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STREET FIGHTERS

Alicia Rose, Edge Hill, Liverpool, Dec 2009

“It was awful. It was absolutely awful. I’d been here four weeks and I thought ‘my own home’. And I’d done a lot to it, because the previous tenants, they had weird and wonderful colour schemes going on. I’d stripped everything, I’d stripped the walls, I took a wall down upstairs, I made a mezzanine floor...I’d made it really nice, you know...my little palace. And to be told that within such a short space of time...and from that point, it’s there in my subconscious, every day I wake up over the past four years I’ve known that something...that it’s all going to go. That it’s all going to be gone from me. But I never knew when. And it’s only in the last six months that it’s really sped....it’s about just under half occupied, this street, so most of it is boarded up – metal, crumbling buildings around me. And two streets up from me it’s all being flattened. The whole area around me is being razed and....um...it’s pretty grim.

“I moved to Liverpool to start a new life, and.....when I bought this house, the street was...I think there might have been a couple of houses empty but nothing to make me think ‘there’s empty houses.’ I’d bought the house and within four weeks of living here a neighbour said to me ‘have you just bought that house?’ I said: ‘yes’. And she said ‘do you know that this land is earmarked to be demolished...everything?’

“Now I’d never have bought this house if I’d have known that. Now I paid for a search to be done and nothing came up on it. But I know now that it has been 10 years in the running, the plans for this area, so by rights it should have come up on a search when I bought this house five years ago. Because even in the last....it’s mainly in the last six months to a year in this road particularly that I’ve seen the removal vans coming a few times.

“We’re....Winifred Street is in what’s called phase three, and I’ve got paperwork there that shows phase three, there is no particular time on it. Every other phase has got ‘March 2010’ or whatever, and it’s showing you when it’s going to happen. Phase three is a grey area again.

“It’s almost a cleansing that’s going on here. But as it stands, us here now are living in psychological limbo.”