

# Ladybarn in the 1970s

## A time of conflict

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An extract from a Withington Civic Society publication:

### Overview

From 1955, Manchester City Council had been tackling its slum clearance target of an estimated 68,000 properties, working outwards from the city centre. By the late 1960s, there was an acceleration of the work with a view to completion by 1976.

The Council's Department of Health review in 1971 had several areas in its sights. Over 20,000 houses were thought to be in need of attention. Public meetings began in two pilot areas, Brailsford Road in Fallowfield (236 houses) and Leicester Road, Cheetham (298 houses) with the aim of encouraging families to invest in home improvements, aided by grants, and the provision of grassland, trees, garages and playgrounds by the MCC.<sup>1</sup>

Several areas, including around Rink Street in Ladybarn (south Manchester) were assessed by the end of 1970 as being in danger of becoming slums within 30 years if nothing was done about some of the properties. To enable demolition and rebuilding, Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) were served in Ladybarn in early 1973.

Some people in the area were determined to preserve as much as possible of Ladybarn's 'atmosphere and social cohesion' and petitioned for a reappraisal. They felt that being designated a General Improvement Area, with a view to retaining and modernising the housing would be preferable. Not everyone agreed. Two petitions were created in favour of the Compulsory Purchase Orders.

A Public Inquiry opened in Manchester Town Hall on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1973. About 50 protestors against the CPO scheme arrived in a double-decker

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<sup>3</sup> Staff reporter: 'Facelift plea for old homes', MEN 9/12/1970 p18.

bus, and a 'coffin', symbolising the demise of Ladybarn, was carried around Albert Square.

There were 9 days of deliberations, then a wait of 12 months before the decision was announced: of the 291 houses threatened with demolition, over 150 were to be saved. However, the remedial and redevelopment work took many years to be completed.

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For details of this fascinating story of redevelopment and protest, see: *Ladybarn in the 1970s: A time of conflict*, by Ruth Shepherd (Withington Civic Society, History Series No. 4).