

Council admits failure in Elephant & Castle.

Article from: Building Design | November 5, 2010 | [Copyright](#)

Heygate residents have lost out to a series of cancellations and delays

Andrea Klettner

A flagship housing scheme intended to transform the lives of some of London's most deprived families by tapping into the skills of up-and-coming architects has "failed" in its key objective, it was claimed this week.

Back in 2005, Southwark Council announced it had assembled a panel of 15 firms including the AOC, Panter Hudspith and Haworth Tompkins to design 1,000 replacement homes for the run-down Heygate Estate, which had been earmarked for demolition as part of the wider Elephant & Castle redevelopment.

At the time, the council promised residents could look forward to living in a series of "jewel boxes" dotted around their original neighbourhood.

Now, the council has admitted that, following a series of major delays and cancellations across the 16 replacement sites, the vast majority of Heygate residents have been moved elsewhere in the borough. So far only one scheme - dRMM's 31-unit Wansey Street development - has seen residents move in, and the council now only plans to build 609 homes across 10 sites.

"We can hardly call it early housing now - they're just re-housing sites," Fiona Colley, cabinet member for regeneration at Southwark Council, admitted.

Labour councillor Colley said the majority of residents had now been re-housed elsewhere with many going to Levitt Bernstein's Bermondsey Spa and a few to BFLS's Strata Tower. She blamed the previous administration's misplaced priorities for the delays.

"They failed," she said. "It's all very well having an innovative procurement programme centred on design, but staying on schedule is extremely important when you have made promises to people."

The news comes as a particular blow to a number of practices working on the cancelled schemes, which include AOC's two projects at Rodney Road and Crown Terrace, Haworth Tompkins' project at Harper Road and KMK's scheme at Pocock Street.

Meanwhile, construction is underway on six of the sites, with dRMM's second project at Harper Road due to go on site in the next few weeks after winning planning approval in October.

Panter Hudspith won planning for its 96-unit scheme at Royal Road in August, following an appeal to the planning inspector.

Stead Street, where Panter Hudspith and Haworth Tompkins are working on two schemes totalling 150 dwellings on the site of car parks, will be submitted for planning permission by December, with construction due to start in spring 2011. A source said: "Like many HCA-funded projects it is in a state of the client trying to figure out when they'll get funding."

The projects are funded through Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) grant funding and money from the registered social landlord (RSL), with the council providing the land for free.