

## News

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# New Heygate: 'It looks nice, but



**First blow:** the bulldozers start work on Southwark's Heygate Estate in April 2011

Residents angry at being priced out of mammoth redevelopment

**Mira Bar-Hillel and Josh Loeb**

THOUSANDS of flats and the largest new park created in central London in over 70 years will transform a neglected neighbourhood after planning chiefs approved redevelopment of a notorious council estate.

The Heygate Estate in Elephant and Castle featured in videos for songs including David Guetta's Love Don't Let Me Go and was the backdrop for fantasy film Attack the Block.

Its high-rise concrete walkways, popular in the Seventies when the estate was built, became synonymous with crime. Demolition started in 2011 and will now be stepped up, with the aim of the first home buyers moving in at the end of 2015.

Southwark council approved a £1.5 billion masterplan by developer Lend Lease to build up to 2,500 homes on the 22-acre site, the biggest regeneration scheme within Zone 1. But at a six-hour planning meeting, local protesters claimed there will not be enough affordable homes.

Police were on standby as dozens of activists held placards with slogans including "Elephant and Castle rip-off" and "Gated communities are zoos". Committee chairman Nick Dolezal threatened to hold the meeting behind closed doors unless the protests ceased but continued after security staff removed the placards.

Southwark MP and Lib-Dem deputy leader Simon Hughes was among about 200 people at the meeting, which ended in the early hours yesterday. Mr Hughes said he supported the regeneration of the estate but was against the plans because just 25 per cent of the homes will be affordable.

He added: "The council has a policy that 35 per cent of all housing should be affordable. They are breaking their own rules." He also criticised planners for meeting in a room too small to hold all those who turned up.

Objectors' spokesman Jerry Flynn said: "Over 850 social rented units will be lost, and the so-called afford-



able rents are way beyond what most people who live in Southwark can afford. Southwark has more than 17,000 people on its housing waiting list – but none of them will be living on the new Heygate."

Dan Labbad, chief operating officer of Lend Lease, said the project was a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity..." that will not only transform the Elephant but will be a global example of regeneration and best practice".

Prices have not been revealed but Lend Lease is already offering flats on the site of the former Elephant and Castle Leisure Centre, from £320,000 for a one-bedroom property.

The project was originally supposed to see the famous pink shopping centre, roundabout and link

road demolished to create a civic square and emphasise the area's good public transport connections.

As recently as 2004 the "vision" also included a new arts and cultural facility, performance square, theatre, science museum, library, council offices and secondary school.

However, the breakdown in negotiations with the shopping centre owners resulted in a more piecemeal approach. The northern roundabout, the most dangerous interchange for cyclists in London, will be reconfigured, while the shopping centre will be refurbished and get a new tower.

The Heygate Estate was emptied in 2008 and the tenants were promised new homes. However, all but 15 have been rehoused in older properties.

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## Pub gets another round as stars call

**Maxine Frith**

A CHELSEA pub has been saved from redevelopment into a £20 million home after a huge campaign against its closure.

Local residents including Hugh Grant and former footballer Sol Campbell were among more than 1,000 people who signed a petition against a planning application to turn the Phene Arms into a residence complete with steam room, swimming pool and gym complex.

A government planning inspector yesterday upheld Kensington and Chelsea council's original decision



**Defiant drinker:** actor Hugh Grant added his name to the petition for the Phene Arms

to reject the application by property developer Robert Bourne, whose 26-year-old daughter Lily runs the pub. Publishing its decision, the Planning Inspectorate said closing the Phene – which was footballer George Best's local – would harm

the character of the neighbourhood, which is in a conservation area.

Terence Bendixson, honorary secretary for planning at the Chelsea Society, said: "We are all absolutely thrilled about this decision because I think it draws a

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News

# where's the affordable housing?



**Regeneration:** developer Lend Lease's vision for the Heygate Estate, above, includes up to 2,500 homes and London's biggest new park for 70 years. The scheme was met with protests, left, at a packed-out marathon planning meeting

## time on developer's plans

line in the sand and makes pubs in Kensington and Chelsea very dangerous for developers.

"It is vital that we keep our local pubs and this campaign showed how much support there is for the Phene."

Mr Bourne spent an estimated six-figure sum in legal bills attempting to obtain permission to turn the 163-year-old Phene into a private home. He has also spent millions on refurbishments to the pub since he bought it 10 years ago.

Mr Bourne's first application for a change of use order last March was rejected by the planning committee. He asked for a public inquiry into the

decision, arguing that the pub, built by philanthropist Samuel Phene for local workers in 1850, was not profitable and "serves no recognisable local community function".

But residents blocked the redevelopment using a new policy by Kensington and Chelsea council to protect pubs from closure.

Paul Tallentire, director of pubs at leisure developer Davis Coffer Lyons who helped Mr Bourne buy the Phene, said: "London desperately needs residential space and it's just crazy to have a ban like this."

Mr Bourne could not be contacted for comment.

## CBI WARNS PROPERTY SHORTAGE IS THREAT TO ECONOMY

LONDON'S chronic housing shortage has leaped past unreliable transport as a threat to its growth for the first time.

Senior executives at the capital's biggest companies rated "housing" above "transport" in a poll carried out by the CBI. Housing charities said the

watershed findings showed that the "brain drain" caused by the dearth of affordable homes to buy and rent is now the biggest single obstacle to London's economic success.

Campbell Robb, chief executive of Shelter, said: "This alarming report shows just how wide-reaching the

impacts of the capital's housing crisis have become. Rising rents and house prices mean that for many talented professionals, living in London isn't the attractive prospect it once was.

"We're going to see a growing exodus of employees who'll be able to find a better life elsewhere."

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