

Mary Powell Closing Statement (Objection 11)

I thank this Inquiry, its chair and support team for the opportunity to present my case last week. I am not legally represented and so I have tried to focus on the facts and circumstances which affect me directly, to tell you about the impact of losing my home. In my closing statement I wish to focus briefly some of the most egregious arguments made by the Acquiring Authority over the last two and half weeks.

1. Counsel for the Acquiring Authority has made much of an apparent 70% approval rating for full demolition in 2014, despite the subsequent turnover of the estate population in the last 9 years and an active campaign by many tenants in temporary accommodation against demolition. The council did not ballot until the rules changed and it had to in 2021, to gain GLA funding. That ballot result, with active canvassing by council employees for demolition, hinged on only 12 voters. Had residents been asked if they would like to live on a building site for 10 years they might have voted differently anyway.
2. I was asked if the council's management of the estate, which I had referred to as managed decline, was a sufficient reason to refuse the CPO. This appears to be an acknowledgement that there has been a managed decline. I would like to reiterate that this is part of the bigger picture. It is one part of how the council has gone about its deliberate and prejudged aim of demolishing this estate, since 2012.
3. Moving forward to 2023, the approval of the accelerated phasing plan was brought forward by stealth after the CPO notices were issued. It means that I would only be able to stay in the area, realistically, if I can purchase a property in Plot A. This means that I would displace a Love Lane tenant in priority need, potentially affecting a household which might for example be severely overcrowded or living with disability in unsuitable accommodation or fleeing from domestic abuse. Haringey Council may consider it expedient to offer me this option, but undermines its own housing allocation policy in the process.
4. It has been put to you that resident leaseholders can "benefit" from an equity loan which the council in its generosity is offering. This is a loan; it is debt. I could not avoid a mortgage to buy a home but paid that mortgage off in half the allotted time and am now entirely debt free. Living within one's means and paying off one's debts used to be considered a virtue, but Haringey Council is encouraging dependency and punishing self-reliance. Living beyond our means, based on debt, may be fashionable but I do not follow that fashion. Debt is a four-letter word.
5. If I do not take a loan, I am expected to downsize to stay in the area, due to the affordability chasm. Counsel for the Acquiring Authority has stated that the authority can only compensate those of us threatened with a CPO for our actual loss at the time of the compulsory purchase. I understand this principle and the need to protect the public purse, but this simply is not true, in the case of Haringey Council. It is in the public domain with a Local Government Ombudsman finding in January 2022 ([case reference 20 006 289](#)) that Haringey Council does pay more when it is expedient to do so. The council paid £2.15m for a property believed to be worth £800,000 in Woodside Avenue Muswell Hill, and was taken to the Ombudsman by a neighbour offered closer to the true value for his property. That development plan was later abandoned. The police have also been involved in investigating alleged fraud around the purchase of the first house and the abandoned development in Muswell Hill. The Council was previously subject to criticism for the mishandled purchase of its own office building at Alexandra House in Wood Green in 2020 for £13m more than it was worth, having had an opportunity to purchase at market value in 2018¹. Haringey Council will pay more when it is politically expedient to do so.

So, I thank this Inquiry for its efforts; I hope that I will still be living peacefully and self-sufficiently in my current home two years from now. Please do not confirm the CPO.

¹ [Ham & High 21 May 2021](#)
[Ham & High 25 November 2021](#)