

REGENERATION CONSULTATION RESISTANCE

1963 November First compulsory purchase orders in preparation for building Cressingham.

1967 March Design of Cressingham started.

1969 January Housing committee approved Cressingham's design.

1971 February Carlton Contractors chosen after the tender process.

1971 May Work started on site.

1978 September Handover of final blocks and first residents move in.

2012 July Lambeth's regeneration team met with the Cressingham Residents Association to discuss repairs issues and concerns. Soon after these initial meetings, Cressingham was the first estate to be included within Lambeth's borough-wide regeneration programme. Lambeth Officers informed the Residents Association that the estate suffered from major structural issues and that the council did not have funds for repairs. In response, the Residents Association pushed Lambeth for an estate-wide survey after committee members complained over finance and repairs data. The survey revealed minor structural problems and poor maintenance were the primary cause of repairs issues across the estate .

2012 Lambeth's press office stated that "People living in Cressingham Gardens will have a unique opportunity to decide the future of their estate" , which aimed to engage with, listen to, and work with Lambeth residents to develop solutions to problems such as housing. Despite these intentions, the lived experience of Lambeth's consultation by residents was anything but cooperative.

2012 September Lambeth held an exhibition on Cressingham, stating that there are not enough funds in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to refurbish the estate.

2013 November Lambeth published a draft survey undertaken by Tall Engineers and pushed for by residents. The report identifies that the most significant problems on the estate are due to poor repairs and maintenance rather than structural issues.

2014 Lambeth produced two estimates for the refurbishment of Cressingham, one by an external consultant and another by Lambeth Living, the council's Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO). Both, coincidentally, came to £15.5m. A surveyor living near Cressingham worked with the @SaveCressingham campaign to estimate that refurbishment would cost £6.95m. This resident-led survey caused regeneration officers to reduce their estimate to £9.4m.

2014 May Members of the Cressingham Residents Association initiated inquiries with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) regarding their Right To Manage repairs on the estate and their Right To Transfer ownership from Lambeth to a resident lead management organisation. The DCLG approved residents proposal to explore transfer and management options which led residents to tender for, and appoint, a lead advisor.

2014 May Lambeth Labour .

2014 May The grounds of the Cressingham consultation shift, due to the Lambeth Labour Party manifesto, where officers now aspire to construct additional homes on the estate. Frustrated with the change of focus and lack of a clear plan, the Residents Association devised and presented a project plan to Lambeth's regeneration team, which they appeared to adopt.

2014 November A regeneration consultation document issued to all residents by the council. This document introduces five options: Option one: Refurbishing the estate and bringing all council tenant homes up to decent homes standard. Options two and three: Refurbish and build additional homes. Option four: Partial demolition and build additional homes. Option five: Full demolition and rebuilding of the estate.

2014 November Residents report that the council refuses to supply 'Job Numbers' to residents when they report repairs which means they cannot chase or monitor the progress of repairs.

2014 November Following pressure from the Residents Association, housing officers agree to run a series of finance, green refurbishment, and resident-led management workshops, led by external consultants, for residents. The workshops (supposedly) informed officers final decision over the future of Cressingham though residents feel the workshops are just for show.

2014 December UK government agrees that Cressingham residents can 'explore the options' for the Right to Manage and Right to Transfer ownership of the estate. UK government also provide initial funds to engage an advisor.

Feb 2015 Lambeths Tenant Management team reluctantly state that they will support residents' applications for Right to Manage Cressingham.

2015 February Lambeth's Cabinet member for housing, Matthew Bennett, announced the council had removed refurbishment options 1-3 from the consultation. Officers had previously informed residents that complete demolition was unaffordable.

2015 March Cabinet members approved Bennett's decision to remove options from the consultation.

2015 April Residents appoint 'Open Communities' as lead advisor to explore Right to Manage and Right to Transfer options.

2015 May Lambeth refused to sign a funding application to help residents explore the Right to Manage process.

2015 July Cabinet members approve a proposal to demolish the entire estate. This decision ignored a July 2015 resident-led survey that indicated 86% of residents who responded (72% of residents) wanted refurbishment, with only 4% favouring demolition.

2015 July Residents instigated a Judicial Review into Lambeth's demolition decision, arguing (amongst other points) that Lambeth had not provided proof that refurbishment was unaffordable.

Jul 2015 Residents were granted permission by the courts to pursue judicial review.

July 2015 Lambeth finally signed the funding application to aid exploration of the Right to Manage process.

2015 November Judge Mrs Justice Laing in issues her judgement and quashes Lambeth's March and July decisions to demolish Cressingham. Lambeth chooses not to appeal the decision to, instead, re-consult with residents on the full range of options 1-5.

2016 January Lambeth commenced a new consultation that residents described as "tickbox exercise and shotgun consultation" because of the limited time provided for resident feedback and input. For example, officers delivered highly complex and incomplete financial viability information days before a consultation deadline, even though they promised the information for more than a year.

2016 March Cressingham residents met to vote on (and approved) proposals to serve notice on Lambeth for both the Right To Manage and Right To Transfer Cressingham. Residents approved both options because the future of Cressingham was unclear and because of concerns that the council would remove legislative rights from tenants that would prevent similar action in the future.

2016 March Cressingham residents responded to the 'shotgun consultation' in the form of The People's Plan . The plan proposed a fully costed and affordable refurbishment, with an additional 37 homes at current rent levels. Residents and campaigners collaboratively produced the document through close work with an architectural firm, a quantity surveyor, financial and legal expertise, a journalist, green retrofit experts, technology and community arts professionals. Residents also devised the Peoples plan through workshops, door knocking exercises, and exhibitions.

2016 March Lambeth rejected proposals outlined in The Peoples Plan for a £9 million refurbishment with more council-owned homes than those proposed within Lambeth's report. In comparison, Lambeth estimates that their demolition and rebuild of Cressingham would cost around £110 million, funded by high-value private sales and rents and involving their Special Purpose Financial Vehicle Homes For Lambeth (HFL). HFL is a complex arrangement of private companies tasked with financing and delivering Lambeth's regeneration programme that operates outside the restrictions of local authority legislation. Lambeth's estimates include costs for the buy-back of properties from homeowners, compensation to displaced residents, and top of the expenses for demolition and rebuild.

2016 May Residents garner support from the only Green Party ward councillor in Lambeth who has the authority to 'call-in' Lambeth's March 2016 cabinet decision (to demolish Cressingham) for further scrutiny. However, the scrutiny committee does not 'send the decision back to the cabinet for further consideration.

2016 May Campaigners prepare for a second Judicial review into Lambeth's decision to demolish Cressingham.

2016 May After much delay and contestation, Lambeth accept residents' Right to Manage notice.

2016 June Despite a pending judicial review, Lambeth begins a re-tendering process for a development management team for the regeneration of Cressingham with an interview and selection process involving members of the Lambeth-led 'Cressingham Resident Engagement Panel' which is highly contested by residents.

2016 August The High Court rules that Cressingham residents have a case for a second judicial review into Lambeth's second decision to demolish Cressingham. A consequence of this ruling is that Lambeth is not permitted to do anything irreversible to Cressingham and cannot rely on any subsequent actions to argue that they have made concrete commitments to move forward with redevelopment.

2016 April Lambeth release a summary dashboard of their 30-year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan. The business plan indicates that the HRA position does not recover over 30 years, but rather, annually goes further and further into the red with a total net loss, by year 30, of -£194m. For an unknown reason, the HRA appears to be bankrupt by 2019/20 which is unlawful. Notably, the UK government debt cap (which prevented Lambeth from borrowing to fund the HRA) is no longer an issue, with £52m free debt capacity available at the lowest point.

2016 September Lambeth submitted an objection, to Cressingham's Right to Transfer notice, with the Secretary of State. Residents write a response to the Secretary of State and wait for a final decision.

2016 November Consultation deadline for Lambeth's 'key guarantees' to tenants and homeowners facing regeneration. These guarantees outline what residents should expect to happen after displacement from their homes.

2016 November @savecressingham argue five grounds for the second Judicial review: 1. Lambeth had erroneously included a £7.5m loan (classified as a grant or loan in different sections of financial models) that falsely adjusted NPV calculations to make the scheme appear financially viable. 2. Lambeth Officers misled Cabinet members about The Peoples Plan. 3. Lambeth had failed to provide Cressingham residents with up-to-date data relating to Lambeth finances. 4. Lambeth's proposal to remove tenants Right to Buy was contrary to current government policy under Article 1, Protocol 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

2016 December Mayor of London, Sadik Khan, published a draft good practice guide to regeneration which housing campaigners widely criticise.

2016 December The @savecressingham campaign lost their second Judicial Review , which means Lambeth's decision to demolish Cressingham still stands. However, residents continued to pursue both Right To Manage and Right To Transfer options for Cressingham as poor quality repairs and maintenance continue to be a significant issue on the estate.

2018 February Residents learn that Lambeth will provide HFL with a £300m public loan with no details of how they will pay back the loan to the public purse. Begs the question of why Lambeth cannot provide money for an environmentally-friendly refurbishment?

2017 March End of the Mayor's second round of consultation on estate regeneration. 95% of respondents support ballots for residents facing regeneration.

2017 July Cressingham Gardens Estate phase one and phase two were approved in the Greater London Authority Open Projects System.

2017 September Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn announces a policy of 'ballots for residents' facing regeneration during his Labour conference speech.

2017 November Lambeth appoint multidisciplinary consultant Mott MacDonald to lead the development of the Cressingham, working with architect Conran and Partners.

2018 February Mayor of London, Sadik Khan, launches a good practice guide for estate regeneration in London titled Better Homes for Local People. The report supports the principle of mandatory ballots for residents as part of estate regeneration schemes.

2018 February Leader of Lambeth, Lib Peck, announces that Cressingham Gardens will be exempt from a resident Ballot as plans for regeneration are too far progressed. Campaigners argue that Lambeth has not produced a master plan or single architectural drawing for any proposed new development.

2018 February UK government assess Cressingham residents ability to manage the estate. The (as yet unpublished) report fully supports the resident application for the Right to Manage.

2018 March Cressingham residents discover that the London Mayor may have rushed through funding to redevelop Cressingham and other estates ahead of the recommendation for estate ballots. Thus funding-stream may allow Lambeth to avoid balloting Cressingham residents.

2018 July Green party councillors in Lambeth propose a motion that all residents of estates facing regeneration be given a ballot over the future of their homes. Labour party cabinet members reject this motion.

2018 October Cressingham residents request to make a deputation, representing all estates facing regeneration, at a full Lambeth cabinet meeting. Lambeth rejects this request.

2019 June Residents register Cressingham Gardens Resident Management Community Interest Company (CGRMC). This company aims to take over responsibility for repairs (under £5,000), anti-social behaviour issues, car parks, and estate cleaning services from Lambeth.

2019 July The secretary of state approves the @SaveCressingham application for the Right To Transfer ownership of the estate into community hands. Lambeth issue a press release stating they intend to go ahead with regeneration.

2019 July A Lambeth representative contacted a contributor to @SaveCressingham to ask if Cressingham residents still want to proceed with the Right To Transfer application.

2019 July A Greater London Authority policy advisor provides information regarding a feasibility study stage, as set out in Part 3 of the Regulations, to develop Cressingham's plan for the Right To Transfer.

2019 September At a Residents Association annual general meeting, residents agree to dissolve the Residents Association in favour of the CGRMC with a board of directors and separate community committee.

2020 Jan Lambeth signed a joint agreement with all ten housing associations operating in the borough to coordinate housing services between 2020 to 2022. The plan applies to the 26,000 councils managed homes and a further 24,000 homes managed by housing associations. Unclear what the implications might be for Cressingham (see <https://love.lambeth.gov.uk/lambeth-housing-partnership>).

2020 Feb The UK Government Treasury increases the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) interest rate by one percentage point from 1.8% to 2.8%. The move seems intended to discourage councils from borrowing to fund multimillion property investments (see <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2019-10-11/interest-hike-for-council-loans-could-stop-regeneration>).

2020 Feb Letter sent to Cressingham residents. "Lambeth plans to build new homes on the edge of Cressingham Gardens on the Trinity Road site". The plans are for twenty new homes comprising 13 at council level rent and seven as shared ownership. Lambeth provides no details of the location in the letter. Residents are nervous, so ask for further information and discover Lambeth aspires to demolish 11 existing homes on Ropers Walk (facing Trinity Rise), including one leasehold property and the rest temporary tenants or are empty. There is no planning application as yet. A council representative also mentioned that Lambeth would finalise their master plan for Cressingham over the summer.

2020 Feb Labour MP Bell Ribeiro Addy states her support of the @SaveCressingham campaign and later invites campaigners for a meeting at Portcullis house. Members of Constituency Labour Party groups in Lambeth are also more vocal in their support of Cressingham and other estates under threat of demolition.

2020 June Lambeth released their accounts which show the council has built three new houses in the year and purchased sixty-one properties on regeneration estates for around £71m. Notably, none of these purchased properties is being used as council properties because HFL rents them on the private market.

2020 Dec Lambeth submitted a planning application to demolish a section of Cressingham Gardens using the Christmas period to limit resident critique. The council notified residents of roads neighbouring the estate but did not notify Cressingham residents.

2020 Dec Lambeth sent a newsletter to residents stating they are in the process of submitting a planning application for the 'Trinity Rise' development even though they had already applied.

2021 Feb Lambeth councillors voted (6 to 1) to approve a 20 apartment redevelopment of 12 homes on Cressingham Gardens at Ropers Walk (described as the Trinity Rise development). The demolition will result in the eviction of an 83-year-old retired NHS nurse who has lived on Cressingham for over thirty-three years. The application received 395 objections and just two comments in favour.

2021 Jul @SaveCressingham prepare grounds for a third judicial review into the Trinity Rise development, variously arguing that the council sought to 'salami-slice' the estate by securing approval for piecemeal demolitions and that the council had not considered the heritage implications of the scheme.

2021 Jul The high court granted permission for @SaveCressingham's judicial review. Rather than argue their case in court, Lambeth quashed their planning application to demolish Ropers Walk.

2021_Oct Lambeth resubmit a planning application to demolish Roper Walk, which planning officers grant for the second time.

Figure 65. Fold-out: Timeline of Lambeth's consultation with residents and subsequent acts of resistance.