

HEYGATE WALKWAYS FACE END



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The notorious walkways of the Elephant and Castle's Heygate Estate are to be closed off in the next phase of the regeneration of the area.

Heygate's so-called "walkways in the sky" will be closed before the end of March to allow the next phase of redevelopment - a brand new paved route costing £120,000.

The estate was designed in the 1960s and completed in 1974 with 1260 council homes, the majority of which are still council owned. These dwellings will be replaced by 2500 homes, mostly for private sale though Southwark Council say they will be affordable.

The estate was one of the first to be designed around the motor car, and the original concept of the walkways was to link all areas of the estate via concrete bridges, so that residents could walk safely around without the need to cross busy roads. However, Southwark Council's head of regeneration Councillor Fiona Colley believes that in practice these walkways proved to be more of a hazard than a help. She said "for decades pedestrians have found the pavement on Heygate street just stops, and they are forced up stairs and ramps onto the walkways. The walkways have also become notorious for crime and have been described by some residents and social commentators as a 'muggers paradise'".

Councillor Colley said "I am delighted that at last we can start putting right the mistakes of the past, responding to public concerns and investing in a safe high-quality pathway along Heygate street".

The new layout of the estate has been negotiated in conjunction with Southwark Council and Transport for London, and will see the bus lane being narrowed to make room for the footpath. The cycle lane will be retained.

The sprawling Heygate estate has provided the backdrop for many films and television series over the years, including the Michael Caine film 'Harry Brown' 2009, 'Attack the Block' 2011, 'Shank' 2010, and the now-defunct ITV series 'The Bill'. The estate is being completely redeveloped as part of Southwark's £1.5bn plans to regenerate the area.