



## Does Coin Street's tower compromise its principles?

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A complete lack of affordable housing makes this tower a liability to the area, argues Michael Ball; while Iain Tuckett says it is the only way to provide the community with a much-wanted swimming pool

'Yes'



Michael Ball

Director, Waterloo Community Development Group

This is a real departure for Coin Street Community Builders. For a start, there isn't any affordable housing, despite the fact that the organisation was set up to create affordable housing at this site, along with some of the things you need for sustainable communities such as local shops.

There isn't a single flat out of 300 or so homes that is affordable, and it is very likely that the homes bought will be second or third homes, which will not add life to the area.

Coin Street's argument is that the project will provide a marvellous swimming pool for the community, but looked at the other way it represents a very large private housing development with a swimming pool added as sweetener.

Coin Street Community Builders originally favoured low-density, suburban-like development, not monumental buildings, but this scheme is a block long, with a large tower. It will be a huge impediment and will create lots of wind problems.

Ultimately, this has come about because Coin Street Builders is not accountable. Nobody there is elected and it does not answer to the community or to the Housing Corporation.

It put forward a financial argument for this project but will not show anyone in the community its figures.

As a result, there has been widespread opposition from local people, who do not like the height of the tower nor the lack of affordable housing.

**'No'**



Iain Tuckett

Group director, Coin St Community Builders

Our development of the overall 5ha Coin Street area has concentrated affordable family housing on sites where we can create a good environment.

On the site adjacent to Doon Street, for example, in 2001 we completed the Iroko housing development, which includes 32 five-bedroom houses, each with its own private garden, among the 59 co-op homes built and managed for people in housing need.

The point about Coin Street Community Builders is that we are community builders and not just housing developers.

All members of this not-for-profit company are local residents who have a shared vision for the future of London's South Bank and who have led the area's transformation over the past 20 years. That means recognising all of the needs of our community, as well as understanding how the area can contribute to London's wider economy and environment.

When a 1999 Mori survey of South Bank and Bankside residents revealed their top priorities to be a public swimming pool and indoor and outdoor sports facilities, we adjusted our programme and have since built four outdoor sports pitches and opened a family and children's centre.

The swimming pool within the Doon Street development is a bigger challenge: it has a £20 million capital cost and requires an annual £412,000 revenue subsidy.

We made available to Lambeth Council and the Greater London Authority our development appraisal, which showed that it was not possible to also fund affordable housing on top of the £36 million of other section 106 benefits.