# Third Street residents vow to resist council demolition plans despite regeneration funding boost



Residents of Third Street in Horden, County Durham, find themselves in a fierce battle against a £6 million regeneration plan that threatens to demolish their homes. As council bulldozers loom, the remaining residents, determined to preserve their community, express sentiments that resonate deeply: they would “rather be shot” than surrender their cherished homes.

The local authority, Durham County Council, plans to raze the 123-year-old terraced houses as part of a wider vision to rejuvenate the area. Included in the council’s ambit is the demolition of around 80 properties, nearly half of which stand empty. The council insists that this initiative is designed to instigate a significant transformation in the village, intending to draw families back to Horden with modern housing.

Yet, the residents remain resolute. Moira Bellingham, 65, and her brother Ray, 67, epitomise that defiance. Having lived in their home for 59 years, they have amassed a lifetime of memories, making it abundantly clear that no amount of money could entice them to leave. “They would literally need to kill me to get me out of this house,” Moira declared, underscoring the emotional stakes involved.

Their plight has echoes across the community, which has felt the repercussions of socio-economic decline following the closure of the coal mine in 1987. With neighbouring homes falling into disrepair, Third Street has increasingly become synonymous with dereliction. The council has faced accusations from residents of employing “strong-arm tactics” to achieve their aims, with some alleging that officials have manipulated the appearance of the area to drive down property values and thus facilitate forced sales.

The council argues that such measures are necessary; they claim the redevelopment will address longstanding issues of empty homes and increase the quality of life for residents. The regeneration project, recently boosted with an additional £4.5 million from the North East Combined Authority, is expected to extend beyond Third Street to encompass Fifth Street and other nearby areas. Yet, skepticism prevails among many locals. Claire Wilson, a former resident, questioned whether this initiative would do anything for the rest of Horden, suggesting that other streets might require attention just as urgently.

Concerns have also arisen regarding compensation. The offers made to homeowners are often perceived as inadequate, with some residents like Ray Bellingham revealing that they have been offered only about half of their homes' value. With the average house price in the UK significantly higher than what is being proposed, many fear they will face homelessness or have to find rental accommodation, which may not be financially feasible.

Residents such as Eva Halili, who moved from London, share similar sentiments. She feels caught in a web of council pressures, describing attempts by the local authority to pry information from tenants regarding landlords as “bribery tactics.” However, the council claims they are working on a comprehensive rehousing strategy to provide support for those displaced, though many remain unconvinced about the sincerity of these efforts.

Frank Whittaker, who has invested heavily in improvements to his home, expresses frustration. “If they were genuine, then they’d offer us fair amounts,” he stated. This sentiment echoes the broader community's calls for a genuine commitment from the council to preserve the rich history encapsulated in these houses, built for miners over a century ago.

Martin Copeland, a local gardener, fears that the community's efforts may be too late. He observed how the persistent sale of properties for as little as £1 has proliferated, creating a landscape ripe for exploitation in the eyes of the council. “It’s sad but all it’s stacked against the residents,” he lamented.

Despite their struggles, the residents of Third Street remain dedicated to defending their homes as more than mere real estate; they embody years of community spirit, familial histories, and a deep-rooted sense of belonging. While they understand that the council's ambitions are set in stone with plans for modernised housing—potentially generating a surge of new residents—they continue to call for respect and recognition of their rights and their past.

In response, Michael Kelleher, head of planning and housing at Durham County Council, asserted that plans for the Horden Masterplan have undergone extensive consultation with residents. The council aims to balance redevelopment while addressing the housing needs of current residents, although many remain incredulous about the feasibility of such promises.

As these battles unfold, one thing remains evident: the fight for Third Street is not just about houses; it’s about homes, history, and the intertwined fabric of a community that refuses to be erased.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
2. Paragraphs 1, 2, 4, 5
3. Paragraph 5
4. Paragraph 5
5. Paragraph 5
6. Paragraph 5
7. Paragraphs 4, 5, 6

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691783/Last-residents-ghost-street-boarded-terraces-REFUSE-sell.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.itv.com/news/tyne-tees/2024-01-25/villagers-not-confident-of-further-regeneration-after-6m-masterplan-unveiled> - Residents in Horden, County Durham, have expressed skepticism about the success of a £6 million regeneration masterplan. Despite Durham County Council securing £6.2 million for the project, locals are concerned that the funds will be limited to Third Street, leaving other areas in need. Claire Wilson, a former resident, questioned the focus on Third Street, suggesting that other streets in Horden require more attention. Mark Bond-Webster, a recent resident, fears that the regeneration might only benefit one street, leaving the rest of Horden neglected. The council plans to redevelop Third Street due to its proximity to existing cleared sites, aiming to create a viable housing scheme. The project includes improved walking and cycling routes to Peterlee town centre, Horden train station, and the Durham Heritage Coast. The council is also exploring options for new care facilities, shops, and business spaces. A comprehensive rehousing strategy has been developed for affected residents, both owner-occupiers and tenants, to identify suitable alternative accommodation. The council emphasizes its commitment to revitalizing the community and improving the quality of life for Horden residents.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cgk737mvey3o> - A regeneration project in Horden, County Durham, has received an additional £4.5 million in funding, bringing the total investment to over £10 million. The scheme, initially backed with £6.2 million from Durham County Council, aims to replace and refurbish dilapidated homes in the village. The North East Combined Authority (NECA) provided the extra funding, with North East Mayor Kim McGuinness describing it as a 'down payment' on her housing ambitions. The plan focuses on the 'numbered streets' in Horden, with the council aiming to redevelop these homes into high-quality housing or demolish them to build new ones. While the council has not confirmed the exact number of council houses to be included, the project is currently in the process of acquiring properties on Third Street. Council leader Amanda Hopgood stated that the new funding would allow the regeneration to extend into Fifth Street. NECA has developed a 'comprehensive rehousing strategy' for current residents of the numbered streets to ensure suitable alternative accommodation is available. The council continues to explore additional funding opportunities to support the regeneration efforts.
* <https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/24059250.6m-masterplan-horden-approved-durham-council/> - Durham County Council has approved a £6 million regeneration plan for Horden, aiming to improve housing standards and quality of life for residents. The plan involves acquiring properties on Third Street to redevelop them into high-quality housing or demolish and rebuild new homes. The project also includes enhancing walking and cycling routes to Peterlee town centre, Horden train station, and the Durham Heritage Coast. An extensive consultation with residents showed strong support for demolishing and clearing the numbered streets and comprehensive regeneration. The council emphasizes its commitment to revitalizing the community and attracting outside investment. A comprehensive rehousing strategy has been developed for affected residents to identify suitable alternative accommodation.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c19y90v1l20o> - Durham County Council has approved a £6 million scheme to regenerate Horden, a former mining town. The plan involves acquiring properties on Third Street to redevelop them into high-quality housing or demolish and rebuild new homes. The project also includes improving walking and cycling routes to Peterlee town centre, Horden train station, and the Durham Heritage Coast. The council aims to address housing issues and support those with housing needs by tackling empty homes and the high number of private landlords. The redevelopment includes some council housing, but the exact number has not been confirmed. The council is currently in the process of acquiring properties on Third Street.
* <https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/31960/News-Major-investment-supports-regeneration-of-Horden> - Durham County Council has approved the first phase of the Horden Masterplan, investing £6 million to regenerate the village. The plan focuses on acquiring properties on Third Street to redevelop them into high-quality housing or demolish and rebuild new homes. The project also includes improving walking and cycling routes to Peterlee town centre, Horden train station, and the Durham Heritage Coast. The council is working closely with residents to identify their housing needs and provide suitable alternative accommodation. A comprehensive rehousing strategy has been developed for affected residents, both owner-occupiers and tenants. The council emphasizes its commitment to revitalizing the community and improving the quality of life for Horden residents.
* <https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/30812/Horden-Masterplan-update-goes-before-Cabinet> - Durham County Council is seeking approval for the implementation of the Horden Masterplan, aiming to invest over £6 million in the regeneration of the village. The plan involves acquiring properties on Third Street to redevelop them into high-quality housing or demolish and rebuild new homes. The council emphasizes its commitment to revitalizing the community and improving the quality of life for Horden residents. A comprehensive rehousing strategy has been developed for affected residents to identify suitable alternative accommodation. The council continues to explore additional funding opportunities to support the regeneration efforts.