

The Empty Homes Agency

PROD Case Study

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The Sad Story of the Creation
of a Slum in North London

2006



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In the early 1970s the Department of Transport decided on new road widening scheme affecting the North Circular Road Bowes Road and Telford Road in London N11. The scheme required the demolition of over 300 houses.

In preparation over the next few years hundreds of homes were compulsorily purchased by the Department of Transport. But the road was never widened. Over the years several different schemes were proposed and the dropped but no work was actually started. In the meantime the blight on the area caused many of the properties to become empty and fall into disrepair. Today, 35 years later, responsibility for the road scheme and ownership of the houses has passed from Dept of Transport to Transport for London but still no decision has

been made about widening the road. The homes, and the residents remain in limbo.



Today 366 homes in the area remain in public hands, and according to figures from Transport for London 79 are empty. In the words of one resident

the area has descended into a slum. Vandalism is rife; several properties have been burnt out, one tragically killing a squatter earlier this year. The dereliction has encouraged frequent fly tipping, and according to residents several of the occupied properties have become magnets for crime, at least one is reportedly used as a brothel others are used for distributing drugs. In recent years selected properties have been demolished including three large Victorian villas on Bowes road and a terrace of houses on Telford Road. The land remains vacant. For many residents the situation has become intolerable and last year they got together to form the Bowes Telford Community Action Group who are campaigning to fight the road plans and return certainty to the blighted homes.



Meanwhile just yards away from the blighted section of the North Circular Road Enfield council has just given permission for a public playing field to be developed into 142 new homes.

David Ireland
Empty Homes Agency
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The Empty Homes Agency was set up in 1992 in response to the high number of empty properties and the crisis with homelessness - something had to be done! In the early days the Agency worked on bringing individual properties back into use and encouraged local authorities to implement empty property strategies.

The Agency as an independent campaigning charity, aims to:

Raise awareness about empty properties in England, devise and promote sustainable solutions to bring empty properties back into use

We do this through campaigning and providing advice and support.

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