



APSE Best Practice Group

Regeneration of Rugby's LPS High Rise blocks

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Making the case for Regeneration



Biart Place

2 x 11-storey blocks of 62 homes
Each comprising 20 x 1-bed & 42 x 2-bed homes
1 x low rise block of 8 x 1-bed homes

Total 132 homes



Rounds Gardens

3 x 11 storey blocks of 63 units
Each comprising 20 x 1-bed & 43 x 2-bed homes
2 x low rise blocks of 16 homes (32 x 1-bed)

Total 221 homes



Making the case for Regeneration



Service User Perceptions

- Issues with popularity/demand
- Increasingly seen as housing of last resort
- Expensive and difficult to heat
- Service charges made it relatively expensive (CCTV and concierge)
- Poor perception of homes
- Town centre location attractive

Inherent building constraints

- Outdated layouts and inefficient space usage
- Common areas difficult layouts for escape purposes
- Difficult to refurbish because of structural grid
- Large Panel System (LPS) build with poor workmanship issues

Outcomes

- Options appraisal needed to identify future investment requirements



Structural investigations key findings

Intrusive investigation, critical friend review and detailed structural analysis, identified:

- Poor build quality
- Friable dry pack installation
- Lack of ties between slabs
- Missing bolts, dowels & loops
- Onset of corrosion to steelwork
- Carbonation of concrete
- High chloride levels within concrete
- Floor panel construction / depth variation



Technical analysis

No viable refurbishment option:

- Structural defects cannot be addressed fully
- No warranty for structural remedial works available
- Full decant necessary even for refurbishment
- **Questionable if tenants would want to return post any refurb**
- Concrete deterioration cannot be reversed.
- Asbestos difficult to fully remove in refurbishment option
- Refurbishment option not financially beneficial compared to full regeneration

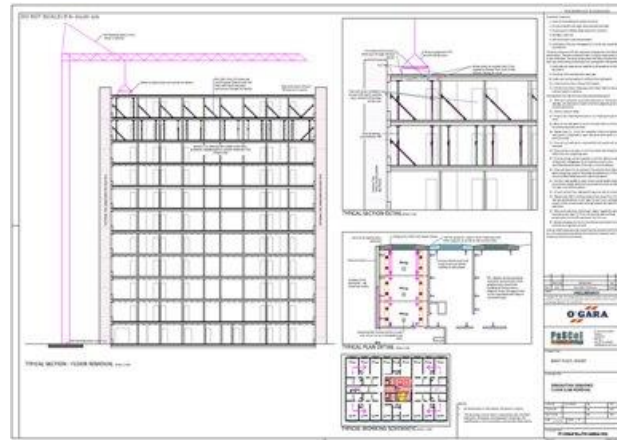
Technical Aspects- demolition

Understand and manage the hazards

Know the structures and modes of failure

Plan the works

Follow the plan



The leadership role of the Council

- Due to the tragedy of Grenfell – people living in the blocks were highly likely to be anxious about the structural issues identified
- It was critical that we provided excellent communications to reassure and support people and to treat them with the respect they deserved
- We had to demonstrate leadership amongst a huge range of stakeholders
- It was vital that Council service operated as a single team in organising its response to the issues identified



Putting our tenants first

- Our work was person centred, allowing people to be treated with the dignity and support appropriate to their individual circumstances
- We put the legwork in – visiting each household (more than once) to identify hopes, fears, aspirations and needs – time well invested
- Our presence was very notable on site – we wanted to keep both our visibility and accountability high, taking every opportunity to provide reassurance
- We were mindful of the broad range of disabilities and support needs not just for the decant but the roll-out of a new evacuate upon instruction protocol. This triggered early moves for the most vulnerable
- We invested in a hard-wire fire detection system as an interim measure, as well as a 24 hour waking watch. Tenant safety was paramount



The value of effective communication

- This is where being a small LA came into its own – across services, we talk to one-another and know our customers
- This was critical for getting the right outcome for our tenants.
- We were a good neighbour - mindful of the needs of the wider community, including businesses surrounding Biart Place – we reached out to them
- We engaged Create Streets to hold a community consultation event
- This event shaped the resulting method statements for demolition of the blocks reflecting concerns raised in respect of noise, dust and asbestos
- We upheld our commitment to provide regular updates on progress on our website



Getting the right messages out at the right time

- We set up a dedicated phone-line for tenants but were surprised by the very low call volumes we received
- We reached out to establish why and tenants told us that that they felt that the communication flow was working well, they felt informed and therefore did not feel the need to contact us
- We made sure that our documents were in the public domain – we wanted to ensure that people had the facts and did not speculate.
- We had feedback that tenants were surprised by our openness and valued being made aware of decisions about their homes ahead of decisions being made, so things did not just feel like they were happening to them



Working with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue

- We sat down with them early on and flagged up the issues identified
- We engaged our insurers and specialist fire safety consultants in these conversations
- From day 1, we ensured that plans were in place to assist should there be a need to evacuate the blocks
- We continue to provide weekly updated floor plans highlighting occupied and void properties, PEEPS listings etc.
- We even welcomed them, along with their peers from other counties, to use the empty blocks at Biart Place for training exercises.



Lessons for future projects

- Keep information in the public domain wherever possible
- Inform Members so that they can make quick decisions
- There is always more asbestos than you've found in the surveys.
- Time spent up-front is a good investment in the project. There would have been significant time delays / cost increases had we not undertaken the investigations / spent time with demolition contractors getting to know and understand the structures and the people living in them
- No two buildings are the same (even when they may at first appear identical).
- A high calibre structural engineer and experienced contractors are essential for work of this nature.
- Doing it right attracts additional costs, but it's significantly more cost effective than having to put it right when a 'cheaper' option goes wrong
- Sharing our experiences with others – for example, the Building Research Establishment, fire training and other authorities

