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ARTICLE

Taking a long view perspective on estate regeneration: before, during and after the New Deal for Communities in London

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Abstract
This paper takes a long view perspective on estate regeneration with reference to Clapham Park, a large social housing estate in London. This estate was one of 39 areas in England included in the Labour Government's New Deal for Communities (NDC) flagship regeneration programme which ran for ten years during the 2000s. This programme is an exemplar of New Labour's brand of roll-out neoliberalism involving both communitarian and privatization strands. The research involves a multi-method case study of the estate before, during and after the NDC. The findings are analyzed in relation to neoliberalism, managed decline, and the dialectical interplay of regeneration and degeneration. Housing improvement was slow and limited during the NDC period itself, while post-NDC progress has been spatially uneven across the estate, with some refurbishment and redevelopment but also continuing housing deprivation. Tenants who had originally been supporters of the NDC were disillusioned with post-NDC housing and physical environment progress. The paper illustrates how regeneration and degeneration have intertwined over the long term, and concludes by highlighting the tensions within the NDC public–private partnership programme that attempted to meld together two ultimately contradictory governance logics—communitarian and market—that configured New Labour's estate regeneration policy.

Keywords Degeneration · Large estates · Managed decline · Neoliberalism · Regeneration · Social housing

1 Introduction

This paper takes what Flanagan and Jacobs (2019: 195) refer to as "the long view" in relation to housing studies with reference to the regeneration of Clapham Park, a large social housing estate located in the south London borough of Lambeth. This long view perspective makes "explicit the connections between the past and the present" in order "to overcome policy amnesia, to demonstrate the interdependence between institutions, events and

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policies and wider currents of social and economic change" (Flanagan & Jacobs, 2019: 196). Estate regeneration is a lengthy, complex, multi-layered process, especially when it involves the partial or full demolition of a large estate of the type discussed here (Johnson & Johnson, 2017; Romyn, 2020; Watt, 2021a). However, as Davidson et al. (2013) argue, the temporal nature of regeneration has been woefully under-examined in the literature.

The Clapham Park case study forms part of a much larger project on public/social housing and regeneration in London (Watt, 2021a). This study and wider project are theoretically located within a critical urbanist account of the breakdown of the Keynesian welfare state and the subsequent rise, consolidation and intensification of neoliberalism (Gillespie et al., 2021; Peck, 2012; Peck & Tickell, 2002). Within the UK (notably England), the neoliberalization of urban space and the welfare state has been pronounced in relation to housing since public housing estates have been targeted for privatization, demunicipalization, deregulation and demolition for four decades under *both* Conservative and Labour governments (Hodkinson, 2019; Lees & White, 2020; Wallace, 2015, 2020). The end result is a shrunken social housing sector that is manifestly deficient in relation to meeting housing needs, especially in London where homelessness and overcrowding are rampant (Gillespie et al., 2021; Watt, 2021a). The pared-back social housing sector in England—now largely consisting of voluntary-sector housing association owned-and-run properties instead of public housing aka council housing (owned and managed by local authorities)—is increasingly dependent upon developing market properties for sale in order to cross-subsidize new-build social rental homes, a situation which is distinct from many other European countries (Manzi & Morrison, 2018; Wilson, 2020).

Critical urbanism is supplemented with an epistemological emphasis on understanding housing, homes and neighbourhoods as meaningful phenomena from the perspective of lay social actors (largely working-class tenants) who have to *live through* estate regeneration over a significant proportion of their lives (Watt, 2021a; see also Allen, 2008; Davidson, 2009). In drawing upon a mixed-methods case study, the paper aims to critically unearth the political economy of urban regeneration, but also the temporal and meaningful nature of residents' and officials' engagement with the convoluted, seemingly never-ending process of estate regeneration involving comprehensive redevelopment—demolition and rebuilding.

The paper focuses upon the origins, development, effects and after-effects of regeneration with reference to the decade-long New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme during the 2000s, and specifically on Clapham Park estate, one of ten London NDC neighbourhoods. The paper begins by outlining the estate regeneration literature, while the following two sections present the NDC context and research methods. The substantive findings are then presented and analysed chronologically: Clapham Park estate prior to the NDC, the NDC period itself, and finally the post-NDC period. The conclusion synthesizes the research findings vis-à-vis neoliberalism, managed decline and regeneration/degeneration.

2 Estate regeneration

The narrative policy arc regarding Clapham Park and similar large social housing estates in Europe and North America shifted from post-War welfare state optimism to entrenched urban dystopianism (Hess et al., 2018; Vale, 2019; Watt & Smets, 2017). By the 1980s–1990s, many such estates suffered from physical decay due to chronic underinvestment resulting from the collapse of the Keynesian welfare state and the rise of

neoliberalism. The latter was pronounced in the UK via the Thatcherite onslaught against local authority housing involving deep public spending cuts and the state-subsidized sale of council homes via the Right-to-Buy (RTB) privatization policy (Forrest & Murie, 1991; Hodkinson, 2019).

The problems associated with these large estates—poverty, poor housing conditions, crime and fear of crime—resulted from structural inequalities and systemic policy failures and contradictions associated with neoliberalization, deindustrialization and institutional racism (Forrest & Murie, 1991; Watt, 2021a). Nevertheless, politicians and policy analysts narrowly targeted estates as being the spatial incubators of such problems via deploying the influential but highly contested notions of 'ghettos', 'sink estates' and 'neighbourhood effects' (Bridge et al., 2012; Romyn, 2020; Watt, 2021a). Hence from the 1970s onwards, estates in European and North American cities have become increasingly subject to a 'new urban renewal' policy-by-bulldozer approach (Hess et al., 2018; Johnson & Johnson, 2017; Vale, 2019; Watt & Smets, 2017). This approach involves large-scale demolition and rebuilding, but rebuilding as mixed-tenure neighbourhoods comprising market housing for sale as well as social rental housing (Bridge et al., 2012). In the UK, centrally-funded estate regeneration programmes peaked under the Labour governments from 1997 to 2010. These, including the New Deal for Communities, took a roll-out neoliberalism form involving privatization and extensive market housing provision, combined with a communitarian emphasis on community participation and active citizenship (Peck & Tickell, 2002; Wallace, 2010; Watt, 2009).

New urban renewal schemes involving demolition and displacement have proved highly controversial among residents, politicians and academics (Watt & Smets, 2017). Whereas some researchers have suggested that demolition allows social tenants to move to improved homes and revitalized neighbourhoods (Kearns & Mason, 2013; Posthumus et al., 2014), critical urbanists identify regeneration with state-led gentrification and emphasize the socially and psychologically harmful aspects of displacement (Allen, 2008; Lees & White, 2020). What the literature tends to share is an abbreviated temporal focus on the period just before and just after physical relocation. Such epistemological short-termism pays insufficient attention to residents' *long-term experiences*—both positive and negative—of living at estates prior to regeneration, but also at how regeneration itself unfolds over many years and even several decades (Davidson et al., 2013; Wallace, 2015; Watt, 2021a).

A few studies have applied a long view perspective to large estates undergoing full or partial demolition. Kabisch et al. (2021), for example, employ a repeat survey from 1987 to 2015 on residential satisfaction in Leipzig, Germany, while Johnson and Johnson (2017) provide an in-depth account of the two-decades' long redevelopment of Regent Park estate in Toronto, Canada. Regeneration has been ongoing at the Aylesbury estate—an NDC neighbourhood like Clapham Park—in south London since 1999 (Watt, 2020). The recent book on the Aylesbury by Michael Romyn (2020) utilizes residents' oral histories to provide a detailed account of the estate which illustrates its origins and development, but also the protracted and contested nature of its regeneration, themes which are pertinent to Clapham Park.

In this paper, I argue that the hegemonic view that is promulgated by politicians, developers, consultants and architects working within the 'regeneration industry'—that estate regeneration in the form of comprehensive redevelopment is a smooth and benign neighbourhood renewal and reinvestment process which only ever brings about positive results for residents (Kilpatrick & Patel, 2021; McLaughlin, 2015)—is fundamentally misconstrued. This view fails to grasp the dialectical nature of estate regeneration involving contradictory processes of *degeneration*—"regeneration's demonic alter ego in the form of

financial disinvestment in those areas and their accelerated physical, social and symbolic deterioration over and above any original problems they might have" (Watt, 2021a, 2021b: 263). One prominent aspect of degeneration is *managed decline* of the physical fabric of the estate—"the area's problems could be solved by allowing the neighbourhood to get worse and worse until it was no longer viable and had to be pulled down" (Davidson et al., 2013: 62). Managed decline involves landlord neglect and disinvestment whereby existing buildings are allowed to deteriorate in expectation of demolition. This expectation can stretch out indefinitely and especially so under post-crash market and state retrenchment conditions (Wallace, 2015; Watt, 2021a). Degeneration also takes symbolic, social and psychosocial forms as residents are dispossessed of those aspects of the original neighbourhood (familiar people, places and facilities) they previously valued in the nominally 'regenerating' estate. In focussing upon the physical housing-related aspects of degeneration—plus to a lesser extent symbolic degeneration—this paper provides a unique in-depth exploration on how estate regeneration and degeneration intertwine over the long view.

3 The New Deal for Communities

From the 1970s onwards, social deprivation increased among council tenants in London and nationally as they experienced high levels of poverty and unemployment, not least due to deindustrialization and the 1980s–90s' recessions (Forrest & Murie, 1991; Romyn, 2020; Wallace, 2010; Watt, 2021a). Such social deprivation, combined with run-down poor-quality housing, prompted a raft of area-based regeneration schemes targeted at council estates, beginning in the 1970s but reaching a peak under New Labour from 1997 to 2010 (Hodkinson, 2019; Kintrea, 2007; Towers, 2000).

The New Deal for Communities (NDC) was New Labour's flagship area-based regeneration programme in England (Lawless & Beatty, 2013; Wallace, 2010). The 39 NDC neighbourhoods had above national average levels of poverty, unemployment, poor health, low education, crime and anti-social behaviour. The over-arching aim was to reduce the statistical gaps between the NDC areas and England in relation to six outcomes. Three outcomes were place-related—"incidence and fear of crime, housing and the physical environment, and strengthening local communities" (CRESR, 2015: 7), while three were people-related—improving residents' health, education and employment prospects. This paper focuses on the place-related theme of housing and the physical environment. Unlike previous programmes, the NDC was longer-term (ten years) and each area received substantial funding of around £50 m. In line with New Labour's roll-out neoliberalism, the NDC had a strong communitarian emphasis based upon re/creating neighbourhood-based communities (Wallace, 2010).

Several London NDCs—including Clapham Park—targeted large council-built estates and especially their manifold housing problems due to chronic neglect and under-investment (Bennington et al., 2004; Watt, 2009). Despite the seemingly generous NDC funding, the sheer size of the London NDC estates (each over one thousand properties), coupled with their dilapidated physical condition, meant that large funding gaps appeared between redevelopment/refurbishment costs and NDC finances (Bennington et al., 2004). Given New Labour's disdain of directly funding public local authorities to reinvest in their housing stock, bridging these funding gaps meant levering in large sums of money from the private sector—hence neoliberal privatization (Hodkinson, 2019). NDCs involved public–private partnerships in which the private and voluntary sectors would play major roles

alongside the public sector. A potential source of private funding was available if NDCs pursued demunicipalization by transferring the housing stock from local authority ownership to a voluntary-sector housing association which could then, unlike the council, commercially borrow the necessary funds, as happened at several London NDCs (Bennington et al., 2004; Watt, 2009, 2021a). Demunicipalization therefore combined with large-scale building of market homes to fund regeneration. This occurred at Clapham Park which is why the NDC has been associated with state-led gentrification (Watt, 2009).

The post New Labour regeneration and housing scenario is different again. Centrally-funded programmes of the NDC variety have ceased under austerity cutbacks as inaugurated by the 2010–15 Coalition Government (O'Brien & Matthews, 2016). Conservative-led governments from 2010 have slashed public funding, especially local government funding which has had severe consequences in London (Gillespie et al., 2021), while social housing grants for housing associations have been severely cutback hence pushing them further along an already-established commercial direction of travel (Hodkinson, 2019; Manzi & Morrison, 2018).

4 Research at Clapham Park estate

While the NDC was the subject of extensive academic research, the main evaluation study ceased alongside the NDC itself in 2011 (CRESR, 2015; Lawless & Beatty, 2013). By comparison, post-NDC research has been sparse. Andrew Wallace (2015), for one, revisited the Salford NDC in the north of England, the subject of his earlier ethnographic study (Wallace, 2010). Wallace's post-NDC study reveals how many of the mooted physical improvements never occurred, and that the working-class residents found themselves stuck in a 'limbo land' still waiting for 'regeneration' to arrive after the NDC finished (Wallace, 2015). Such findings resonate with those presented below on Clapham Park. The research in this paper emerges out of, and extends upon, a much larger project on public housing estates and regeneration in London (Watt, 2021a). Clapham Park is singled out because I had initially undertaken research there during the late 2000s (Watt, 2009), and also because it's an estate where long-term residents were particularly critical of its pre-regeneration condition.

Clapham Park is a diffuse estate of nearly 2,000 properties (mainly low-rise blocks of flats with a few maisonettes and houses), spread over 34 hectares and sub-divided by two major roads. It is spatially sub-divided into three sections: Clapham Park east, most of which was built by the London County Council (LCC) during the 1930s; Clapham Park south which was built from the 1930s–70s; and Clapham Park west which was mainly built during the 1950s–60s (Gill & Croxson, 2007). Ownership of the estate was transferred from the LCC to the Greater London Council (GLC) when the latter was created in 1965, and was then transferred again from the GLC to Lambeth Council during the early 1980s as part of the Thatcherite restructuring of local government (Towers, 2000; Watt, 2021a).

My ethnographic research took place over three time periods—2008–09, 2016–18 and 2021–and comprised field visits, interviews and visual methods. Over 30 field visits involved observation, participant observation (for example, attendance at the Over 50s' Club), walking tours, and also included informal conversations with residents, shopkeepers and officials. During these visits, I took over 900 photographs which provide an extensive visual record of Clapham Park's physical changes. To date, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with 69 participants including estate residents, officials and local

activists. Resident interviewees occupied a variety of housing tenures, including social tenants, owner-occupiers, private tenants and property guardians. This paper focuses on 28 social tenant interviewees who rented their home from the relevant housing association. Six of these rented their flats on a temporary basis, mainly in the condemned blocks in Clapham Park west, and they were brought in after the original housing association tenants deceased or were decanted. As demolition came nearer (at least nominally), the temporary tenants were themselves eventually evicted and replaced by licensed property guardians who became more prevalent during the post-NDC period in the condemned blocks at Clapham Park west and south.[1] An additonal three interviewees had previously lived in council homes at Clapham Park, but they no longer lived there although they frequently visited relatives who remained. In addition to social tenants, the paper draws upon five interviews with home-owning leaseholders; two had originally been council tenants who had bought their flats under the RTB, while three had bought on the open market. Over-two thirds of resident interviewees had lived at Clapham Park for 15 years or more, while the mean length of residence was 19 years; such longevity facilitates a long view perspective. Depth is assisted by how several interviewees had been actively involved in running the NDC, either as volunteers or as paid employees. However, the interviewees do not form a representative resident sample, so no statistical generalizations can be claimed.

In addition to residents, the paper draws upon five interviews conducted with housing, regeneration and community officials/ex-officials. Finally, desk research was undertaken using official documents, NDC reports and data, local newspaper articles and letters, the chapter by Beaumont (2006) based on resident interviews undertaken in 2000–01, and the *Brink of Change* film (Clapham Film Unit, 2010).

5 Clapham Park estate before the NDC

Elderly tenants spoke favourably about moving to Clapham Park during its post-War heyday in the 1950s–60 s. Moving into a council property represented a vast improvement on their previous cramped and unsatisfactory housing conditions in the private rental sector (PRS), a typical finding in London during this period (Watt, 2021a). Tenants found their new flat or house to be spacious and well-fitted out compared to their previous often-overcrowded PRS dwellings. Ronnie's family had moved to a four-bedroom house at Clapham Park in the late 1950s which:

> … was a big leg up for us. My father was in his late 30s, my mother was in her mid-30s, so this would have been the first house with an inside toilet, the first house with a bathroom they'd ever experienced. (Ronnie, age 68, white British)[2]

One black Caribbean female tenant recalled how her family "were the first black people on the estate" when they moved in during the 1950s. This family of wife, husband and four children had previously been renting one room elsewhere in south London: "we cooked there, slept there and shared a bathroom and toilet, so when we came here, we felt lucky to have a bath". Clapham Park was in many ways a typical south London working-class

[1] Such heightened population churn forms part of the social aspect of degeneration which unfortunately cannot be examined here.

[2] Quotations from semi-structured interviews specify respondent's age (where given) and ethnic background. Unless otherwise indicated, quotations are from social housing tenants.

council estate (Romyn, 2020). Not only was the housing considered a step-up, but tenants described having a good sense of community (Clapham Film Unit, 2010).

Clapham Park, like hundreds of other London council estates, became increasingly socially disadvantaged from the 1970s onwards such that it was suffering from extensive multiple deprivation, poverty and unemployment by the 1990s-early 2000s (Beaumont, 2006; Watt, 2021a). Like many inner London estates, Clapham Park also became increasingly multi-ethnic since people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds comprised 39% of Clapham Park NDC inhabitants in 2002, with the largest groups being from black African and Caribbean backgrounds (Ipsos MORI, 2008).

5.1 Housing

Not only were London council tenants increasingly poor and socially disadvantaged, but their estates suffered from chronic under-investment due to twenty years of neoliberalism and public housing spending cuts, as crystallized by an estimated £19bn. repairs' and maintenance backlog in England by 1997 (Hodkinson, 2019). Housing conditions deteriorated at Clapham Park due to these macro-factors, but also due to its being foisted onto Lambeth Council by central government during the early 1980s—via a stock transfer from the GLC—as part of the breakup of the GLC's housing empire (Clapham Film Unit, 2010; Watt, 2021a). This transfer occurred at a time when London councils, like Lambeth, faced Thatcherite budget cuts and hence struggled to properly manage and maintain their additional GLC estates (Towers, 2000).

Despite its manifold problems, Clapham Park was not an extreme outlier neighbourhood within Lambeth since another eight neighbourhoods within the borough also suffered from severe deprivation and crime problems which meant that they were potential NDC contenders (LBL, 2000). What distinguished Clapham Park from much of the rest of Lambeth's council stock was the parlous state of its housing and community infrastructure (Beaumont, 2006). A stock condition survey estimated that £19,616 per unit was needed to bring Clapham Park properties up to the Decent Homes Standard (see below), i.e. £6446 above the Lambeth average (LBL, 2003: 15). By the start of the NDC, housing deprivation was acute at Clapham Park: "There has been a record of poor housing management and under-investment (for example, 30% of local authority properties lack central heating)" (Cole et al., 2003: 36). Clapham Park also had the eighth highest overcrowding rate among all 39 NDC areas in England (Beatty et al., 2005). Tenants were frustrated both with their housing conditions and with Lambeth Council as a landlord (Beaumont, 2006). Malana (62, black Caribbean) moved to Clapham Park east during the mid-1970s, and she described how subsequently "these properties started to go downhill":

> It was very run down. Particularly with the windows—we didn't have any double-glazing. It was a situation whereby they needed to do something with the properties. I wrote to Lambeth [Council] myself, doing my own lobbying, to say that the windows in the bathroom, the toilet and the kitchen was in such a dilapidated state that you could push a pen through what was left of the wooden ... and go straight through to the glass.

The NDC Clapham Park Project manager (see below) arrived at Clapham Park during the early 2000s and described the sense of abandonment he found there: "Most

residents you spoke to thought the estate had been deliberately ignored, they all felt like they were the forgotten part of Lambeth". Long-term tenants themselves said:

> The properties were *really rubbish*. Talk about Third World. I think it was on equal par with that and nobody cared about us. This is why we went into the NDC. (Sally, 70, white British)

> Nobody cared before [the NDC], because the powers that be didn't care, so why should we [residents]? (Audrey, 64, white British)

Clapham Park estate *was* neglected. It had received no previous regeneration funding, and this was part of the rationale for why the estate was chosen for the Lambeth NDC (LBL, 2000). Institutional neglect at Clapham Park was enhanced by geography and public service fragmentation. Not only was it a large estate, but Clapham Park lacked a singular, coherent spatial identity due to its uneven development, varied architectural styles and roadway divisions. The estate was spread across four local authority wards, was covered by three police teams, and had three tenants and residents' associations (CPP, 2013). Such spatial governance fissuring contributed towards its neglected status as having "a long history of physical and administrative fragmentation, divided by major roads, ward boundaries, police sectors and health groups" (CPP, 2013: 2).

Nevertheless, despite their often vociferous criticisms of Lambeth Council as a landlord, tenants' dominant narrative of institutional neglect requires two qualifications. First, that they considered the buildings themselves to be structurally sound:

> That [now demolished block] was *solid* man, that was solid, solid brick. (Linda, 75, white British)

> Quite sound [buildings], been neglected. The whole problem with this estate is pure criminal neglect by the statutory bodies. (Sally).

Second, several tenants praised the on-site council workers—housing officers and live-in caretakers—who they felt *cared* about them and their housing problems. These on-site services had a paternalistic character; tenants trusted 'their' local workers, who they knew personally. Even though Malana was highly critical of the council per se, she praised the local caretaker:

> He engaged with everyone, everyone knew Derek and I still remember his name [laughs]. No job was too big for him, and if he couldn't do it he would point you in the direction of someone who could within Lambeth Housing Office.

Linda recalled being ably assisted by the locally-based Lambeth housing officers, both in relation to rent arrears and decorating her flat.

> I can't fault Lambeth [Council]. We used to go around to the office because they were on site. I saw Mrs Wilson [officer] and said 'any chance we could have the paintwork in the passage done up a bit?' She said to me, 'no problem'. And she came around our flat one evening, and she brought around this wad of all different designs of paper for the walls, she said 'pick your paper'.

Such intimate and supportive localized relations were in stark contrast to the later distanced housing association landlord-tenant relations, as discussed further below.

Table 1 Original 2006 and proposed post completion housing tenures, Clapham Park estate

Tenure	Original at transfer 2006 N	Permitted 2008 OPP N	2019 application - Estate wide post completion N	Increase 2006 to post completion N	Increase 2006 to post completion %
Social rented	1448	1451	1680	232	16
Intermediate	0	225	495	495	–
Affordable total	1448	1676	2175	727	50
Market	549	1763	1902	1353	246
Total	1997	3439	4077	2080	104

Source: adapted from GLA (2019: 4)

6 The NDC period

By the inception of the NDC, Clapham Park was a deprived estate with rundown housing, sparse community facilities, extensive poverty and unemployment, prominent crime and drug problems, and a general atmosphere of neglect and alienation, although the NDC area was somewhat larger and less deprived than the estate itself (Toynbee, 2003; Beaumont, 2006; CPP 2013). Clapham Park Project (CPP) was set up in order to apply for NDC status and funding, and subsequently £56 m. NDC grant was awarded to CPP in April 2001 (LBL, 2007). CPP included resident representatives on the board and had 80 employees at its peak. It managed the overall NDC programme for ten years until 2011, but only the housing aspect of this up until the stock transfer to Clapham Park Homes in 2006 (CPP, 2013).

6.1 Housing

Clapham Park estate in 2006 consisted of 1,997 properties, of which 1,448 (73%) were rented from the council, while 549 (27%) had been sold to sitting tenants under the RTB (Table 1 below). There was an annual 20% turnover rate for tenancies (Cole et al., 2003), and the 2002 NDC survey found that half of tenants wanted to move out of their homes, mainly for housing-related reasons (Ipsos MORI, 2008). Audrey, for example, had unsuccessfully tried to transfer off the estate prior to the NDC. For her and other long-suffering tenants, the NDC came as a welcome relief: "Clapham Park needed an uplift, because they [dwellings] were in such a bad state of disrepair" (Malana). In their analysis of the London NDCs, Bennington et al., (2004: i) identify how, "The emphasis placed on housing reflects the priorities of local residents, concerned not only about the condition of the housing stock but also the consequences of poor housing for their health, well-being and safety". Although the initial national NDC brief did not include housing, this was something that Clapham Park tenants pushed for, as Sally highlighted:

> Originally housing wasn't in the NDC curriculum. I mean we used to go to conferences and things like that and we brought it up. Other people from other parts of Britain did as well. We were all singing from the same hymn sheet, so they [government] included housing.

In fact, Clapham Park NDC allocated the largest proportion of its expenditure to the housing and physical environment (HPE) theme among all 39 NDCs—£27,600,275, around two-thirds of the total (Cole et al., 2010: 31). CPP's housing strategy involved demolition and redevelopment of half the estate's existing properties (mainly at Clapham Park west), including building extensive private housing for sale and re-provision of social housing for existing tenants. The other half of the existing estate—the 1930s-built, generally better-quality properties in Clapham Park east and south—would be refurbished. CPP laid the groundwork for the stock transfer and outline masterplan. The project was predicated upon transferring the entire housing stock from Lambeth Council to Clapham Park Homes (CPH):

> … the view was that a stock transfer was the only realistic means of securing the investment required. It was also regarded as a process that would provide more 'local' control and enable the community to have a greater say in determining investment priorities (Cole et al., 2010: 77).

CPH was widely described as a 'community-led' housing association, including having residents on its board (CPH, 2012). However, CPH's 'local control' was heavily qualified given that *de jure* it was a wholly-owned subsidiary of Metropolitan housing association—one of the large, increasingly commercially-oriented G15 group of London-based housing associations (Manzi & Morrison, 2018).[3]

Stock transfer involved a bitter struggle between pro- and anti-transfer campaigns which culminated in a 59% 'yes' vote by tenants in a 2005 ballot (Watt, 2009). The pro-transfer campaign emphasized how the *only way* to have substantial housing and community facility improvements was a transfer to CPH. Tenants also supported stock transfer because of irritation with their council landlord: "The majority of tenants wanted a change because they were fed up with Lambeth" (Doris, 84, white British). Resident and housing activists' objections to transfer—and to the various masterplans—have focused on unnecessary demolition, increased density, loss of green space and trees, and the massive uplift in market homes resulting in unaffordable properties—hence state-led gentrification (GLA, 2019; Watt, 2009). The homes were transferred from Lambeth Council to CPH in June 2006. The total investment package was around £450 m. including £48 m. public grant, but the bulk of funding was expected to come from new-build private housing for sale which would cross-subsidize the redevelopment and refurbishment programmes (Lambeth Council, 2006).

An initial outline planning permission (OPP) was granted to CPH/Metropolitan in 2006, followed by a 2008 OPP for "the residential-led, mixed use regeneration of the Estate" (GLA, 2017: 4). The 2008 masterplan involved demolition of 1037 flats and their replacement with 2,479 new flats, and the refurbishment of 960 units up to Decent Homes Standard (see below), (GLA, 2008, 2017). Most of Clapham Park west was to be demolished, whereas most of Clapham Park east would be retained and refurbished, while redevelopment/refurbishment was more even at Clapham Park south. As Table 1 shows, there would be a 72% increase in the total number of properties to 3439, most of which was accounted for by a three-fold increase in market homes. By comparison, there were just three additional social rental units plus 225 intermediate 'affordable' properties. The 2008 masterplan also included an ambitious raft of new/improved community facilities including: "shops, offices, library, creches, nurseries, primary school,

[3] . Due to a 2018 merger, Metropolitan is now named Metropolitan Thames Valley.

Fig. 1 Entrance to social housing block (with broken windows) at Clapham Park west, 2008. Photo: Paul Watt

Fig. 2 Bin area outside social housing block at Clapham Park west, 2008. Photo: Paul Watt

community hall, gym, youth centre, health centre, elderly persons' support facility, sports hall, park and other open spaces" (GLA, 2008: 1). Progress on these facilities, however, was predicated on the housing redevelopment.

Table 2 Local authority/housing association non-decent dwellings at Clapham Park, and local authority non-decent dwellings in Lambeth, London and England, 2002–2009 (%)

Area	2002	2006	2008	2009
Clapham Park[1]	92	92	92	69
Borough of Lambeth	48	32	34	30
London	55	38	32	31
England	49	36	26	22

Sources: LBL (2006: 14 & 24), CPH (2007b: 5), Audit Commission (2009: 47), LBL (2009a), DCLG (2010)

Note 1: Clapham Park 2002 percentage is for pre-transfer local authority dwellings and is an estimate based upon the 2006 stock transfer figure, but could be even higher. The Clapham Park 2006, 2008 and 2009 percentages are for post-transfer housing association dwellings

I first visited Clapham Park in November 2008 at which point the estate was over seven years into the NDC programme. While I had not seen it at its 1990s' nadir, my field notes and photographs (Figs. 1 and 2) capture its surprisingly poor physical condition for a flagship regeneration neighbourhood: "It still looks like a rundown council estate" (field notes, cited in Watt, 2021a: 268). My consternation at the slow progress regarding the built environment is reflected by residents. A 2009 local newspaper report highlighted the poor housing conditions; as one tenant, who had previously been an enthusiastic NDC participant, said:

> When I look around, it looks more run-down now than it did 10 years ago. I just cannot see where all the money has gone. […] People are still living in terrible conditions and yet rents have gone up. No progress has been made whatsoever. (Truscott, 2009).

Rather than regeneration, the estate was experiencing managed decline and degeneration relative to surrounding areas (Davidson et al., 2013; Watt, 2021a). This is confirmed by data on 'non-decent homes', as calibrated by the Decent Homes Standard (DHS) criteria that the Labour Government introduced in 2000 which all social rented properties were expected to meet by 2010 (Hodkinson, 2019). These criteria involved minimum housing and repairs standards for kitchens, bathrooms and heating. Most of the housing stock at Clapham Park, including all 1,000 properties in the west, was of a non-decent standard (CPH, 2007a: 17). Table 2 shows that from 2002 to 2008 there were substantial reductions in non-decent homes percentages in Lambeth, London and England, whereas 92% of Clapham Park homes continued to not meet the DHS throughout this period. It was only in 2009 that any substantial reduction in non-decent homes occurred at Clapham Park when it went down to 69%, but this was still over three times both the Lambeth (30%) and London (31%) percentages. Such limited progress at Clapham Park—eight years into the NDC and three years after stock transfer—is lamentable given how the "key objective of the revised masterplan and NDC scheme" was "to improve the condition of the existing social housing in Clapham Estate by achieving decent homes standards by 2010" (LBL, 2007: 5.5.10.1).

An Audit Commission (2009: 6) report found that. "improvements in [housing] services have not been strong since CPH was set up and delays in the master plan mean that some tenants will not live in a decent home until 2017". Refurbishment was behind schedule, although the report acknowledged that CPH had refurbished some homes to a high specification. Satisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service was just 49% in 2008, well

below the national equivalent of 75% (Audit Commission, 2009: 47), while "Residents are cold in winter and paying large sums of money to stay warm in worn out homes with ageing facilities" (Audit Commission, 2009: 23). Despite the Clapham Park NDC prioritization of HPE in its budget, residents' satisfaction with accommodation and the state of repair of their homes only improved slightly from 2002 to 2008, and remained below the 2008 NDC national averages (Cole et al., 2010: 116).

7 The post-NDC period

7.1 Changing masterplans

The 2008 masterplan was due to be completed by 2017, 6 years after the NDC funding ceased. However, NDC evaluation reports warned about housing delivery at Clapham Park:

> … there is no guarantee of funding for future phases and revision of the masterplan might be required. […] Changes to the development plan would, in turn, raise the challenge of maintaining community support, which has already been undermined by delays in the process. (Cole et al., 2010: 83).

As Colenutt (2020: 99) argues, the 2008 financial crash had severe impacts on the UK housing market with, "a slump in house prices, a halt to housebuilding and a severe liquidity crisis for the banks". As an ex-housing association manager said, "the private sales [at Clapham Park] were essential to cross-subsidize the replacement of rented". However, post-crash the 2008 masterplan's heavy reliance on market sales "led to the development grinding to a halt at the start of 2012 when Metropolitan encountered difficulties in securing a refinancing" (Johnstone, 2016). In December 2012, the Homes and Communities Agency "downgraded Metropolitan's regulatory governance rating […] amid concerns over what it called an 'undeliverable masterplan' for Clapham Park, along with serious weaknesses in the group's financial planning" (Blackman, 2017). Organizational restructuring subsequently occurred and in 2017 the CPH subsidiary was transferred "into the parent [Metropolitan] in a bid to eliminate potential financial exposure" (ibid.). The community-led Clapham Park Homes was no more.

Metropolitan submitted a revised planning application in 2017 which indicated that three quarters (717) of the 960 homes due for refurbishment under the 2008 masterplan had been refurbished by July 2017, whereas only just over half (530) of the 1037 homes permitted for demolition had been demolished (LBL, 2017: 4, 85).[4] Lambeth Council granted planning permission in 2018, followed by the GLA in 2019 (GLA, 2019). The revised masterplan involved an additional 638 units resulting in a doubling of density to 4,077 properties (Table 1), something that tenants were concerned about: "It's going to be like New York, Manhattan—it's town cramming" (Sylvester, 56, mixed race). In terms of meeting housing need, there was a welcome increase in the number of re-provided social homes to 232 (assisted by GLA funding), although market properties for sale also increased to 1902. Regeneration will inevitably result in state-led gentrification given that three-bedroom flats at Clapham Park sold for around £650,000 in 2020, way beyond the affordability capacity

[4] . My calculation, based on desk research and field work, is that around 360 properties were demolished by the end of 2021; hence 530 demolitions by 2017 would appear to be an inflated figure (see Gill & Croxson, 2007; LBL, 2004; Metropolitan, 2017).

Fig. 3 Bin area (with broken-off door) outside social housing block at Clapham Park west, 2016 Photo: Paul Watt

of working-class Lambeth residents. The new enlarged scheme costs ballooned to £1.6bn. (Barker, 2018), over three times the 2006 figure.

The revised scheme has massive housing implications for existing Clapham Park residents. I calculate that 246 homes across six blocks were switched from refurbishment to demolition, mainly in Clapham Park south, while around 80 homes were changed from demolition to refurbishment (LBL, 2004; Metropolitan, 2017). My best estimate is that around 1,200 homes will be demolished under the 2017 masterplan or 60% of the original estate compared to 52% in the 2008 masterplan. The following analysis illustrates the spatially and temporally uneven nature of regeneration—as intertwined with degeneration—at Clapham Park during the post-NDC period.

7.2 Condemned blocks at Clapham Park west

My 2016–18 field work indicated that post-NDC Clapham Park west continued to look physically run-down and even in some ways more rundown than it did when I first visited the estate in 2008. Although security doors had been put in most of the blocks and central heating had gradually been installed in the flats, external and internal conditions remained poor. Figures 2 and 3 show the dilapidated state of the bin areas at the same block at 2008 and 2016. A community development worker described conditions in the condemned blocks in 2019:

> I've met an elderly lady, disabled, someone has to pick her up from her flat and basically help her down two flights of stairs … the lifts been broken for like weeks and weeks and weeks. It's not just [R] House, it's basically most of the flats in and around that kind of [area] because they've just been left to rot. I mean they do look disgusting really if you look at the outside of them. I mean people shouldn't have to live like that.

I interviewed eight social tenants and one RTB-leaseholder who lived in the blocks due for demolition at Clapham Park west. Managed decline is suggested by tenants' exasperation regarding maintenance. In a joint interview, two female temporary tenants reported how their lift was often out-of-order: "Two weeks it was working, four months it wasn't working, one week it was working, another five months it wasn't" (Katrina, 48, white Eastern

Fig. 4 Broken window in social housing flat at Clapham Park west, 2021 Photo: Paul Watt

European). A friend of theirs had once been trapped in the lift with her child, and they were told that it would take eight hours for the engineer to come out. Marie (44, white Eastern European) was disgusted by this tardy response and called the fire brigade to free her friend: "What can we do, can we leave her crying in the lift with a 5 years-old boy? No!" Katrina highlighted disinvestment at their condemned block: "I spoke with the engineer and I said 'what's happened with this lift?', and he said to me 'they [housing association] don't want to spend money to do it."

Broken windows—a visible symbol of physical neglect and degeneration—were prominent at Clapham Park west; I counted over 40 broken/boarded-up windows during summer 2016 (Watt, 2021a). Although there were fewer such windows by 2021, several blocks remained pockmarked by them giving this part of the estate an air of dereliction (Fig. 4). Reporting broken windows via the call centre system (discussed further below) and then getting them fixed proved wearying for tenants, as Katrina illustrated:

> You need to call, how much time you need to spend on the phone, and how many days you need to call them, *again and again and again*, and when you call they answer and you tell the story, and after they say 'okay I will transfer you'. When they transfer you, you need to start again with the story. And you know we are working, we have kids. I cannot stay every day on the phone with them.

Isobel (61, black Caribbean) felt call centre staff were accusatory when she reported a broken window in her stairwell:

> If you ring up about broken glass in the precinct, they say 'did you break it?' They said 'it's your responsibility', she kept arguing and arguing. I said 'the children broke it with a ball', but she tried to say it was my fault. I told the maintenance men in the yard [outside], and they got someone to board it up.

Katrina and Marie had a broken window in their stairwell for two years even though workers came to look at it. Such tardiness led tenants to fix problems themselves. The broken window was unsafe for Marie's children: "I took some tools and I broke all the window because I need to take it down."

If the exterior of the condemned blocks looked decrepit, internally the flats continued to suffer from poor conditions. Temporary tenants reported having to undertake intensive and

Fig. 5 Window frame from inside social housing flat at Clapham Park west, 2016 Photo: Paul Watt

extensive 'self-provisioning', in Pahl's (1984) terms, in order to make their flats liveable when they first moved in. James (40, black African) had spent over £2000:

> When they give it to me [flat], nothing was there. I put the laminate floor in, I did the painting, because I've got kids here. *Nothing* was there, nothing, it was an empty concrete building, I've built everything you see here. I have to maintain the flat for it to be what it is. If you wait for them [housing association], they will never do it.

Windows were single-glazed and had worn-out metal frames (Fig. 5). Tenants complained about the cold: "There's no double-glazing because they [housing association] say they won't do it, so I go to bed early because of the cold" (elderly female tenant). James had to sell the family television because he needed the money to pay the exorbitant heating bills arising from the loss of heat through the single-glazed windows: "I have been calling them for double-glazing, but they have never done it for twelve years now."

The Coalition Government introduced the Community Organisers Programme from 2011 to 2015 whose aim was to develop community in deprived neighbourhoods via employing paid trainee community organisers (TCOs) who would recruit volunteer community organisers. I interviewed one TCO who was hosted by CPP during the post-NDC period. He went into many tenants' homes and was scathing about the poor housing conditions and overcrowding that he witnessed:

> There was one family I kept on going to see, to help them represent themselves to the [Labour] councillor and the housing association, because they lived in a ground floor flat, they had two children with learning disabilities, and they had no insulation, damp and mould. And they couldn't heat their house in the winter. It was fuel-poverty basically, because if they turned the heating on, it would all go out the windows and then they'd be paying £100-plus a week in heating and then they couldn't feed themselves. I mean I saw lots of families where they had a couple of kids, late teenage kids living in the same room together, that made it hard for them to study.

The promised central heating—which was supposed to be part of the NDC upgrade—took years to arrive. Isobel had her central heating installed in 2011, while James had to wait until 2016 following years of complaining about the cold. In 2016, Jasmin (24, white British) encapsulated the housing deprivation and neglect that frustrated tenants experienced

Fig. 6 'A vision of the future' with condemned social housing blocks in background at Clapham Park west, 2021 Photo: Paul Watt

and which the NDC was originally meant to have remedied; instead 'do-it-yourself' became normalized:

> My flat is crap, there's mould, black walls, and single-glazed windows which are closed, but it's as if they're open—it's a joke in wintertime. You can't put wallpaper up because it's damp. The windows are all brittle, cracking. I had little cockroach like things coming through holes, I complained but they said I had to do it myself. They [housing association] don't do nothing because it's going to be knocked down and they don't want to spend any money. The majority of the houses have got mould and it's because of the shitty windows. If you fixed the buildings up, you wouldn't need to knock 'em down.

Residents of the condemned blocks continued to suffer from housing deprivation in the post-NDC period, as the above and also a 2013 newspaper report highlights: "Frustrated residents plead for changes in Clapham Park flat conditions as winter approaches" (Ogundu, 2013). Residents complained to their local MP about their housing conditions, including mould, damp and severe cold in winter. This block was originally scheduled for demolition in 2011, but "annoyed tenants are being told they will have to wait until 2016 [for] the flats to be demolished" (ibid.). Despite this assurance, my field work indicates that the block in question remained standing by the end of 2021, as did another nine condemned blocks in the west (with a combined total of around 450 flats). A staggering twenty years after the start of the NDC, the gulf between the regeneration 'vision of the future' and degeneration reality was symbolically etched on to Clapham Park's physical landscape, as Fig. 6 illustrates.

7.3 New blocks at Clapham Park west

By 2021, the housing association had built 768 new properties across the estate and these accommodated rehoused existing social tenants and leaseholders, as well as incoming homeowners and shared owners (Metropolitan Thames Valley, 2021). Although the new social housing blocks in the west were architecturally uninspiring (Fig. 7), their fresh appearance contrasted with the nearby rundown council-built blocks, as tenants themselves highlighted. I interviewed Tammy (49, white British) outside her new flat and she pointed

Fig. 7 New social housing block at Clapham Park west, 2021 Photo: Paul Watt

to the old blocks: "I prefer the look of these [new] blocks than the old ones over there which look really bedraggled and old-looking". Most of the six tenant interviewees who had moved into the new flats, including Tammy, preferred them to their old flats because they were newer, warmer, in better condition and also more spacious:

> The new flats are much better. You didn't need to put your central heating on here because it's so warm and insulated. We all moved in the same time—'wow isn't it lovely'. I came to view it and they had a fitted kitchen. They bought you carpets and curtains so you didn't have to buy any of that sort of stuff. (Tammy)
> The [previous] council flat was old and had a lot of problems, it needed constant renovation. There was leakage from the upper floor to us, and then also leakage from our flat to downstairs. They [council] were always having to come there to fix one thing or another. This is much better than the previous flat, it's spacious, it's a new build, it's warm and is not very close to the main road. (Bernice, 49, black British-African)

Despite general appreciation of their new flats, several residents also spoke fondly about their old flats due to their memories of living in them over many years, and they also expressed reservations about the quality of their new homes, as is typical among rehoused social tenants in London (Watt, 2021a, 2021b). Such reservations included how the new flats looked shiny, but lacked the solidity of their old flats: "The flat is awful, it looks gorgeous from the outside, but inside it's all plasterboard" (Linda). Bill's aunt (whose late husband had worked in construction) had looked at one of the new flats, but "she wasn't impressed, lovely fixtures and fittings, but basically all cosmetic." Having moved into her new flat, Linda spent £3500 to refit the kitchen because of what she described as "rubbish" fixtures and fittings.

> You had this horrible, horrible hob, and they gave you this set of saucepans. I said 'I don't want that cheap old rubbish, I've got my own'. It's the *cheapest rubbish* you could buy. I said 'I've got good saucepans, copper-bottomed', but they said 'they won't work on that stove'. So I paid to have the whole thing gutted out and put my own kitchen in.

Carla (60, black African) complained bitterly about having dysfunctional vents, and also about how a crack in her bathroom meant that "when I bath, the water floods all the way to

Fig. 8 Refurbished social housing block at Clapham Park east, 2016 Photo: Paul Watt

the carpet." The local neighbourhood reputation of the standards of the new blocks among other interviewees—who had visited the new flats and/or knew friends and neighbours who had moved into them—was not high. Interviewees mentioned flooding underneath some of the new blocks and other problems which meant some tenants preferred moving to a refurbished property: "I said I don't want a new flat, I heard everything about them, because I know there was a balcony across the road which fell down" (Joshua, 54, white Southern European). George (53, black British) was a RTB-leaseholder whose flat was condemned, but he baulked at moving to the newly-built flats because of their reputation:

> I just want to sell and get out [leave the estate]. A new property is just a trap. My friends complain about their new properties, it's just a box, they say they made a mistake in moving. The new building is rubbish, there's leakage everywhere, whereas this place is solid, you cannot even put a nail in the wall here.

Among interviewees who lived in the new blocks, opinions differed regarding repairs and maintenance. Some reported having few problems because they were still relatively new buildings, while others thought the housing association did a good or at least acceptable job: "sometimes they come quick, but sometimes not" (Diane, 55, black British). However, two of the six interviewees were extremely frustrated with the repairs and maintenance service, for example Carla said:

> Whenever I have problems, they come and do f-all. The housing officer will ring me and do diddly squat. They need to sort it out so as I don't have to call them again. Three of them came, one came about the electrics, one about the plumbing and another one, and I just wanted to kick them out. Now I know what the issue is, I get so upset and frustrated.

Such frustration was also evident at the refurbished blocks, as now discussed.

7.4 Refurbished blocks at Clapham Park east

Most of Clapham Park east had been refurbished by 2016–2017, including lifts placed into the blocks, and generally it looked much better in terms of external appearances than it did when I first visited the estate in 2008 (Fig. 8). Internal refurbishment was

done in situ, or with residents being temporarily decanted and then either returning to their original property or to another refurbished flat, while others were rehoused from about-to-be demolished properties. I conducted interviews with seven tenants who lived in Clapham Park east, plus Sylvester who moved from his rundown flat in the west to a refurbished flat in the east. Although Sylvester had been originally opposed to stock transfer and demolition, he was happy with his relocation: "My new flat is great, it's refurbished to a high standard, it has a decent sized bedroom, a big living room, and a big bathroom and big kitchen." Like Sylvester, some tenants thought that the refurbishment had genuinely improved their housing conditions:

> They [CPH] did a good job, we got a new roof, double-glazing, new bath and toilet, and new units in the kitchen. We had the original kitchens until then. I was quite satisfied when they did the refurb. (Doris)

One female tenant had moved out of her flat for three months while the refurbishment happened: "they put a new lift in and generally I like the refurbishment".

At the same time, tenants routinely expressed reservations about the refurbishment process and results—'it looks good, but the reality is somewhat different' was a familiar refrain. Despite being pleased with the double-glazing and new roof, Sally described the in situ process as a "living nightmare, and it cost me money to put things right", and was unhappy with the standard of work and some of the results:

> The electrics were a danger, and the foreman had to come back and rewire the box. I haven't got enough cupboard space [in the refurbished kitchen]. I used to have a lovely big pantry and it held an awful lot of stuff. I've had trouble with my electrics, I've had trouble with my toilet, the toilet wasn't working properly, it wouldn't flush. And they ruined me carpets.

Tenants who lived in the largest refurbished block in the east were especially aggrieved at how the external brickwork had been sandblasted which had caused the old bricks to be porous resulting in dampness within the flats:

> They'd never had dampness before, and suddenly very damp. 'When you sandblasted it you took the whole bloody lot off [waterproofing]!' And those bricks are like sponges, and it just comes straight in through the walls into the flats, but they [contractors] couldn't get that through their heads. The people that was in charge at the time didn't know what they were doing. (Audrey)

Although Lola's flat was not affected by damp and mould, her neighbours were suffering: "I am very lucky here, but many, many, many flats they cannot stay in the bedrooms because it's mouldy" (Lola, 48, white Southern European). The problems with this particular block had prompted complaints about the refurbishment, while those tenants who were badly affected felt that their housing conditions were even worse than pre-regeneration, indicative of physical degeneration:

> That was the whole purpose of refurbishing [to meet DHS]. But it's gone below Decent Homes Standard now with all the impacting problem that's occurred due to the damp and condensation. You couldn't say [T] House was Decent Homes anymore, because of the impacting problem—mould growing on the wall, patches of whatever the bricks are storing inside. It's impacting on the walls, so it's all coming into the property. (Malana)

Although Joshua's flat had double-glazing put in, he described it as "rubbish, the cheapest they could find", and even worse than his original windows—"we can hear everything". The combination of damp, poor windows and insulation meant that Joshua had to sleep downstairs during the winter:

> In the winter now I don't sleep in my bedroom which is upstairs, because it's like a freezer all the time and it gets me sick. A couple of years ago, I woke up at 4 o'clock in the morning with so much pain, I couldn't even leave the bed to walk. I had to crawl to leave the room, and I came downstairs to sleep on the sofa because the living room—because it's downstairs—is warmer.

Tenants like Joshua, Malana and Lola had been staunch supporters of the NDC and CPP (either as volunteers or as employees) and also of the stock transfer to CPH, but years later they were bitter at how they had been sold a dream of regeneration which did not live up their daily degeneration reality:

> Metropolitan showed us the beautiful thing, everything shining and heating insulated, this insulated. Nothing happened, nothing has been insulated. The flats are freezing cold, there is damp all over the place. (Joshua)
> Where is the [regeneration] legacy here? I'd be lying if I said I'm fantastically happy. I'm still living like a hermit! Living quarters completely out, it's been a nightmare for me living here because I haven't settled. I loved my property before it was refurbished. It was cold, but I felt happy. I don't feel happy any more. You know I feel as if my life is topsy-turvy, whereby I don't know from one day to the next what's going to impact on this property. (Malana)

Such tenants had been 'unhomed' in their supposedly improved homes, indicative of degeneration (Watt, 2021a, b). Unhoming also occurred due to overcrowding. Although Laura (42, black British) thought the refurbishment of her 2-bedroom flat had improved its quality, it was too small for her and her children who slept in bunk-beds. She had applied for rehousing but, according to her, was told that the housing association could not assist her and that instead she had to apply for rehousing via the council: "you'll have to join Lambeth's waiting list."

7.5 Newly-condemned blocks and abandoned space at Clapham Park south

As indicated above, the most radical change resulting from the 2017 masterplan occurred at Clapham Park south where the majority of homes were located that were switched from refurbishment to demolition. I calculated that only 88 of the originally condemned flats in the south had been demolished by 2021 and that most of the original and newly-condemned blocks of flats (with around 390 properties) remained standing. I interviewed seven social tenants and four leaseholders (one RTB) living under the shadow of demolition and displacement in two of the newly-condemned blocks. The drastic change in plans brought distress; as one middle-aged leaseholder said, "I was frightened at the demolition because everything around here is so expensive. It would mean I have to move away, I was upset naturally about it" (Lena, white Eastern European). A local newspaper reported on the planning change: "Residents fuming at new threat to homes, green space and trees in massive Clapham development" (Jones, 2018). The loss of homes prompted 'displacement anxiety' (Watt, 2021a) as residents awaited their uncertain rehousing fate:

> I'm not sure when we're moving out. I believe we've got another year or two, but I don't know. I don't know about where we'll go or when, we've had very little communication. I phoned a few times, but they [housing association] just say 'look at the website'. There's not enough personal information about my own situation. (Alicia, 39, black British)

Leaseholders mentioned disinvesting in their homes as they retreated into a limbo-like domestic existence:

> I think it's put quite a negative sort of pall over my experience of living here. My personal perspective is there's no point in doing anything to the flat or making any improvements. (Katy, 37, white British)

The housing association had undertaken some refurbishment at the remaining southern blocks, including putting central heating in, but on the whole this appeared less substantial than at Clapham Park east. The blocks in the south were not as visibly run-down as the condemned blocks in the west, and a few interviewees were broadly content with their flats. Nevertheless, poor housing conditions, for example damp, mould, cold, flooding, infestation and overcrowding, alongside slow/inadequate landlord responses, formed a recurrent narrative in interviews. Sofia (51, white Southern European) described having inadequate heating and suffering from black mould (she showed me photographs) in her flat: "My bathroom was black and I was painting and painting, but it kept coming back black again, fifteen years I lived like this". Following numerous complaints—"nobody listened"—the housing association eventually treated the mould and Sofia was happy in her flat. But she was then facing the daunting prospect of displacement due to future demolition: "I've got a new bathroom and kitchen now, I'd rather not move, I like the area". Maya (24, black Caribbean-African) was a tenant in an adjacent block to Sofia, and she described similar long-standing damp and mould problems plus periodic flooding:

> I do think that the housing association, or whoever is in charge, does neglect its residents because like I've had mould and damp in my room for god knows how many years, as long as I can remember, and like they've only fixed it now, literally last month. [That lasted] as long as I can remember, so most of my life, if not all of my life. It was kind of always here, so we would just like clean it every year and then paint over it, and then like I have a cupboard in my room that I would put my clothes in and my clothes would end up smelling of mould and damp and then, you know I'd have to throw them away.

Maya was exasperated by her efforts to get the mould and damp dealt with, indicative of managed decline as the block was due for eventual demolition:

> They [housing association] didn't seem to take it seriously, because like I know that whenever there was an issue it would be the same, they'd come and take pictures and 'oh no I can't do it, this person has to do it, someone else has to come and take pictures, no I can't do it, they have to do it'. It's just a very repetitive cycle of not doing anything, just taking a lot of pictures. I don't think honestly they've done a very good job of taking care of anything.

Simon (white British) was a middle-aged leaseholder who thought managed decline was occurring in a deliberate effort to pressurize residents like him to sell up and leave:

Fig. 9 Empty site (foreground), old social housing block (left background) and new housing block (centre background) at Clapham Park south, 2021 Photo: Paul Watt

> Three quarters of the rooves have problems, but they were supposed to be done as part of the refurbishment. We're being managed out due to the lack of repairs, maintenance and the sheer frustration of dealing with them [housing association].

As elsewhere at the estate, do-it-yourself/self-provisioning was evident:

> I got a new door from them [housing association], but it took ages to get. They take so long to do anything, I don't bother anymore. I'm a qualified gas fitter so I just do-it-myself if anything needs fixing. They say they'll come and then you have to take time off work, and then they don't turn up. (Todd, middle-aged, black British)

Clapham Park south also contained an empty abandoned site which resulted from the demolition of two blocks of flats in 2015 with a view to redeveloping the area as educational and residential facilities. Laura's friend had been moved out of one of these blocks: "They knocked down her block—how many years ago?—and they haven't done anything since, it's just an empty site." In 2021, this empty site was fenced off, padlocked up and overgrown with grass (Fig. 9). It had been transformed into a wasteland—a degraded physical environment redolent of the abandonment and neglect which the NDC was originally supposed to remedy—hence regeneration as symbolic as well as physical degeneration. Residents living in nearby blocks were perplexed at what had happened there over the years:

> There was so many different talks that they were going to build a school and they were going to build housing, then there was an issue with the land that there was gas underneath or something, I don't know. And now it's just being left abandoned. A couple of years ago it was taken over by travellers. I think they [housing association] evicted them and then they left. But that land is just being vacant. (Naomi, 35, mixed race)
>
> That's been there for like more than five years now and they've done nothing with it, it's just kind of sat there. I remember there used to be a mountain of bricks, to the point where you had plants growing over it again. And then a few years ago, they removed the pile of bricks that was there. (Maya)

Wallace (2015) identified how state-led gentrification was 'interrupted' in peripheral Salford since the post-NDC urban landscape there contained devalorized abandoned spaces. However, as the above indicates, such spaces also appear in London indicating that

state-led gentrification—and the springing of the state-induced rent gap (Watt, 2009)—is by no means a foregone conclusion under conditions of state and market retrenchment despite London's generally buoyant land values.

7.6 Landlord-resident communication

Residents from across the estate complained about communication vis-à-vis housing association landlord services. In 2011–2012, Metropolitan and CPH went through a joint restructuring which involved the implementation of a Customer Services Delivery Model whereby the locally-based on-site repairs service was replaced by a customer call centre which operated from Nottingham in the north of England. CPH Board Minutes reveal that this shift appears to have been driven by Metropolitan's financial need "to improve performance" (CPH, 2012: 10). The minutes also show how some CPH Board members expressed concern about this move and the shift away from a locally-based landlord which could potentially mean a worse service for residents: "the residents here were now MHP [Metropolitan Housing Partnership] residents but that they didn't vote for this, they had voted to be managed locally" (CPH, 2012: 9). Interviews reveal how the foreseen problems played out. Although there was an on-site housing association office, frustrated residents were expected to ring the call centre regarding repairs, etc.:

> Generally, they [housing association] are not really proactive. You have to be on the phone, you have to be fighting. You have to call and call and call and call before these things happen, before they do anything. They just don't do the maintenance. (James)

Although Doris appreciated the refurbishment of her flat (above), she had qualms about the landlord-tenant communication system:

> You have to phone Nottingham, It's like a call centre really, and they deal with the contractors. That's the trouble, they don't ring back when they say they're going to. Sometimes when they ring back, you have to repeat it all over again.

Several interviewees—who had previously been council tenants—contrasted the impersonal call centre system unfavourably with the locally-based familiarity and support that they had with Lambeth Council when it had operated an on-site office prior to stock transfer (see above and Wallace, 2020):

> You know you walked in the [council] office, 'hello Mrs Atkins, how's Mr Atkins'? But you go in this one here [housing association office]—'oh, phone Nottingham'. There's no personal touch at all, you're *just* a number. (Linda)
>
> They [council] were more friendly. You could talk to them about moving and personal conversations. They're [housing association] not as personable. The housing officer is nice, if you can get hold of him, but it's hard to get hold of them, not like Lambeth. (Isobel)
>
> I think with Lambeth [Council] it was a whole lot better. So you could explain to them, 'oh this in the flat, or that in the flat', but these lot [housing association] that are on the end of the phone, they just don't know nothing. If you ring up, they don't seem to know where anything is. (Laura)

Several tenants also contrasted the delays they experienced regarding repairs with the swift response they received regarding rent payments:

> They [housing association] were on your back for your rent, but they were very, very slow at getting anything [repairs] done. (Linda)
> After seven days they send me a letter that I'm in arrears with my rent and they will take me to the court. Honestly so quick, boom, boom! If you call them and say 'I want to pay my rent', in one second they are available. But if you have something to do [repairs], they have to transfer you from an operator to the other one, to the other one, to the other one. (Katrina)

This contrast confirmed in some residents' eyes how the housing association's main priorities were financial rather than service-oriented.

7.7 Stuck in limbo land

Several Clapham Park interviewees felt stuck in a post-NDC 'limbo land' (Wallace, 2015)—of being caught in-between never-ending degeneration and still waiting for the promised regeneration to truly arrive. Several tenants had been committed supporters of the NDC and enthusiastic cheerleaders for the 2006 stock transfer. Post-NDC, they were disillusioned with the glacial progress of the housing and community facility aspects of regeneration:

> I'm disillusioned, very disillusioned with the whole thing. Originally, we wanted this place to be solid, but Clapham Park Homes were useless. They were always complaining they've got no money. They conned us and blamed it on the [2008] crash and finances. (Sally)
> It should have been done and dusted by this year, 2016, but it's not. The refurbishments are just about finished, but they've not anywhere near finished the remainder of it, because the whole of the west side is all getting redeveloped, that's all being demolished. (Audrey).

As the TCO said, "One of the primary things that struck me was just the disillusion of people there [Clapham Park], that they'd been sold this idea that was clearly absolutely rubbish". Older tenants had died waiting for a Godot-like rehousing which had never arrived (Watt, 2021a). Bill's elderly aunt passed away before she was able to transfer flats:

> Quite a few of her neighbours were in exactly the same situation, they were in their late-60s, early-70s and they'd all been waiting for 15, 16, 17 years and just being constantly told 'next year', mañana.

Younger tenants who lived in the dilapidated west were also dismayed: "I thought it would have been done ages ago, I don't know why it's taken this long" (Jay, 28, black British).

The gap between NDC regeneration promises and post-NDC degeneration reality is symbolized by the fate of the show flat which CPP spent over £108,000 on erecting and running in order to represent the kind of housing that would be available to tenants *provided* they voted for transfer back in 2005 (LBL, 2009b: 78):

> We'd built a show flat to show residents what it would look like and it's beautiful. I walked around the show home with residents: 'Wow, I'd love to have this, and I'd love to have that', and I think that did influence quite a few people. (CPP manager)

In our 2016 interview, Isobel recalled when she and her fellow tenants had visited the show flat in 2005 and how she was disappointed at the lack of progress eleven years after the ballot:

> Everybody [tenants] thought we would get put into new accommodation, but it hasn't happened. There was a show flat and they made us think we're all going to move and get nice flats and they haven't done anything.

The show flat was subsequently demolished and then dumped into the garden of the closed and boarded-up local pub—a neighbourhood eyesore—where it was then discovered by residents as part of a clean-up day: "I was pulling out signage, 'Clapham Park Homes Show Flat' and everything. Residents were horrified by this" (CPP manager).

The 2008 crash, which occurred two years after stock transfer, undoubtedly contributed towards the project's delays. The fact that the crash was so devastating is also predicated on how the housing association sector as a whole has become more exposed to market forces due to years of neoliberal housing policy, culminating in deep austerity funding cuts and privatization under Conservative-led governments from 2010 (Hodkinson, 2019). As one regeneration manager at a London-based housing association explained: "With [social housing] grants falling, you have no choice but to do private development, therefore the sector has become exposed to the cyclical nature of the economy, whereas previously it wasn't". Plus, as Colenutt (2020: 110) notes more generally, large housing schemes in England "may take 20 years to build out".

In addition to the above macro-factors, tensions arose between the various organizations within the NDC public–private partnership edifice, tensions which illustrate the two contradictory governance logics—communitarian and market—that configured New Labour's estate regeneration policy. CPP's main focus throughout the NDC was improving the local neighbourhood, for example in terms of community safety, but its housing efforts were subsumed by CPH following the 2006 stock transfer. CPP's communitarian role ties in with the ideological rhetoric that both the national and Clapham Park NDC promoted—that 'the local community was in charge'. However, NDC and post-NDC housing redevelopment was dominated by neoliberal market rather than communitarian imperatives (see also Romyn, 2020). This dominance was encapsulated by the tensions within CPH over the introduction of the customer call centre system. Although CPH was nominally 'community-led', it was always a subsidiary of Metropolitan, one of the G15 housing associations described by Manzi and Morrison (2018: 1939) as "complex businesses extensively driven by a market logic motivated by state withdrawal". An ex-housing association manager highlighted the governance mismatch between the Clapham Park NDC community-based 'vision' (as developed by CPP) and the 'business case' that he considered Metropolitan was centrally concerned with:

> Well, the vision and the economics didn't come together. The vision of the NDC with those residents who were involved, they had a real vision for it, but there was very little commercial understanding of, well how much it's going to cost. They didn't have any proper cost advice. It was very much an architectural vision for the future, rather than a robust business case.

Ultimately it was neoliberal market logic which prevailed at Clapham Park with deleterious consequences for those residents who were struggling in the regenerating/degenerating post-NDC housing landscape.

8 Conclusion

Pre-NDC Clapham Park was a deprived and neglected estate, and many residents welcomed the NDC as a potential saviour to get them out of their dire living conditions, notably poor quality housing, sparse community facilities and high crime levels. Despite the large NDC funding spent on housing and the physical environment (HPE) at Clapham Park, the above long view perspective highlights how housing progress was in fact slow and limited during the NDC period itself, with 69% of properties failing to meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2009, over three times the Lambeth and London percentages—awoeful result for a flagship regeneration scheme. Clapham Park NDC relied upon a model of redevelopment involving stock transfer to a housing association (demunicipalization) which would in turn redevelop and refurbish the estate based on large-scale market housing cross-subsidy. The 2008 financial crash put paid to this model resulting in severe redevelopment and refurbishment delays.

During the post-NDC period, Clapham Park has morphed into a highly fragmented and spatially uneven urban landscape comprising a patchwork quilt of condemned devalorized blocks of flats awaiting demolition, newly-built blocks, refurbished blocks and abandoned spaces. Regeneration and degeneration intertwine across the estate, both physically and symbolically. Twenty years after the NDC began in 2001, most of the condemned blocks of flats (containing over 800 properties) in Clapham Park west and south remained standing. Residents living in these blocks—especially in the visibly rundown west—suffered from housing deprivation during the post-NDC period and experienced managed decline and degeneration. By contrast, most tenants living in the new-build western blocks were on the whole pleased with their flats—suggesting positive regeneration effects—although problems with housing quality, repairs and maintenance also arose. Although Clapham Park east was refurbished, the quality of this work was patchy, with some improvements but also tenants' criticisms indicative of how apparent regeneration was marred by degenerative outcomes. Degeneration was also evident at post-NDC Clapham Park south which was scarred by an empty site that symbolizes the abandonment and neglect the NDC was originally supposed to rectify. Residents from across the estate made disparaging remarks about the housing association's impersonal and time-consuming call centre service system, a communication system that long-term tenants contrasted unfavourably with the on-site personal service they received when the estate was managed by Lambeth Council. In sum, given the regeneration delays, shifting masterplans, managed decline, housing deprivation, and frustrations over tardy repairs, its unsurprising that many interviewees—including several tenants who had been committed supporters of the NDC and stock transfer—were dismayed with the NDC housing legacy.

Although this paper has focused on housing, the other element of the Clapham Park NDC HPE package was the extensive community facilities promised in the 2008 masterplan, mentioned above. Few of these facilities had materialized by 2021, largely due to their financial dependence upon housing redevelopment but also related to local government 'austerity urbanism' (Gillespie et al., 2021; Peck, 2012). Like the pub, the previously functioning parade of local shops near the estate had entirely closed down by 2021 and was boarded up (Brixton Buzz, 2021). Such environmental degradation—emblematic of physical degeneration—contributed to the considerable disillusionment with regeneration that Clapham Park residents and officials expressed in interviews, fieldwork, and newspaper reports. By contrast, aspects of CPP's communitarian regeneration agenda had some

long-standing success, notably in terms of improved community safety which interviewees acknowledged (Cole et al., 2010; CPP, 2013).

The paper illustrates the tensions within a public–private partnership regeneration scheme that attempted to meld together two contradictory governance logics: a communitarian logic of local control as promoted by CPP, and the market-oriented logic of the parent housing association. The competing nature of these logics illustrates the contradictions inherent within New Labour's roll-out neoliberal brand of regeneration which the Clapham Park NDC exemplifies (Hodkinson, 2019; Romyn, 2020; Wallace, 2010; Watt, 2009). The attempt to foster bottom-up neighbourhood-based communities and active citizens on the basis of social housing providers (like the G15 group of housing associations) operating under a private-development cross-subsidy model was always going to produce unresolvable tensions. Such tensions were exacerbated by market retrenchment resulting from the 2008 property crash and subsequent state retrenchment due to government-imposed austerity. As noted above, England's housing association sector, with its large and risky development-for-sale activity, is "fairly unique in a European context" which by comparison tends to be both more regulated and publicly funded (Wilson, 2020).

In conclusion, the paper illustrates how taking a long view perspective facilitates an in-depth, temporally and spatially nuanced account of how estate residents live through regeneration—coupled with degeneration—over many years. As discussed elsewhere, the Clapham Park NDC regeneration/degeneration story is not unique in London (Watt, 2021a). In particular, parallels can be drawn with the similarly protracted and controversial regeneration at the Aylesbury estate which was also an NDC neighbourhood (Romyn, 2020; Watt, 2020). Given that the latest Clapham Park masterplan will not be completed until at least 2030 (Kilpatrick & Patel, 2021), residents there can expect several more years of inter-related regeneration and degeneration to come.

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