

The Welsh Streets Public Inquiry

**A report from SAVE Britain's Heritage on the public inquiry held in
June 2014 into an application to demolish 440 houses on
Liverpool's Welsh Streets.**



SAVE
BRITAIN'S HERITAGE

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Thank you to everyone who donated. In particular, as per the benefits offered to those who pledged, those who gave £50 and above are noted here:

Susan Andrew| **Nancy** Arbuckle| The **Bodfach** Trust| **Dorothy** Brown| **Roger** Brown| **Jonathan** Brown| **Luke** Browne| **Timothy** Cantell| **Rebecca** Child| **David** Clarke| **Martin** Colman| **Stephen** Conrad| **Evelyn** and **John** Cook| **Charlotte** Crow| **Helen** Dorey| **Alfred** Ebeling| **John** Feltcher| **Christopher** Foley| **Christopher** Garrand| **Roger** Gow| **James** Hall| **Anthony** Hanson| **Peter** Heald| **George** Hesse| **Peter** Hirschmann| **David** Holberton| **Alison** Homewood| **Laura** Hornak| **Charlotte** Kempin| **Richard** Latto| **Andrea** Le Boutillier| **Oliver** Leigh-Wood| **Jean** Marston| **Craig** McHugh| **Selma** Montford| **Kathleen** Murrell| **David** Osman| **John** Peverley| **Basil** Postan| **Charlie** Radclyffe| **Graham** Reddish| **Donald** Rice| **Pam** Roberts| **Herbert** Robinson| **Martin** Rowley| **Kate** Russell| **Lisa** Shell| **Iain** Smith| **Robin** Stainer| **Phillip** Thwaites| **Richard** Upton| **Ian** Watmore|

Our especial thanks go to SAVE's team at the public inquiry:

Dave Bedford| **Jonathan** Brown| **Gareth** Carr| **Fiona** Deaton| **Alec** Forshaw| **David** Ireland| **Ed** Morton| **Wilf** Jones| **James** Potts| **Trevor** Skempton| **Paul** Sutton|

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Tilly and **Wayne** Hemingway of HemingwayDesign| British Ceramic Tiles| Dulux| Howdens Kitchens| Plumber **Michael** Barrett| **Hot Pots** and **Planters**| local paint and building suppliers **Palace** Chemicals| **Emma** Bridgewater Pottery| And to Project Manager **Lesley** Mullally for making it happen|

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1. ABOUT SAVE

SAVE has been described as the most influential conservation group to have been established since William Morris founded the Society for the Protection Ancient Buildings over a century ago. It was created in 1975 - European Architectural Heritage Year - by a group of journalists, historians, architects, and planners to campaign publicly for endangered historic buildings.

Through press releases, lightning leaflets, reports, books and exhibitions, SAVE has championed the cause of decaying country houses, redundant churches and chapels, disused mills and warehouses, blighted streets and neighbourhoods, cottages and town halls, railway stations, hospitals, military buildings and asylums.

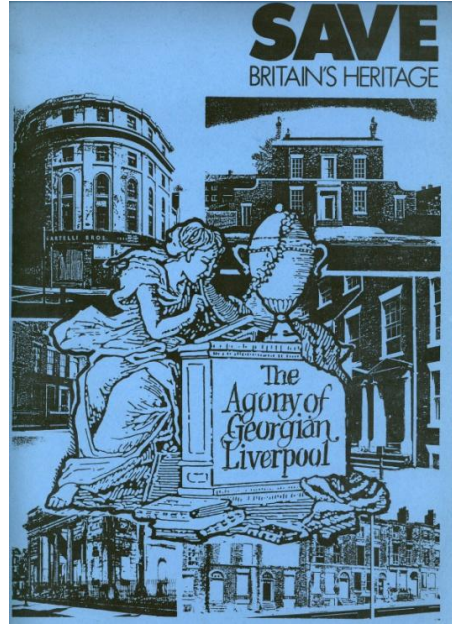
From the start, SAVE has always placed a special emphasis on the possibilities of alternative uses for historic buildings and, in a number of cases, it has prepared its own schemes for re-use of threatened buildings. On repeated occasions SAVE proposals have been instrumental in giving threatened buildings a renewed lease of life. SAVE is also very active on the broader issues of preservation policy.

SAVE and Liverpool

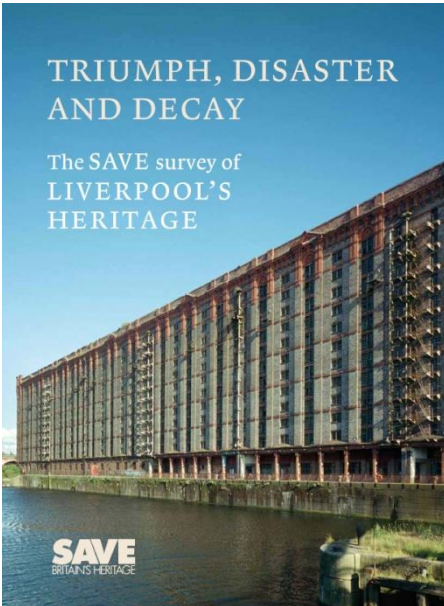
SAVE's campaigns in Liverpool date back to the charity's founding in 1975. It has been instrumental in saving many of Liverpool's most loved buildings. They include Albert Dock, the Georgian Lyceum on Bold Street, St Francis Xavier's Church in Everton, and the Art Deco Littlewoods Pools Building on Edge Lane. Looking back, it is difficult to believe that many of these buildings were once threatened with demolition. Fortunately - and through the tireless efforts of local and national supporters - they have been saved for future generations to enjoy.



St Francis Xavier, Everton



The Agony of Georgian Liverpool (1984)



Triumph, Disaster and Decay (2009)



St Peter & St Paul, New Brighton

2. PATHFINDER

Background

Pathfinder, otherwise known as Housing Market Renewal (HMR), was introduced by John Prescott in 2002. It claimed to address alleged housing market failure in certain parts of some Northern cities, and placed 400,000 terraced houses under direct threat of demolition. The housing targeted has been predominantly Victorian and Edwardian terraced housing. The issue is not one of vacancy or of uninhabitable homes – prior to the announcement of the scheme occupation levels were normal, homes were perfectly habitable and the cost of repairs and updating would have been modest. The claim of market failure was essentially that house prices were lower than elsewhere. Some 30,000 houses have been demolished.

The policy failed to consider the human element - the effect it would have on entire communities that were uprooted and rehoused, often against their will.

There was an illuminating feature Trevor MacDonald in 2005 that can be watched here: <http://vimeo.com/25227502>

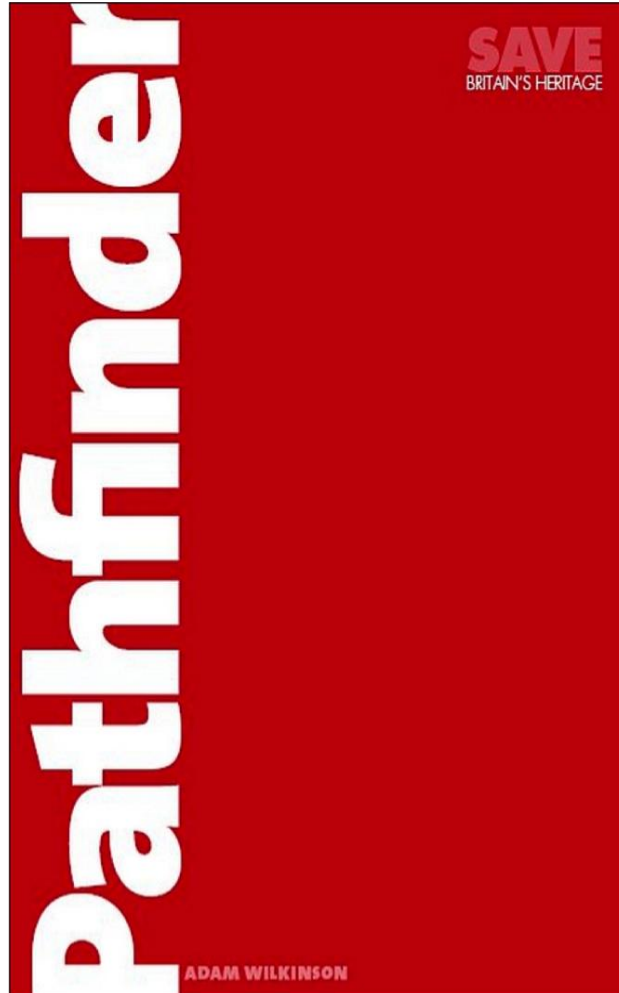
Liverpool-based SAVE Campaigner Jonathan Brown writes:

'Since 2002, £2.2 billion of public money has been squandered to buy-up, board-up and bulldoze tens of thousands of perfectly good terraced houses across England's north and midlands. Thousands of households have been driven out of historic streets under threat of compulsory purchase, and their homes - or rather the land they occupied - 'harvested' to benefit private developers and complicit social landlords. Although a limited number of replacement homes have been built, entire neighbourhoods now lie derelict and blighted.

Like junkies in deep denial, councils proffered social wounds caused by their own addiction to demolition, to beg government funds for more of the same.'

In March 2011 the controversial policy was scrapped by the present government, and resources switched from housing demolition to renovation, following a seven year campaign by SAVE and many local community groups. As a result of these

efforts, public policy is now directed towards the re-use and refurbishment of empty and historic housing, with demolition only as a last resort.



SAVE's 2006 Pathfinder Report was sent to every member of Parliament and helped trigger a critical investigation by the National Audit Office

The Rt Hon Don Foster MP gave the following critique of the HMR programme:

"The obsession with demolition was environmentally, economically, and socially wasteful and these centrally-driven schemes were often resented by local communities and created as many problems as they solved. This top-down

approach has not worked, often resulting in blighted areas where large scale demolition and clearance projects have been stopped in their tracks, leaving some families isolated in abandoned streets.”

HMRI has been unequivocally revoked by the present government, as set out in a written Ministerial Statement by Mr Grant Shapps MP on 24 November 2011:

“The last Government’s housing market renewal pathfinder programme imposed large scale Whitehall targets for demolition and clearance across the midlands and the north of England.

“There was widespread public controversy over an obsession with demolition over refurbishment, the lack of transparency of the pathfinder quangos, large profits by developers, the demolition of our nation’s Victorian heritage and perverse incentives being given to run down neighbourhoods.

“The designation of areas for demolition effectively increased deprivation in those areas; many social landlords prepared the ground by “voiding” and boarding up properties. In turn, this undermined the housing market as mortgage lenders were unwilling to lend in such areas. Areas were effectively managed into decline—to make the notional benefits of wholesale demolition more attractive, ensuring a larger windfall gain for the state.

“Local communities in some of the most deprived areas of the country were told they would see a transformation of their areas, which in reality amounted to bulldozing buildings and knocking down neighbourhoods, pitting neighbour against neighbour and leaving families trapped in abandoned streets. This was wrong.

“As campaigning group Save Britain’s Heritage has remarked:

“From the start, pathfinder showed an appetite for destruction... The classic English terraced house was demonised as “obsolete”. Whole neighbourhoods were declared surplus at the keystroke of a consultant’s laptop. Bureaucratic arrogance reduced communities to inmates of a

“Zoo”— Zone of Opportunity — for house builders. Statisticians assumed compulsory purchase and eviction for demolition were acceptable measures for householders in a property-owning democracy. Quite predictably, the cure turned out worse than the disease’.”



Above: Vienna Street, Anfield, 2007. Demolished 2014.

Condemnation was cross-party. In the Committee of Public Accounts, 35th Report, 2008, Rt. Hon Don Touhig MP, (Labour), said:

‘You have put at risk some of Britain’s housing heritage. You have ignored the views of local people. You have provided a bonanza for property speculators and left the people you are supposed to help unable to buy houses because of rising prices. Did your department deliberately plan a cock-up on this scale, or are you just incompetent?’



The Pathfinder legacy in Venmore Street, Anfield (above) and Tunstall Street, Toxteth/Edgehill (below)





Above: An aerial view of Tunstall Street, L7, showing the scale of Pathfinder clearances.

Post-Pathfinder

Pathfinder funding ceased in March 2011, but killing off a bureaucratic mindset used to government billions has proved problematic. The argument was made that the Pathfinder tap had been turned off prematurely. Nine years was said to be insufficient time over which to judge a 15-year programme. Proponents blamed its failure on the new government's cuts, rather than fundamental flaws in the policy itself. After years of overriding people on the ground whose lives were being wrecked by the scheme, authorities suddenly displayed a conscience - arguing that people left stranded in streets emptied by Pathfinder were reason for continuing clearance.

A Review Team was set up the government and TV presenter and architect George Clarke was appointed as Empty Homes Adviser. The following recommendations came out of the review process that give strong and sound guidance on how to

approach empty homes, with an emphasis on bringing them back into use.

<http://www.emptyhomes.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/George-Clarkes-12-Recommendations.doc>

In November 2011 Housing Minister Grant Shapps unveiled a £70m 'Transition Fund' to help rescue those left behind in Pathfinder's 'ghost streets'. He told Parliament that Pathfinder had been an abject failure, and this new funding would not be used for large-scale demolition.

However, our subsequent scrutiny of the funding applications revealed a different story. The Homes and Communities Agency, the government quango bidding for and distributing the money, had ignored Ministerial statements and embarked on a new phase of housing acquisition and mass demolition. Freedom of Information Act requests show Pathfinder areas requested and received 'transition' funds to demolish another 5,125 homes, and renovate just 113. This did not square with unequivocal government promises to draw the line. Almost half the planned clearance was on Merseyside, where councils want to demolish another 2,369 homes by 2018 (on top of 4,489 already destroyed there under Pathfinder).

Despite the clear change in government policy, Liverpool council now had the money to re-start compulsory purchase and demolition across neighbourhoods in Anfield, Edge Hill and Picton – and of course in Toxteth, the home of the Welsh Streets.

Our lawyers advised that this appeared to be an unlawful use of public funds, and SAVE decided to challenge it. We launched Judicial Review proceedings against the Government early in 2012.

At the High Court in London that September, barrister James Eadie QC, acting for the Government, accepted that former housing minister Mr Shapps had signed off the fund unlawfully, having "not been informed" that it provided for large scale demolition against his own stated policy. But he argued the decision should not be legally quashed, claiming the Secretary of State has no power to claw back funds

from councils, or retrospectively impose conditions on use of the funding.

Nevertheless, following permission for Judicial Review, Secretary of State Eric Pickles conceded and formally quashed the decision. Despite SAVE's best efforts, we were unable to secure any remedy from the Government to rectify this monumental mistake. This is all the more galling because Judge Justice Lang granted permission partly because QC Richard Harwood acting for SAVE, made it clear that remedy was possible. The Government instead arranged some meetings between SAVE and Liverpool Council to discuss possible ways forward for the Welsh Streets. We argued that this was not sufficient remedy for a mistake of this magnitude.

These meetings were inconclusive and Liverpool Council went ahead with their planning application to demolish over 400 houses, refurbishing only 40.

Sixteen of the 40 are on Madryn Street, following a visit from Mr Shapps to the site in summer 2012 when together with Mayor Joe Anderson he made a public pledge:

"Now, in a ground breaking experiment Liverpool City Council have agreed to give the local community the opportunity to take over and refurbish 16 of the properties on the street, and in doing so gauge the demand for such properties in the wider area."

Despite this claim in a government press release, the 16 Madryn Street properties were not in fact handed to the community but remain empty and in the control of the council and Plus Dane. SAVE did not support this approach, labeling it 'tokenistic' in our own press release.



Above: Prime Minister David Cameron and Lord Heseltine visiting the Welsh Streets in 2006

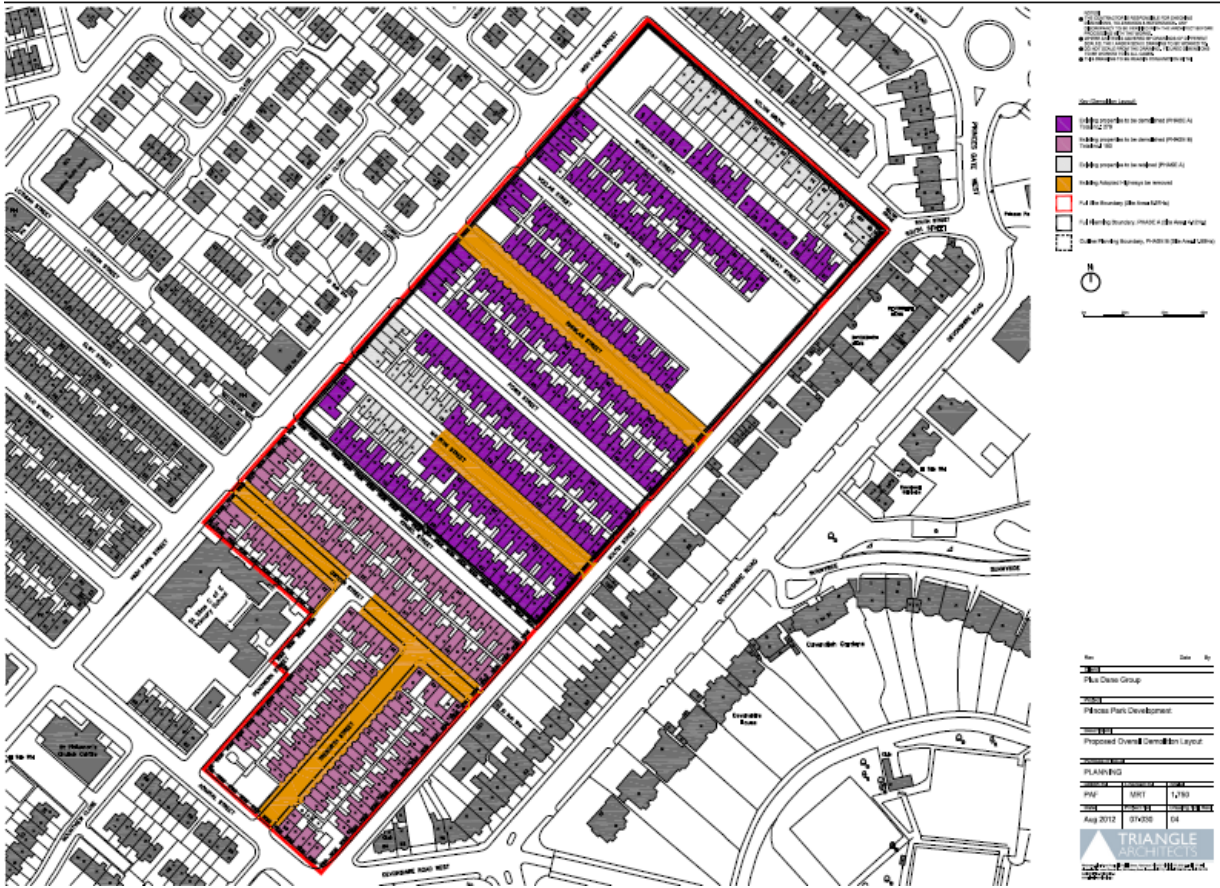
3. THE WELSH STREETS, LIVERPOOL 8

The Site

The Welsh Streets comprise a rectangular area of 8.45 hectares less than a mile from the commercial centre of Liverpool, bounded by Kelvin Grove, South Street, Admiral Street and High Park Street. It consists of a grid-plan of streets built in the 1870s as bye-law housing very close to Princes Park which had been laid out by Paxton in 1840. The estate layout and the terraced houses were designed by the Welsh-born architect Richard Owens and constructed by Welsh builders. They were intended to house Welsh families, among others, seeking work in the growing economy of Liverpool. Most of the streets were given Welsh names. The majority of this housing survives, although there has been some demolition and there are vacant sites in Voelas and Rhiwlas Streets. The area is predominantly residential although there are commercial activities on High Park Street and Admiral Street, including over a dozen small shop units and independent businesses, none of which would be replaced within the area in the council's proposals. Many of the properties in the southern part of the area (Phase B) are still occupied. The majority in Phase A to the north have been vacated, boarded up and allowed to fall into disrepair.



The Welsh Streets from above



Above: A map showing Welsh Street properties scheduled for demolition. Both purple and pink denote demolition. The purple is phase A, and the pink phase B.

The Welsh Streets lie to the south of the City Centre and are only 15 minutes walk from the University campus and from the Anglican cathedral, which is clearly visible from several of the Welsh Streets. The area is well connected by bus routes to the City Centre.

Background

The majority of the Welsh Streets were still inhabited until at least 2007, with high levels of resident satisfaction and low levels of property unfitness. (Our evidence for the inquiry included significant data supporting this, taken from Neighbourhood Renewal Assessments conducted by the Council.)

The 400-or-so homes in the wide tree-lined, Welsh Streets were selected under Pathfinder for demolition, apparently on the basis of the attractive development site they would make when cleared. Sandwiched between two conservation areas, with 27 listed buildings in the immediate vicinity, Joseph Paxton's grade II* listed Princes Park, and the city centre Georgian district, the location is certainly excellent. Site assembly and 'voiding' was made relatively easy, with over half of the property under social landlord control when demolition plans were drawn up in 2002/3.



The north end of Joseph Paxton's GII* listed Princes Park, showing the proximity and intimate relationship of the 1870s Welsh Streets terraces to the listed villas of the conservation area round the park.



Above: The Welsh Streets, with the Cathedral in the background, showing the close proximity of the site to the city centre and huge potential for regeneration.

When finally consulted in 2005, Madryn Street residents voted 33-1 against demolition. Unfortunately their wishes were ignored. The Council's preferred developer, Housing Association Plus Dane (under Chief Executive Ken Perry and Chair Cllr Richard Kemp, who had resigned as Council Executive Member for Housing) obligingly helped empty out tenants and board up properties, putting pressure on owners to sell or face the Compulsory Purchase Order powers Liverpool city council resolved to use the same year.

In a clever accounting move, homes acquired with some £20m of public funds were written down in value by 20% each year, meaning the site is now officially valued at only £1m. This excessive write-down allows the site to be transferred the council's preferred development partners (in this case Housing Association Plus Dane) for a nominal sum, while still staying within the council's legal obligations to obtain fair market value.

SAVE's Freedom of Information requests have revealed the absurdity of such financial trickery, with the birthplace of Beatle Ringo Starr now officially valued at less than £600, and a four storey townhouse on Kelvin Grove, bought as recently as 2011 for £110,000 now formally valued at just £1,100..

Responding to SAVE's lawyers, Secretary of State Eric Pickles stalled Liverpool council's bid to demolish the area in 2011, by ordering it to undertake a full Environmental Impact Assessment.

Meanwhile, also in 2011, SAVE purchased 21 Madryn Street, a few doors from Ringo Starr's birthplace at Number 9, and helped a local couple bring it back into happy occupation for an initial £3,000.

SAVE bought 21 Madryn Street to prove demand and to show just how easily and cheaply these homes can be reoccupied, preventing devaluation.

In addition, SAVE wants 21 Madryn Street to act as a seed from which further investment in the Welsh Streets and inner-city Liverpool can grow, by demonstrating the desirability and value for money of 'retro-fit' refurbishments.



Above: 21 Madryn Street, with property Guardian Chris and SAVE's northern caseworker Jonathan Brown



Above: Voelas Street in 2004

4. The Present Inquiry

In July 2013, Liverpool Council gave approval to a planning application from preferred developer Housing Association Plus Dane, to demolish 440 houses, including the so called 'Phase B' area, which is still largely inhabited, and which has benefited from some renovation over the last few years. The application would result in a net loss of 210 houses and a 45% reduction in density.

The refurbishment of 16 houses on Madryn Street, which includes Ringo Starr's house, and 24 other houses, was tied in with the permission to demolish the rest of the site. This made it difficult for those living in the houses that were going to be saved and refurbished to object to the planning permission, including local group the Welsh Streets Home Group - a vital and powerful force for the campaign over the last 10 years. Instead they called for improvements to the proposed new designs and presented innovative solutions.

SAVE objected to the planning application and called for a public inquiry. This was granted by the Secretary of State in September 2013 and was held at the end of June 2014 over 3 weeks in the Cunard Building, Liverpool. Our objection letter was supported by a petition of over 1,000 signatures. The inquiry also considered a Compulsory Purchase Order of 21 Madryn Street.

The Proposals

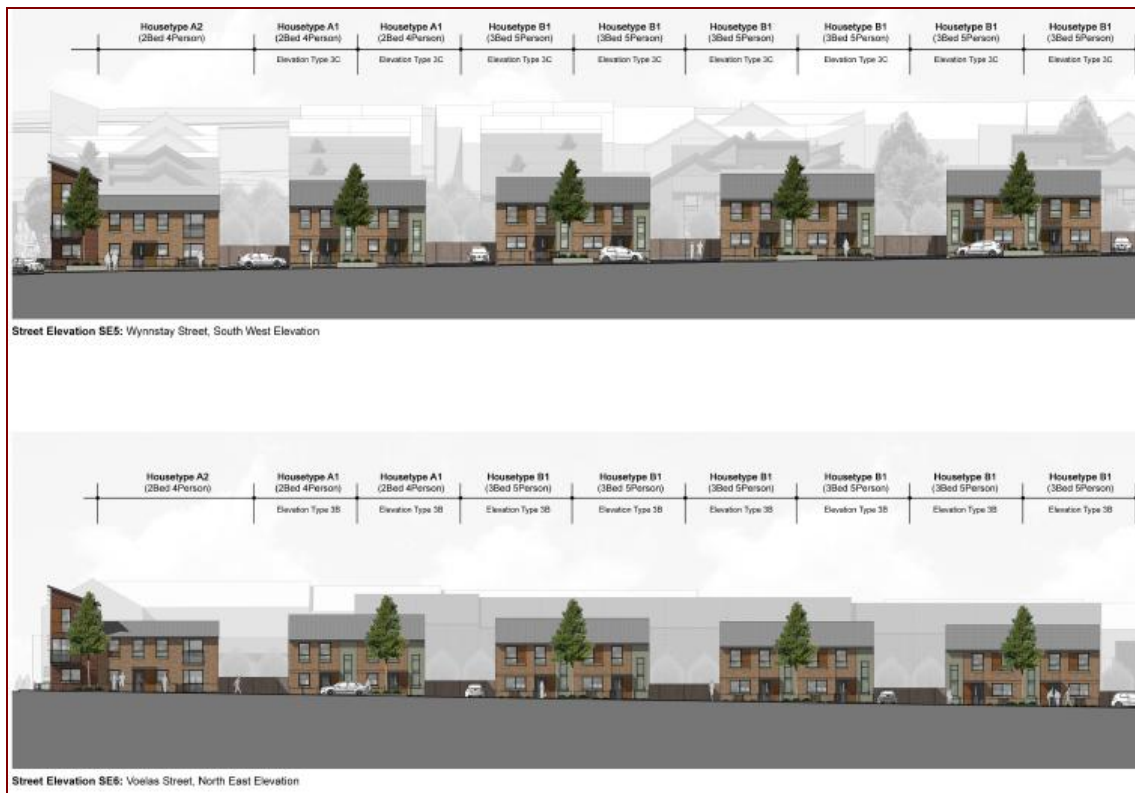
The proposed development would involve the demolition of nearly all the properties within the area. Four hundred and forty properties would be demolished and 40 retained; 16 on Madryn Street, 18 on Kelvin Grove and 6 on High Park Street. For part of the area, Phase A, there are detailed proposals for new residential development, mainly semi-detached or short terraces of two-storey houses, partly using the existing street plan but also removing Rhiwlas Street and inserting a new wide 'green street' cutting across the existing layout from Voelas Street to Kinmel Street. For the other part of the area, Phase B, between Kinmel Street and Admiral

Street, comprehensive demolition is proposed and there are outline proposals for 70 new residential units, removing Gwydir Street and Treborth Street from the street plan.



Above: The proposals showing the new build houses and fractured streetscape

Below: The proposed housing on Wynnstay Street and Voelas Street



The Inquiry

SAVE was a Rule 6 Party in the inquiry, led by James Potts of 39 Essex Street, acknowledged to be one of the top planning Barristers under the age of 35 by Planning Magazine earlier this year. The grounds for the inquiry, as outlined by the Secretary of State and expanded by the Inspector Christine Thornby were as follows:

- 1) good design
- 2) conserving and enhancing the historic environment
- 3) empty homes
- 4) other matters including whether the scheme creates a healthy inclusive community, challenge of climate change, wider planning framework for both matters
- 5) planning balance i.e. whether this is consistent with national and local policy

The Team and summary of our case

SAVE had a great team including forming planning and design officer Alec Forshaw, architect Trevor Skempton, former Director of Empty Homes charity David Ireland, structural engineer Ed Morton, local Beatles historian Dave Bedford, estate agent Paul Sutton, and architectural historian Gareth Carr. We also had support from the National Trust, Professor of Architecture at Liverpool University Dr Neil Jackson, and local Beatles historian Phil Coppell. Fiona Deaton of Maisna Heritage put together an illuminating Heritage Statement about the architectural and cultural significance of the area. This included new evidence about the architect of the buildings, Richard Owens, the subject of a recent PhD thesis by our witness Gareth Carr. Thanks to his research it was established that the houses were 20 years older than was originally thought and were part of a larger estate by Owens, one of

several he laid out for Liverpool at this time of great expansion for the city. Carr believed that the Welsh Streets and Owen are pivotal to the understanding and the development of the terraced house nationally and even internationally, not just in Liverpool. Owens is the architect of 200 Methodist chapels in Wales: both Carr and Trevor Skempton underlined the significance the Welsh Streets have for Welsh culture in Liverpool.

The Heritage Statement also included information about the importance of the street as a whole for the understanding of Ringo Starr. Not only was he born here and lived the first five years of his life here, his best friend lived opposite, whose mother taught him to read, his aunt lived at No.21 and his grandparents lived at the end of the street. Ringo Starr later moved to Admiral Grove across the street, before finally moving to London on hitting fame. Of all the Beatles' stories, Ringo's is the most rags-to-riches. SAVE holds that not only is this culturally important, but it also is extremely significant from the point of view of Beatles tourism, which is a huge earner for Liverpool. It is astounding that Liverpool Council should think of killing the goose that lays the golden egg in this manner, when the site is visited by thousands of people every year and has huge potential to be a much-needed driver for the regeneration of the wider area.

Trevor Skempton persuasively argued that the proposed designs for the replacement 153 houses are of poor quality, detracting from the adjoining Prince's Park Conservation Area. In addition it reduces the density to a suburban level, which is not appropriate in a large metropolis like Liverpool where the population is on the rise again after a long period of decline.

Our planning case was particularly strong seeing as demolition on this scale is in direct and blatant contravention of national planning policy. Staggeringly, witness for Liverpool Council Mark Kitts argued that Pathfinder was a success, despite its total condemnation by the government, independent auditors and politicians of all parties as a failure, and by thousands of residents affected by it in several northern cities over the last 10 years.



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From Maisna Heritage’s Heritage Statement for SAVE showing the properties in the Welsh Streets and the immediate vicinity that were part of Ringo Starr’s life and upbringing

Our planning witness Alec Forshaw made the important point that there are empty sites within the Welsh Streets that could be built on, and also local empty sites, some cleared under Pathfinder but left vacant. These would provide enough space for houses with gardens. In addition, the two-bed houses offered by the Welsh Streets are ideal accommodation for young families and those living alone, especially in the light of the lack of such small properties in Liverpool and the new ‘bedroom tax.’

Part of the site, referred to as Phase B, is still mostly inhabited and permission here is sought for demolition and outline planning only. Of this area Forshaw said in his evidence: “The degradation of the area, coupled with the lack of maintenance and repairs, all over a long period of time, have persuaded some residents to believe that the offer of a new house is the only alternative, and that demolition accordingly has to take place. However, some residents would rather remain in a refurbished

property, and even those who might want to move can appreciate that the existing houses could provide good accommodation for others. Some existing residents have strong roots in the area and want to stay. Total redevelopment will involve more upheaval and erode the social cohesion and sense of community that survives.”

It transpired in the first days of the inquiry that the residents of Phase B would not in fact be given new houses on the demolished site, but would be rehoused elsewhere, apparently contrary to what they had been led to believe by the council.

Forshaw made the point that a policy of ‘managed decline’ in the streets, has resulted in deliberate neglect. This means that the condition of the houses should not be taken into consideration when considering the application.

This was supported by surveys carried out by structural engineer Ed Morton on a sample of 19 properties on the site, with detailed assessments of five. Permission was not given for access to houses in Phase B, which we found puzzling. Ed Morton working with Wilf Jones Quantity Surveyor of the John Pidgeon Partnership, established that the worst case scenario for the refurbishment of the houses in the poorest condition would be in the region of £66,500. Local estate agent Paul Sutton confirmed that if demolition status was lifted he would be able to sell the houses for £80-85,000, indicating a clear potential for profit. `

In the light of this Urban Space Management founding director Eric Reynolds wrote to the Planning Inspectorate before the inquiry opened, proposing a regeneration model for the area, that he would be able to implement, with the aim of bringing the houses back into use. Indeed, it also transpired during the course of the Inquiry that other developers had approached local group the Welsh Streets Home Group as recently as March this year, expressing interest in bringing the Welsh Streets back into use. Like all previous offers, they were met with a wall of silence at Liverpool Council.



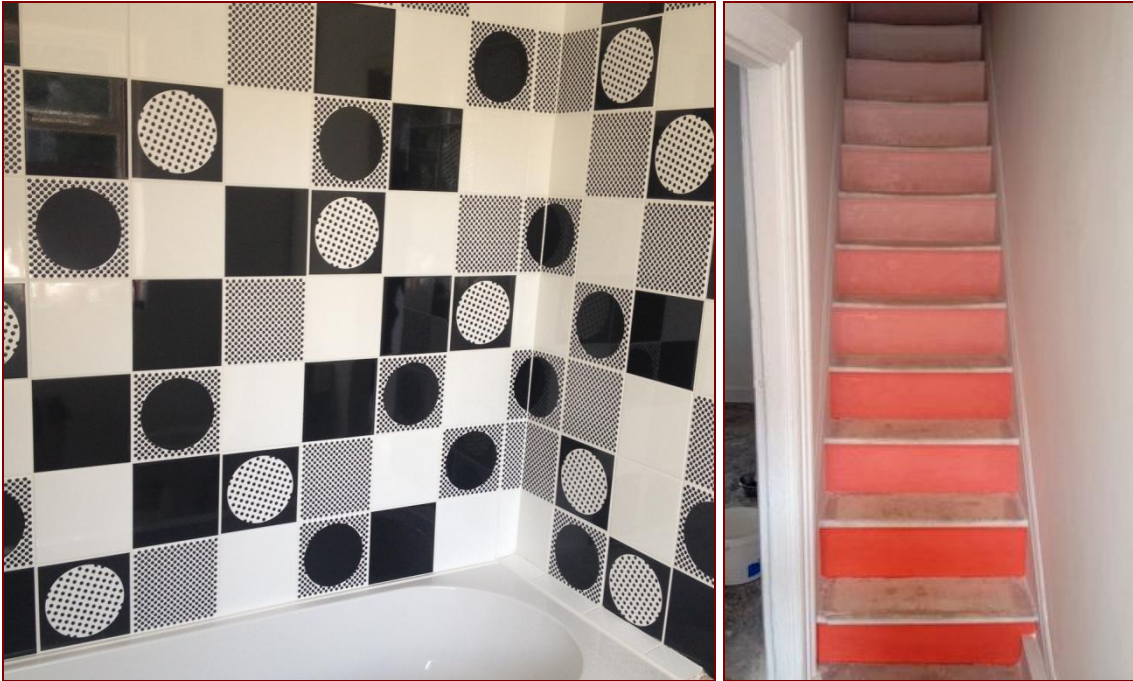
Thousands of tourists visit Ringo's birthplace at 9 Madryn Street every year – such as this coach load of Spanish young people we met in 2014 (Pic © SharetheCity.org)

21 Madryn Street – The Re-vamp!

In preparation for the Public Inquiry, SAVE undertook to redecorate our property, the former home of Ringo Starr's aunt, and performed our very own 'Changing Rooms'. Wayne and Tilly Hemingway of HemingwayDesign undertook a redesign and encouraged many of their suppliers to provide us with free product.

SAVE's Project Manager Lesley Mullally did a sterling job of getting the house finished in time for the Inspector's visit. Thanks to the team we received free product from British Ceramic Tiles who donated beautiful HemingwayDesign tiles for the bathroom and elegant white tiles for the kitchen; Dulux kindly donated some paint for our cheerful bright orange new door; Howdens Kitchens generously

donated a new kitchen; plumber Michael Barrett gave us discounted prices; local paint and building suppliers Palace Chemicals donated paint; Hot Pots and Planters gave a planter for flowers outside the door; HemingwayDesign kindly gave of their time and expertise, and also donated some art, while Emma Bridgewater pottery provided a cheerful tea set for the kitchen.



Above: HemingwayDesign Tiles in the bathroom, and the fiery painted staircase

Many thanks to everyone involved. This major bit of work illustrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that with only a little investment it is possible to give these terraced houses a real uplift. And thanks to residents Chris and Leah for their patience, and to their trusty dog Lilo and cat Loki - an essential part of the household as they catch the vermin so rife in the largely empty streets!



Above: Emma Bridgewater making use of the tea set she kindly provided for the house



Above: Before and after shots of the front of 21 Madryn Street

5. Quotes from Evidence

For a flavour of the inquiry, below we lay out the central arguments for our case, starting with a quote from our opening statement.

From the Opening Statement of Barrister James Potts of 39 Essex Street:

“The Council has criticised the Secretary of State for calling-in Plus Dane’s planning application, and SAVE for campaigning for greater refurbishment rather than demolition, and it has been said that they have delayed regeneration. Far from delaying progress, it appears the public inquiry has effectively brought matters to a head: only in the last couple of months (despite demolition of the Welsh Streets having been proposed for a decade) have the Council and Plus Dane set out a funding scheme for the proposals, proposed a tenure mix, obtained a detailed site valuation, and signed Heads of Terms.”

From Architectural Historian Gareth Carr’s evidence:

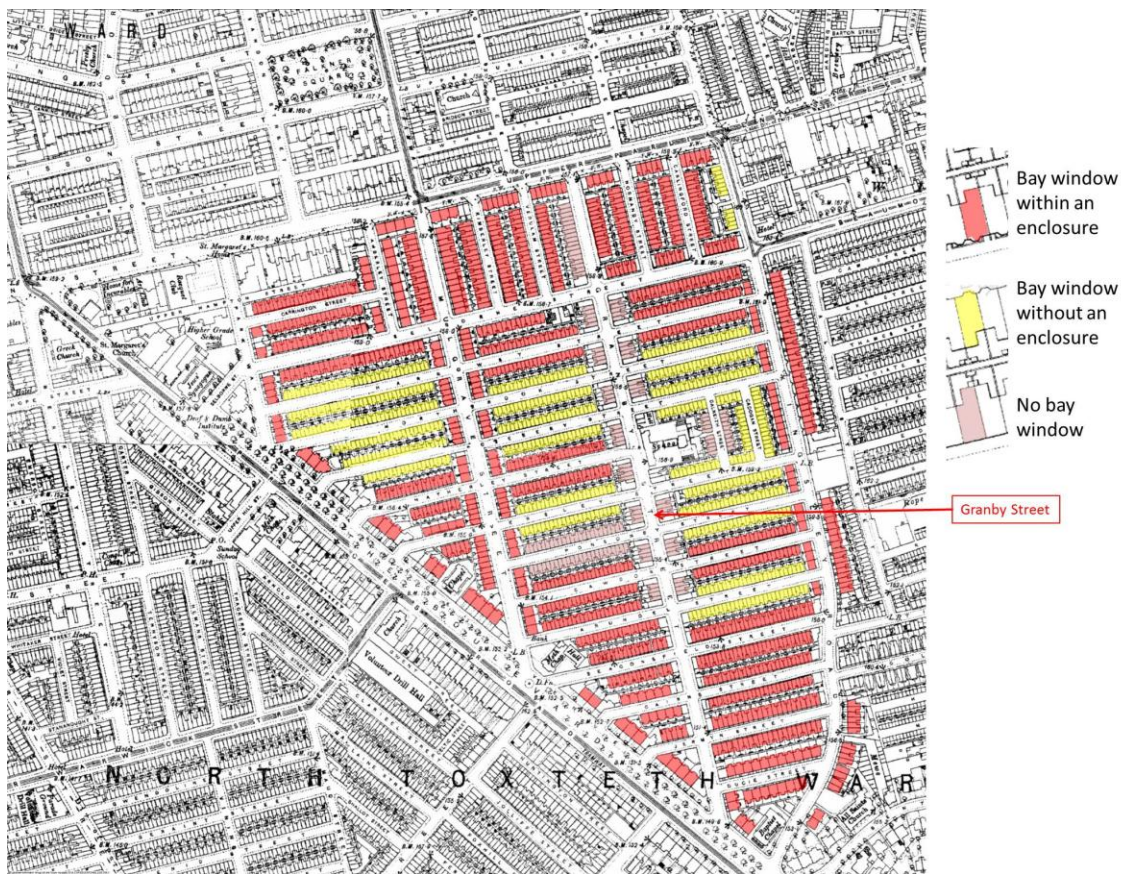
“In terms of the demographics of cultural ethnicities within Victorian Liverpool, the ‘Welsh Streets’ are amongst the last reminders of a once thriving Welsh community, self-sufficient in the acquisition of land, the provision of labour, the importation of construction materials and the entire means with which to accommodate its own growth.

“The ‘Welsh Streets’ should be considered in the wider context of the four estates developed by Richard Owens for D Roberts, Son and Company so that their significance in the history of town planning in Liverpool becomes clear. The ‘Welsh Streets’ were an integral part of an extensive and sophisticated private sector intervention in the fields of Toxteth Park, the scale and careful orchestration of which were unprecedented in the development of the City.



“Although Richard Owens is now almost forgotten, over a period of approximately thirty years between 1863 and 1891, he was responsible for planning the development of more than 325 acres of land for speculative housing in the suburbs of Liverpool, and was to become almost a millionaire by today’s standards in the process... The extent of development shown corroborates the statement published by the Liverpool Daily Post on 29th December 1891 which described the funeral of

Richard Owens and recorded that he, “...is said to have laid out more land in the vicinity of Liverpool than any other architect of [that] period.”

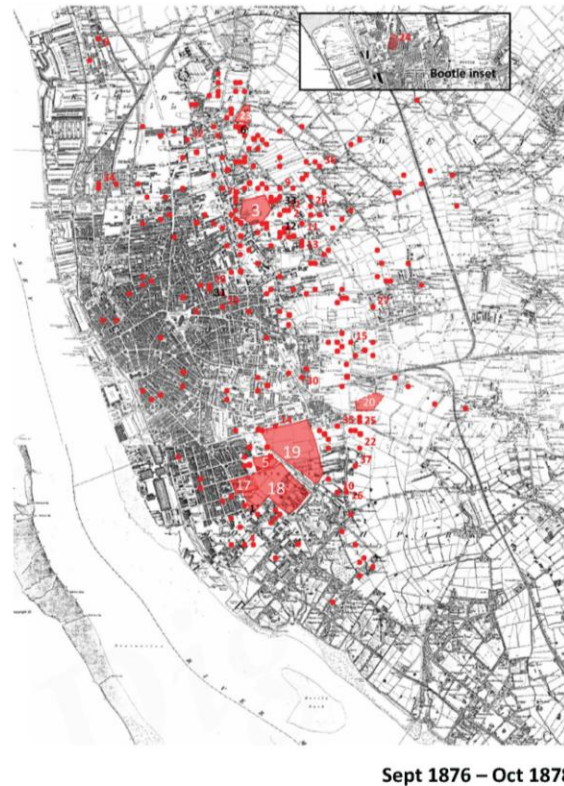


“The ‘Welsh Streets’ are of particular significance to the historic development of Liverpool, and that their loss would diminish further an already much-depleted but important physical environment, bequeathed us from the Victorian period.

“In respect of the demolition that has already taken place in the vicinity of the ‘Welsh Streets’, to fail to appreciate the former physical context which once surrounded the houses that remain, is to underestimate their historical significance.

“The ‘Welsh Streets’ should be considered in the context of the entire estates within which they were constructed, and not in isolation. The simple architectural differences between the streets which still exist are amongst the last reminders of the subtleties with which differing environmental contexts were accommodated,

during a period when the application of planning theory in the development of mass housing on such a scale was still in its infancy.



The geographical distribution within Liverpool of housing projects undertaken by Richard Owens

“That Richard Owens was able to establish such an important architectural practice in Liverpool, and to undertake the design of such extensive speculative housing developments, was due to the cohesive and industrious characteristics of the Welsh ex-patriot community within the City. Throughout the period of the career of Richard Owens, the ‘Liverpool Welsh’ found the means to purchase land, to set-out streets, to construct houses, to live in them and to worship in the many non-conformist Welsh chapels which were established within the City, numerous examples of which were constructed to the designs of Richard Owens himself.

“The ‘Welsh Streets’ should be spared in order to protect what little survives of the legacy of the Welsh contribution to Liverpool in terms of its history, culture and diversity and as being amongst the last surviving examples of the work of one Liverpool’s most prolific, and important architects.”



Architect of the Welsh Streets, Richard Owens

From Dave Bedford’s evidence on the importance of Madryn Street for Beatles tourism in Liverpool:

“Jerry Goldman, managing director of The Beatles Story, says that "close to 500,000 people each year visit Liverpool with Beatles as the main driver". He also notes an increase in Beatles tourists from China and Brazil which appear to be important new markets for Beatles tourism.

“Pam Wilsher, Head of Visitor Economy Development at the Liverpool City Region

LEP says: “The Beatles remain hugely important in attracting visitors to Liverpool, especially those who come from overseas. Visit Liverpool, the Tourist Board for Liverpool City Region which this year is promoting the Beatles’ 50th anniversary, estimates that the total spend per year by visitors drawn by the Beatles is almost £400m. More than 3 million visitors a year cite the Beatles as one of their reasons to visit Liverpool. Fifty years on, the band’s legacy, and the city that shaped them, retains an enduring appeal to visitors from all over the world.

“You can go anywhere in the world, and when you say you are from Liverpool, people will say “The Beatles”. This city depends on tourism as one of the key components in our economy.

“You can stand in Madryn Street any day and you will see numerous private Beatles tours visiting Ringo’s birthplace every hour. You will soon see how important this house is! Some visit Admiral Grove for interest, but every tour visits 9, Madryn Street as it is so important to the story, being Ringo Starr’s birthplace. It is therefore considered of more importance than 10, Admiral Grove, hence why all of the Beatles tours come to Madryn Street.

“With this background, deciding to damage that business by demolishing most of Madryn Street even while saving No.9 and only 15 other houses around it, would be seriously short-sighted. In 1973 when they demolished The Cavern they could be forgiven for not having the foresight to preserve the most famous club in the world. However, we have the information at our fingertips now, and surely we would not be forgiven for taking such liberties with this site! Below I expand on why the street as a whole to understanding Ringo’s background and not just No.9.

“Richard Starkey - known as Richy and later as Ringo Starr - was born at 9, Madryn Street on 7th July 1940, to Elsie and Richard Starkey. At the age of three, his parents divorced and his father moved out of the house, having very little contact with him initially and after that, no contact. His father, Richard Snr, moved back to 59, Madryn Street, the home of his parents. Elsie and Richy lived at 9, Madryn Street, until 1945.



Above: Ringo Starr

“I welcomed the news in 2012 that No.9 Madryn Street was not intended for demolition, as we see in this planning application it will be refurbished along with 15 others on the street. However it is not just about saving Ringo’s house, it is about saving the environment where he was born and grew up. These houses were built as entire streets and the community lived in them as such – his grandparents lived at the other end. For a visitor, it is a much more immersive and interesting historic experience to see the street in its entirety as it was. This is the case with the terraced street where George Harrison lived and it is evocative of that time.

“I would love to see 9, Madryn Street restored as it would have been for the Starkeys in the 1940s, so that visitors can really appreciate Liverpool, and Ringo Starr. I also believe that there would be wider interest for educational purposes, because these days people are increasingly interested in social history, which it is taught in schools. Schools could visit the property and study working-class living in Liverpool

in the 1940s-1960s in the house.

“It is also vital to show the street as a whole, not just for the sites of his relatives, but, as many fans want to, they need to walk the street and immerse themselves in Ringo’s childhood. If they just wanted to see a picture of the house, they can buy a book or hit Google! They need context, and to walk from High Park Street, down Madryn Street to the bottom, tells a story of working class Liverpool. The visiting fans love that walk and to see the street as a whole, where a young Ringo would have played. We also show them neighbouring streets too.

“With the thousands of Beatles fans visiting Liverpool every year, the potential income for Madryn Street and the immediate area is substantial. As reported recently, The Beatles Story had over 250,000 visitors in 2013 alone!”

From Local Estate Agent, Paul Sutton’s evidence:

“We should point out that the prospect of clearance and redevelopment has created uncertainty and instability in the market for such properties in this area which has lasted several years. Therefore an acceptable sales demand will only be achieved if there is a settled plan for the area as a whole thus removing the problem of blight.

“We are confident that there would be a steady demand from purchasers for renovated older housing stock in this location provided a settled and accepted plan for the future of the area can be adopted and approved.

“We believe there would be a ready sales market for a selection of older terraced housing in the redevelopment area if such retained housing were fully renovated and improved to a good overall standard. Such property would provide a contrast with newer housing schemes being planned and in our view would help retain the character of the area and provide a valuable historic link for the community.

“If properly executed we believe the mix of old and new housing stock would work well providing the redevelopment scheme was sufficiently comprehensive in terms

of infrastructure improvements and provided also they are sympathetic and would enhance both types of property.”



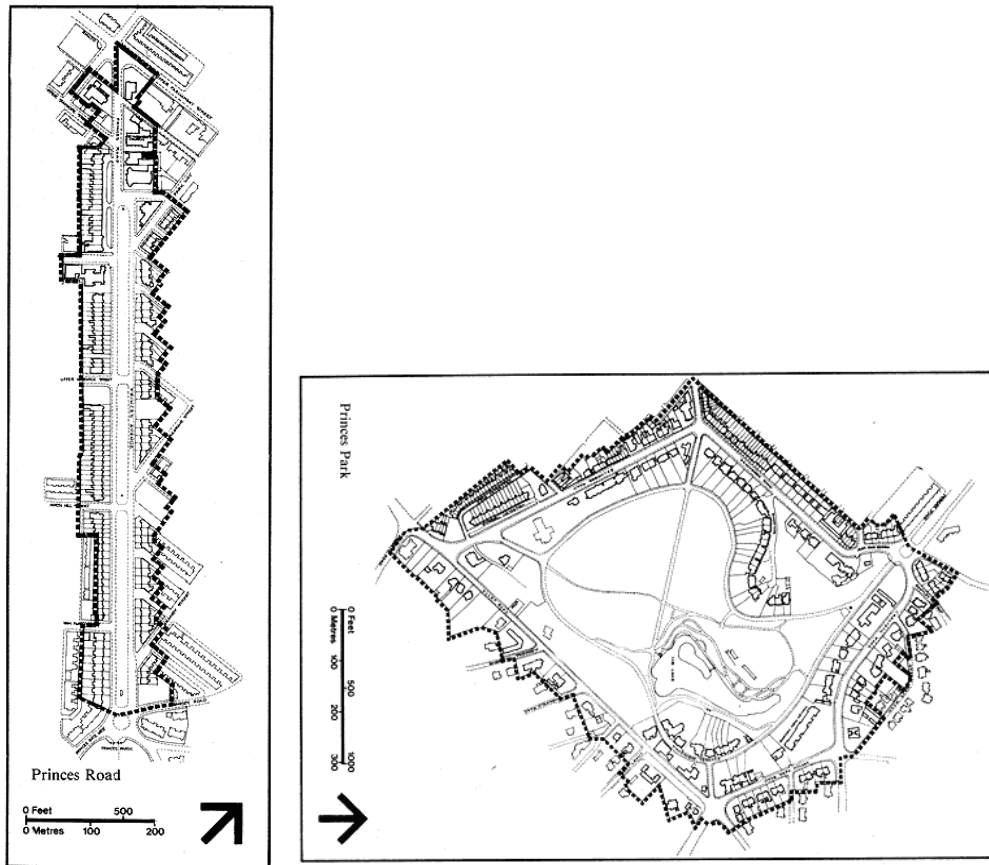
Tinned up houses and shops on High Park Street, The Welsh Streets

Extracts from the evidence of Architect Trevor Skempton:

“The 'Welsh Streets' form an integral part of the composition of Princes Park and Princes Avenue. Unfortunately, only the grander houses were included within the designated Conservation Areas. The rationale of the urban park was that it had a symbiotic relationship with the high-density communities surrounding it, such as the 'Welsh Streets'. This relationship is being damaged elsewhere by demolition coupled with replacement by lower-density suburban development. I see this as symptomatic of a ‘managed decline’, which should be resisted. The 'Welsh Streets' is an important test case.

“Liverpool's surviving legacy of Georgian and Victorian housing is of significant quality, both in the durability of its basic structure and materials, and the historic

value and effectiveness of its layouts and street patterns. Many of the terraces were built and designed by Welsh builders and architects, the 'Welsh Streets' being designed by Richard Owens. These terraces have outlived many more recent housing developments, including tenements, terraces and towers. The Victorian houses and streets have an inherent adaptability that could support gradual organic change and retention of density, rather than clearance. Consideration should be given to including the Welsh Streets in one of the adjoining Conservation Areas.



The Conservation Area boundaries are tightly drawn around the grander buildings facing Princes Avenue [left] and Princes Park [right], thus excluding the terraced streets and not addressing the vital relationship between park and people.

“With the re-establishment of the historic density would come the need for, and opportunity to provide, new local social and communal facilities. We ought to re-discover methods of healthy, organic and sustainable local urban development

specific to inner city Liverpool. The 'Welsh Streets' is not the only area where it's all gone horribly wrong, but it would be a very good place to make the decisions that would set us back on the right course.



Much of Liverpool's fine Georgian housing has been demolished, but many streets have survived and are cherished [left]. These larger buildings used the same design and construction principles as the smaller terraces, such as Madryn Street [right].

"I argue that despite the fact that much of the community has already been dispersed, the streets should be restored and retained. The historic density and character should be re-established, allowing for the possibility of gradual organic long-term change (ideally, they should be incorporated into the adjoining Conservation Areas). The street pattern, street names and characteristic townscape should be preserved. They are an important part of the context of Princes Park, and of the collective memory of many in Liverpool and North Wales.

"I will suggest that the introduction of new suburban development to the inner city is symptomatic of an overall 'managed decline', which should be resisted. The historic phenomenon of managed decline is still inherent in these proposals, which will leave the area as a low-density, suburban, isolationist residential backwater, inappropriate in this location, lacking a sense of place, rather than a vibrant area (as it once was) related to both the city centre and Princes Park. The design of the proposed new build is poor. I will demonstrate the potential of the Welsh Streets to

be restored through good design to a thriving urban community, with particular reference to the examples of Saltaire, in Bradford, and of Hindpool, in Barrow-in-Furness.

“My particular interest in the Welsh Streets dates from my time as an architectural student in Liverpool. I lived in a flat near the Princes Park Gates and have re-visited the area regularly over the years. I live and work in North Wales and am well aware of the historic relationship between Liverpool and Wales. The city’s terraced housing in general, with the ‘Welsh Streets’ as a good example, is one of its most prominent manifestations.”

The ‘Welsh Streets’, the Parks and The Boulevard:

“The ring of parks around the centre of Liverpool – Princes, Sefton, Newsham and Stanley, as well as Birkenhead - were created in a symbiotic relationship with surrounding development. Large villas, terraces and crescents overlook the parks and helped in their financing.

“Behind these, local communities were housed in high-density terraced housing, sufficiently close for the inhabitants to benefit from the parkland, in terms of their health and recreation. The close relationship between the ‘Welsh Streets’ and Princes Park, and also the boulevard of Princes Avenue, is an example of this. Easy access to the park is via each end of South Street, through the main gates or across Devonshire Road. Princes Avenue (the Boulevard) is underused - an inevitable consequence of the decay, clearance and suburbanisation that has occurred since I lived in the area in the 1960s. I believe that this process could and should be reversed by consolidation of the diverse communities and restoration of densities. Both the Avenue and Princes Park are in Conservation Areas.



Road between the Welsh Streets and the back of Devonshire Road that faces Princes Park. The view from the windows of these listed buildings are of the Welsh Streets.

“Terraced houses and other ‘joined-up buildings’ are the essential building blocks of any historic city or town, not just because of their inherent efficiency in terms of land-use, but also because of their enclosure and definition of public space. These ‘joined-up buildings’ sometimes take the form of apartment blocks, in cities such as Glasgow and Edinburgh, but the main surviving Liverpool model is the terraced house. Thus streets, squares and parks are formed as part of the fabric of the city and defined by the frontages of buildings. In suburban development, the enclosure and definition of the public realm is much weaker; the focus is on the private plot rather than the collective street.

“The individual terraced house forms part of a grander composition. This is sometimes given an explicit form, such as when a Georgian terrace is given a central pediment so that the individual houses become part of a palace-type façade. Extra

expression is often given to the ends of terraced streets, to signify the presence of communal facilities or corner shops. The composition of the street, as a whole, is thus greater than the mere sum of the individual houses within it. This communal expression also supports the placing of elements of extra quality within the public space, such as stone paving and street trees (as in the 'Welsh Streets'). Conversely, the suburban model tends towards a minimal specification for public areas (outside the private plots), with areas of 'left-over' land, often associated with highways.

"In order to maintain an acceptable balance between community and privacy, a number of conventions have been developed in traditional streets. Windows tend to be vertically-proportioned, thus maximising the capture of light whilst minimising the view inwards from passers-by. The ground floor is generally raised above street level. There is usually a markedly greater degree of privacy in the front rooms of houses in a traditional terraced street than in the front rooms of modern houses in suburban avenues. Bay windows were introduced in some Victorian terraced housing (including some in the 'Welsh Streets'), capturing extra light and views up and down the street, without compromising privacy.

"The use of 'outriggers' at the rear decreases intrusive overlooking of the backyard, whilst allowing light into the centre of the home. This is a common and adaptable pattern, typically with two living rooms, a kitchen and scullery at ground level and two or three bedrooms above. An internal bathroom would be added, either beyond or above the kitchen. One of the additional objectives of some modern, well-designed terraced housing is the creation of private outdoor spaces at the back that are not overlooked by the neighbours.



Madryn Steet

“Terraced housing, with shared party walls, is inherently efficient (in comparison with semi-detached and detached housing) in terms of the cost of building and repairs, the cost of the provision of services and the use of energy. This efficiency is increased further, when considering the viability of a wide range of local facilities (shops, churches, schools, transport, parks, etc.) at the higher densities of traditional terraced housing.”

'Managed Decline' and the Promotion of Suburbia

“Whatever the rights and wrongs of the historic clearance programmes in Liverpool, they developed a local momentum that went far beyond the early specific objectives. Large areas of terraced housing and tenement blocks were demolished for political/policy reasons, not because the buildings themselves were deficient. I remember, when I was a student, a concerted (and fortunately successful) campaign had to be waged to save the superb Georgian housing of Liverpool 8, around

Faulkner Square. Then, some forty years later, I was told by the City Council's Planning Manager: "There's nothing wrong with terraces, Trevor, it's just that we have far too many of them." Then again, when the demolition of the 'Welsh Streets' was first proposed, I discussed it with the Chief Executive of one of the large Social Landlords involved; she focussed entirely on the area's social problems and perceptions of a dysfunctional community, rather than on the nature of the buildings or the tree-lined streets themselves.

“Back in the cleared inner-city, some people were 're-housed' in new cheap and poorly-managed council housing and tower blocks, much of which has been subsequently cleared in turn (with half of the 70-year loans raised to build them being written off!). The prophecy that they would be 'slums of the future' came to pass even sooner than feared. Another panacea was sought, in the form of inner-city suburban enclaves. The notion that this type of development might be an appropriate setting for Scouse community life was promoted by the television soap opera 'Brookside'. This offered a suburban 'Close' in Liverpool as an alternative to the close Mancunian community of 'Coronation Street' and the equivalent Cockney London of 'Eastenders'. Significantly, Brookside is no longer broadcast, but the other two seem to go from strength to strength. Nevertheless, the Brookside model was promoted for a time. We can see its direct influence in the small inward-looking low-rise, lowdensity estates built right next door to Liverpool City Centre. We can see an ongoing influence, if less overt, on newer inner-city suburban-style housing, such as the proposals for the Welsh Streets.

“On a number of superficial levels the new designs may seem a positive move from the present neglected and degraded environment. However, a permanent lower density will mean that people will live their lives more isolated from each other, be more car-focused and dependent on journeys out of the immediate area, than they were when the community was intact. The symbiotic relationship between the Welsh Streets and Princes Park, as described above in Section 2, has been broken, diminishing the Park's viability as a health and community resource for local people.

This damage could be reversed if the density was restored.”



Contrasting settings for Liverpool and Manchester soap operas. One emphasised an aspirational suburban life, and the other the resilience of a more traditional urban community, in which social and communal facilities are cheek-by-jowl with homes.

Lack of Consistency of the Proposals with the Requirement of Good Design

“My main and over-riding criticism is the proposed breaking-up of the established street pattern, and the adoption of a suburban development model, with much lower development densities. This comes with a weakening of the traditional texture, which is based on a palette of high quality materials and details in buildings and streetscape: brick, stone, slate, cast iron, sliding sash windows and street trees. Also, there is a loss of the traditional proportion system, as it applies to windows, doors and the ratio of building height to street width, and even the treatment of street and pavement surfaces (with stone flags and setts being replaced by tarmac).

“My criticisms of the proposed houses, their internal spaces, layout and services, fall into three categories. Firstly, the house-types are suburban and take little account of the need for external enclosure and privacy (see also paragraph 3.4). Secondly, the modern building construction and materials are inferior, largely because of affordability within the limitations of modern relatively short-term financial borrowing facilities (whereas housing in previous eras was built on the assumption that the houses would last for a much longer period – as has proved to be the case –

see below, 6.8.). Thirdly, the consistent expression of street and hierarchy as a form of ‘good manners’ in accordance with generally accepted patterns has been lost, giving rise to oddities such as mono-pitch roofs and materials that are alien to the historic context, such as uPVC and concrete. Where criticism is a matter of personal taste, I believe it is best handled within a process of multi-disciplinary ‘peer review’ (see paragraph 6.8.1. below). This proposal has not been subjected to such a review despite the requirement also laid out in paragraph 62 of the NPPF 6.2.1. “Local planning authorities should have local design review arrangements in place to provide assessment and support to ensure high standards of design. They should also when appropriate refer major projects for a national design review. In general, early engagement on design produces the greatest benefits. In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the recommendations from the design review panel.



This photograph, showing Ringo arriving back in Toxteth in the 1960s [included as an insert in his 2008 album 'Liverpool 8'], demonstrates the subsequent erosion of the character of the area, not just in terms of the street frontages and density, but also the surfaces of the streets and pavements [which are now mostly tarmac].

“The proposals would disrupt the established layout and linear street, specifically the following aspects:

1. The strong pattern of parallel streets gives distinctive views of the back of 1. the larger houses on Devonshire Road, within the Princes Park Conservation Area, to the South-East, and distant views across rooftops towards the Cathedral, to the North- West. These views and orientation provide the area with a strong and consistent character, not least in the way sunshine and light has a similar memorable impact on each of the historic streets.
2. Present street widths are generous, and allow for the presence of trees. Windows are large and vertically-proportioned, helping to bring light into the houses.
3. Bay windows add to the effect of light-collection, as well as providing visibility up and down the street.
4. Sliding sash windows are elegant and allow full opening, without disrupting the pavement. They relate the Welsh Streets directly to Georgian precedents and pattern-books (see comparative illustration in 3.2. above). This is of critical importance – they were all part of the same overall design language and conformed to generally accepted notions of quality.
5. In the existing terraces, the small yards are relatively private areas by the back doors, shielded to some extent by the outriggers. In contrast, the gardens in the proposed scheme look very exposed – and, as designed, will probably be quite uncomfortable places. In my experience, gardens of this type and configuration are often uncared-for or abandoned, although there can be exceptions to this rule as a result of ingenious landscaping (which I haven’t seen proposed as part of the scheme) or particular local groups of enthusiastic people (which is not a controllable factor). In any event, I question the need for large private gardens, given the proximity of Princes

Park. It seems to me this is both an inefficient use of space and is likely to lead to less interaction between neighbours and therefore a lower level of social cohesion.

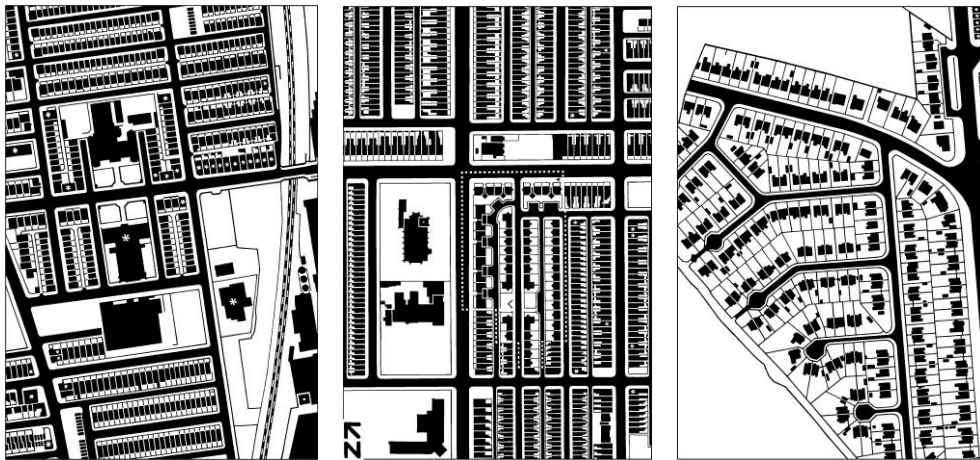


Flat and house plans for Barrow-in-Furness [left]. A later variant [right] has the same principles, of non-overlooking of the back gardens, applied to a larger 4-bedroom house. The 'mitre' allows the terrace to turn a corner, either 45° or 90°. Optimum house width and depth was used in order to maintain historic densities.

6. The proposed 'Green Street' represents a deliberate breaking up of the characteristic terraced street pattern. In my experience of similar green spaces in other terrace locations, these have not been successful. For example, in Barrow-in-Furness (see illustrations 12, 13, below) I had included small play and green areas at the midway point of Exmouth Street, at the insistence of planning experts. I remained unconvinced and regretted the loss of the density and coherence in the street. Some years later (after I had left Barrow), I discovered that these green areas had been replaced by a further six houses. This was apparently a response to requests from the local community. With the present proposals I would be concerned, in particular,

about the proposed length between Powis Street and Kinmel Street, in which one side of the street is faced by a new terrace and the other is faced by gable ends. I would question how likely it is that the ‘Green Street’ will be used, by whom and what for. In my view, it would be better instead to promote the use of Princes Park.

7. The use of concrete roof tiles and uPVC windows marks a deterioration, in terms of both appearance and sustainability, from the durable standards of Welsh slate and timber sliding sashes. If the site had been included within the Princes Park Conservation Area, such materials wouldn’t have been considered. Although this site is not within a Conservation Area, it is very close to two CAs, and the materials proposed are unsympathetic to their character and history as well as that of the Welsh Streets.



Comparative plans, to the same scale, of Saltaire [left], Hindpool [centre] and pre-war semis [at a relatively high density] in Denton, Greater Manchester [right]. The asterisks indicate shops or communal facilities. The area within the dotted line in the central plan contains 79 houses and flats built in 1985.

“Means of regenerating the Welsh Streets that would be acceptable in design terms, unlike the proposed scheme, in my view would include:

1. Retaining the street pattern and retain the historic street names;

2. Restoring all those houses that can be restored;
3. Allowing suitable replacement of those that are deemed to be 'too far gone' – either on a like-for-like basis, or as an acceptable modern interpretation of the notion of the terraced house, promoting innovative and sympathetic design;
4. Filling in the gap sites with well-designed houses;
5. Establishing and promoting the easiest possible routes into Princes Park to meet the open space requirements.”

Historic Links between Liverpool and Wales

“I would also like to say a few words to emphasise the historic links between Liverpool and Wales, although I know this has been covered in more detail elsewhere and I am not intending to put forward a professional opinion on the historical significance of the Welsh Streets (which others have done).

“The Welsh contribution to the rise of Liverpool was as significant as that of the Irish, the English and any of the many other nationalities that contributed to the city’s growth. The Brython Press in Liverpool (*Gwasg y Brython, Lerpwl*) was for many years the leading Welsh-language publishing house. The Welsh colony in Patagonia was founded by those who sailed from Liverpool on ‘The Mimosa’. But one of the most enduring contributions was the housing. Among the Liverpool Welsh were architects, builders and landlords, who morphed into a particular Scouse establishment, worshipping in Welsh in numerous chapels, most of which have disappeared or changed use (such as the imposing Chatham Street Chapel, now the Liverpool University Management School).

“Dewi Prys Thomas was born into one such Welsh-speaking community in Liverpool. He became an inspirational lecturer in his home city, before taking over as Head of the Welsh School of Architecture in 1960. He was eloquent about the

community and city he grew up in, but described the view of Moel Famau from his childhood streets as representing arcadia, just twenty miles but another world away. He spoke of *treftadaeth* as “a word imbued much more eloquently with atavistic depth” than the English term ‘heritage’. Indeed, he had a vision of a Wales “radiant in her *treftadaeth*... in her mountains and valleys, and in the miraculous language and laughter of her children... radiant in the heritage of all her towns, and little villages.” In the same year that Dewi Prys Thomas moved to Cardiff, Saunders Lewis (one of the founding fathers of Plaid Cymru and a native of Wallasey), in a notable television interview with Aneirin Talfan Davies, said: “The idea that because I was born in Liverpool I was born an exile from Wales is completely false.... I’m pretty sure that there were around a hundred thousand Welsh-speaking people in Liverpool during the period of my boyhood.” For these distinguished Liverpool-Welshmen, an architect and a dramatist, the call of the Welsh landscape was irresistible. Their *hiraeth* included the architecture within that landscape. For architecture, alongside language and music, is a vital part of the well that sustains Welsh culture. The development of such cultures was explored by Eric Hobsbawm, Prys Morgan and others, in a brilliantly-titled series of essays, ‘The Invention of Tradition’. Cultural traditions, consciously nurtured, can have a particular appeal for those who live within large multi-cultural cities.”

within the Inner core of Liverpool have had a negative impact on the townscape and social cohesion, while the recreational and ecological value is often low.



From Maisna Heritage Heritage Statement for SAVE, an aerial photograph showing the 1970s clearance sites within the Welsh Streets

“Liverpool City Council’s Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Update 2012 Final Report, published in 2013, identifies opportunities for new residential development throughout Liverpool. The schedule for Princes Park identified 59 potential sites for housing development, excluding the Welsh Streets, Phases 1 and 2. Within the immediate time period of 1-5 year 29 sites were identified for providing, with a new gain total of 599 new units. Several of these sites have been developed or are under construction, but there are still sites awaiting development capable of providing over 150 units. In the time period of 6–10 years, an additional 20 sites are identified, providing 226 new units; for the 11–16 year

period a further 10 sites, with 49 new units are listed. In addition the windfall site of the former Mount Carmel Primary School at North Hill Street/Letitia Street/Admiral Street, not included in the SHLAA, is being brought forward for 38 new-build housing units by Plus Dane Group (Application 14F/0073). The previous buildings have now been cleared on this site.

LIVERPOOL www.liverpoolecho.co.uk

ECHO

NEWS/SPORT/LIFE. IT'S HAPPENING 40,321 MAIN EXTRA Monday, April 26, 2010 49p

Shots fired

TWO streets in Toxteth were cordoned off today after reports of shots being fired. Officers were called to Longfellow Street at around 11.50pm after residents heard a number of loud bangs. There were no reports

SEALED OFF: Longfellow Street

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'BUS SMASH' HOUSE HIT AGAIN!

Page 3

GERRARD

We can't let Blues finish above us

Back Page

RUSH JOINS REDS

Legend back at Anfield - Page 43

MIKEL KEEPS EURO HOPE ALIVE

Sport Extra

WE LEFT STREETS LIKE WAR ZONES

EXCLUSIVE City leader admits housing blunders

REGRET: City council leader Warren Bradley

by DAVID BARTLETT City Editor

LIVERPOOL council leader Warren Bradley today vowed to turn around the city's derelict communities after admitting they were left like "war zones". Cllr Bradley said the council's housing policy - and that of its partners - had "ripped the heart" out of communities. He was speaking about the

Sagship Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI) which is costing tens of millions of pounds. In a frank interview with the

● Turn to Page 6

WOMAN HURT IN ARSON TERROR

Story - Page 12

"In the neighbouring wards of Picton and Riverside there are an even larger number of sites. In the 1-5 year period Picton has 18 sites with 700 units. Riverside has 52 sites providing 2483 units. In the 6-10 year period Picton has 15 sites with 362 units, and Riverside has 82 sites providing 2189 units. For the 11-16 year period Picton has a further 25 sites and 317 units, while Riverside has 22 sites providing

1469 units.

“It is clear that there are plenty of unfulfilled opportunities to build new housing both within Princes Park and the adjoining wards in a reasonably short time frame.”



Trees

“The generous width of the existing streets and pavements has enabled a considerable number of street trees, planted earlier in the 20th century, to grow to a good size. There are good and seemingly healthy specimens of plane, acacia, alder, ash, rowan and lime trees, which provide a notable contribution to the streetscape. The proposals involve the loss of these existing mature street trees. While new specimens can be planted, it will be many years before these compensate for the loss of these large trees, or replace the habitat and townscape value which mature trees offer.”



Voelas Street, part of which was destroyed by bombing in WW2. Note the maturity of the trees and also the open space that could be landscaped or used as a site for more housing.

Local opinion

“Widely different views have been expressed by the local community over many years concerning the future of the Welsh Streets, in line with the Housing Minister’s observation that Pathfinder ‘pitted neighbour against neighbour’. Nevertheless, it is clear that when first consulted in 2005 (two years after clearance plans were drawn up), resident opinion was decisively in favour of retaining the houses. In 2005 101 properties registered an objection to demolition with 74 in support, a 58% majority against demolition. In some streets there was overwhelming objection to demolition. In Madryn Street there were 35 objections with just one supporter. The 2005 Princes Park NRA showed majorities against demolition in Kelvin Grove (94%), Voelas Street (53%), Rhiwlas Street (70%), Treborth Street (80%), South Street (100%) and High Park Street (62.5%). Overall public consultation responses

to the 2005 NRA show 78% of respondents against demolition – 338 objections with 97 in favour (Princes Park NRA 2005 Pages 104 – 106).

“There is evidence that local opposition has been worn down over time, with a process of attrition, blight and neglect. As noted in the National Audit Office’s Report of 2007, acquisition of existing properties, proposals for demolition and redevelopment and interim environmental deprivation cause great stress in existing communities.



Former residents of the Welsh Streets, Magda and Tarquin Maylam, who submitted evidence to the inquiry

“Interviews with residents who did not want to leave show they did not feel their voices were listened to, and that they were heartbroken to be forced from what they felt were good homes in a decent area. An example is Mrs Carmen Muberry who lived at 35 Madryn Street for 60 years between 1948 and her unwilling departure in

2008, interviewed by Trevor McDonald on TV's *Tonight* in 2006 and by Jonathan Brown in 2014.

“Individual or family aspirations, coupled with worries about blight and uncertainty, are sometimes at odds with those trying to see the area in its wider context. For some of those people still living or working in the area the continuing delay is deeply disconcerting and the opinions of ‘outsiders’ are not always welcome. However there is also a strongly-felt view among local people that lifting the current blight and getting the right decision is the most important thing in the long term. Some long-standing residents have claimed that their existing houses to be slums and are very keen to move to new accommodation, perhaps semi-detached houses with large gardens. However it remains the case that terraced houses remain popular as buildings to live in. Residents’ concerns are usually more to do with specific and relatively easily solved issues like damp and cleanliness, or safety and the reputation of the area, problems brought about by the blight imposed by the scheme itself. While some want to move there are others who would like to stay and who appreciate the existing houses as adaptable and flexible. Expectations of new housing have become inseparable from demolition in some residents’ minds, due to the rhetoric of the Council, even when the two are not necessarily inter-linked or inter-dependent. As for those who do want to move to a new-build house, or out of the area altogether, there are many ‘outsiders’ who would like to move into the Welsh Streets.”

Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment (NRA)

“The Princes Park NRA Review and Update Report of January 2013, produced for Liverpool City Council attempts to summarise residents’ opinions (pages 51 - 57). In particular it focuses on the October 2012 Resident Survey. It claims that the 50% response of existing households was ‘high’. In my experience of situations where people are in danger of being re-housed, it is a rather low figure. What it did show is that 72% of the respondents were ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with their existing

house. Of the 25% who were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied', it was because of the run-down condition of their house. The survey questionnaire was unclear whether the option of moving to a 'new home' had to be a new-build house or whether it could be an existing house renovated to equivalent modern standards. Understandably very few wanted to move to another existing house, unimproved. Significantly, 79% wanted to stay in the area.

"There are some who say that the depopulation of the Welsh Streets, particularly Phase A, has gone so far that any sense of social cohesion in the area has vanished. There are others however who take a more optimistic view. Paragraph 7.26 of the NRA Review and Update Report highlights the strength of local community spirit in the Welsh Streets, including worries about how facilities can be sustained. It is surely the case that the local community can be nurtured and rebuilt more easily by rehabilitating the existing fabric, with an element of new build on the vacant sites. The wider social benefits of retaining existing fabric are also an important part of the consideration of the historic environment."

Madryn Street

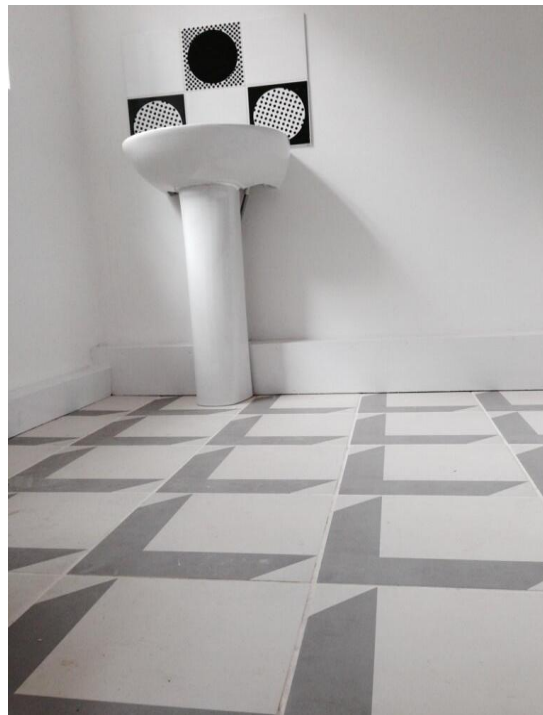
"Madryn Street has particular 20th century cultural interest because of its associations with Ringo Starr... Madryn Street was described by Evan Davies in his BBC 'Mind the Gap' programme as "a beautiful rickety little street". The proposed retention of just the stub end of the street, to be surrounded by low-density modern housing will greatly diminish the existing character and appearance of the street and its setting.

"On the opposite side of High Park Street the Empress Public House is another building with strong connections with the Beatles, being one of their first performance venues and appearing on the cover of Ringo Starr's 1970 solo album, *Sentimental Journey*. It is surely a candidate for statutory listing in terms of its

architectural, historic and cultural interest. Madryn Street and the other Welsh Streets have group value with this other undesignated heritage asset.”



New window for 21 Madryn Street



Beautifully laid tiles by WayneHemingway Design, provided for the house by British Ceramic Tiles

Planning Policy

“Paragraph 135 of NPPF requires that the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. A balanced judgement is required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. It is considered that the scale of harm caused by the large amount of demolition, coupled with the poor quality of design of the replacement housing, will very greatly reduce the significance of the Welsh Streets, both individually and as a group, as a non-designated heritage asset.

“Paragraph 3.13 of Liverpool City Council’s Sustainability Appraisal Non-Technical Summary states that the focus on prioritising the reuse of previously developed land and buildings, and the protection of heritage assets, will contribute to preserving Liverpool’s cultural and historic heritage and local distinctiveness. Negative effects could be felt if new development is not sympathetic to its surroundings. It is considered that the proposals will have negative effects.

“The Welsh Streets are located close to the grand Princes Avenue, one of the spokes of Liverpool’s radial structure and a spectacular Victorian set-piece. The Welsh Streets contribute to the setting of the adjacent Princes Park Conservation Area whose boundary adjoins South Street (see map on Page 81 of Princes Park Conservation Area Appraisal page 81, Core Document 6.32). Virtually all the houses on the west side of Devonshire Road are statutorily listed Grade II. The Welsh Streets contribute to their setting. Indeed the map of 1846 shows that South Street was originally the rear access lane for these houses and for any stable accommodation they may once have had. The orientation of Devonshire Road, as one of the main developments enclosing Princes Park itself, influenced the subsequent layout of the Welsh Streets to its rear.

“The rear elevations of the Devonshire Road houses are particularly and unusually fine, with symmetric and balanced fenestration. The internal position of the staircases in these houses results in principle rooms at the rear as well as at the front. These rear elevations, and the boundary walls to South Street, are built in the

same red brick as the Welsh Street terraces. There are long views down most of the Welsh Streets to the rear elevations of these grand three storey houses in Devonshire Road. Similarly there are views out of the Devonshire road properties across the Welsh Streets. This relationship is harmonious and mutually beneficial.

“The Welsh Streets undoubtedly contribute to the setting of the Princes Park conservation Area and the listed buildings. Its demolition and redevelopment as proposed will cause harm to the setting of Princes Park CA and the listed buildings. “The new design of the new housing and street layout proposed, as outlined above, is suburban and undistinguished in character, and will form a stark contrast with the early Victorian character and appearance of the adjoining Princes Park Conservation Area, and indeed with those existing mid-Victorian buildings within the Welsh Streets that are proposed for retention. The harm caused to the Conservation Area would probably be considered as insubstantial and would thus come within the remit of Paragraph 134 of NPPF, whereby “this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.”

Deliberate Neglect

“Generally the houses now vacant and ‘tinned up’ are in local authority or registered social landlord ownership, leaving isolated areas of private ownership in amongst them. Services have been withdrawn and some of the empty properties have been vandalised. For example, the deliberate removal by the local authority of lead flashings and rainwater goods, including downpipes on front elevations on the pretext of ‘avoiding theft’, is a petty and misguided management strategy, leading almost inevitably to water penetration. What might be described as a form of ‘managed decline’ could also be considered to be deliberate or ‘deliberated’ neglect. Greater detail of condition and remedial costs are given by Edward Morton in his Proof of Evidence.



Management companies at work on the Welsh Streets, who are paid to keep the streets clear and the deteriorating properties bolted, but not to repair them.

“Paragraph 130 of NPPF states that where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset (designated or non-designated) the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision. The NPPG further explains that where there is evidence of deliberate damage to or neglect of a heritage asset in the hope of making consent or permission easier to gain, the deteriorated state of the asset should be disregarded. It is very arguable that the pre-meditated removal of fabric and the lack of maintenance on existing vacated or decanted houses constitutes deliberate neglect. Apart from the tinning up of the windows, presumably to deter break-in, there has been no effort to keep the vacated houses in good condition.”



The house on the right was in good condition when it was requisitioned for clearance, and has since deteriorated due to lack of drainpipes and maintenance.

Sustainability

“The Welsh Streets are close to the City Centre, within 10 minutes walk of the cathedral, and even closer to the university. The existing houses are an asset that could provide a range of useful, affordable and flexible accommodation. Refurbishment is likely to provide a diversity of unit sizes, including smaller units attractive to young couples, students, retired and elderly people, and single households who value being near the employment, educational, cultural and recreational facilities of the City Centre. The retention of high-density housing close to the City Centre is likely to be mutually beneficial, and will help to sustain and revitalise local shops and businesses. The SHMA in Paragraph 4.35 notes that net in-migration into the City Centre is a key driver of growth in Liverpool’s economy, and that this is assumed to continue. This will also involve a ‘ripple out’ effect to adjacent wards, as confirmed by the Princes Park Ward Profile 2014 (Core Document 6.34) which shows a 23% increase in population since 2001. The

retention, refurbishment and re-population of the Welsh Streets can help and reinforce this. Indeed, regeneration of the Inner Core is likely to be as important to the future prosperity of Liverpool as the City centre itself. Loss of population through redevelopment will not help the economic regeneration of the City Centre or the delivery of Local Plan objectives.

“Paragraphs 6 – 10 of NPPF set out the agenda for how the planning system should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, combining the three dimensions of economic, social and environmental. The core planning principles are set out in Paragraph 17.

“The proposals for the wholesale demolition in the Welsh Streets run contrary to these aspirations. Aspects relating to the economic and social dimensions of sustainability have been dealt with above. Don Foster MP’s Ministerial letter to David Ireland dated 1st February 2013 reiterates the Government’s view that Pathfinder-style demolitions are “economically, socially and environmentally wasteful.

“In terms of environmental impact, demolition itself results in a huge loss of embodied energy, comprising the existing built fabric. Even if new housing is designed to the highest energy-saving standards it is generally accepted to take at least 30 years to recoup the energy used in demolition and construction (Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution Report 2007, Building Research Establishment *Knock it down or do it up?* 2008). While refurbishment may not be to such high energy-saving standards, the energy used during building work is a fraction of that. It is also likely that within 30 years, refurbished properties themselves would have received a further upgrade in their energy performance.

“English Heritage has carried out research into the level of embodied energy inherent in older buildings. This showed that a typical Victorian terraced house contains embodied energy equivalent to 15,000 litres of petrol.

“In terms of the overall effect of the proposals they will have an adverse impact on the City Council’s environmental, social and economic sustainability policies.”

Refurbishment

“While there are powerful arguments that the proposed redevelopment of the Welsh Streets is no longer justified in terms of housing need, and is harmful in terms of loss of heritage, social cohesion, employment, tourist potential and embodied energy, it is essential that any alternative strategy to retain and refurbish the existing terraced houses is viable, fundable and deliverable. After years of decanting, planning blight, minimal repair and neglect of fabric, the costs of refurbishment for some of the houses are now much higher than they might have once been. While Paragraph 130 of NPPF states that deliberate neglect of a heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision, this relates more to the balancing of public benefits against harm. It does not help towards footing the bill to rectify the neglect.

Alternative Approaches B. Full Refurbishment



This beautiful street was designed by Welsh Streets architect Richard Owens. It shows what can be achieved in Liverpool's inner city areas with a conservation and community-led approach.

Alternative Approaches

B. Full Refurbishment

B.2. (P2) 29 Powis Street, Welsh Sts, L8



29 Powis Street – Restored for £24k by the Trevor MacDonald Tonight programme (Granada TV).

18

“There have been many examples elsewhere showing how run-down Victorian terraced housing can be upgraded, including from Urban Splash and local authority renovations in Salford, and projects by Manchester City Council in Northmoor and by Miller Homes in Moss Side. In Liverpool, terraces forming part of Richard Owen’s other 19th century estates have been sustainably refurbished, such as Claribel Street and the Camelot Streets. Plus Dane are now pursuing renovation of empty homes in nearby Granby. Liverpool City Council received an overwhelming response to its ‘Homes for a Pound’ scheme, with about 4,000 expressions of interest for just 20 properties. It is entirely wrong to regard the existing properties as ‘obsolete’, as the Princes Park NRA Review and Update Report 2013 persists in doing. See Appendix 10 for further examples of refurbishment of terraced housing in the Merseyside and Manchester.

Alternative Approaches

B. Full Refurbishment

B.7. Northmoor, Manchester, 2002

The Northmoor project in the Levenshulme/Longsight area of inner Manchester was undertaken by Manchester City Council with social landlords and community groups between 1997 and 2007, and should have been an exemplar for Liverpool's HMRI Pathfinder interventions. The area was suffering from low values, high turnover, a degraded public environment and pockets of dereliction.

A radical but sensitive public sector intervention has transformed the neighbourhood into a desirable, diverse and delightful inner city district, working with the existing community and housing form, instead of erasing them as is being suggested for the Welsh Streets.

This is considered to be an internationally important case study of enlightened urban regeneration, and it was delivered for £20m.

<http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/transformation-northmoor-manchester>



“Plus Dane have accepted the principle of refurbishment for 37 of the existing Welsh Streets properties, including 16 houses in Madryn Street, following a vigorous campaign to save Ringo Starr’s birthplace. On 14th June 2012 Grant Shapps visited Madryn Street, and announced: “In a ground-breaking experiment, Liverpool city Council have agreed to give the local community the opportunity to take over and refurbish 16 of the properties on the street, and in so doing gauge the demand for such properties in the wider area”. “I am keen that this is just the start. That’s why I’ll be watching closely to see how the refurbishment of these 16 houses progresses, and how we can use this to prevent more houses from being demolished”. (www.gov.uk/government/news/rock-starrs-home-saved-with-a-little-help-from-his-friends). Unfortunately no such opportunity has been given to the local community, and even though planning permission would not be needed for repairs and renovation of these 16 houses, they have been tied in to the comprehensive Plus Dane scheme, now under consideration.

“Refurbishment of most of the existing terraces, including those that are vacant or occupied, can be delivered whilst meeting current energy-savings standards. In terms of funding there are various alternatives, some suited to provision of social housing, others for the private market. In order to be comparable with the Plus Dane scheme it had been assumed that an overall refurbishment package would need to provide the equivalent amount of social housing.

“However, in terms of tenure mix Plus Dane Group’s proposals are remarkably unclear. In Liverpool City Council’s letter on 10th April 2014 it is stated in Paragraph 6 that “The proposed tenure mix for Phase A of the Welsh Streets remains subject to on-going contractual negotiations and therefore will only be confirmed once this process is concluded. The proposed tenure mix to Phase B will be subject to the same process once contractual negotiations commence”. Nevertheless SAVE is confident that refurbishment of the existing houses could be achieved under a variety of tenure options, and providing a range of unit sizes.”

Alec Forshaw’s Conclusion

“The National Planning Policy Framework requires that an overall assessment of the merits of the proposed redevelopment of the Welsh Streets should involve the balancing of the public benefits achieved against the harm caused. It is concluded that the significance of the Welsh Streets as an undesignated heritage asset has previously been under-valued. It is considered that the proposed demolition in Phases A and B of the proposals would seriously reduce the significance of this undesignated heritage asset. It is also considered that both the demolition and the replacement new housing, by reason of its poor design, would cause harm to the setting of designated heritage assets, comprising the adjoining Princes Park Conservation Area and listed buildings in Devonshire Road. Considerable weight should be given to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings when carrying out a balancing exercise in planning matters.

“It is considered that this harm is not out-weighed by public benefits. The original HMRI justification, if it was ever valid, has disappeared. The overall loss of housing units is now a disadvantage in terms of meeting Liverpool’s growth targets. There is now strong demand for 1 and 2 bed units which the proposals do not provide, but which the existing terraced houses can help to meet. Such demand as does exist for large family houses in Liverpool can be provided on other housing redevelopment sites in the neighbourhood and elsewhere in Liverpool, not involving the needless demolition of existing housing. In addition the refurbishment of properties on Kelvin Grove will provide some large family homes. The new housing is not of good design or townscape quality. The construction of new houses that meet current energy-saving standards does not out-weigh the overall energy costs of demolition (including embodied energy) and construction (materials and transport). The blight and neglect of the area, which has been caused by deliberate planning policy, acquisition and maintenance decisions, should be discounted under Paragraph 130 of NPPF. In any event this blight and neglect can better be remedied by the repair and refurbishment of the majority of the existing houses, coupled with well-designed infill on vacant sites. In terms of social cohesion it is considered that this would be more successfully achieved by allowing those existing residents who wish to remain in the area, and in their existing houses, to do so, and by retaining and enhancing the existing and familiar townscape.”

Extracts from the evidence of David Ireland, Former Direction of the Empty Homes Charity

“My involvement in the Welsh Streets dates back to 2010. I had been aware of the Welsh Streets area and the council’s proposal to demolish the houses for many years. The Welsh Streets area was one of the largest areas of vacant housing in the country, and represented one of the largest projects in the country under the Housing Market Renewal Programme. It was an example of what I feared would arise, an area where homes had been emptied for a clearance programme but

clearance and rebuilding was heavily delayed, resulting in a much greater vacancy rate than before the council intervened.

“In June 2010 I visited the Welsh Streets and heard reports that the developer (Gleesons) that were to build houses on the cleared site had pulled out. I was in regular contact with ministers and officials from the Communities and Local Government Department. It appeared likely that a change of policy on Housing Market renewal was likely. I was concerned when I heard that Plus Dane were intending to pursue demolition anyway and saw that they had submitted a planning application to the council for permission to do so. The planning application did not include proposals to build new houses in the place of the demolished houses. I submitted an objection to the application in a letter to Liverpool Council dated 24th August 2010 (DI1).


“In October 2010 the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the Housing Market Renewal Programme would be withdrawn. Whilst not surprised by this announcement, I was concerned that unless councils adapted to the change in policy, large areas of housing could remain empty for many years. I wrote to a number of councils about this including Liverpool.

“It was on this basis that on 31 January 2011 I wrote to the then Liverpool council leader Councillor Joe Anderson specifically about the proposal to demolish the Welsh Streets, which I considered the most worrying aspect of the councils Housing Market renewal programme. I asked him to consider alternatives to demolition in the light of the change of government policy and the recent news that the council’s developer for the Welsh Streets, Gleeson homes, had pulled out of building homes on the site. I suggested other alternatives including self-renovation and homesteading. I received a response from the Director of Housing John Hale. His letter acknowledged that the situation had changed but was not willing to consider alternatives. He cited a number of reasons for continuing with the policy of clearance, including that “an existing housing association (presumably Plus Dane) already owns significant numbers of properties in the area. They do not regard

renovation to be viable in terms of either cost or demand” He also said that he anticipated that there would be greater subsidy in building new houses than renovation. “The Government, although withdrawing funds to renovate properties in the Welsh Streets area has introduced mechanisms to provide for 150,000 new homes to be built over the next few years. Surely, this provides a far greater prospect to finding a solution.”

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BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO THE TERRACE



5 GOOD REASONS FOR KEEPING THE TERRACES:

1. Redevelopment is destructive and uproots communities
2. Over the last 100 years the houses have proven flexible and adaptable to suit a range of occupants and lifestyles
3. The existing houses can be upgraded to make them much more energy efficient
4. It is more sustainable to recycle the properties – the embodied energy already invested in them should be saved
5. It is cheaper to refurbish the houses than to build new ones

WHY WAS REFURBISHMENT NEVER AN OPTION?

SAVE
BRITAIN'S HERITAGE

Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment (NRA)

“NRA was used by Liverpool council in determining the most satisfactory course of action for the Welsh streets in 2005. The 2005 NRA recommended total clearance of houses in the Welsh Streets. In 2013 the council chose to undertake the NRA again to take account of changes in circumstances. The council said “the Council consider it prudent to undertake a further update to ensure that the emerging proposals for the Princes Park area can be considered against an up to date policy framework.” The council chose to appoint a consultant to undertake the NRA on their behalf. The consultant they appointed was DTZ. I know DTZ as a large international property company.

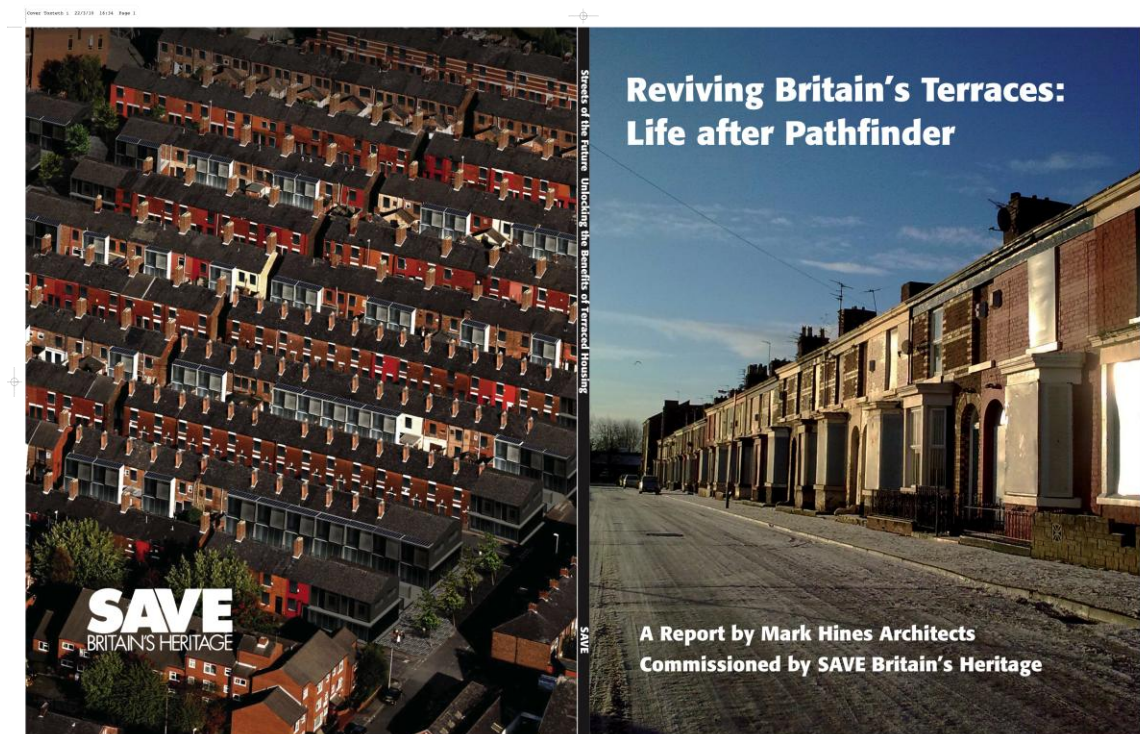
“In my view the NRA undertaken by DTZ was flawed in several respects. In my view it appears that it was conducted with a predetermined outcome in mind. The options that were generated and the way in which these options were tested against objectives appeared to be biased towards an outcome that recommended demolition of the houses.”



Evidence from Ed Morton, structural engineer

“I am a chartered Civil Engineer, Fellow of The Institution of Civil Engineers, Accredited in Conservation under the Conservation Accreditation Register for Engineers (and sit on their panel) and member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (and sit on their technical sub-committee).

“Instructions were received from SAVE Britain’s Heritage. My instruction was to provide advice to SAVE in relation to the condition of properties within The Welsh Street area of Toxteth in Liverpool and to establish the likely cost of repairs to these buildings.”



Inspection

“It was agreed with Liverpool City Council that the inspection would be jointly carried out with Damian Gore, a Chartered Building Surveyor from Mouchel Property acting on behalf of the Council.

“The detailed inspections were undertaken on 14th and 15th of April with nineteen properties being assessed. This included 21 Madryn Street which is owned by SAVE. However on completion of these inspections it was jointly agreed that there was a lot of repetition of the condition and the nature of repairs required, particularly to the two storey properties, and thus it was agreed that the detailed assessments would be limited to 5 properties.

“The inspections were a visual assessment of the condition of the buildings from ground level and accessible positions, and using a surveyor’s ladder to inspect internal attic spaces, flat roofs to bays etc. Torches were used as necessary as natural light was poor. Hazard survey sheets for each property were read prior to entering each property which highlighted areas or matters of concern related to Health and Safety and provided an indication of overall condition.”

Cost Assessment

“Based on the Mouchel schedule, as commented on by myself, Wilf Jones Quantity Surveyor had produced detailed assessments of the works required for the five properties which are included in appendix B and summarised below.

“A meeting was held on Wednesday 15th May 2014 between Wilf Jones and the Mouchel Quantity Surveyor to try and agree common ground on costs. In many cases the rates adopted by Wilf Jones were higher than the Mouchel costs.”

	20 Kelvin Grove	4 Wynnstay Street	19 Kinmel Street	7 Rhiwlas Street	42 Rhiwlas Street
Condition	Fair	Fair	Fair	Very Poor	Very Poor
Description	3 storey + basement	2 storey + outrigger + single storey extension	2 storey + outrigger	2 storey + outrigger + 2 No. single storey extension	2 storey + outrigger
Construction Cost	£53,357.02	£44,500.31	£36,508.80	£53,553.10	£42,891.10
Contractors preliminaries/ on costs (15%)	£8,003.55	£6,675.05	£5,476.32	£8,032.97	£6,433.67
Contingency (8%)	£4,908.85	£4,094.03	£3,358.81	£4,926.89	£3,945.98
TOTAL COSTS	£66,269.42	£55,269.39	£45,343.93	£66,512.95	£53,270.75

“Based on the costs in the table above we have estimated an average cost for the properties as below:

Two storey building with outrigger in fair condition $£55,269.39 + £45,343.93 / 2 = £50,306.66$ rounded up to £51,000.

Two storey building with outrigger in very poor condition $£66,512.95 + £53,270.75 / 2 = £59,891.85$ rounded up to £60,000.

Two storey building with outrigger in poor condition $£51,000.00 + £60,000.00 / 2 = £55,500$ (approx. 9% increase from property in fair condition).

Three storey property in Kelvin Grove in fair condition £66,269.42 rounded up to £67,000.

Three storey property in Kelvin Grove in poor condition £67,000 increased by 9% = £73,030.00 rounded down to £73,000.”

“This provides a basic indication for costs for the two and three storey properties being considered. For the two storey buildings these include extensions to the outrigger for both one in fair condition and one in very poor condition. It is accepted that figures for individual properties will vary but these figures are considered by me as reasonable figures for an assessment of the whole site being considered.

“We have been passed copies of the Hazard Survey Sheets for 291 properties, plus we also inspected 21 Madryn Street (owned by SAVE) and we have used this to form an approximation of the numbers of properties which fall into the three categories of fair, poor and very poor.

“In general terms where properties are described with areas not safely accessible, evidence of structural failure etc., then it has been categorised as ‘*very poor*’.

“Conversely where no structural comments are made, or these are of a minor nature, the building is categorised as ‘*fair*’ – this does include some with rot indicated to floor structures, as I considered that these can still be repaired easily. Those in between are categorised as ‘*poor*’. The results of this are included in appendix C and summarised as follows:

Property Type	Fair		Poor		Very Poor		TOTAL
2 up/ 2 down + outrigger	82	29%	103	36%	97	35%	282
Kelvin Grove	7	70%	3	30%	0	0%	10

“From the above and the average costs indicated at 4.11 the overall costs for the 292 properties are as follows:

Two up / two down

82 Fair at £51,000 = £4,182,000

103 Poor at £55,500 = £5,716,500

97 Very Poor at £60,000 = £5,820,000

Kelvin Grove

Three Fair at £67,000 = £ 469,000

Three Poor at £73,000 = £ 219,000

“So the total anticipated cost of works to the buildings to make them habitable is estimated at £16,406,500 exclusive of VAT. Based on an estimated end value of £85,000 per property and ignoring the greater value that the Kelvin Grove properties would sell for, the end value for the entire site is £24,820,000, i.e. a profit of £8,413,500 exclusive of VAT.

“Whilst the above apply to Phase A, we see no reason why a similar exercise would not yield the same results for Phase B properties.

“Wilf Jones has also carried out a brief assessment considering how a developer may regard the site in terms of costs and this is included in appendix D. With the inclusion of professional fees, legal costs, finance charges, developer’s overheads and profit (22%) and sales costs (legal and agents at 1.5%) the surplus value over cost is £2,478,390. This excludes VAT. I consider it likely that these figures are a worse case scenario and a greater surplus is obtainable.”

Conclusion from Ed Morton’s Evidence

“The properties inspected are in a condition where they can be repaired and returned to habitable and beneficial use.

“Based on the cost assessments for the repairs and an average likely end value, provided by Paul Sutton, and excluding any uplift for the end values of the Kelvin Grove properties, and any incentives such as the New Homes Bonus there is still substantial profit including a surplus to be made in a commercial development on the Welsh Street properties.

“Based on these facts and costs it is clear that the buildings can be viably retained and brought back into residential use.

“For the above reasons it is requested that the planning application for the demolition and redevelopment of both Phase A and Phase B of the Welsh Streets should be refused, subject to overall assessment of any other relevant planning harm an/or benefits.

“With regard to the Compulsory Purchase Order for 21 Madryn Street, the current tenants (guardians) seem to be comfortable and want to continue living in the property and clearly the building is in beneficial use and some further minor improvements can easily be made to improve its energy efficiency. For these reasons, subject to other relevant considerations, it is suggested that the CPO should not be upheld.



Voelas Street

From SAVE's Closing statement:

“The planning application is a direct continuation of the depredations of the now-cancelled Housing Market Renewal Initiative (“HMRI”). The extent to which LCC and PDG, at this inquiry, have sought to defend HMRI and its continuing relevance today is extremely surprising, apparently refusing to acknowledge that it has been cancelled by the present government and expressly labelled “environmentally, economically, and socially wasteful”: that is to say, not sustainable, in a clear echo of the three dimensions to sustainable development in NPPF para.7. LCC’s/PDG’s witnesses have referred to there having been “some changes” in government policy since the original NRA was undertaken in 2005, when in fact these changes – such as the government’s empty homes policy – have been radical. PDG have called it “short-sighted” to seek to modify its housing stock in light of the so-called “bedroom tax” or removal of the “spare room subsidy”, despite the fact this is present government policy.

“LCC/PDG have also suggested that, if this planning application is not granted, the site would sit as it is for a further 5-10 years before they bring another planning application. The suggestion that the Welsh Streets would be left for a further long period of time, if LCC/PDG do not get their way on this application, is frankly outrageous, in circumstances where they have failed properly to consider alternatives or even to test the market.

“Prior to the joint surveys undertaken by LCC/PDG and SAVE, LCC/PDG were advocating demolition without even having accurate information about the costs of refurbishing the properties. In a funding bid with the WSHG, PDG were suggesting that 16 Kelvin Grove properties would cost c.£115,000 each in base refurbishment costs – whereas we now know they would cost less than £70,000 each.

“LCC has displayed a completely intransigent attitude to the Welsh Streets. It has failed to consider alternatives including greater refurbishment of the existing terraces. Fewer than 10% of the properties are to be refurbished in the scheme, as a result of a vigorous campaign and an agreement to consider greater refurbishment brokered between Grant Shapps MP (then Minister for Housing and Local

Government), Mayor Anderson, George Clarke (as the government's empty homes advisor), and SAVE. LCC has never tested demand for properties on the open market (despite Mr Shapps MP having announced on 14 June 2012, on visiting Madryn Street, that LCC "have agreed to give the local community the opportunity to take over and refurbish 16 of the properties on the streets, and in so doing gauge the demand for such properties in the wider area").

"It is submitted that the Welsh Streets are a significant non-designated heritage asset, which would be almost completely lost as a result of the proposals. The scale of harm to the Welsh Streets as a non-designated heritage asset outweighs the supposed benefits of the scheme (NPPF para.135). Further, the proposals would cause harm (albeit less than substantial) to the significance of the Princes Park and Princes Avenue Conservation Areas and many listed buildings on Devonshire Road (NPPF para.134).

"There has therefore long been a functional relationship between the Welsh Streets and the two Conservation Areas, to add to their visual relationships (which include views from Devonshire Road West, from Princes Avenue, from the 13 listed buildings on Devonshire Road and Princes Gate West, and from Devonshire Road itself through the gaps between the villas). The Welsh Streets are an important part of the setting of the CAs and listed buildings. Even if it were not accepted that there was a functional relationship between the Princes Park and the Welsh Streets from its inception, they have co-existed for almost 150 years. English Heritage guidance on setting makes clear that "[t]he setting of a heritage asset can enhance its significance whether or not it was designed to do so." The interrelationship between the Welsh Streets and Princes Park is even depicted in the artist's impression on the biographical map signboard near the entrance to the Park (endorsed by both English Heritage and LCC).

"The heritage assessment contained in the Environmental Statement was carried out in ignorance of the facts uncovered by Gareth Carr's research, which demonstrates that the Welsh Streets date from earlier than previously supposed and were masterplanned by Welsh architect Richard Owens. English Heritage, in their consultation response to the planning application, were also unaware of the full heritage significance of the Welsh

Streets. A full picture has been presented only by SAVE.

“LCC/PDG have sought to suggest that the Welsh Streets have been “denuded” of their original character. Whilst there have been changes made (for example to roofing materials, windows and doors, painting of brickwork, and rebuilding to the rear of properties), the Welsh Streets are significant for the high degree of coherence which remains. The original street pattern and rhythm remains, and the original buildings are substantially retained with the exception of a small number of gap sites and in-fill houses. A large amount of major features such as bay windows, stone plinths, dentil courses, window and door surrounds, brick decoration and other detailing remains. The arrangement of rooms survives, and ceiling heights are generous (as the Inspector will have seen from her internal site inspections). Features like windows, doors and roofing materials, to which LCC/PDG point, do not significantly impact on the overall coherent character of the Welsh Streets, and in any event could easily be replaced (as they were in Kensington Fields, following which it was designated as a Conservation Area). Rebuilding to the rear of properties is to be expected and does not significantly affect the character of the streets themselves.

“Further, to the extent that there has been any erosion of the character of the Welsh Streets houses since they were progressively bought up by LCC from the early 2000s, in so far as there is evidence of deliberate neglect their deteriorated state should not be taken into account (NPPF para.130). There is clear evidence of such deliberate neglect here. For example, rainwater goods and lead flashing have been systemically removed from properties and not replaced. It is absurd to suggest that downpipes needed to be removed to prevent their own theft, even having taken measures to prevent theft of lead flashings: this has had regrettable consequences for the buildings, which have been exposed to water erosion, and is completely disproportionate to the risk of theft of cheap plastic downpipes. There has been no proper effort to keep the vacated houses in good condition.

“LCC/PDG have attempted to downplay the level of harm by suggesting that the terraced housing in the Welsh Streets is “ubiquitous” in Liverpool. Liverpool is England’s greatest Victorian city, so it is unsurprising that it has a large number of Victorian terraces

(although not vastly more than other northern core cities). This is not an appropriate justification for demolition. Huge swathes of Liverpool's Victorian terraces have already been lost, at least in part as a result of previous CPOs, which have led to sites being cleared and left vacant after promised new build did not take place.



“The Welsh Streets are in fact unique survivors in terms of their stage of development in the evolution of masterplanning of speculative housing development in mid-Victorian Liverpool, their coherence and their architectural variation. They are the closest and most complete surviving area of mid-Victorian terraced workers’ housing to Devonshire Road and Princes Park. At least 50% of Richard Owens’ terraced housing in Liverpool has already been destroyed (some 4,500 houses); the proposals would see the destruction of over 10% of the remainder. Demolition would sever the remaining parts of Estate No.3

from their important historical context with Princes Park.

“The architects of the scheme have sought to cover the fact that the proposals are suburban, since suburbanisation is clearly inappropriate in its location, by seeking to integrate more “urban” features such as three-storey corner units. But, as Mr Skempton stated, such attempts are doomed to fail because of the scheme’s fundamental contradictions: they look out of place and lack coherence.

“Finally, the loss of mature street trees would be a significant loss in design and sustainability terms. They can and should be retained and managed applying an ordinary tree maintenance regime, taking up the paving slabs around them and laying a flexible, permeable material, which would not be expensive to do. LCC/PDG have failed adequately to investigate their condition.

“One of the key planks of LCC’s/PDG’s case is that there is an oversupply of smaller, Victorian terraced housing in Liverpool’s inner core which needs to be replaced by three-bed, semi-detached properties with gardens and off-street parking. By contrast, SAVE’s case is that there is clear need for smaller properties including terraces, and these are a valuable housing resource for people seeking affordable housing in the inner core which should not be lost, particularly when there a very large number of vacant sites in Liverpool which could and should be developed for new build.

“LCC’s/PDG’s argument has its roots in the now-abandoned HMRI, as indicated by the extracts submitted by LCC/PDG from previous CPOs in 2006 and 2008. However the circumstances that formed the basis of HMRI (as set out in those extracts from earlier CPO decisions) have now fundamentally changed: HMRI has been cancelled, the government has radically changed its approach to empty homes, and Liverpool is now clearly a growing rather than a declining city.

“Consistently with government policy requiring empty homes to be brought back into use, the onus is clearly on LCC to demonstrate that there are no realistic options other than demolition. Despite this, since it embarked on buying up the Welsh Streets, LCC has never attempted to market test the properties or to seek to redevelop the area other than through its developer partner. A paper-based developer appraisal is of course an

important tool for gauging viability, but it is no substitute for proper market testing.

“LCC has never sought to market the site or any part of the site, even after Mr Shapps MP’s announcement on 14 June 2012 that 1-16 Madryn Street were to be offered to the community for refurbishment and, in so doing, demand to be gauged for such properties. LCC’s/PDG’s protestations that there would be no developer able and willing to undertake greater refurbishment of the Welsh Streets cannot be regarded with any credibility where they have failed adequately to consider alternatives and to test the market.

“It is frankly ludicrous to suggest, as was put to Mr Forshaw, that since SAVE has been creating publicity about the Welsh Streets over many years, the fact that no costed alternative proposal has come forward in that time is evidence that no such proposal would come forward, even if LCC had a change of heart. First, this disregards the evidence that there have been expressions of interest that LCC appears to have ignored or rebuffed. Second, SAVE is a small charity with very limited resources, and has never been in the role of some sort of de facto marketing agent on behalf of LCC, which is one of the largest and most influential local authorities in the country with extensive resources to market or promote schemes if it so wished. Third, as can be seen from SAVE’s press releases and other material fairly read in their context, SAVE’s campaigning in relation to the Welsh Streets over many years has been precisely on the basis that LCC’s approach to date is blinkered and has failed to consider alternatives because it is wedded to its sole developer partner for this area: this is the very opposite of some sort of invitation to treat for the redevelopment of the Welsh Streets. As Mr Forshaw remarked, in response to this suggestion made to him that SAVE’s campaigning is hardly the same as an advertisement placed by LCC in the Estates Gazette. LCC should not be permitted to demolish the Welsh Streets without even having tested the market, and should do so in an open and fair way without a closed mind and with proper records kept of expressions of interest.

“LCC has never seriously considered a mix of refurbishment and selective demolition in the Welsh Streets. The Neighbourhood Renewal Assessments have never changed their

criteria, despite changes in policy and in Liverpool’s demographics. The very narrow range of options presented in the 2013 NRA Update includes full refurbishment on one hand (or refurbishment of Phase A with nothing done to Phase B) and, on the other, full demolition or demolition with only very minimal amounts of refurbishment (1-16 Madryn Street, Kelvin Grove, or both). LCC has never tested an option for refurbishment, say, of all of Kelvin Grove, Madryn Street and Kelvin Grove (as recommended by English Heritage), with demolition elsewhere in Phase A. It has never tested refurbishment of Phase B in the absence of full refurbishment of Phase A. It has never sought to explore whether properties in the best condition could be retained and those in the worst condition selectively demolished and replaced with new build, with further new build on the vacant sites, for example at the end of Voelas Street. There are many possible permutations, but none of them have been seriously considered.

“Cllr Ann O’Byrne stated in her third party representation that “we have listened to what local people want, and when I say local, I mean people who actually live in the Welsh Streets, and they want new modern homes with gardens and parking. This is what the scheme before you gives them” [emphasis added]. However PDG have made it clear that there are “no promises” to Phase B residents or former residents of Phase A, who would either have to purchase a new build property themselves (if they could afford to do so) or be allocated a house through the general housing waiting list according to their level of need. Furthermore, existing residents will inevitably have to be resettled elsewhere whilst demolition takes place, after which (like others already decanted from Phase A) they are unlikely to return to the Welsh Streets. Of course residents would similarly have to move out if extensive refurbishment of their properties took place – but this would at least offer a chance for those who wished to remain in the Welsh Streets to return.

“SAVE submits that a scheme involving greater refurbishment would better serve to create a healthy, inclusive community, allowing existing residents who wished to stay in the Welsh Streets a chance to remain in their homes and creating opportunities for a wider mix of people to move into the area.

“Demolition would involve huge loss of the embodied carbon within the existing

buildings, failing to meet the challenge of climate change. LCC/PDG have not sought to quantify the improved energy efficiency of new build properties to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3, so it is submitted that little weight can be placed on this as a supposed benefit of the scheme.

“There was some suggestion that the scheme might involve salvage of existing materials, but the application itself appears to be limited to salvage of a small number of granite kerbstones and thresholds. The proposed condition in this regard is in very general terms (certainly not for re-use of the imperial-sized bricks of the Welsh Streets in their current form), and the Inspector can place very limited weight on the prospect of materials being recycled in an energy-efficient way, if this is suggested to be a benefit of the scheme.

“It is submitted that the harm caused by the scheme clearly outweighs its supposed benefits.

“Further, it is submitted that the Secretary of State should be concerned by LCC’s reluctance for a condition to be imposed requiring a construction contract to be let before demolition commences. A larger number of vacant sites in Liverpool bear testimony to demolition having taken place without the promised new build following, and continue to remain subject to “interim landscaping” after many years.

“The Secretary of State will no doubt be asked by LCC/PDG to have regard to the benefits of the proposed scheme in light of the dis-benefits if planning permission is not granted. As noted above, it is alleged that the site would be left for another 5-10 years before a new planning application comes forward, if LCC/PDG do not get their way on this application. No weight should be afforded to this assertion, in circumstances where there has been a complete failure to consider alternatives or to test even a sample of the properties for refurbishment on the open market. There are statutory powers available to deal with the site if it does not come forward within an appropriate timeframe following refusal of planning permission.

“Finally, even if the Secretary of State were minded to grant permission for Phase A, consent for demolition should not be granted for Phase B, where there are no detailed or funded proposals and LCC/PDG have not even undertaken work to establish the

condition of the Phase B properties.

“Consent for this proposal and confirmation of the CPO would set a terrible precedent, encouraging demolition of empty homes rather than bringing them back into use. SAVE noted in opening that the Welsh Streets are said to be the last major proposed clearance, or the “final intervention”, of the NRA process set in train under HMRI. However if permission is granted for this scheme it would be allowing HMRI to continue despite its revocation, and might well lead some local authorities to consider reviving cancelled clearance programmes.

“There is a solution to the conundrum of the Welsh Streets, as SAVE has been saying for a long time:

“Kelvin Grove and 1-16 Madryn Street should be removed from the clearance zone straight away so refurbishment can be started (which does not require planning permission).

“Remaining Phase B residents should be offered suitable alternative accommodation off-site (whether on the new Mount Carmel School site or elsewhere).

“Phase B residents who wish to remain in the Welsh Streets should be offered help to enable them to improve their properties.

“The remaining properties should be properly and imaginatively marketed, which may involve LCC assembling a mix of refurbishment options and involving a variety of agencies (public, private, co-operative and others). This would require comprehensive management from LCC, with real open mindedness about alternatives to demolition in the Welsh Streets.”

Postscript:

This report was put together before the result of the inquiry was announced. On 16th January 2015 it was announced that the Secretary of State refused planning permission for this application, overruling the Planning Inspector. The Secretary of State's letter can be found on our website.



The tea-towel designed by Kitty Rice as a reward for our crowd funders.