



Demolition: flats on the Heygate estate and, inset, an impression of the replacement Trafalgar Place development. New homes are being marketed in the Far East

Residents of the forced to move

Mira Bar-Hillel

DOZENS of residents of the Heygate estate have been forced out to locations as far away as Slough and St Albans, it has been revealed.

Homeowners say the offers they received for their flats, after the Elephant and Castle site was sold to Australian giant Lend Lease, did not cover buying locally. At the same time, it is marketing homes there in China, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore that have yet to be built.

It comes as the last two remaining residents on the estate are due to be moved within weeks, with the council warning that it may resort to using bailiffs.

Southwark council sold the site six years ago after council bosses decided to regenerate the area in 2004, following decades of neglect. Initially leaseholders were offered the chance to use their equity

Slough switch: former resident Orho Okorodudu



to part-buy higher value new flats on site. But by the time the deal was signed in 2007 the offers had been withdrawn. Lend Lease has renamed the site Trafalgar Place and has planning consent for 2,535 homes – of which 79 will be for social renting.

Prices at Trafalgar Place start from £330,000 for a studio. But the average compensation the council offered for one-bedroom flats was £93,112.

One former resident, Orho Okorodudu, was offered only £80,000 for his Heygate flat. He is now living in Slough. He told a BBC documentary: "We realised that local properties started at around £300,000.

"Their attitude was – 'this is what we are offering, take it or leave it'. There was no compromise. They wanted us out and were not willing to pay the cost. There is no way that we will be able to afford to move back to London – not in my lifetime."

Terry Redpath, a former Southwark housing officer, lived on the estate

Heygate estate out of London



"I feel I have had to give up my home to allow the building of homes for overseas investors"

Terry Redpath with wife Brenda

since 1974 but had to move to Sidcup using his £45,000 life savings. "I feel I have been forced to give up my home to accommodate the building of homes for overseas investors," he said.

Other leaseholders have ended up in Croydon, Orpington and Ilford. Once home to 3,000 people, the estate has slowly been emptied, with 1,100 homes being gradually demolished at a cost of £44 million. Now only two residents remain. One of them, Mojisola Ojeikere, a former civil servant, claims the council has used every method they can to try to force her out. Ms Ojeikere, who lives in a fifth-floor flat, said: "The council are valuing my two-bed flat at just £150,000 and have refused to negotiate.

Three years ago they cut off our heating and switched off the lifts."

The other resident, Adrian Glasspool, says he was offered £225,000 for a three-bed ground-floor maisonette. The equivalent on the new estate would cost about £1 million. "Lend Lease is estimated to make a £200 million profit from the expropriation of our homes. We have literally been sold out by our own council," he said.

Fiona Colley, cabinet member for regeneration at Southwark council said: "We are in some difficult times economically and we are getting a great deal for Londoners."

■ *The Heygate scandal will be on BBC London News tonight at 6.30 and 10.25*