

Customer / Neighbour Satisfaction

**Development at Grosvenor Road, St Paul's
(former Black and White Café)**

Date of Completion : February 2006

Developer:

Knightstone Housing Association:

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Partners:

Bristol City Council:

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Housing Corporation:

Asad Butt: asad.butt@housingcorp.gsx.gov.uk

Architects:

Hope and Bowden (up to planning)

Stone & Partners (detailed design): www.stone-partners.co.uk

Employers Agent:

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Contractor:

Matrix Solutions UK Ltd: Justin.Hampshire@matrix.uk.com

Background

St Paul's Bristol gained a poor reputation as an area of multi deprivation, high crime rates, drug dealings, shootings and prostitution. It was portrayed in the press as an area ravaged by rival Yardie gang warfare, controlled by drug dealers and pimps and a no go area for the police.

There are, however, many welcome, often unpublicised signs that the image and reality of the area is being turned round. The long established local community is fighting back to reclaim the streets. The police too have at last begun to take the area seriously with a series of highly publicised raids.

There have also been a number of significant new developments in the area including a new sports academy completed in early 2003, a family and learning centre completed in early 2004 in Grosvenor Road and a circus school in the conversion of St Paul's Church in Portland Square.

Knightstone has been working in St Paul's for over 25 years and we own and manage over 230 homes within this area, which are all within walking distance of our Bristol office.

We long been an active member of the local community and have played a major role in St Paul's Unlimited Community Partnership since it was established in 2001. This is a partnership between residents, agencies, businesses and people who work in St Paul's & St Agnes. It aims to address some of the problems that exist in the inner city to improve the quality of life in the area. We specifically work in the Task Groups covering Crime and Disorder, Rubbish, Community Cohesion and Housing.

At the heart of our approach is the desire to work closely with the local community and provide solutions that fit with their aspirations. We aim to help improve not only the built environment, but also raise the quality of life for all those who live there. In addition, we seek to promote St Paul's in a positive way to a wider audience and break-down preconceptions held by others outside the area.

We have effective housing management practices to ensure our properties are well managed, taking prompt actions when problems arise around nuisance, anti-social behaviour and harassment.

The four major landlords of Bristol City Council, Knightstone Housing Association, Bristol Churches Housing Association and United Housing Association, who between them own 80% of the housing in the area, have produced a joint housing plan which consists of converting existing housing in multiple occupation back into family housing, selling off some of the social housing to local people either on a shared ownership basis or outright, improving some of the housing and finally selective demolition and redevelopment of housing which is not cost effective to repair and maintain with financial assistance from the Housing Corporation.

Scheme Details, Process and Programme

The Black and White Café, notorious as the starting point for the 1980s riots, was a focal point of criminal activity and drug-dealing. We campaigned jointly for three years working with the Police, local residents and the City Council to secure a Compulsory Purchase Order on the property. Without this input from the Council, the scheme would never have taken place. It involved very difficult and tough negotiations, staff fearful of intimidation and retribution and included a two day hearing involving the City Council, our staff and local residents.

Once the CPO had been awarded, the Police continued to raid the property and obtained a closure order very shortly after. This meant that they could close the premises until the CPO was implemented and ownership transferred to the City Council.

The café site and 4 adjoining houses in the City Council's ownership were then transferred to us in February 2005. The fifth house next to the café was already in our ownership. These 6 properties were demolished in March 2005 and have been replaced with six new 3 bed family houses for rent.

It has been redeveloped as six new build houses in a style similar to the original houses.

The initial capital costs of redevelopment were only marginally more expensive than refurbishment and significantly cheaper when the 30 year whole life costs were considered.

The design of the scheme was the subject of considerable local consultation. Local residents wanted the new homes to be built in the Victorian vernacular style which is characteristic of the area and rejected a modern façade.

Key features of the scheme include :

- Use of modern methods of construction including timber frame construction and single ply roofing technology resulting in a fast track project and energy efficient dwellings
- High energy efficiency and sound attenuation qualities;
- External Masonry skin which is rendered and coloured;
- Free stone features to match the existing terrace;
- High performance double glazed timber windows;
- Steel frame front and rear doors to ensure high security standards;
- Burglar alarms;
- Rear gardens turfed and enclosed with fencing;
- Rear garden sheds, driers and patios provided.
- Substantial time invested in the planning and execution of site set up, enabling works, local resident liaison, propping of neighbouring properties and site clearance measures

- The original design of the front garden walls was modified to include railings in response to residents' concerns about anti-social behaviour.
- The site hoardings have been painted by local young people
- 'On Site Bristol' - a Bristol City Council and Jobcentre Plus joint venture agency – were appointed by the project team and clear objectives were set to employ labour and subcontractors from the local area
- Knightstone and Matrix invested in the community as a key sponsor of the 'Big Time 9 Matrix Cup' a very successful football tournament held recently at the August Big Time 9 Ashley Youth Arts Festival; an annual event that will ensure that we remain known in the area

Best Practice Outcomes and lessons learnt

- The development has attracted a lot of interest and already has had a positive influence on the area. The demolition of the former Black and White Café marks a break with the past and the dawn of a new, bright and vibrant future for this much maligned neighbourhood.
- The scheme involved a huge amount of staff time and consultation and was only successful because it had the support of the local community.
- The huge commitment of staff from Knightstone, Bristol City Council and local residents to secure the CPO
- A small minority yet hostile opposition to the scheme could have easily prevented it taking place
- Local people wanted a design in keeping with the Victorian vernacular rather than a contemporary design favoured by professionals
- Multi agency support to the project was essential
- Funding from the Housing Corporation and Bristol City Council enabled the project to happen
- Open days held at appropriate times gave the neighbourhood a chance to view the properties prior to occupation
- A very successful opening celebration was held in January which attracted huge media interest and much praise from local residents.

GROSVENOR ROAD, ST PAUL'S



Black and White Café prior to demolition



Architects Impression

Five of the new houses are in a row (Nos 21-29) and the sixth house (No. 17) is on the opposite side of Campbell Street. We were unable to acquire the end terrace house on the north side of Campbell Street (No. 19) and this remains in private ownership. As a result the scheme was technically difficult to construct. The two existing properties at either end of the new terrace of five homes (No. 19 and 31) had to be propped up whilst the existing properties in between were demolished and the new homes constructed.



Grosvenor Road, St Paul's – completed scheme



New local tenants outside their home