



MOVING_ME?

London council estates are undergoing the most sweeping changes in a generation with major 'renewal' programmes causing varying degrees of anxiety, with residents' lives disrupted, and in some cases, being requested to leave their home. Moving_Me? is a collection of single square format mobile phone photographs and stories contributed by residents on affected estates that best represents how they feel about the structural and social change taking place around them.

The photo elicitation project is part of 'Gentrification, Displacement, and the Impacts of Council Estate Renewal in C21st London' Moving_Me? provides tenants and homeowners the opportunity to respond creatively to the research by submitting one photograph that sums up their view of the change taking place around them. Photographs were submitted with or without comment. The photographs and stories will be archived alongside the research interviews, collected documents and published papers.

Moving_Me? is funded by the Economic Social Research Council (ESRC) and led by the University of Leicester, with co-investigation by King's College London.



FIJI TO PEPYS

PW has lived on the Pepys Estate as a council tenant since 1982 and feels the area is improving and the council is doing a good job, “although there is always room for improvement,” this is her story... “I have not always lived in London, but always loved London, came as a young woman from Fiji. Travelled around, lived in Essex, Brighton, Bournemouth and Midlands and places like that. I trained as a nurse and I am still a nurse. I used to work in hospitals and now work in a home of a Christian charity. In 1982 I moved to Pepys and have been in the same flat since then. I have seen Pepys change a lot, it has been improving all the time, there is still room for improving further but it has got better. I like the river view, the ships that pass and in summer it is very nice, sometimes row boats come this way. There is too much turnover of people in my flats now. I am happy with my neighbours; some have been around as long as I have been there. There is no threat to move us. The 1987 hurricane tore off the stairs to one of the towers, and that is why the cladding had to be attached so not to damage the building further. There used to be car parks under the towers and shops. The Council is doing reasonably good work on the estate. In the 80s we had no security doors or security in the flat. There used to be a lot of break-ins and robberies. They got rid of the car park and the newsagent’s, launderette and other shops moved all over the road. They demolished lots of building across the road and built new ones, that didn’t cause anyone any problems. I am happy where am I. The Aragon Tower is really nice now, doesn’t belong to the council anymore. Not sure about Eddystone Tower. There used to be an underground car park there too but that was demolished. There should be a concierge but council cannot fund it. Yes, I am a council tenant. Council did a good job on the history plaques along the river walk. There used to be dolphins in the Thames and Captain Cook left here and went to Fiji.”



NAMELESS ESTATE AGENT

While Y was homeless, she would clean homes that were for private rental, including penthouses, for an estate agent in exchange for staying overnight, this is her story... “I was offered a place on Pepys Estate in 2011 after being homeless. Funnily, I met a guy on the bus yesterday who said, “you slept in my garden shed”, which was true. You cannot do that for long. I went to live with someone and it did not work out, it caused a big problem when I had a political meeting in her living room. I stayed in many places around here; I had a deal with an estate agent who will remain nameless, where I could stay in a place and give it a good clean, sometimes it could be for 4 nights. One really beautiful penthouse over there (points) with a bed that meant you could see views from three windows was my favourite, it was huge, took 4-days to clean! I had a big battle to get housed by Lewisham homes. Ended up on the Pepys. People are very noisy upstairs. The neighbours put down laminate floor without any insulation so you can hear every noise. I made my place all warm by buying many bits of carpet from all around, the place was so cold, it was built around 1970s. I love where I live. The council don't do much these days so I sweep the garden and surrounding area. I love gardening and I help people with their gardens. For me this is just being part of a community. I have the key to the caretaker's cupboard, I asked for a hard brush broom and the council got it specially and I keep sweeping the driveway, doing the weeding, and little jobs. I like cleaning and like keeping the building clean.”



MAMA J COOKBOOK

Central to the Pepys Estate, JJ recounts her own roots and ethos that is bringing the local community together, this is her story...

From Freetown Kisaumi to Southampton.
To the Pepys Library, Pepys Estate, London.
The village ethos - food for thought.
The community was brought together with food.
Discussion around the table - open house bring and share.
Communication through food is the key on a Wednesday.
And most days you can come and get a freshly cooked meal.
For the homeless you get a packed lunch.
Sharing recipes and creating a cookbook.
Cookery on a low budget: What to do with a tin of beans.
We have no set menu, in fact it's what do you have to go in the pot.
End result: Mama J's Cookbook and Healthy Living.

Words from JJ



CALM PEPYS

AB is entering her teenage years and moved from Kilburn to Pepys with her family and feels lucky, finding her new home calm and more relaxing, this is her story... “Just moved here 2 years ago from Kilburn. The family was moved because of the rats in the flat. I like Pepys and the river, it is calm here; Kilburn was loud because of the road. I moved school to Lewisham and made some new friends and some old school friends live in the area.

Our flat here is better than Kilburn, the view is way better. In the old house we lived in front of McDonalds. One day my Mum and Aunt went out without us and then later we saw them in McDonalds and were really sad; we wanted McDonalds.

Now I can see the river and the park. Most of our family and friends think we are lucky to have to such views. Mum and Dad are very happy in the new flat. I have an older Sister and younger Brother. I like the community here, when I am tired or sick of the house I can come to the library or go to the river. In Kilburn we could not go out much.”



BLOCK CHANGE

M grew up on the Pepys Estate with her Mum and Dad until Lewisham Council moved them out in 2003, before their block was finally demolished. M lived in a building identical to the one that appears on right hand side of the photograph. Her block was where the new building, see left hand side of the photo, now stands, this is her story... “We could not wait to get out once we were told our block was going to be demolished, most of the neighbours felt the same. The building had a nice community but was in need of lots of work and the area was dangerous in 1980s when I was growing up. From the time the letters arrived telling us we were being moved to being moved was about 10 years. We were one of the last to leave as I was getting older and I really needed a place of my own. As people started being decanted, squatters began to move in and it got pretty horrible. The electricity was switched off in the empty flats so the squatters dangled extension cables down the outside of the block from flats where the electricity was still connected. The area around the block became pretty bad with rubbish. I got moved to a nice flat about a mile and half away and my mum and dad were also moved nearby. I was back here just to visit my friend (M walks towards where she used to live). These new flats are a lot smaller inside and you can hear your neighbours. In this block, (pointing to the older flats of the same design of her old building) the rooms are big and spacious, really well built and people are happy in there. My friend still lives there and really likes it. It is much cleaner and safer around here now.”