



Royal Holloway Geography for Schools Lecture Series

Class Activity.

Contemporary Urban Environments. The case of Cressingham Gardens.

The class activity is based on the proposed regeneration of Cressingham Gardens Estate in Tulse Hill, South London. It is a real case study and the final outcomes may differ to the current situation so you may wish to Google 'Cressingham Gardens' before the session to check the final outcomes / current state of play and use as a postscript to the exercise.

Cressingham Gardens is a low-rise council estate of 302 homes which were finally completed in 1979. The estate, situated on the edge of Brockwell Park, is owned by the London Borough (LB) of Lambeth. In 2015, LB Lambeth published plans containing 5 options for regeneration from repairs of all housing stock through to demolition of the entire estate to be replaced with a mix of private and social housing. LB Lambeth concluded that the most cost-effective way to regenerate Cressingham Gardens was through demolition of the entire estate and its replacement with a mix of private and social housing. In response, Cressingham Garden residents protested against the demolition and produced an alternative to the proposed demolition called the 'The Cressingham Gardens People's Plan'. The plan was rejected by LB Lambeth. Residents then applied to manage the estate through the government's 'Right to Transfer' policy which would effectively hand control of the estate to the residents and so prevent demolition. LB Lambeth are still planning to demolish part of the estate and residents are still trying to prevent this.

Discussion Points:

This activity asks students to look at the plans of both LB Lambeth and residents and decide on what should happen next. The resources attached outline the positions taken by both LB Lambeth and local residents. Students should use these materials (and conduct their own information gathering) to consider the reasons why LB Lambeth wish to demolish and replace the estate. One way of doing this is through a SWOT analysis.

Students can be split into two groups. Group 1 will carry out a SWOT analysis of the LB Lewisham regeneration plans. Group 2 will conduct a SWOT analysis of the plans of Cressingham Gardens residents. The two groups can then feedback to the class.

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Strengths	Weaknesses
Positives Who will gain from the plan? How does the plan exploit available funding, laws and regulations?	Negatives Who will lose from the plan? What threats do available funding, laws and regulations pose?
Opportunities	Threats
What further benefits might the plan lead to? e.g. social, economic, political, environmental. Role of local community?	What further negative impacts may the plan lead to? e.g. social, economic, political, environmental. Role of local community?

Students could be asked to think about how the proposed regeneration reflects wider processes of urban change such as gentrification, dispossession and dispersal of residents, and cuts to local government funding. The class can discuss the roles of local government, local communities, property developers and global finance in regeneration projects.

The class can debate who ‘governs’ in this case study and think through broader questions of who has the power to make decisions and who should govern.

The Cressingham gardens case study illustrates what has been called ‘state-led gentrification’. Should local authorities actively encourage gentrification?

What are the positives and negatives of gentrification?

Class Debate.

An alternative to the general class discussion outlined above is a debate on the two positions of LB Lambeth and residents. The class could be split into three groups;

1. Representatives of LB Lambeth
2. Representatives Cressingham Gardens residents
3. A Citizens Panel

Representatives of the local authority and residents can present their case of how to regenerate Cressingham Gardens to the Citizens Panel. The Citizens Panel can cross examine each group before making a recommendation based on the evidence presented. The Citizens Panel should justify their decision and draw on the evidence presented.

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Resources;

Students may wish to conduct their own research but here are some sources that should help;

Community Information:

Cressingham Gardens People's Plan.

<http://cressinghampeoplesplan.org.uk/>

Save Cressingham Gardens (a key residents action group) <https://savecressingham.wordpress.com/>

Tom Keane Regeneration 'cheat sheet'

<http://www.db-estate.co.uk/08.ReganCheatSheet/00.CheatSheet.html>

Pablo Sendra and Daniel Fitzpatrick (2020) *Community-Led Regeneration: A Toolkit for Residents and Planners* Free download from UCL Press: <https://www.uclpress.co.uk/products/125696>

London Borough of Lambeth;

These documents spell out the case for demolishing Cressingham Gardens and give some context regarding cuts in funding which have led, at least, in part, to local authorities seeking to benefit from gentrification.

London Borough of Lambeth Cabinet Report.

<https://moderngov.lambeth.gov.uk/documents/s75751/Appendix%20A%20-%20Cressingham%20Gardens%20v2a.pdf>

London Borough Of Lambeth funding cuts.

<https://love.lambeth.gov.uk/toughchoices/budget-figures/>

Media reports;

Oliver Wainwright (2020) 'A Kafkaesque nightmare': the survival guide helping condemned estates beat the bulldozers. A Guardian article.

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2020/may/22/a-kafkaesque-nightmare-the-survival-guide-helping-condemned-estates-beat-the-bulldozers>

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