



# EAST END HOWLER

— East London's FREE Working Class News Sheet —

For  
Community  
and  
Solidarity



## APARTHEID IN EAST LONDON

**East London is being transformed before our eyes. Glittering high rise buildings are shooting up everywhere, along with American-style shopping malls such as Westfield in Stratford. The traditional terraces of houses, council flats and markets are being either overshadowed or demolished, making our city a carbon copy of every other city in the world.**

It is not just the physical aspects of the city that are changing. More profoundly, it is the change in social class of the people who live here. East London has traditionally been a working class area both for British workers and immigrants fleeing persecution and/or seeking a better life. Now we are seeing an influx of finance workers, young professionals as well as investors seeking to make a profit out of property. This means that the current residents either have to be moved out or be 'contained' so that the well-heeled incomers will not be 'contaminated'. This is especially important for the foreign investors who are used to a sharp class divide and would not want to invest somewhere that was near social or less expensive housing.

The vast majority of new developments in the area

are designed to attract this 'better class' of resident. The developers are backed completely by Boris Johnson and the local councils. They claim that they are providing housing for Londoners but it is clear that it is not the less well-off Londoners that they are concerned with. Robin Wales, the mayor of Newham, has been ruthless in pursuing policies of social cleansing. He has set up council squads to harass rough sleepers, continues to threaten Queen's Market in Upton Park, refuses to develop Carpenters as a social housing estate and, whenever possible, tries to move the less well-off out of the borough.

Fed-up with being treated like second-class citizens, people are beginning to fight back against this 'apartheid' and social cleansing, challenging the take-over plans of the developers, foreign investors and politicians. Many campaigns now exist that are beginning to have an impact and showing the power we have for taking control of our communities.

This edition of The Howler focuses on two of the most inspiring and effective campaigns to have emerged over the past year: the 'E15 Focus Mothers' and the 'Rich-Door/Poor-Door' campaign.

# ONE DOOR FOR THE RICH, ONE DOOR FOR THE POOR



**Housing apartheid is at its most blatant in the Redrow apartment block at No. 1 Commercial St next to Aldgate East Station. This area, which once was home to radicals fleeing persecution and now to the Bengali community, is being promoted as one of the most sought after places to live, as well as a prime 'investment opportunity' because of its location near the City and the future Crossrail link being built at Whitechapel.**

*'One Commercial Street towers twenty-one stories above Aldgate East like a blade of light, its glass fin protruding dramatically to add a sculptural quality to Redrow's first flagship development' (from redrow.co.uk).*

In order to ensure that the development attracts either rich residents or investors to this 'flagship development', it must be marketed as being exclusive and up-scale. Unfortunately for the developers, they are sometimes forced to provide some housing that could be classed as 'affordable' and some which is 'social' in order to get planning permission. 'Affordable' is still beyond the reach of the average Londoner but it is still lower than the prices asked for the majority of the 'apartments' and 'penthouses', some of which are going for millions of pounds. The end result is that the developer is faced with the situation where the desired residents will be living in the same building as the undesirables. The solution devised by Redrow, as well as other developments through-out London, is to have two separate entrances for the two groups. (<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/jul/25/poor-doors-segregation-london-flats>) At One Commercial Street, the main entrance has a vast lobby with security guards and receptionists, resembling an up-scale hotel reception. The 'poor door' is around in a dingy side alley with nothing in the narrow entrance but the mail boxes.

The protesters have talked to residents from both doors. One of those coming out of the 'rich door' did not even know that there was a 'poor door' and was clearly sympathetic to the protest. Some of the 'poor door' residents have revealed some more details of the discrimination. The lift frequently breaks down and they are not allowed to use the 'rich' lift.

The protest gets bigger every week and is set to continue until the two doors are abolished. However, it is not just

about the two doors. We would not be happy if there was only one door. The 'two-doors' symbolises what is happening across London: the take-over of London by the rich. This is but one step in a growing movement to fight the encroachment of the developers, the rich and foreign investors into our communities.

The No. 1 Commercial St. protest has been initiated by the Class War Party and they have ensured that it is a lively and fun protest that has attracted a lot of support from a range of other groups and individuals, including from Action East End, as well as attention from passers-by. It will continue until the two-door policy is abolished. However, this cannot be the only building that has a 'rich door' and a 'poor door'. Look around you where you live, maybe you yourself have to go through a 'poor door', and organise your own campaign. The more there are such campaigns the better!

**Protest every Wednesday from 6-7 pm outside One Commercial Street. Nearest tube - Aldgate East.**

**For more information: [www.classwarparty.org.uk](http://www.classwarparty.org.uk)**

## REDROW AND ITS CHAIRMAN: STEVE MORGAN

- Redrow had a 91% jump in full-year pre-tax profit to £132.6 million for the year to June.
- London makes up 20% of its business with £124 million in sales.
- Morgan owns 30% of the shares, so his dividend is 3 million.
- Morgan's personal wealth is estimated to be £560 million.
- In addition to Redrow, he owns Wolverhampton Wanderers FC, and is chair of the Bridgemere Group of Companies and Carden Leisure.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/comment/redrow-chairman-steve-morgan-rakes-in-3m-as-annual-profits-double-9706794.html>

## HOW REDROW ADVERTISES 1 COMMERCIAL STREET TO POTENTIAL INVESTORS

From: [www.redrow.co.uk/london/en/developments/one-commercial-street](http://www.redrow.co.uk/london/en/developments/one-commercial-street)

- Exceptional potential to deliver strong returns
- Located within a short walk of the forthcoming Whitechapel Crossrail
- Knight Frank have forecasted a 32% increase in property values around Whitechapel Crossrail.
- Property values in Tower Hamlets have risen 5.2% in the past 12 months
- The Aldgate area is undergoing extensive redevelopment, which will help it become one of capital's

premier addresses.

- There is a strong existing rental market around One Commercial Street, driven by its outstanding location.
- Finance workers enjoy the convenient access to the City.
- London boasts some of the world's top universities, attracting students from all over the globe. In fact, around 1/3 of all prime London rentals are taken by international students.  
([www.building.co.uk/rich-students-rent-a-third-of-prime-london-homes/5047971.article](http://www.building.co.uk/rich-students-rent-a-third-of-prime-london-homes/5047971.article))



## FOCUS E15 MOTHERS: LEADING THE WAY TO EFFECTIVE RESISTANCE

**The campaign of the young mothers expelled from the E15 hostel has now been going on for a year and has gone from strength to strength, thanks to the determination, imagination and organising skills of these women and the support they have received from those who they have inspired.**

The recent occupation of Carpenters Estate (for two weeks, ending on October 6th) has been a resounding success in many ways:

- In making gains in their local struggle
- In drawing attention to the wider fight for social housing
- In raising awareness of social cleansing
- In demonstrating the power of radical self-organisation by the people affected themselves.

The campaign had already forced Newham Council to back down on their plans to 'decant' them away from the area - and has now provided them with accommodation in the area (though only in private rental accommodation), but the campaign has also drawn huge public and media attention to the abuses of landlords and councils (a Labour council no less) around social housing. The ugliness of the state was laid bare in physical violence (vandalising the water supply to the occupation), legal intimidation (refusing negotiations that E15 mothers had pursued from the beginning and serving an unlawful court summons) and media attacks (where they were labelled as 'agitators and hangers on' involved in 'petty stunts').

All of this was achieved through a self-organised campaign by the very people involved. They themselves pulled apart the rhetoric of the council. They themselves articulated the different campaigns of the hostel, the Carpenters Estate, and other groups such as Friends of Queens Market. They themselves negotiated with the council and the courts, handled the media, and disseminated information via social media. And they are not stopping there - they continue to battle for social housing, both at the Carpenters and looking further at the wider struggle for social housing in the borough, in London and across the country. In their words 'This experience has shown us that there is a broad based movement for council housing in London. There are empty homes in every borough, every town and every city in the country'. This nesting and interlinking of struggles - the personal, local, city-wide and national - is vital for the long-term strength of action for social housing.

One of the keys is finding the things that these struggles have in common, the themes that run between them. There is a theme running through all these local situations - whether it is the decanting and demolition at Carpenters or the 'Poor Doors' at 1 Commercial Street: money from the rich trumps housing for the poor. Capitalism demands and the state supplies. Local councils see local people as dispensable or interchangeable - people that can be 'decanted' to aid development, to make buildings available to be demolished, and to push up prices by cleansing an area of 'undesirables'. This is often quite brazen, with councillors talking about bringing in a 'better class of people'. And if they can't be partitioned by decanting them

CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE

to other areas, they will be partitioned within their own buildings. The East End, along with many other parts of the country, are becoming seen less as places with community and history, and instead places of 'opportunity' for business and the rich, at the expense of local working class people, either through displacement or segregation – but either way, through a social apartheid of rich and poor.

To fight these broad forces and to find success beyond local struggles, organisation is vital. The communication and organisation between Focus E15 and other campaigns and the public, gave it the strength it needed against the council. What the campaign for social housing must do

now is to replicate these successes not just in new localities, but also through connecting struggles across boroughs, cities and the country as a whole.

**Focus E15 Mothers will continue their stall at Saturday on Stratford Broadway outside Wilkinsons from 12-2pm.**

**Follow them on Facebook and Twitter**

**<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Focus-E15-Mothers/602860129757343>**

**@FocusE15**

## USEFUL ADDRESSES

### **Tower Hamlets Federation of Tenants & Residents Associations**

C/o Unite Community Centre, St Georges Town Hall, 236 Cable Street, London E1 OBL  
Email: [admin@th-federation.org.uk](mailto:admin@th-federation.org.uk) | Website: [th-federation.org.uk](http://th-federation.org.uk)  
Tel: 07903060303

### **Tower Hamlets Renters**

C/o Unite Community Centre, St Georges Town Hall, 236 Cable Street, London E1 0BL  
Email: [towerhamletsrenters@gmail.com](mailto:towerhamletsrenters@gmail.com)

### **Tower Hamlets Leaseholders Association**

6 Watney Market, London E1 2PR

### **Friends of Queens Market**

142 Clements Road, London E6 2DL  
Email: [friendsofqueensmarket@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:friendsofqueensmarket@yahoo.co.uk)

### **Newham Monitoring Project**

Office telephone: 020 8470 8333 | 24 hour Emergency Helpline: 0800 169 3111  
The Harold Rd Centre, 170 Harold Rd, Upton Park, London E13 0SE

### **Random Blowe**

Great blog on what's happening in Newham and all points north, south, east and west  
<http://www.blowe.org.uk/p/about-random-blowe.html>

## ABOUT ACTION EAST END



The East End Howler is produced by Action East End. We are a small group of local residents keen to highlight issues not taken up by the popular media. All of this, as so much in life, costs money...and surprise, surprise, we're not millionaires! So please donate a small amount for each copy of the Howler you take.

If you like what we're doing and feel like doing more, please send an e-mail to: [actioneastend@gmail.com](mailto:actioneastend@gmail.com)

We will add you to our mailing list and keep you informed of our latest activities. Alternatively, if you supply us with an address, we will send you a paper copy of our news letter and a free East End Howler through the post.