

PLANNING SCANDAL - Court showdown looms



Our future:Rabbit-hutch Rotherhithe

The deluge of development plans all lodged with Southwark Council Planning Department in the last few weeks has sparked protests that the Council planners and Big Business property developers have purposefully timed this onslaught to leave ordinary Rotherhithe residents reeling in a sea of complex planning details.

Now the DDC is seeking to hold up the process to secure a full, public Inquiry into the history and conduct of the Downtown Planning Process by the Council's own watchdog investigators – called the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC).

In March this year, at the DDC's urging, the OSC set a June date for their Downtown investigation. Immediately Southwark's lawyers threw the book at the OSC, demanding its inquiry be suspended until after our last legal action against the Council, to overrule the last Downtown Planning Permission. The OSC bowed to the Council lawyers' pressure and agreed to postpone.

Then in April the DDC won our last Court battle, and the OSC were back on the case. It announced a new date for the Inquiry – 12th October in Rotherhithe. The DDC was preparing to submit evidence and witness statements to the Inquiry.

But once more, Southwark's lawyers stepped in to block the OSC Inquiry, and again the Committee has backed off.

Now the DDC has threatened to take the Council back to Court once more if they refuse to permit the OSC to hold its Inquiry, **AND** we have demanded that the OSC Inquiry is held **before** any Downtown Planning Permission is granted to Barratt. A legal response from Southwark Council is expected imminently, as we go to Press. Southwark has until 19 October at the very latest to respond. If they refuse to budge, or if they fail to respond, then there will be a new High Court action against the Council's OSC blocking tactic.

"This is all being done with unseemly haste – it reeks of a stitch-up," said DDC Chair Steve Cornish. "We are talking about 2000 residential units, 7000 or more people, and nothing for the roads, no pool, no new health centre, no secondary school, not one inch of extra green space – it's a scandal. The DDC is massively grateful to everyone for all your support and we will continue to need it. Please contact us, if you want to help us." (See our Contact and Donations Panel below right.)

To help you understand the current confusion, we have set out your 'At-A-Glance' Guide to the Planning Avalanche:

CURRENT ROTHERHITHE PLANS

CANADA WATER Site A

Owner – British Land; Developer – Barratt; location - by CW Bus/Tube stations; Plan – 26-storey Tower Block, 668 flats. Consultation close date – 16 Oct

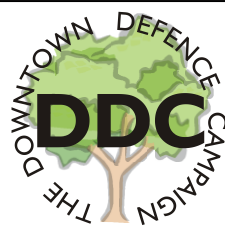
CANADA WATER Site C

Owner – Conrad Phoenix; location – Decathlon shopping sheds at Canada Water; Plan – 430 flats, bars. Consultation close date – 13 Oct (closed)

Surrey Quays Leisure Centre

(also known as the MAST Centre)

Owner – Frogmore; location – multiplex cinema, bowling, bingo, restaurants complex; Plan – 509 flats, hotel, 123 student rooms, new cinema, bowling and restaurant (not Bingo). Consultation close date: 16 Oct



ABOUT THE DDC

A non-political neighbourhood self-help group to safeguard the best interests of the Rotherhithe Community

WEBSITE

http://www.russiadockwood.ukfriends.com/html/downtown_defence.html

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PLEASE - WE NEED YOUR CONTINUED DONATIONS

To: the DDC Treasurer, Sue Agnew, 1 Somerford Way, Downtown, Rotherhithe, SE16 1QN

Please make all payments to "Downtown Defence Campaign".
Thank you for your continued support. We will continue our fight.