

Royal Victoria Floating Residential – Early ideas

Background

In February 2026 we published the Vision for Royal Victoria Dock West. In February and March we collected feedback from more than 400 local people. In October 2026 we are now focusing on the Floating Residential part of the Vision.

The Royal Victoria Dock Vision

The Vision for Royal Victoria Dock West, a 12-hectare stretch of water set to become one of London's most significant new public spaces and the capital's first large-scale floating destination, was published at rvdwactivated.com in February 2026.

The Vision comprises three elements:

- Floating Residential
- Floating Wellness
- Floating Park

What is the Floating Residential project about?

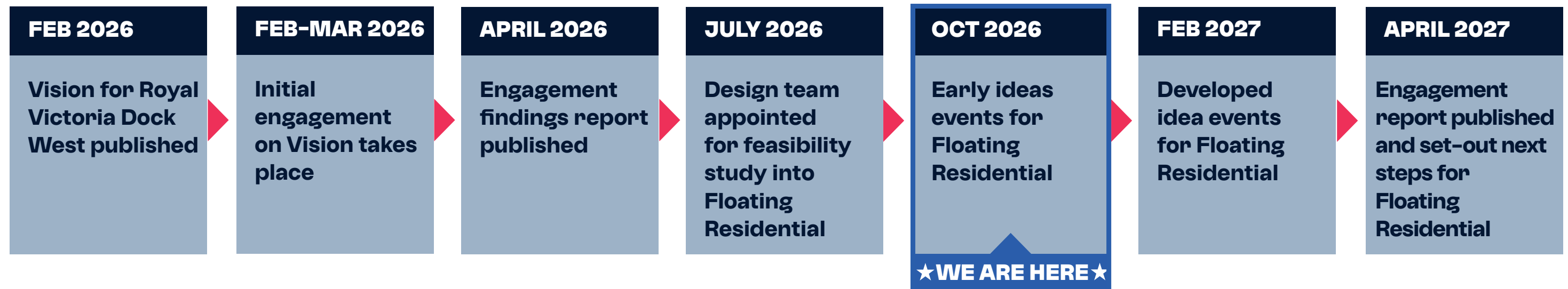
The Floating Residential project is seeking to create a new waterside community for Royal Victoria Dock West through residential moorings and floating homes, with additional communal facilities for both existing land-based and new water-based residents.

We have started a feasibility study, led by Haptic Architects and Gort Scott, so that Royal Docks Waterways can decide in 2027 if and how to proceed with the Floating Residential project.

What did we hear in Feb and March?

- Will the new housing be too dense and will it result in a loss of views?
- Will we have less access to open water space in the docks?
- Will the open water space be privatised?
- What local facilities will be provided for new and existing residents?

Our design team has created some early ideas which aim to address these and other questions.



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About today

Meet
the Floating
Residential
team

See the
early ideas

Provide
feedback on
the ideas

Share
your priorities
for community
facilities

Have your say!
Comments open until 25th Oct.

Fill in the online
questionnaire:
Link below

Have questions? Email us at
rvdw@royaldockswaterways.com



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Do you support our emerging design ideas?

We've developed 8 design principles from earlier feedback and want to hear your thoughts on our current design ideas. The illustrations show the design principles, scale and context only - these aren't final proposals.

Design Principle 01: Connected to context

New floating homes will be 1-3 storeys, to preserve the dock's open sky character. Building footprints are kept small to maintain views. Pier locations respond to the layout of Britannia Village.

How this builds on the Vision

The Vision requires the design and layout to preserve the openness of the dock and avoid the sense of filling the water. It shows homes clustered for visual unity with varied views out across the water.

Previous comments this responds to

- Concern about blocked views from existing homes
- Protection of property value
- Some people asked for height limits
- Loss of open sky and tranquil nature
- Concern over density and motivation for housing
- Connected relationship to the existing village
- Housing not universally opposed if low, well-made development improved the view

"Height of new homes blocking existing water views"
[Post-it, 07.03.26, SB Will Event]

"Breaking up the open water is good, the right sort of boats will lift the view."
[Early Engagement Report Summary]



Precedent: Amsterdam Canals (Image Dries Buytaert)



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Design Principle 02: Extending the publicly-accessible dock edge

The boardwalk expands the dock edge, providing the public a closer, accessible connection with the water whilst improving its quality and usability.

How this builds on the Vision

The Vision describes an immersive experience that brings the public close to the water, and asks that new infrastructure is comfortable, sheltered and made of warm, tactile, crafted materials in what is an exposed and windy place.

Previous comments this responds to

- Poor quality and upkeep of existing dock edge
- Concern over the privatisation of the water
- Concern that existing public access is reduced rather than extended
- Request for shelter/warm places to sit
- Step-free access and routes that work for all
- Desire to get close to the water

“Restriction of access/gated or closed areas”

[Post-it, 07.03.26, SB Will Event]

“Winter, wind-shielded cosy hangout spot! We need a warm space in the water!”

[Post-it, 08.03.26, SB Will Event]



Precedent: Eden Dock, Canary Wharf
(Image Chris Wong)



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Design Principle 03: New public amenities

A range of new facilities will include generous landscaping and wildlife habitats to explore, and indoor and outdoor multi-purpose community spaces for a range of uses.

How this builds on the Vision

The Vision requires amenity buildings serving the moorings, and asks that social spaces are of a type, size and quality to be genuinely useful, with the potential to be shared with existing residents.

Previous comments this responds to

- Facilities for everyone, not only for new residents
- Distrust of commercially driven scheme
- Public park and place to spend time, bookable community space that could include a cafe, WCs, co-working
- Play / fitness facilities for all ages
- Places to socialise for young people
- Facilities must be affordable (cheap or free)
- A stated client commitment to explore community facilities

“We need a place that serves as a town square... with play areas for younger kids which are currently lacking at the docks.”

[Early Engagement Report summary]



Precedent: Hermitage Community Moorings
Pier House, Wapping (Image Ted Maxwell)



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Design Principle 04: A variety of homes for a diverse community

A mix of home types and sizes, from boats to purpose-built floating houses and from homes for one person to homes for families, so that the new community reflects the diversity of the dock's existing community.

How this builds on the Vision

The Vision defines a place where a range of options and price points makes residents and workers feel comfortable, with infrastructure for a mix of residential boats and floating homes.

Previous comments this responds to

- Concern about creating an exclusive enclave
- Will this be affordable for local people?
- Who are the homes for?
- Desire for family homes
- Permanent community rather than transient one
- Creation of a community

"Needs to be affordable for local people"
[Post-it, 25.02.26, Britannia Village Hall]

"Affordable housing, no rentals or holiday lets"
[Online survey response]



Precedent: Schoonschip, Amsterdam
(Image Alan Jensen)



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Design Principle 05: Enhancing safety by the water

Design of the built environment, carefully considered wayfinding and signage and active management will increase safety by the water, and intuitively raise water safety awareness.

How this builds on the Vision

The Vision states that safety and security are matters of high quality management and responsible, proportionate risk controls as much as of design, and that the water should feel safe for people of all abilities and water confidence.

Previous comments this responds to

- Concern around falling in and drowning, particularly children
- Unsupervised, unregulated and inexperienced swimming
- Crime, anti-social behaviour, safety and feeling safe after dark
- Lighting and greater supervisory presence
- Inclusive and youth-friendly environment

“People fall in the water!”

[Post-it, 26.02.26, Britannia Village Hall]

“Floating path to be safe and have room for young kids”

[Post-it, 25.02.26, Britannia Village Hall]



Precedent: Paper Island, Copenhagen
(Image Scott Grady)



Illustration



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Design Principle 06: Increased biodiversity above and below the waterline

The infrastructure and landscaping will create green planted habitat areas for a range of aquatic flora and fauna to encourage greater biodiversity in the docks.

How this builds on the Vision

The Vision makes biodiversity a component of everything that is designed and built, on land and in water, and describes biodiverse edges, reed planting and floating gardens as a way of softening visual impact while improving ecology.

Previous comments this responds to

- Appetite for more wildlife with green edges, nesting and fish
- Fear that occupation will disturb and deter wildlife
- Specific warnings about mites from water vegetation and bird strike due to London City Airport proximity
- Some view the open water as the natural asset and see added greenspace as a loss
- From previous engagement Ecology was the first-named theme in 2020 Community Design Principles

“Barges along edge to include fish will be more fun!”

[Post-it, 25.02.26, Britannia Village Hall]

“Disturbs the local wildlife and drives them away”

[Post-it, 08.03.26, SB Will]



Precedent: Eden Dock, Canary Wharf
(Image Chris Wong)



Illustration



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Design Principle 07: Clean air, clean water

Homes will be all-electric - Nothing will be burned. There will be no discharge from the homes into the dock water. Renewable energy sources will be incorporated where practically possible.

How this builds on the Vision

The Vision requires all services to be integrated, rules out fossil-fuel based power generation through the code of conduct, and points towards water source heat pumps while ruling tidal and wind systems inappropriate in this location.

Previous comments this responds to

- Air-quality concerns about smoke from solid fuel
- Concern about diesel and oil pollution in the water and swimmer safety
- Definition of how sewage and servicing will be managed
- Desire for good water quality - cleaner water with less floating litter and no pollution for wildlife

“Pollution from boat diesel/
coal burning”
[Early Engagement Report 5.3 fears]

“Cleaner water, less floating
rubbish”
[Post-it, 08.03.26, SB Will Event]



Precedent: Schoonschip, Amsterdam
(Image Isabel Nabuurs)



Illustration



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Design Principle 08: Well-made, well run

High standards of construction, performance and a proactive management strategy will make the development a beautiful addition to the dock for the long-term.

How this builds on the Vision

The Vision asks for stringent guidelines on vessel quality and maintenance, a code of conduct ideally derived from engagement, a design that reduces noise and anti-social behaviour, and that can adapt and endure.

Previous comments this responds to

- Requests for high-quality architecture and well-kept vessels, and explicit objection to untidy houseboats
- Strict control on short-term letting
- Concern about noise carrying over water including night-time music and generators with requests for quiet hours
- Well-managed waste storage/collection, deliveries and servicing with concern about this over the long-term
- Royal Docks Waterways commits to addressing this in the finalised proposal

“Clear rules + regulations re: noise + sub-letting AirBnB etc”
[Early Engagement Report 4.1, Hopes]

“Requests for no house boats due to messiness”
[Early Engagement Report 4.1, Fears]



Precedent: Waterbuurt, IJburg, Amsterdam
(Image Alex de Rijke)



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Do you support our emerging design ideas?

We've applied the 8 emerging design principles to the site to create early ideas of what Floating Residential could be like. We want to hear your thoughts on these, particularly on public amenities.

01 Connected to context

- Views through Britannia Village to see dock water and piers
- Low height (1-3 storeys) to allow views from higher dock level and Britannia Village over floating boats

02 Extending the publicly-accessible dock edge

- Public landscaped boardwalk extends the dock edge
- Accessible and safe, naturally surveilled public boardwalk

03 New public amenities

What are your priorities for community facilities? Ideas suggested at previous engagements include:

- Landscaped public park with space to spend time
- Bookable Community Room
- Cafe with WCs
- Co-working space
- Play space and fitness equipment for all ages
- Space to socialise for young people

04 A variety of homes for a diverse community

- Flexible layout allows mix of boats and homes. This could have more boats, more homes or an equal mix
- The mix of boats and homes can change over time

05 Enhancing safety by the water

- Safe barriers to new public areas
- No swimming in Floating Residential - Swimming only allowed in public supervised areas
- Floating Residential all-day presence discourages unsupervised swimming

06 Increased biodiversity above and below the waterline

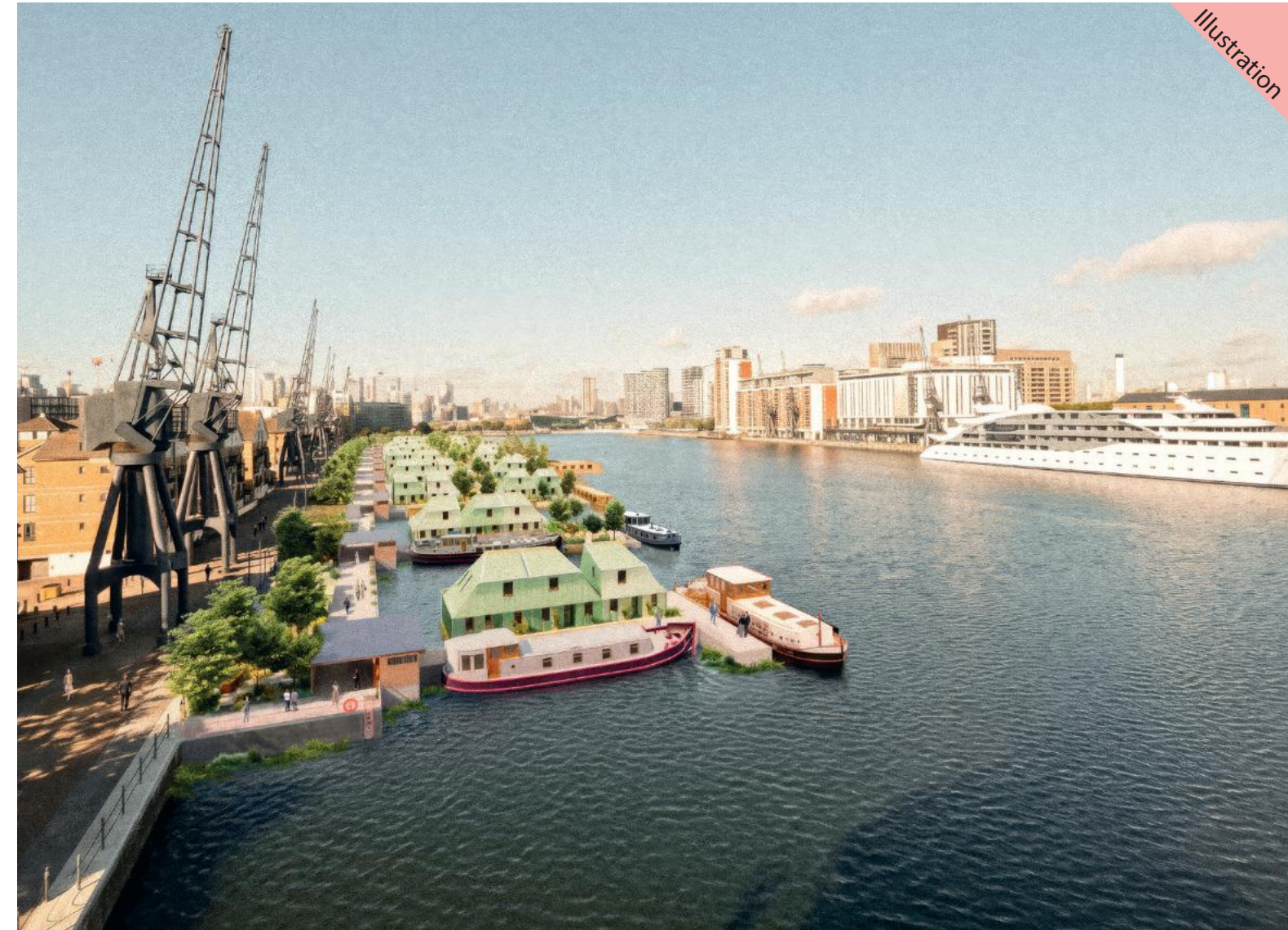
- Biodiverse planting above the water for people and wildlife
- Biodiverse planting in the water to encourage marine wildlife

07 Clean air, clean water

- No pollution: Boats and Homes will have water, sewage collection and electric (no wood / petrol fuel)
- Planting to improve air and water quality

08 Well-made, well run

- Well-made homes, built to last
- Well-maintained public and residential landscaped areas
- Well-designed threshold between public and residential areas to ensure safe use
- Managed deliveries and refuse collection to minimise disruption



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