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STREET FIGHTERS

Maureen & Terry Walsh, Derker, Nov 2009

“We got a letter through the door, saying the plans for Derker were round at the community centre and when we went round to have a look at them, that was when they dropped the bombshell. There were 588 properties earmarked for demolition. And we fought it and lost.

We had the public inquiry, which we lost. And then we got the decision made that we could go to the High Court because of the way the public inquiry had been led, if you like. And when we went to court then, we did lose. It's not that they're not fit to live in, it's just that they want the land. One of the main things that we fought for was that if they want this house they should be prepared to find us another property at no cost to ourselves. We should be able to live now as we have lived since 1985, when we paid for this property. We sat down one night and we went through it all, what we've been offered. And there was £250 a year ground rent, £750 a year maintenance charges and they wouldn't even tell us what council tax band it was in. And we did the sums, me and Terry one night, and it made it that we would pay out an extra £80 a week. Well where do we get that from?

“But none of it has been taken on board. No one's wanted to listen. We've always worked, we've always paid our rates at the time they were rates and we've always paid full council tax, and we still do pay full council tax. And at the end of the day we've been kicked in the teeth and the bottom line is, nobody bloody cares.”