

STATEMENT OF CASE
by Rastko Novakovic on behalf of
Better Elephant

Includes

- Section 1** Introduces the community group Better Elephant
- Section 2** Outlines the failure by the Acquiring Authority (AA) and the Applicant (LL) to consider alternatives to the present development
- Section 3** Evaluates the social, economic and environmental cost of the proposed scheme
- Section 4** Outlines potential alternatives to the present development

Appendices

- 1 Gensler Report
- 2 HAWSE proposals

1 Better Elephant

- 1.1 Better Elephant is a community group, based in the Elephant and Castle area. It has hundreds of local supporters and no fixed membership structure or constitution.
- 1.2 We have encouraged the local community to develop ideas for:
 - Refurbishment of some of the existing homes
 - Retention of the urban forest of 450 mature trees
 - Wind turbines located on high-rise blocks
 - Green roofs and food-growing spaces
 - Conversion of existing district heating system boiler to biomass
- 1.3 We continue to promote meanwhile use of the Heygate Estate, such as gardening activities which have received endorsement and donations by Veolia, as well as local businesses such as the Ivory Arch and groups such as Aylesbury Tenants and Leaseholders First, Cool Tan Arts, Walworth Garden Farm, Guerilla Gardeners, Elephant and Castle Urban Forest, Crossways Church, Fareshares Food Co-operative, numerous schools and countless universities (University College London, Goldsmiths College, etc.).
- 1.4 We have promoted a pop-up cinema which saw half a dozen packed-out events such as the screening of 'Doreen' by David Reeve and Patrick Steel (featuring Doreen Gee, the former Chair of the Tenants & Residents Association) attended by former residents of the estate and the local community.

2 Failure to consider alternatives to the present development

- 2.1 In the chapter on Alternatives (headings 4.4 - 4.7), submitted by Waterman on behalf of Lend Lease, it is evident that all other options - of partial demolition, refurbishment, infill etc. - were not considered. Instead, the focus is solely on the 'no development' alternative, which is rejected.
- 2.2. The Statement of Case submitted by the Acquiring Authority (section 2.8) and Jon Abbot's Proof of Evidence (section 3) mention a number of other options which were not considered by the applicant, including the recommendation towards partial demolition and refurbishment which is acknowledged as the 'best solution'. The outline of the statement of case then paradoxically continues to claim that the proposed scheme is a 'better option'.
- 2.3 These aforementioned alternatives are based on the 1998 Allot and Lomax Options Appraisal Survey commissioned by the AA, and include the option to 'do nothing' as well as 'complete demolition and redevelopment by the private sector' which is currently being proposed. Other options explored are:
 - repair and refurbish,
 - refurbish and improve,
 - reduce the height of high rise blocks alongside refurbishment and improvement
 - complete demolition and re-build at lower density,
 - partial demolition for registered social landlord or other partnership development alongside refurbishment/improvement of the remainder.

- 2.4 The scheme proposed by the AA and LL: 'complete demolition and redevelopment by the private sector' was the second most unpopular of all options polled, just behind 'doing nothing'. 34.5% of responding residents ranked this as their least preferred option. The Survey also raises questions of the timescale of the development (which is evidenced in the 15 years elapsed and an estimated further 17 years pending in the proposed scheme) and concludes that there are too many unknowns for the surveyors to put this forward as the recommended option (sections 12.4 and 12.5 of Conclusions and Recommendations).
- 2.5 The social cost of complete demolition and redevelopment by the private sector is outlined in the Survey's concern that it 'will completely break up the Heygate community'. Moreover, Appendix F of the Social Background Report (Additional Comments for Consideration) states that '80.3% of residents did not want to move off the estate.' This is supported by the 1999 MORI poll which states that the percentage of residents who desire to remain on the estate, no matter what improvements might be made there is 52%.
- 2.6 The social cost of complete demolition has particularly affected the elderly, as foretold in the Allot and Lomax Survey. Section 4.12.1.6. states: 'There is a large number of residents, mainly elderly, who have resided on the estate for a number of years and have extensive links with the local E&C area, and who have a reluctance to consider relocating elsewhere in the borough.' Moreover, the recommendation 12.4 clearly states: 'Many of the residents of the Heygate Estate have lived on the estate since it was constructed 25 years ago and many have lived in the locality all their lives. We would strongly stress, therefore, that the Council retains the Wingrave site and that it is developed by the Council for housing with an emphasis on sheltered housing for the elderly so that many of the long standing tenants can remain in the immediate locality.' Neither LL or AA acknowledge the damage to social sustainability that the present scheme is causing.
- 2.7 The preferred option of partial demolition and refurbishment would tackle the documented issues around density, barriers, walkways and subways. Moreover, section 12.10 of the Survey specifically refers to the benefits of retaining the Heygate maisonettes, the owners of which may have retained ownership had this option been pursued. The Alternative Uses and Designs section of the Alternatives document submitted by LL does not consider any of the above.
- 2.8 The Survey also outlines that the buildings and walkways are in generally good condition given their age but need a programme of maintenance given the 'years of neglect' (section 4.8.3.1). Point 4.4.4.2 states that the estate's district heating system's 'boiler houses service are good and appear to be well maintained'. Finally, 'It should be noted that the buildings probably have a design life of 50-60 years". This is a sound basis to consider alternatives to the present proposed development.

3 Cost of the Proposed Scheme

- 3.1 Further to the failure to consider alternatives to the present scheme, there are serious concerns about the social, economic and environmental cost of the scheme, especially when compared with the 2004 SPG framework and Elephant and Castle Masterplan, which included a plethora of public benefits, such as: MUSCO (Multi Utility Service Company), civic square, the demolition

and rebuilding of the Shopping Centre, improvements to the public transport interchange and the peninsularisation of the Elephant and Castle Northern Roundabout, museum, library, theatre and new school.

- 3.2 The social cost of the proposed development is the permanent and irreversible displacement of 3,500 members of the Heygate Estate community. Since the scheme proposes 71 social rented units and no timescale for when the bulk of these are to be delivered (due to phased development), it further reduces the chances of return for 209 former Heygate residents who have signed a Right to Return to the Heygate footprint. Compared with the 2004 SPG promise of 23 early rehousing sites to be completed by the time of decanting, a small minority of residents now face being rehoused twice and within a potential span of 18 years. This particularly impacts negatively on older residents as outlined in paragraph 2.7 of this document. To date, only 45 of the original residents have returned to the wider Elephant and Castle area and the current scheme does not seek to improve those circumstances.
- 3.3 Although the scheme is proposing a minimum target of 25% affordable housing, it is not proposing the type of affordable housing required by planning policy or negotiated in the Regeneration Agreement (i.e. social rented). 'Affordable rents' proposed are beyond the means of most Southwark residents or indeed former Heygate residents. The proposed scheme, alongside other schemes by LL, such as One the Elephant (which provides no social housing) due to lack of social housing provision and the introduction of gated communities has the potential to create segregated communities, reduce the social mix and destroy the existing social fabric of the area.
- 3.4 Compared with the preponderance of family homes on the existing Heygate Estate, the proposed scheme offers 10% (circa 230) of the new development as 3+ bedroom flats. This does not encourage lifetime neighbourhoods or a long-term socially sustainable infrastructure.
- 3.5 The Acquiring Authority currently values its residential housing stock at £954 per square metre (Southwark Council Asset Management Plan 2010 – Appendix 1). Based on these figures, once refurbished, the total value of the Heygate Estate would add up to circa £100m for the 1,200 homes. In a recent study by global architectural consultancy Gensler, refurbishment costs have been estimated at around £35m, which includes full refurbishment of the estate plus the additional construction of balconies and installing an Envac waste system. Subtracting the projected refurbishment costs estimated by Gensler, the value of the site in its current condition therefore amounts to £65m.
- 3.6 This value is not integrated by the current scheme. The AA has spent at least £40m on emptying the Heygate estate (as evidenced in Jon Abbot's proof of evidence), not counting the loss of rents could have been offset by a refurbishment programme of £35m. The Regeneration Agreement states that the AA is to receive £50m for the 23 acres of the Heygate land. Compared with the 1 acre Oakmayne Plaza site which was sold for £40m, this is an inordinately low amount.
- 3.7 The planning application's Estate Management Strategy, which proposes that the entire 10 hectare footprint comes under the control of a privately-managed 'Estate Management Company' erodes the status of existing fully public green amenities together with the potential

loss of 400 mature trees (CAVAT-valued at 18m) and threatens the existing natural habitats of: bats, woodpeckers, squirrels and natter jack toads.

- 3.8 The scheme's commitment to the 'zero carbon growth' Clinton Initiative has been abandoned with no provision for renewable energy on site. Along with the abandonment of the green MUSCO, the scheme replaces the car-free development with 678 car parking spaces. In addition to this very large projected carbon footprint, the scheme will result in the demolition of buildings which contain circa 40,000 tons of embodied carbon.
- 3.9 Contrary to the scheme's development objectives, it does not: 'adopt a balanced and integrated range of measures to maximise the efficient use of natural resources, limit carbon emissions and minimise waste.'

4 Potential Alternatives

- 4.1 The Allot and Lomax survey estimates the cost of Basic Partial demolition and refurbishment at £ 41m. Paragraph 4.8.3.1. clearly outlines the benefits: 'It is not only the most cost-effective solution but will lead to an overall development which will be environmentally, architecturally and socially appropriate to take the Heygate to the new millennium.' This is an alternative based on the existing assets of the estate, its infrastructure, business and green amenities.
- 4.2 The viability and benefits of refurbishment are further supported by Southwark Council's 1998 Stock Condition Survey which showed the current condition of housing stock, and estimated costs for maintenance and repairs during the following 30 years. The Heygate estate buildings are half-way down the priority list, below average and estimated costs were £21,742 per dwelling over 30 years.
- 4.3 Since then, 15 years have elapsed, and other design techniques have been developed, such as the steel pod proposed by the Gensler report. It contends that the Heygate buildings are still in good condition and could be fully refurbished for just £13,955 per home. The proposals outlined are compliant with the London Housing Design Guide, Lifetime Homes and Building Regulations at a concept level with an aspirational target of Breeam Excellent.
- 4.4 Another approach would be to develop the The Pop-up HAWSE (Homes through Apprenticeships With Skills for Employment) proposals by Levitt Bernstein Architects for the Building Trust's Home competition as a basis for converting (circa) 500 of the Heygate's disused garages. The scheme proposes bedsits to be created within a disused garage using timber frame pop-up structures for circa £13,000.
- 4.5 Homesteading should be explored with the assistance of Council and grant aid while working together with the 'Homes from empty homes' initiative.
- 4.6 Potential for converting the District Heating System to a biomass boiler, which is the most efficient form of energy production and has the smallest environmental impact should be explored. The current scheme excludes the possibility of installing a biomass boiler due to emissions control requirements on the large number tall buildings proposed.

- 4.7 In addition, there is potential for re-instating the estate's wind turbines and adding solar PV panels to the roofs of many blocks.
- 4.8 The flat roofs of the Heygate estate are one of its distinctive design features. These lend themselves perfectly to creating green roofs for food growing and insulation, and will assist in meeting mayor Boris Johnson's climate change adaption strategy of providing 100,000m² of green roof space in London.
- 4.9 Mixed tenure should be explored through the potential to establish a Community Land Trust.