

# More than just poor taste...

**I FEEL that some context is needed for readers to decide whether the plans were in poor taste or not ("Turned down", South London Press, January 3).**

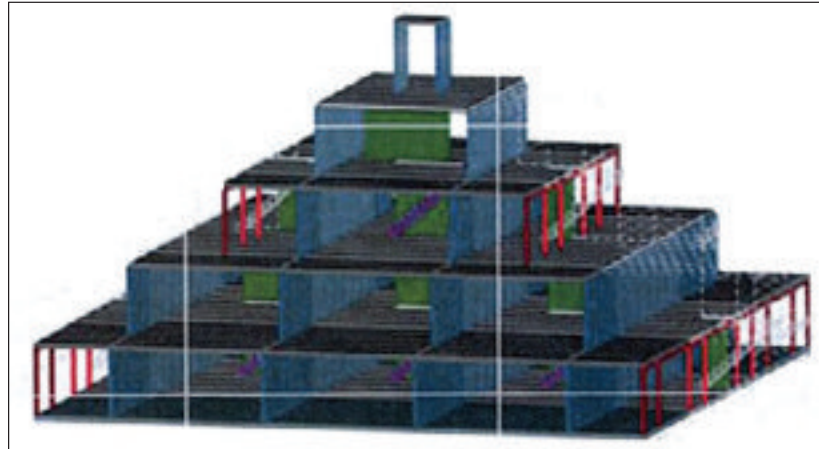
Whilst there is some archive material online at heygatewashome.org, the extent to the appalling way in which we Heygate residents have been treated is not widely known.

Having originally been promised new homes at the Elephant that were never built, we were hurriedly bullied out under the threat of compulsory purchase and bailiff action. Many families were forced into suitable accommodation miles away from their social ties.

My wife and I have been forced to relocate more than 10 miles away from the area where our families have lived for three generations.

A promise was made that residents would be able to return to the new social housing on the site, but recently it emerged that there would be just 79 social rented units in the new development (three per cent of the new homes), and that the last of these wouldn't be completed until 2026.

Former Heygate residents aside, in terms of your question as to what the area needs:



**AXED IDEA:** Artwork proposed at the Heygate by The Artangel Trust, made from emptied maisonettes j3225/C

one should take a look at Southwark council's housing requirements study, which shows that the majority of people in the area need affordable housing – at council rent levels.

To be deconstructing structurally sound council homes in the midst of a housing crisis,

in order to reconstruct a public art branding device for developer Lend Lease is surely poor taste all round?

**Terry Redpath**

**Former resident of Heygate Estate, Elephant & Castle (for 34 years)**

## Creeping privatisation can be a recipe for bad health

**HEALTH** Minister Lord Howe and some MPs are pushing to introduce charges for "health tourists".

Although on the surface this seems like a reasonable idea, we must not ignore the agenda behind it.

For many years now, the Government has been pushing through the privatisation of our NHS.

Private companies, such as Virgin, are buying up slices of this extremely lucrative pie.

It seems their aim is to make our health service resemble the despicable US version – where tens of millions can't afford health insurance. Charging migrants to gain access to health services is the latest step in that direction. Yes, the NHS does lose money in this regard.

Yes, the NHS could be run more

efficiently. However, the main reason for the NHS struggling is because it's underfunded – under the excuse of austerity.

Also, if we allow the privatisation to continue, then we will all suffer in the future, both physically and financially.

In addition, when services are taken out of public ownership, you and I will never again have an effective say in how they are run. My advice for your readers would be for them not to fall for this cheap tactic.

Look at the bigger picture.

If our Government collected all unpaid corporation taxes (around £30 billion a year) and stopped financing our pointless war in Afghanistan, then our beloved NHS, fire stations, and all other public services will be protected.

Colin Crilly, Tooting

## Switching to battery-powered buses should be our priority

**JUST** before Christmas two new battery-powered electric buses started on London's roads and in a few months time two more will start as part of a TIL trial.

This might seem like a dramatic development, but in reality London is falling behind many other cities in the adoption of buses run entirely on electricity. Electric buses create no exhaust pollution so can play a big role in tackling London's dangerous levels of air pollution.

They are quiet so lead to more pleasant roads for people living on bus routes. Electricity is also cheaper than diesel fuel, so in time could lead to cheaper bus fares.

With all these advantages London should be leading the way, but instead we are on catch up with many other cities in the UK and around the world. The Mayor's obsession with the diesel-powered bus has sadly hindered the development of truly new and green buses for London.

The "new bus for London" is expensive



**ELECTRIC DREAMS:** Stephen Knight j3286/C

to buy, expensive to run and is still more polluting than an electric bus. At the start of 2014, let's hope that we start to see a big switch to electric buses across every part of London. **Stephen Knight, Liberal Democrat London Assembly environment spokesman, City Hall**

## WINTER CHECKLIST COULD HELP OLD FOLK SAVE ON FUEL BILLS

**PUBLIC** trust in energy companies has hit an all-time low following obscene gas and electricity price rises. This applies in particular to the elderly and infirm on a fixed income.

It was recently revealed that eight out of 10 people questioned by Which? [consumer campaigner] say they are worried about how they will be able to pay their bills. Inane "advice" from the Government, such as "switch from your present energy supplier" and "put on an extra jumper" do little to improve the situation. But as usual they don't care. In fact, between April 2012 and March 2013, 340 MPs claimed £200,000 for their energy bills on their expenses, while taxpayers were left to struggle.

Following a winter warmer checklist can make your home warmer and less expensive to run.

- Insulate your loft at least 21cm.
- Fit draught excluders on all your doors.
- Brush strips around your letter box will prevent heat escaping.
- Cavity wall insulation

can save you £300 a year. Many companies offer it for free.

● Invest in regular boiler services to make sure it is always running efficiently.

● Keep all internal doors closed to stop heat escaping from your warmer rooms.

● Heavy, thick curtains or blinds will help retain heat in your rooms.

● Reflecting panels behind your radiators will direct heat away from walls and back into the room.

● Turn down your thermostat – just one degree lower can cut 10 per cent off your heating bill.

● Use filler to plug gaps in floorboards or use rugs to cover them.

### Distressing

For the elderly and vulnerable people, the thought of having to go without heat again this winter can be very distressing.

Let's hope some of the above tips will enable homeowners to make simple changes around the house that will keep them warmer for less this winter.

Reg O'Donoghue  
Wooler Street, Walworth

## FOCUSING ON FUTURE OF OUR TOWN'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

**IN THE** next month or so there will be further ways people can take part in helping Peckham's creative industries and the town centre. For more information people can follow

**Peckham Vision on Facebook and Twitter.**  
[www.facebook.com/PeckhamVision](http://www.facebook.com/PeckhamVision)  
[www.twitter.com/PeckhamVision](http://www.twitter.com/PeckhamVision)  
Eileen Conn  
Peckham Vision co-ordinator

## Thanks to all who supported our food bank

**COULD** we please wish your wonderful readers a happy new year.

We also thank: New Cross and Deptford Scouts, who collected food door to door; the Stephen Lawrence Trust; local schools and churches across South London, who turned Christmas fairs into a chance to collect food for us; Waitrose, Armada Community Centre and Housemartins staff and Sebastian Roche estate agents, who allowed offices to be used as food collection points; the Birds Nest Pub that did a rock night where regulars were asked to pay for tickets with food; and the endless local groups who baked cakes and made Christmas puddings to ensure no one in our community was without food this Christmas; the wonderful people who donate clothes, bric-a-brac and furniture to give us the money to keep going; and the awesome People Before Profit members who collect the food at all hours, open and staff the shop six days a week and deliver to our disabled household clients each day – and the huge numbers of people who shop in our shop.

I have never been more proud of serving our community, a community that will not stand by and allow its neighbours to starve and which cares passionately about social justice, and your paper for giving us a voice.

While we are extremely grateful for all this kindness that allowed us to share our food with Crisis and the 999 Club, poverty and hunger does not take a holiday and our work relentlessly goes on six days a week.

We still urgently need to raise the £1,800 to secure charity status, so any lottery winners out there, please help by donating to We Care Food Bank, sort code 08 92 99, account no 65659328

**Ray Woolford**

**Barbara Raymond**

[www.Lewishamfoodbank.com](http://www.Lewishamfoodbank.com)



**WE CARE FOOD BANK:** Volunteers Ray Woolford, Nicola Walters, John Hamilton, Helen Mercer and Barbara Raymond

## Housing crisis must be sorted

**WITH** the news that house prices have risen by an average £37 a day over the last year, that one of Britain's biggest buy-to-let landlords is closing his doors to benefit claimants and that rents are rising twice as fast as earnings despite a third of properties being substandard, it's clear that housing is one of the biggest issues we face in Britain.

In Lewisham, we also have to cope with some of the lowest wages in London while rents spiral. The housing crisis is being largely ignored by the main three parties. The coalition's Help to Buy scheme is increasing prices and mortgages while Labour suggests a national register of landlords but says little about the cost of housing itself. There is a simple solution: build more social housing.

The housing crisis in the rental sector can be traced directly back to the failure to replace homes sold off through the Right to Buy scheme. By replacing these homes now we would create jobs and create homes at affordable rents, both of which would reduce the benefit bill and provide a more secure future for thousands of families.

**Dave Plummer**  
Lewisham Green Party