

<http://35percent.org/2015-03-18-stand-up-for-more-social-housing/>

Stand up for more social housing (at 80% market rent)

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“Let’s all of us stand up for more social housing” was the [call to arms](#) during the ‘[impassioned speech](#)’ from Notting Hill Housing Trust’s Director Kate Davies at yesterday’s ‘[Homes for Britain](#)’ rally. The rally was part of an ongoing campaign organised by the [National Housing Federation](#), of which NHHT is a founding member.



Notting Hill CEO - Kate Davies

We have blogged previously about NHHT’s dodgy definition of social housing and its [blanket policy](#) of converting all its existing social rented properties to [affordable rent](#) when tenancies expire. We also [blogged](#) about Kate Davies’ involvement in the Tory-led think tank that lobbied for the introduction of affordable rent.

So we have taken a closer look at the kind of ‘social’ housing Notting Hill’s Director wants us all to stand up for more of.

This is ‘[The Exchange](#)’ in Bermondsey, Notting Hill’s latest completed development in Southwark and part of the [Bermondsey Spa regeneration scheme](#). All but three private and two shared-ownership units

in this 205-home development have been sold and of those that remain the private flats are [priced](#) at over £1m and the shared-ownership flats [require](#) a minimum salary of £73,986 to qualify.



‘The Exchange’ - Notting Hill’s 205 unit development at the Bermondsey Spa regeneration

The development should also have had 44 social rented units, to replace the 54 council homes demolished to make way for **‘The Exchange’**.



Demolition of 54 council homes on the site

44 social rented units were duly proposed in Notting Hill’s [planning application](#) for the site and that’s what was confirmed in the [planning officer’s report](#). Paragraphs 27 & 29 of the GLA [planning report](#) also confirmed that the development proposed 44 social rented homes. However, after approval was given Southwark Council and Notting Hill signed-off the [s106 legal agreement](#) with something completely different - 44 ‘affordable rented’ units (ie. up to 80% market rents) **not** 44 social rented units.

Bermondsey Spa Regeneration Site C5 (ref:10/AP/3010)

S106 legal agreement

Officers Report

50 The application proposes the following housing mix by unit:

	Market		Social Rented		Intermediate		TOTAL	
Unit size	Units	% of total	Units	% of total	Units	% of total	Units	%
Studio	9	7	0	0	0	0	9	4
1 bed	29	21	9	21	14	58	52	25
2 bed	78	57	20	45	8	33	106	52
3 bed	15	11	9	20	2	8	26	13
4 bed	6	4	6	14	0	0	12	6
TOTAL	137	100	44	100	24	100	205	100

SCHEDULE 5
1. APPROVED AFFORDABLE HOUSING MIX

	Market		Affordable Rented		Intermediate		TOTAL	
Unit size	Units	% of total	Units	% of total	Units	% of total	Units	%
Studio	9	7	0	0	0	0	9	4
1 bed	29	21	9	21	14	58	52	25
2 bed	78	57	20	45	8	33	106	52
3 bed	15	11	9	20	2	8	26	13
4 bed	6	4	6	14	0	0	12	6
TOTAL	137	100	44	100	24	100	205	100

"Affordable Rented Units"

44 Affordable Housing Units shown for the purpose of identification only as edged [] on Plan [] available for rent in perpetuity such that (a) the total cost of rent and service management charges meet targets for affordable rented housing set by the Homes and Communities Agency from time to time OR any successor regime imposed by the Homes and Communities Agency or any successor public authority and (b) is consistent with the Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document extant at the time of Implementation and the requirements of the London Plan and the Mayors Housing SPG 2005 provided that if there is inconsistency between the rent and service charge levels set by reference to (a) and (b) of this definition (a) will apply;

Officers report states social rent but S106 Agreement says affordable rent

The change in wording is subtle but the consequences aren't; according to [Southwark's own figures](#), a 1-bed social rented flat in Bermondsey(SE16) costs an average £97 per week, compared to well over three times this for 'affordable rent' at 80% market rent.

We double checked against this against the [GLA affordable housing data](#), which confirmed that the rents are indeed set at up to 57% market rent. We then contacted a local councillor for the Bermondsey Spa area and he wrote to Notting Hill, who [confirmed](#) that the rents were actually as high as 62% market rent.

It's hard not to conclude that the public has been deceived over this development: it was led to believe that it was getting social rents at all stages up to and including planning approval.

Having cross checked a number of other developments, we have [found](#) that this sleight-of-hand tenure switch is becoming commonplace in Southwark's planning process.

We have also shown in [previous blog posts](#) how Notting Hill is using the terms 'social', 'target' and 'affordable' rent interchangeably in its forthcoming application for the Aylesbury estate redevelopment and [blogged](#) about the worrying fact that affordable rents of up to 80% are included in the Notting Hill development agreement for the Aylesbury.

"Affordable Rents"

(at the date hereof) rents to be no greater than 80% of Market Rents and otherwise as the expression "Affordable Rents" is defined from time to time by or on behalf of the Government for England and Wales from time to time

"Affordable Residential" (a) the Target Rent Residential Units

Extract from Aylesbury estate Development Agreement

So, we have to ask the question - will the Aylesbury go the same way as the Bermondsey Spa regeneration with affordable rent slipped in quietly through the back door?



Notting Hill's Director & Southwark council leader celebrate demolition of Aylesbury redevelopment's phase 2