

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
AND ACQUISITION OF LAND ACT 1981**

Revised Inquiry into

**THE LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK
(AYLESBURY ESTATE SITES 1B-1C)**

COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2014

PINS REFERENCE: NPCU/CPO/A5840/74092

**Proof of Evidence of
Professor Jane Rendell For the Aylesbury Leaseholders Group**

6th December 2017

1. As an independent academic witness, I am a trained architect, and an architectural historian/theorist, with over 100 publications, including 10 (co-)edited volumes, and 5 authored books, one focusing on the history of London's post war social housing – *The Architecture of Psychoanalysis* (London: IB Tauris, 2017). My statement is based on a study of the documents circulated to the meeting of the Executive Committee of Southwark Council on 27 September 2005, at which the decision was taken to demolish and rebuild rather than to refurbish the Aylesbury Estate. I argue that the information provided to the Executive Committee for that meeting was inadequate for making such a decision, and that the information was unbalanced, as it did not include key design work and costings for the demolition/new build option, that could be compared with the detailed work already undertaken for the refurbishment option.

2. The information for the option to demolish and rebuild the Aylesbury Estate consisted of a one-page 'Annex C: Indicative Cashflow Forecast' **(JR1)**. This forecast included figures for 'estimated land value', 'income from development', 'leaseholders CPO' and 'tenants decant', but there were no figures given for design or construction. There were also figures for 'delivery team fees' and 'master plan', but no master plan was attached, nor were there any designs or information on construction. Annex C contains no code to allow the reader to decipher the abbreviated terms, so it was not possible to understand the costs to which some of the figures referred. I concluded, therefore, that this one-page cash-flow report did not constitute sufficient evidence on which to base a decision to demolish and rebuild the Aylesbury Estate.

3. The information for the refurbishment option, consisted of a one-and-a-half page summary document titled 'Costs of Refurbishment' **(CD8: Annex A)**, that estimated the total cost of refurbishment to Decent Homes Plus as £314.6 million. **(CD8: Annex A, p. 599)**. And although Southwark Council had commissioned substantial research, designs and costings for the refurbishment option – specifically, a large design package (up to RIBA Stage E) comprising 105 sets of documents (including reports, costings and design and construction drawings) provided by Levitt Bernstein Architects, **(JB CD1)**, a 71-page report by

Frost Associates **(JR3)** and a 20-page report by BTPW Partnership **(JR4)** – *none* of this detailed information was provided to the Executive Committee.

4. Annex A included a figure of £148.9 million for External Works, **(CD8: Annex A)** nearly half the total estimated cost of refurbishment; yet I have been unable to correlate this figure with the calculations in the Frost and the BPTW reports. **(JR3 and JR4)** The BPTW report gave a total figure for external works for the whole estate as £24.8 million, **(JR4: np, Table entitled: AYLESBURY ESTATE (INC SOUTH WEST CORNER) SUMMARY OF REFURBISHMENT OPTIONS (DECENT HOMES BASIC/DECENT HOMES +)** less than a quarter of the Council's total; and although the Frost report did not give a total figure, even by adding up all the figures given for the external works for each relevant block on the estate I could only reach a total of £20.7 million. **(JR3)** So when faced with such a high figure for the refurbishment costs and no background details to justify it, it is perhaps understandable why the Executive Committee decided to reject the option to refurbish the Aylesbury Estate.

5. The work undertaken by Levitt Bernstein Architects for the south-west corner of the Aylesbury Estate – which was presented to Southwark Council in November 2004, nearly a year before the meeting of the Executive Meeting on 27 September 2005 – also included the only designed and costed comparison between the refurbishment and demolition-rebuild options that I could find. **(JR6)** This comparison, which consisted of 3 options for refurbishment and 2 options for demolition-rebuild of the 5-6 block which required structural strengthening, showed that – taking as an example a 5-storey block such as 1-68 Chartridge House – the cost of Option 3 for refurbishment to Decent Homes Standard, plus gas removal and structural strengthening, was £3.54 million; whereas the cost of Option 4, for demolishing the block and constructing a new block with the same number of dwellings, was £9.45 million **(JR5)**. Even if one estimated the cost of refurbishment at Decent Homes Plus (that is, including new kitchens and bathrooms), then refurbishment remained at £6.01 million for 1-68 Chartridge House **(JR3: p. 6)** ie 64% of the demolition-rebuild cost.

6. Finally, a further document not circulated to the Executive Committee was Option 5, for demolishing and rebuilding the blocks with the addition of new dwellings. **(JR6)**. These designed costings show that a block could be rebuilt to provide the same number of replacement dwellings (68), plus additional dwellings (40), on the same footprint. If the aim of regeneration is to increase the housing density of the site, then why was this option not explored to see if the receipts from the sale of the new dwellings could cover the costs of refurbishing – rather than demolishing – the existing homes?

7. The Government Inspector's Report **(CD 50)** states that: 'The figures put to the Executive Committee are more than 10 years old, and there is no submitted evidence which would allow me to compare them with the costs of the scheme for the Order Land.' **(CD 50: para 383)** The London Borough of Southwark submitted no evidence on which to make such a comparison in the 2015 Public Inquiry. It is still not possible to make costed comparison between refurbishment and demolition/new build, because despite numerous requests **(see the Witness Statement of Simon Morrow)** the London Borough of Southwark has still not provided evidence of the costs for the scheme for demolition and rebuild on the Order Land.

8. London Borough of Southwark are continuing to argue that refurbishment is not possible, because of the 'physical shortcomings' of the buildings on the estate **(CD83, para 11.2.2)** and they state:

Between 2001 and 2005 the Council carried out work to consider whether the refurbishment of the Estate would be feasible and deliverable, and whether refurbishment would address satisfactorily the physical shortcomings of the Estate. The conclusion reached was that it would not. **(CD83, para 4.4)**.

However, the research, design and costings for refurbishment prepared by Levitt Bernstein and produced in their stage E report of April 2005 **(JB**

CD1), included costings for structural strengthening repairs to those buildings that required it, following the report by structural engineers Conisbee, commissioned as part of the risk assessment in March 2005 which confirmed that only the 5 and 6 storey blocks would need to be structural strengthened. **(JR2, para 6.4)** The construction and design fee costs for structural strengthening were estimated in the BPTW report as only approx. 2.75% of the total costs of decent homes + refurbishment package for the whole estate, and only 2.3% for the SW corner **(JR4, np, Summary, para 3, and JR4: np, Table entitled: AYLESBURY ESTATE (INC SOUTH WEST CORNER) SUMMARY OF REFURBISHMENT OPTIONS (DECENT HOMES BASIC/DECENT HOMES +)**. The later Frost report of May 2005, then included the associated 'soft' costs such as decanting, necessary for any form of refurbishment. **(JR3)**

9. Additionally, and importantly, the objectors have not had access to the substantial funds that are required for professionals to produce such a fully costed and designed scheme. If funding could be made available then the refurbishment scheme prepared by Levitt Bernstein could be updated.

10. The Government Inspector adds that a refurbishment scheme 'would be unlikely to deliver a comparable increase in the number of dwellings'. **(CD 50: para 418)** But the costed design options produced by Levitt Bernstein provide evidence of how, working with the existing footprint of the estate and the refurbishment of existing blocks, it is possible to increase the number of dwellings, see para 6 above and the fully designed scheme **(JR7, p. 1.3)**

11. There are many excellent refurbishment examples that can be drawn on for comparison, including currently the Alton Estate, which combines refurbishment of existing post-war buildings and new buildings. **(JR8)**

12. We do know from the *only* designed and costed comparison between demolition-rebuild and refurbishment that exists - in the options report provided by Levitt Bernstein in 2004-05 that:

- (i) Refurbishment was the cheaper option. **(JR6).**

- (ii) New dwellings could have been added while retaining the existing footprint of the estate. **(JR6, and JR9, p. 2.1).**

13. We also know from Levitt Bernstein's designed and costed refurbishment scheme 2004-05 that:

- (iii) "For an average cost of about £50,000 per unit the scheme promises:
- * Significant improvements to the environment and conditions for residents on the SW Corner.
 - * A shift in both perception and reality of the image of living on the estate.
 - * Decent Homes and Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) works to common areas and to an extent within dwellings agreed." **(JR7, p. 1.3)**

14. However, the information in paras 11 and 12 above was not put before the Executive Committee in 2005, and was not responded to at the Public Inquiry into the Aylesbury Estate CPO in 2015.

15. Despite the fact that the Second Stage Tender documents were due to go out on 31 May 2005, **(JR9, 2.1)** and detailed planning permissions for the refurbishment to Bradenham and Chiltern had been granted. **(JR7 and JR10)** Levitt Bernstein state that 'an instruction to suspend the project and tender preparation was issued by the Client on 1st April 2005, pending resolution of estate-wide funding matters'. **(JR9, 2.1).**

16. On 2 October 2017 one of the objectors asked Southwark Council to explain who took the decision to give that instruction and the reason for it. As of 6 December 2017, no response has been received.

Ends

List of Annexes referred to:

JR1: Annex C 'Indicative Cashflow Forecast' (omitted from CD8).

JR2: Alan Conisbee and Associates, Aylesbury Estate: Robustness Considerations to Inform Risk Assessments, 10 March 2005.

JR3: Frost Associates, Aylesbury Estate Regeneration Total Cost Review, 6 May 2005.

JR4: BPTW, Report on Estimated Costs for Estate Wide Refurbishment Options on the Aylesbury Estate April 2005, np.

JR5: Conisbee, BPTW, Aylesbury Estate Regeneration Briefing Report on Structural Robustness of 5 and 6 Storey Jespersion Blocks, November 2004.

JR6: Table, Conisbee, BPTW, Aylesbury Estate Regeneration Briefing Report on Structural Robustness of 5 and 6 Storey Jespersion Blocks, November 2004, p. 10.

JR7: Bernstein, PTE, BPTW, Aylesbury Estate Regeneration, SW Corner, July 2005, Volume 1 Executive Summary and Stage E Report and Volume 2, Supplement to Stage E Report, volume 1, 01 Executive Summary, p. 1.3.

JR8: Alton Area Masterplan Report, October 2014.

JR9: Bernstein, PTE, BPTW, Aylesbury Estate Regeneration, SW Corner, July 2005, Volume 1 Executive Summary and Stage E Report and Volume 2, Supplement to Stage E Report, volume 1, 02 Introduction, p. 2.1.

JR10: Planning Permission Granted for 1-172 Chiltern House, 10 February 2010.

List of Annexes Cross-referenced

CD8: Annex A 'Costs of Refurbishment'

CD50: CPO Report to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government by Lesley Coffey BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI, an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Date: 29 January 2016.

JB CD1: Bernstein, PTE, BPTW, Aylesbury Estate Regeneration, SW Corner, July 2005, Volume 1 Executive Summary and Stage E Report and Volume 2, Supplement to Stage E Report. (comprising 105 separate sets of drawings and reports).

The expert witness statement of Simon Morrow.