



**PRESS RELEASE 23rd JULY**

**Liverpool Council grants Housing Association, Plus Dane, permission to demolish 440 houses on the Welsh Streets, Toxteth, Liverpool - a continuation of Pathfinder-scale demolition 18 months after the Government officially called an end to the destructive policy.**

In a heated meeting in Liverpool's town hall today, Liverpool Council voted 6 to 1 to approve an application to demolish 12 streets, saving 40 terraced houses for refurbishment, including Ringo Starr's house at No.9 Madryn Street.

The demolition area includes an inhabited area of housing in four streets called, 'Phase B', a move the government's independent empty homes advisor, architect and TV personality George Clarke, condemned as 'social cleansing'.

The current proposals involve the demolition of 440 homes, the refurbishment of 40 homes and funding for 150 new builds with outline permission (without funding) for a further 70. This represents a net loss of at least 220 houses, and potentially 290.

The Welsh Streets have been a battleground since 2003, when plans were first tabled to destroy the tree-lined streets of 130-year-old Victorian homes, which were built by Welsh immigrant workers for their families, and named after the valleys and villages of their homeland.

Over the last ten years, around 750 people have left the area, many under duress as housing association landlords ceased vital repairs and boarded up hundreds of homes.

Liverpool council resolved to issue Compulsory Purchase Orders to remaining residents in 2005. At that point a majority of residents strongly opposed demolition.

The planning committee today heard impassioned arguments from both sides of a now divided community, with many pleas from residents left in limbo to be provided with the new homes they have been promised by Plus Dane, while objectors condemned the Pathfinder process of 'managed decline' for having reduced a thriving community to ruins through a decade of increasing dereliction, delay and decay.

Local residents, the Welsh Streets Home Group tabled a compromise solution, asking applicant Plus Dane to consider new designs which would preserve a further two streets, while allowing sufficient demolition and new build to rehouse those desperately wanting

new homes. Their proposal saves a further 54 houses.

SAVE supports this compromise and is also calling for the retention of the inhabited 'Phase B' streets.

Those in Phase B who wish to move to new homes would still have the option to be rehoused in the new builds planned for Phase A.

SAVE will now appeal to Secretary of State Eric Pickles to call the decision in to be scrutinised in a public inquiry. SAVE holds that today's decision runs against government policy to build more homes and refurbish empty ones.

SAVE owns a house on the Welsh Streets at 21 Madryn Street. SAVE purchased the house in order to demonstrate the houses are both desirable and pleasant to live in.

SAVE will receive a CPO if plans to demolish proceed, which we can challenge in a Public Inquiry.

Today's objectors who made spoken representations included a Liverpool resident who wishes to move to the area. She had moved to Liverpool as a student 8 years ago and wishes to stay. For her, Liverpool's empty homes represent an opportunity to get on the housing ladder. She said, 'I belong to a group of graduates who want to refurbish and call a house in this area my home. There are lots of people of my age who want to live and invest in Liverpool; we want to be part of a vibrant community in a way we can afford. There are people saying that people don't want to live here but I and those like me prove that's not true.'

**Resident of SAVE's house on Madryn Street Chris Fontaine** said: 'when we moved in two years ago we spent £3,500 on flooring, paintwork and tiling and now we live in a fully functioning home. It is an ideal location that allows my partner to walk to work, and I am close to university where I'm studying.'

**Jonathan Brown of Share the City** said: 'If it goes through, the application will represent the triumph of managed decline over real regeneration. There will be up to 300 fewer homes and no local shops or businesses on the site. There will be around 750 less people in the area than before the scheme. A neighbourhood of fewer, smaller and less characterful houses would be a poor return for the millions of public money spent.'

**SAVE Director Clem Cecil** said: 'We have seen the failures of HMR - Pathfinder, and be in no doubt - this is Pathfinder continued. Pathfinder is a destructive, cynical policy that divides communities. We will be seeking a public inquiry to look at the planning permission granted today.'

For more information and images please contact:

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### Notes for Editors

- John Prescott's notorious Housing Market Renewal 'Pathfinders' spent £2.2bn buying up and bulldozing 30,000 Victorian terraced houses in the north and midlands, often resorting to compulsory purchase to oust homeowners.
- BBC Radio 4 - Renovation fund used for demolition <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-21675093>
- Rather than face full Judicial Review, Communities Minister Eric Pickles finally accepted a 'quashing order' in June. <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/legal/clg-told-to-put-a-stop-to-demolition-or-face-court/6527223.article>
- Bridget Hogan Story <http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/88-year-old-bootle-woman-evicted-home-3349526>
- Housing Minister Mark Prisk Statement and comment <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm130510/wmstext/130510m0001.htm>
- Alicia Rose story, Edge Hill <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-merseyside-22397521>
- Gateshead story <http://www.sbresidents.org/>
- Welsh Sts Ed Vulliamy story <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/apr/21/fight-to-save-ringo-starr-estate>
- George Clarke social cleansing story <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/mar/27/liverpool-rotting-housing-renewal-pathfinder>
- Homes for £1 Daily Mail story <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2295470/Tale-Two-Kensingtons-In-London-average-house-price-19m-Liverpool-homes-sale-1.html>
- Don Foster MP announces George Clarke Recommendations <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/91-million-cash-to-tackle-over-6000-empty-and-derelict-homes>
- Huffington Post and Big Issue journalist Adam Forrest on the unlearned lessons of empty homes policy [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/adam-forrest/britains-empty-homes-the-unlearned-lessons\\_b\\_2203836.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/adam-forrest/britains-empty-homes-the-unlearned-lessons_b_2203836.html)

SAVE Britain's Heritage has been campaigning for historic buildings since its formation in 1975 by a group of architects, journalists and planners. It is a strong, independent voice in conservation, free to respond rapidly to emergencies and to speak out loud for the historic built environment.

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