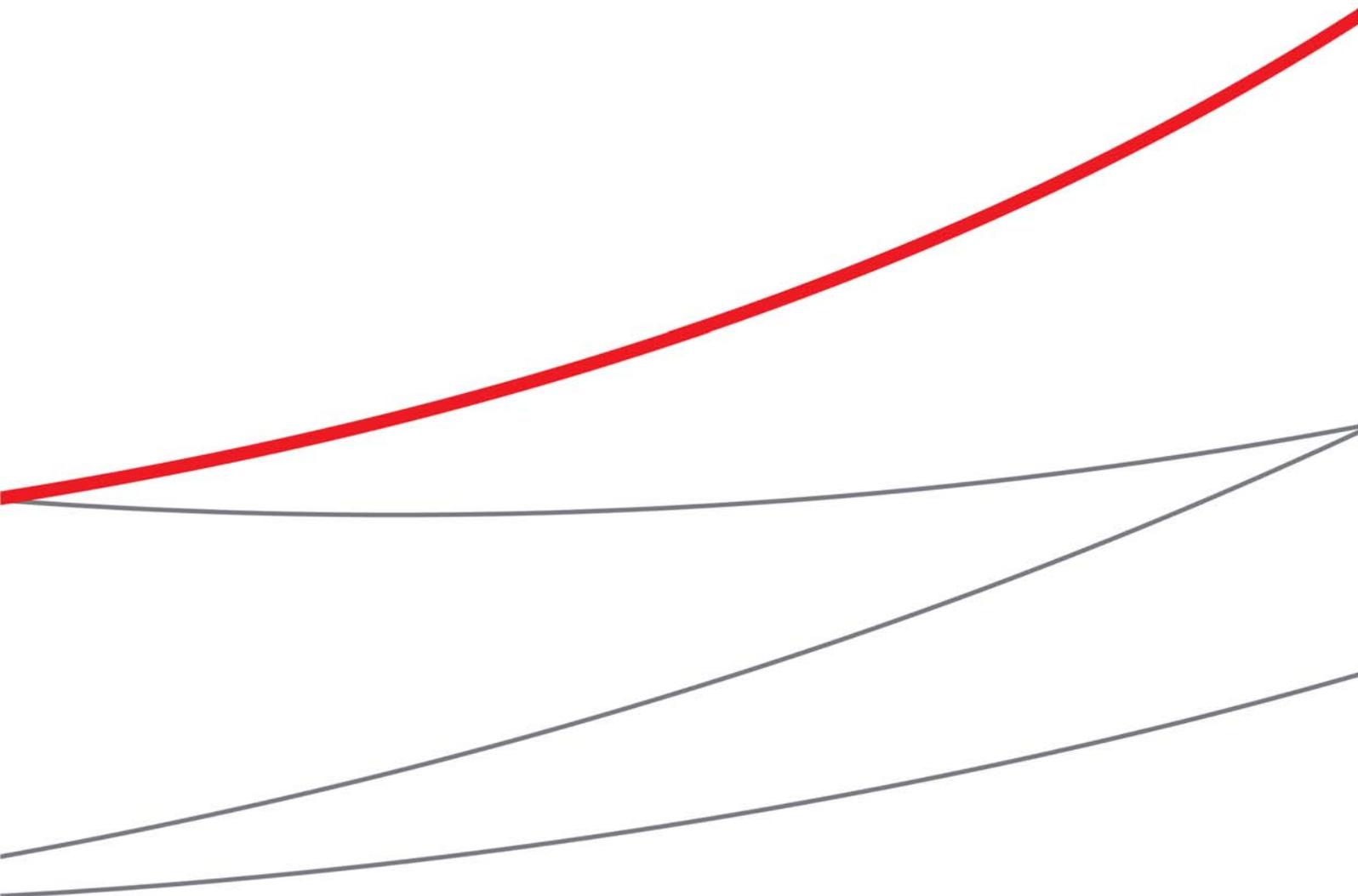


Harlow Priority Estates

Implementation Strategies

Technical Note on Dorran Bungalows

October 2010



**EC HARRIS**  
**BUILT ASSET**  
**CONSULTANCY**

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## 1. The Briars – Dorrان Bungalows

### 1.1 Historical Content

In response to the post war need to re-house the nation following the destruction and damage to some 30% of existing housing stock the Government initiated a program to deliver 300,000 “temporary” dwellings with a design lifespan of between ten to fifteen years. The program was based on re-directing manufacturing skills and capabilities learnt from the efficient delivery of armaments into the production of prefabricated homes. Whilst the production was indeed efficient, the materials available at the time were poor and it turned out that these pre-fabricated homes were in fact more expensive to build than traditional homes. During that program only 150,000 pre-fabricated dwellings were in fact completed.

The Dorrان Bungalows, built by the firm of R.Tarran, Hull, which form the heart of The Briars Estate, were a later derivative of this type of construction instigated from 1951 when Churchill’s Government made a promise of 300,000 further new houses. We understand that, of the Dorrان Bungalow type, there were only a total of 600 of them built nationally. At the time, the big attraction was the relatively large internal spaces that they provided. As dwellings, they resulted in a low building density of, typically less than 20 dwellings per acre.

### 1.2 What has happened elsewhere?

There are many precedents for large scale redevelopment of estates made up of similar pre-fabricated housing types. One such prominent and recent example being, the Excalibur Estate in Catford, South East London. The Excalibur Estate comprises 186 prefabricated bungalows (very similar but not identical to the Dorrان Bungalows) built under the Governments re-housing initiative with an intended lifespan of 10 years. In 2005 the London Borough of Lewisham Council looked into the cost of bringing them up to Decent Homes Standard by 2010. They decided that, subject to tenants voting in favour, the best option for Excalibur in order to meet the standards was to transfer all the homes to a housing association, who could raise the funds to re-develop new homes for the future.

In February 2007, London and Quadrant Housing Trust (L&Q) were selected to be the partner for what was to be a stock transfer. This decision was endorsed by the Council in April 2007. Following close consultation with residents an Offer Document with L&Q’s commitments was sent to residents in July 2008 by the Council. The ballot was intended to be carried out in the October of 2008. At that point six of the Excalibur bungalows, those which had been least altered, were given grade II listed status. Thus preventing the

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construction of the required number of new homes which balanced the costs, so creating a funding gap.

In order to be legible for the gap funding required, the project had to be converted from a stock transfer into a regeneration project. In March 2010 the Mayor of Lewisham decided to ballot the residents.

There was a vocal residents group that campaigned vigorously against the redevelopment. However the result of the vote, carried out in July, was a 56% vote in favour of demolition. Quotes from delighted tenants are testament to the conditions they had been living under:

*"Its brilliant, I'm very happy. At last people get decent homes to live in."*

*"We can't live here any longer. They are falling down. My daughter lives in Ector Road and they are falling down"*

*"They were good in their day but I get Ice on the inside of my bedroom window"*

The proposal for Excalibur consists of redeveloping the whole estate and rebuilding a mixture of affordable homes with additional flats and houses for sale, shared ownership and equity ownership. The 186 bungalows are to be replaced with 397 new homes and we understand the regeneration is now getting under way.

We are aware of a similar but smaller scale scheme at St Georges, Telford which concerned Dorran bungalows and where consultations began in 1999. The resident's priorities at that time were for individual established gardens, adequate and secure resident and visitor parking facilities, improved drainage and easy adaptability of the dwellings for the residents changing mobility and care needs. A Residents Focus Group (RFG) was set-up and individual consultations were undertaken with each resident regarding the design and layout of their new home. We understand that the creation of that Group removed many of the traditional barriers between tenant and landlord and that through the entire project good communications and support was maintained, the regeneration was successfully delivered.

There are other examples of planning consents being granted for the demolition of Dorran Houses and replacement by new dwellings, an example of which is from The Banff and Buchan Area Committee where permission was granted for demolition of five Dorran bungalows. The planning report states that the Dorran Construction was classified as a "defective house type" by the Housing Act of 1985 and that structural surveys suggest the houses would only be structurally stable for a further seven to ten years. In conclusion it was deemed that *"The Dorran properties no longer met building standards and in the wake of specialist investigations that they had a very limited future as tenanted accommodation"*. Permission was granted for demolition of the 5 Dorran bungalows and

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replacement by 18 new dwellings of various types providing densification of the estate. Importantly the proposal was supported by all of the existing tenants.

The fact that there are still surviving Dorran Homes today, some sixty years after their design life, is testament to the quality to which they were in fact built. There is a specialist company that provides refurbishment solutions for these dwellings and other prefabricated dwelling types. The solutions that company, Landmark PRC, provide involve replacing all external concrete panels with new insulated panels which whilst extending the life of the dwelling, do not, without additional refurbishment, meet Decent Homes Standards. This cannot match the life span and performance of newly constructed dwellings.

## 1.3 Conclusion

There is therefore documented evidence supporting the premise that the most successful route to regeneration and achievement of Decent Homes Standards with Dorran Bungalows is through their demolition and re-development.

## 1.4 References

Wikipedia  
Landmark PRC  
L&Q Housing Association  
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Michael Dyson Associates Ltd  
Banff and Buchan Planning Department  
The Excalibur Estate

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