

Granby St

Posted on July 10,2019 by admin



Granby St is a

street in Liverpool 8 postal district. In fact when we talk about it we are talking about 4 streets. Its near to Toxteth where there were riots in the 1980's. The area had been declining for years before that and this decline accelerated afterwards. Since then Liverpool has to a certain extent recovered although life for many of residents is still hard. In this context the story of Granby St is both inspiring and instructive. The residents decided they'd had enough of boarded up empty houses, demolition and the threat of demolition so they did two things. They started guerrilla gardening in the street and fighting further demolition. It took decades of struggle to start winning and in the meanwhile they set up a community land trust. The definition comes from the Granby Four streets CLT website. "*A Community Land Trust (CLT) is a not for profit community-based organisation run by volunteers that delivers housing and other community facilities at permanently affordable levels for local people.*" Then in 2015 the design collective Assemble won the Turner prize for its work on Granby St. Its just opened a winter garden in a house on the street. This is like a greenhouse with trees inside it. The Winter Garden as it is known was inspired by a house with a tree growing inside of it. The CLT has done up 10 houses which are for sale at below the average Liverpool price or for rent at half the average rent (tied to local wages). So why is all this on the blog? There are a number of lessons here to do with sustainability. First there is no reason to demolish the houses. The houses are small but attractive and can be restored, which is more sustainable than building new ones. The record on moving people out to new estates is not a happy one. Second the area has been beautified with gardens and plants. Third arts and crafts businesses have been started which are also based around recycling materials from the houses that cannot be saved. There is clearly a long way to go and progress is slower than the local residents would like but this whole project is an inspiration. Neil

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