTs potentially offering social rent but this would risk to make the organisation move towards the role of a housing association, with a more profit-oriented profile. Moreover, the CLT’s focus now is on middle/low income earners that have no access to social housing rents or people who are not on the priority list for social housing but are being priced out of their neighbourhoods. As due to the housing shortage in London, there is a great demand for affordable housing, London CLT developed a well-designed **selection procedure** for its homes. CLT homes are allocated to local residents with a deep connection to the area (worked in the area for at least 5 years); unstable housing situation (in risk of losing their homes); financial eligibility (not catered for by social housing programmes); local involvement (social connections in the area); supportive attitude towards the CLT’s values and mission (potential future CLT advocates).



Picture 6. Allocation criteria at the London CLT. Image © London CLT

London CLT is member of the **National CLT Network**, a nation-wide network representing the interests of CLTs across the UK. In 2007-2008, as a result of some interest among funders, some research into CLTs was done by Bob Patterson at Lancaster University, and three charitable foundations, the Tudor Trust, Carnegie and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation began to fund programmes to help communities set up CLTs. The need for a national body to promote the

concept of CLTs gave birth to the NCLTN in 2010 that became incorporated into a charity in 2014.

“We want to support regional organisations that have the capacity and knowledge to develop relationships with the different local governments, developers, housing associations, and creating more strategic opportunities for communities. Our role is to ensure they have adequate funding and we take policy lessons from and feed is back to the central government.” Tom Chance

The National Community Land Trust Network today represents all 330 CLTs operating in England and Wales. The network helps CLTs incorporate, supports its members and is engaged in creating a policy and finance environment that makes it possible for communities to implement new CLTs. The NCLTN also works with municipal authorities that are interested in offering sites for affordable housing or community-led initiatives, linking them with good practices and introducing them to successful policies. The NCLTN is less and less involved with individual CLTs and more focused on supporting regional organisations that can help local groups.

“As the CLT movement become more established, government policy has had more impact on us so we have lobbied either specifically against what governments do that damage CLTs or in favour of things that might help them.” Tom Chance

Establishing a CLT: Developing new sites begins with Citizens UK organising local communities and building campaigns that demonstrate that significant groundwork has been made in these areas. Such groundwork is the basis for the engagement of London CLT that can support building relationships, finding land and acquiring funding. While at the St Clemens site, London CLT is representative of the local community, at other sites its role is more of a technical advisor that supports communities developed by Citizens UK. London CLT’s work on these sites begins with walking around with local community institutions in the identified neighbourhoods, looking for possible sites. This is followed by running a local campaign and building relationships with a local decision-maker, prompting public commitments. Then the local community group would build relationships with the neighbours around the site, identifying stakeholders and setting up a committee or a steering group to discuss how to put in a bid for the land. The local CLT boards include community leaders, thus assuring that CLTs are embedded in local relationships and community dynamics.

After establishing the first CLT in London where residents have already moved in, London CLT is now in the process of developing new projects outside the St Clements site. The next project in Lewisham will consist of 11 CLT homes, with the construction to start in 2019. Two Transport for London sites in Shadwell and Lambeth, to have around 40 and 30 homes respectively , are in consultation stage with local community groups. Further sites in Croydon and Redbridge are to be identified together with local communities. All CLTs have their own identity and are focusing on their own neighbourhood and local stakeholders. However, relationships across the different CLT sites are being developed. An important

part of these relationships is sharing resources, especially expertise and experiences: campaign groups of prospective developments often visit St Clements to learn about how the CLT works there. Annual meetings allow all CLT stakeholders from different campaign groups to come together and collectively make key decisions.

11 Relationships on site

The CLT's leverage at the St Clements site is mostly political. **Political engagement** from the side of Ken Livingstone and later Boris Johnson was a response to the pressure built up by Citizens UK that held the mayors accountable for the St Clements site. In 2007, for instance, there was a camp outside City Hall highlighting the dramatic housing situation, and events like that were used to pressure politicians to engage with affordable housing plans. As a member of Citizens UK, London CLT has been building on such political pressure.

"London CLT didn't have any capital when we made this agreement, we weren't bringing anything financially to the project, it was a political commitment because of the amount support we had through community organising and the pressure we put on decision makers to make this project happen." Hannah Emery-Wright

CLT projects in different boroughs have different relationships with the borough councils. The initial support of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets was not followed by financial subsidies during the process, allowing the CLT to keep its relative independence and mobility, without additional strings attached to public funding. In some cases, like in Lewisham, the site offered for a CLT is rather difficult, but still a show of public support.

"Since CLTs aren't prioritised, we are given sites that people don't necessarily want. As CLTs become more mainstream maybe we'll have more a choice over the sites we can choose." Hannah Emery-Wright

At the St Clements site, London CLT found itself in a cooperation with **Linden Homes**, a commercial entity, with a fundamentally different working culture. The different priorities of the developer caused significant delays in delivering homes, which forced the CLT to continuously reallocate the homes as struggling would-be residents were forced to drop out of the process. Changing positions concerning the John Denham building from the side of the developer and incomplete legal protection on the CLT side have meant additional fundraising tasks for the CLT.

"Working with Linden Homes has been difficult as we have fundamentally different working cultures: they are about making profit and turnover, and we are a non-profit organisation providing affordable homes." Hannah Emery-Wright

Important relationships with groups around the St Clements site and Mile End were formed already during the meanwhile use activities led by Shuffle. A key alliance was built with neighbouring site, the **Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park** by Shuffle when organising its meanwhile use events. The Cemetery Park is a nature reserve with knowledge in biodiversity and development and with the experience of building gardens also for housing associations: they also prepared

a biodiversity plan for St Clements. The Cemetery Park also hosted many of the events Shuffle organised.

At the St Clements site, London CLT supported residents to establish **residents' association** to include CLT residents as well as private and social housing residents to participate in the decision-making related to the site. This organisation has already been formed with a representative from each building, but will be formally constituted in 2020 as a resident management company to take over from the management company appointed by Linden Homes once the developers have left. Some of the residents constituting the association are also part of the Tower Hamlet Leadership Committee run by Citizens UK, organising a broader discussion about the issues of the borough. As Linden Homes have no long-term interest in the project, they will relinquish their stake in the site once they are no longer developing it. Once the development is finished, the site will be handed over to a freeholder, the Ricardo Community Foundation (named after the famous economist David Ricardo whose family lived in the area) made up of different stakeholders on the site, including Peabody, the CLT, the local council, the Greater London Authority, Linden Homes, Galliford Try and the residents' management company.

12 Impact

The impact of the London CLT on the St.Clements site, its neighbourhood and on the city is manifold. By opening the St Clements site from Bow Road through to Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park the built environment facilitated the rebuilding of social fabric also, making its heritage buildings and public spaces accessible for all surrounding neighbours and not just those on site.

By offering affordable housing to people involved in the neighbourhood, CLT homes are contributing to easing the effects of London's housing crisis. With its temporary use events and participatory governance model, the London CLT has engaged local communities to share their memories of the site, on one hand, and shape its future, on the other. The involvement of local residents in the CLT board and subcommittees, as well as their participation in local campaigns contributes to improving their skills and capacities of mobilisation and self-determination.

"It's not enough just to build affordable homes but we want to have a lasting impact in the areas we work in: developing our residents as individuals or leaders of the community." Hannah Emery-Wright

At the city level, London CLT has created a precedent to showcase how CLTs can work in an urban setting, under strong real estate pressure. While previous CLTs had worked predominantly in rural areas where local communities came together to buy land, London CLT has opened the way for urban CLTs and showed how to apply political pressure in order to secure land. Reaching beyond the St Clements site, London CLT is involved in setting up other CLTs across London, and provides peer learning opportunities for other initiatives from across the country. With the help of the [SHICC](#) project, its resources relating to its experiences are also available for initiatives on the continent.

13 Interviewees

Charles Campion, architect at JTP

Tom Chance, president of the National CLT Network

Lizzy Daish, co-founder of Shuffle, former board member of London CLT

Hannah Emery-Wright, Communities Manager at London CLT

Nicola de Quincey, architect and heritage specialist at JTP

Rosy Smith, resident at St Clements, member of the residents' association and former board member of London CLT

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