

# Draper House Refurbishment Independent Investigation

Claer Lloyd-Jones  
LLB Solicitor

claer.lloyd-jones@hotmail.com  
07813 621107

# Context- An understandable potential for conflict

- The independent investigation was set up in response to continuing complaints from residents about the delivery of major works at Draper House.
- Built in 1965 by the LCC, it is an unusual and striking design which has attracted some residents who have an artistic or design background and who feel strongly about the integrity of the building

# An understandable potential for conflict

- No major works for 17 years
- Inexplicable delays
- Strata building and legal problems
- Scaffolding and netting up for 3 years
- Breyer appointed and started on site Xmas 2011- problems identified from the start
- DRA, a considerable asset, raised concerns- site management, quality of work
- Breyer suspended Nov 2012- carbon monoxide incident

# An understandable potential for conflict

- No works carried out until the contract was mutually terminated in March 2013
- AE Elkins appointed following a resident ballot
- Insufficient due diligence carried out- faults left by Breyer – e.g. disagreement about number of non-decent kitchens
- Compensation payments were felt to be inadequate
- 2 deputations to Council Assembly

# An understandable potential for conflict

- Further delay of 4 months while Arup reviewed exterior cleaning
- No resident satisfaction survey
- Leading politicians have apologised publically- how is this translated into action by officers?

# Terms of Reference

- a) Communications
  - b) Building works
  - c) Governance and Transition
- (Set out in full on page 15)

# Findings- Communications

- Communications universally regarded as poor
- Given the special features of delay-communications should be an exemplar
- Confusing mix of communications from the Council and the contractors – no clear single voice from Southwark
- Poor communications contributed to breakdown of trust

# Findings- Building works

- OSC recommendations address problems with contractors
- No single decision-maker from Southwark on site
- No risk assessment – particularly reputational risk due to failure to manage resident expectations
- RPT not successful- ‘Putting ResidentsFirst’ needs review against best practice

# Findings- Building Works cont.

- No adequate programme of works- for communal areas or individual properties
- Completion date consequently moved back without explanation, appointments moved and inconvenience caused
- Substantial problems with quality of work
- Compensation strategy inadequate – further legal action
- Lessons to be learned set out on p 26

# Governance and Transition

- Governance at Draper House changed twice but roles and responsibilities were never made clear causing confusion
- Large volumes of emails may have been caused by absence of decision-maker at site level, and no single point of contact for complaints
- At times it is unclear who is making decisions

# Recommendations - Communications

- One senior person has responsibility for ensuring all communications within major works projects are open, timely and effective.
- Regular soundings are taken through TRAs and satisfaction surveys, including establishing preferred method of communications.
- Use joint Council/TRA communications where possible.

# Recommendations-Communications

- Join up communications between Council departments
- Regular, pro-active brief for Ward Councillors
- Explain delays early, with an apology, preferably before the delay and from the residents point of view
- Senior Council presence to be available on site

# Recommendations - Communications

- Transition arrangements should be via a single point of contact; Housing management Team have important role to play; all relevant parties need to meet
- Single point of contact for emails and correspondence

# Recommendations –Building works

- OSC recommendations are fully implemented
- Risk assessment is carried out prior to determining staffing arrangements
- ‘Putting residents first’ is reviewed against best practice elsewhere
- Resident liaison is a stronger criteria for contractor selection, including extensions of 3 existing contractors in partnering arrangements

# Recommendations-Building Works

- Programme of works must be produced and must include communal areas and individual properties
- RPT conducts facilitated review before practical completion which is published to residents
- Transition pack to be published to all residents

# Recommendations- Governance

- Skills and experience of Project Team members examined carefully in advance. Construction experience and customer care experience are essential.
- Explanation of roles and responsibilities are published- avoid two project managers in future
- PMs should be able to make decisions on site

# Recommendations- Governance

- Southwark provides methodology for accountability to residents and Councillors for each future project
- That residents are involved in sign off of works

# Conclusion

- Relationships between residents and the Council have broken down.
- Underlying lack of trust.
- 23 recommendations.
- Lessons to be learned for the future.
- Council comes across as being serious about wanting to make things better, but it must listen to residents and take their concerns seriously.

# The Report

- I was appointed as independent investigator 17<sup>th</sup> January 2014.
- I interviewed 53 people of which 29 are residents of Draper House
- I read 19 key documents and numerous emails
- DRA organised 3 meetings for me to meet residents
- I also attended Council Assembly and a Draper House Residents panel
- The report was completed in July 2014

# Next Steps

- Housing Departments produces an Action Plan with timescales and milestones to implement the recommendations and lessons learned
- A monitoring group meets regularly to examine progress- suggested membership:
  - Chair of this meeting,
  - Cabinet Portfolio holder for Housing,
  - Ward Councillors,
  - TRA/DRA representatives,
  - Housing Department Officers.