

Street Fighters

Gary Loftus, Beswick, New East Manchester

“It’s very modern, it’s very white. I would say it’s quite striking, and that’s what appealed to us when we first saw the plans and the artists’ impressions. The reality though has been a very different picture. We’ve had numerous problems with the developer and the way they built the houses. We’ve experienced some of the worst things you could ever experience in terms of bureaucracy, in terms of people backing each other up. And at the end of the day the people who live in the houses are the people who bought into the vision. The people who had the vision delivered it. I don’t think they delivered it very well. And it’s something that we never actually expected to have to deal with...you know.

I didn’t know that I’d still, four years on, be going backwards and forwards with New East Manchester, looking at development agreements, head leases....I never envisaged having to read a development agreement or a head lease but that’s the level that we’ve had to go to.

And at one point the developer came and offered to buy us out, there were so many issues that we’d come across having moved in. And not only us – a lot of other people who had moved in, and collectively we’d worked together.

The end result seems to be that the people that deal with the problems are then portrayed as the problem.

I can only speak from my own experience and the people that I talk to, but I think there always are winners and losers. But I think what people are realising now is that it isn’t a bottom-up approach – we’re actually seeing a more corporate top-down approach to regeneration. And it very much happens, things like we’ll be consulted on documents but those documents are already drawn up.

I wouldn’t consider myself a winner or a loser, but I would say I made the right decision to move and I don’t know whether I made the right decision to move where I moved to. In terms of who I bought from, I’d say well, they didn’t manage my expectations very well at all.”