

A Draft proposal on how the CRE rebuild might help with social regeneration

A Personal suggestion from Dr. Mike D'Souza MD FRSA -Chair of One Norbiton



Helical Home Streets

Fig 1 Spiral interconnected stacked neighbourhoods surrounding a central communal area with amenities (18x60 = 1080 units)

After spending 40 years doing home visits on the CRE and working as a GP in Kingston, I could not help but notice that some of the most successful, supportive and neighborly communities live in cul de sacs. On the Cambridge estate now there is not nearly as much neighborliness as people would like, but there are many factors opposing its development and increase social stress also there are very few cul de sacs.

Challenges for CRE neighborliness

Churn, or population turnover, is contributing to poor social cohesiveness, (using the two electoral rolls of 2014 and 2017 in just one of the towers, Madingley, I found that the churn among the registered electorate was 23% including 3 deaths). Also, we are witnessing periodic invasions by the local homeless seeking temporary shelter (and occasionally these start dwelling for the longer term in the corridors). There is also chronic lift failure that is particularly stressful for the disabled and young mothers in high rise accommodation. Substance abuse is long standing problem that still too common and Illicit drug-dealing continues to thrive, (aided and abetted by the structure of long rat-runs enabling escape from police and look out vantage points). Nevertheless, the vast majority of residents are law abiding and things have been steadily improving. This is witnessed by the many residents who do not want to leave.

Outline Proposals

The basic idea

Therefore, I would like at the to propose a design feature for the regeneration that would use modern technology to replicate some of the first multi-storey buildings in history and produce a series of ziggurat-based Helical Home street.

These would incorporate the wishes of our existing residents and be, in essence, a series of simple coiled cul de sac streets coming off a central communicating rising coiled road. At the centre of these would be grassed play areas where children could play safely and be supervised, the coiling would also permit individual gardens or balconies to be created on the top of roofs of the houses below rising to quite a high level.

Certainly, in the wake of Grenfell, any regeneration of the CRE building stock must show case how much we prioritize social regeneration. (See photo-diagram made from £1 coins each representing a helical neighborhood of about 60 dwellings. The engineering costs are reduced, if instead of curves there straight -edged twelve-sided spirals like the modern £1-pound coin). To get 60 units per neighborhood the spiral would only need to rise to five stories, although depending on land area some stacking of these helical neighbourhoods. (To achieve over 2000 units, we would need to double the size of this diagram)

Broadening the land area

It may be possible to extend the **footprint of the development** to include the Cemetery.

With proper permissions graves tended by living relatives could be tastefully re-sited perhaps in a modern catacomb. Then considerably more green space could be available as well as the famous Hog's mill river. (One Norbiton did propose this three years ago and some local citizens were asked what they thought of the idea. None objected, however clearly all faith groups should be involved before this could be implemented and provision made for continuing funeral services.

Flexibility

Planning social housing requires flexibility with regards to the numbers of units and their physical. By constructing adjoining units in a way that will facilitate their merging, much like Hotel bedrooms, this problem can be addressed. However, **soundproofing** is a very important issue that must not be compromised. As social housing is to be constructed alongside owner-occupied it is essential that it is not externally identifiable as such.

Transport & Parking

If 2000+ households are to live in the new development, providing car parking space for all will be impossible. One suggestion could be to provide *no spaces for any one on site* but instead instituting a system of electrical vehicles for communal use around the estate that could also be used be by residents access off-site parking.

Energy Saving

TESLA solar roof tiles and power walls
Heat pumps etc. must be considered.

Halls and shared spaces

Each spiral cul-de-sac neighborhood **would** surround its own green area and share some amenities with other local neighbourhoods
Situating by a central shared garden would be a larger meeting place accommodating sports, performance spaces, crèches etc.

Garden areas

Each unit would in addition have their own small garden area or balcony

Other shared facilities

Internet, TV and Monitoring facility for disabled and elderly linked to an experimental on-line voting facilities to assist community decision-making.

References

1. Neave Brown Alexander Rd
2. <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/seminarpapers/ses18032006richardson.pdf>

3. *"The Cul-de-sacs may not be quite as popular as they once were but people lucky enough to live on one are the happiest people in Britain, a survey has revealed.*

Neighbors on the dead-end streets are more likely to know each-other's names, enjoy cups of coffee together and lend tools when compared to any other community.

The good life found on a cul-de-sac, long considered the epitome of middle class suburban Britain, is so sought after by homebuyers that people will pay up to 20 per cent more just to secure a property, experts say."

Daily Mail 2013

Please add your ideas or comments to the e-Democracy site