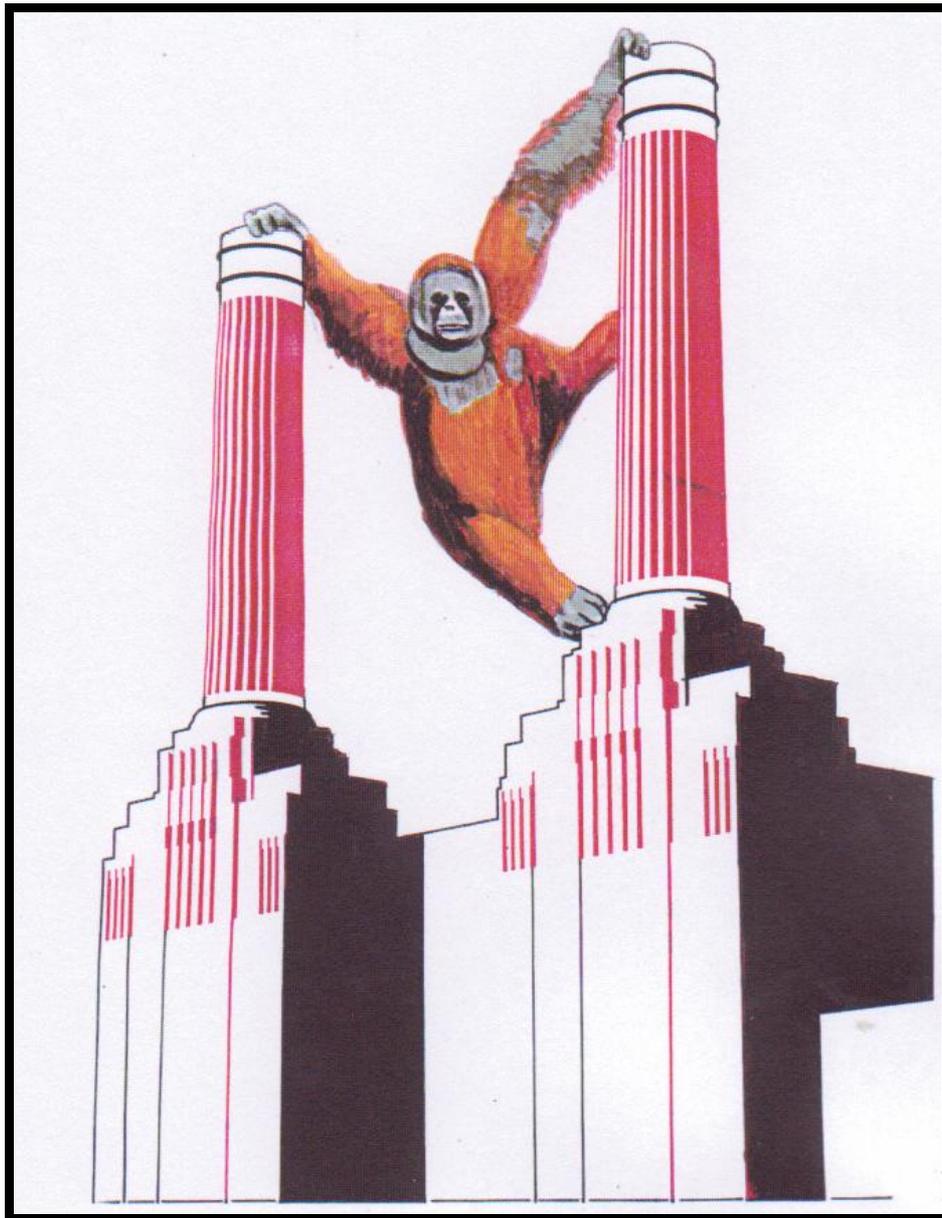


Battersea **Bulletin**



BOTH FACING EXTINCTION

Power Station owner Sime Darby carried out illegal logging in Malaysia endangering habitat of orangutans

Sime Darby, a member of the Malaysian consortium which recently took over Battersea Power Station, has been involved in illegal logging in the rain forests of Malaysia and Indonesia, according to a 2010 report by Friends of the Earth.¹

The logging is carried out to clear land for the growing of palm oil, which comes from the fruit of the oil palm tree and is used in the production of a range of goods including food and cosmetics.

As recently reported by the South London Press, the logging was carried out directly and by subsidiary companies. Logging in Malaysia and Indonesia is contributing to global warming and endangering protected species such as the orangutan.

Loss of rain forests is often an indirect consequence of increased palm oil production, known as “Indirect Land Use Change” (ILUC). As agricultural land is turned over to palm oil, other agriculture is displaced into rain forests which are cleared.

Demand for palm oil is increasing owing to its use as a so-called “bio fuel”. According to the Friends of the Earth report, published in 2010, increased greenhouse gas emission due to cutting down of rain forests is greater than any savings in greenhouse gas emissions arising from increased use of biofuels.

The report states that Sime Darby is: “*deforesting new land partially in order to meet increase in demand for certified palm oil for biofuel*”.

Palm oil is supposed to come from “sustainable” sources certified by the Round Table for Sustainable Palm Oil” (RSPO), a voluntary certification scheme run by the palm oil industry. But in practice self-regulation by the industry had not been effective.

The report then looks in detail at Sime Darby which describes itself as “*the world’s largest palm oil producer*”, selling both certified and uncertified palm oil, with 6% of total world production. The company has 65 palm oil mills in Indonesia and Malaysia of which 5 were RSPO certified.

Sime Darby has also recently acquired forest land in Liberia, with the intention of producing palm oil there. However at the moment production is concentrated in Malaysia and Indonesia, which the report notes: “*contains the most extensive tropical rainforest cover in Asia, but has the world’s fastest rate of deforestation*”.

¹ “‘Sustainable’ palm oil driving deforestation. Biofuel crops, indirect land use change and emissions”, Friends of the Earth Europe, 2010.

The FoE report goes on to note: “*More than 2 million hectares of forest, including protected forest and conservation areas, have been illegally converted to palm oil plantations*”. Sime Darby has played a central role in this process. Examples given by the FoE include illegal deforestation of protected forest in Ketapang and illegal expansion by Sime Darby subsidiaries from certified areas into protected forests which are then cleared.

An article in the South London Press on 14th September contains a strong denial from Sime Darby about its involvement in illegal logging: “*Sime Darby observes best agricultural practices in all its plantations. It does not clear virgin forests or high conservation-value forests as a matter of policy across its operations. Sime Darby is also involved in large-scale reforestation programmes and has planted more than 300,000 trees on its Malaysian estates, including rainforest tree species*”.

However, Kenneth Richter of Friends of the Earth recently told BPSCG:

“*Sime Darby’s business empire is built on industrial palm oil plantations, one of the main drivers of deforestation in South East Asia according to the United Nations. Now they are seeking to expand their business globally.*”

In Liberia their acquisition of land totalling more than 1.5 million acres for oil palm and rubber plantations jeopardizes land rights of local populations, threatens the livelihoods and wellbeing of communities, and puts the future viability of one of the world’s most significant biodiversity hotspots into doubt.

Given their track record of conflict with local communities Sime Darby’s motives for acquiring Battersea Power Station must be questioned.“

Sime Darby is involved at Battersea Power Station alongside developers SP Setia and the Employees Provident Fund, a Malaysian pension fund. The new consortium has formed the Battersea Power Station Development Company to manage the project.

The question now is whether a company with Sime Darby’s history and reputation will look after Battersea Power Station? Already the neglect is continuing with more buddleias seen recently growing from the chimney bases. Rob “Dr Frank-N-Furter” Tincknell (formerly of Treasury Holdings, still on the project) has confirmed that they intend to demolish the chimneys, which BPSCG thinks is the prelude to demolition of the building.



Wandsworth's hypocritical pledges

Last July Wandsworth made a great deal of their joining the nationwide network of groups concerned with tackling vandalism: The Alliance to Reduce Crimes Against Heritage (ARCH). Conservative councillor Vanessa Graham, responsible for the borough's heritage, announced: *"Wandsworth is blessed with many architecturally and historically important buildings..... so we have much to protect and treasure – but also much that could be at risk from criminal behaviour."*

A grand statement, but Wandsworth Council has clearly failed to rally to this cause. Looking along the Battersea riverfront or travelling into central London by rail, from Clapham Junction, one sees the most well known and recognisable historic building in Wandsworth, Battersea Power Station, as a sad reflection of the mighty 'cathedral of power' it once was. And it is Wandsworth Council that must take the blame for the dramatic demise of this once magnificent industrial building.

During the 29 years since the Power Station was decommissioned, the Council has hardly honoured the fine words of Cllr Graham. It has given planning permission to one developer and disastrous scheme after another with few reservations. And where were the Council and English Heritage when the Power Station's west wall and the boiler house roof were demolished in 1989 by Battersea Leisure/John Broome, who was promising the world and delivering only dereliction and debris. Even the important grade II listing of the building in 1980 had much more to do with the efforts of SAVE than with any initiative by Wandsworth.

Since 1993 and the ownership of the Power Station by the Hong Kong company Parkview International, followed by the more recent Treasury Holding (now defunct) the building has remained largely derelict with structural steelwork and the fabric of the building open to the weather. Throughout this period of mismanagement and promises, promises, the Power Station has been given minimal protection and Wandsworth Council has remained silent showing little respect

and even less concern for the Power Station against the vandalistic policies of its numerous owners.

So it is little wonder we have no confidence in the hypocritical pledges of the Tory councillors that they will protect Wandsworth's historic buildings against rapacious developers – just look at Battersea Power Station!



Ravi Govinda, Leader of Wandsworth Council, and Dick Tracey, formerly of Treasury Holdings, enjoying a joke at our expense. A prize for the best caption.

"Affordable" housing

Once again local people will miss out. Of a total of 3,400 flats planned on the Battersea Power Station site, only 15% will be affordable. Of the 800 flats in Phase 1 of the development, none are affordable. To be able to afford an "affordable" flat here, a buyer would have to be on a salary of at least £80,000.

So the price of housing on this site will be beyond most local people, who wish to stay in the borough where they were born and grew up. Once again, these people and their parents who have paid Council Tax, worked in the borough, and contributed to the community in many ways, have been forgotten.

And this is just the "affordable" housing. Most of the housing will be far more expensive. BPSCG has learned that the flats are currently being marketed to investors in the Far East where it is considered the best price can be had. These flats will either be rented out or kept empty and used occasionally when owners visit Europe or their children come to study here.

There is no pretence that housing on the Power Station site will be used to alleviate the housing shortage in the capital for key workers and people on average earnings. Even consultants and staff working for the Malaysian consortium, who were promoting the project at the recent "consultation" on Phase 1, could never afford to live there.

There is no choice at Battersea Power Station!

BPSCG offers £1 for Power Station

Battersea Power Station Company, the charitable trust set up by BPSCG, offered £1 for the freehold of Battersea Power Station when it was put up for sale earlier this year.

The sale followed the failure of Treasury Holdings, with creditors Lloyds Bank and the Irish “bad bank” NAMA, asking for their money back, forcing the company into administration. Each bank was owed approximately £150m. Ernst & Young, acting for the two banks, put Battersea Power Station up for sale. We offered £1 for Battersea Power Station and Battersea Water Pumping Station. Our proposal was to repair the listed buildings and open them to the public using money from the Lottery and other sources not available to a commercial developer.

Our offer excluded the former South Lambeth Goods Yard site (the land south of the Power Station) which we felt could be sold separately to pay back NAMA. The refusal of our bid is another lost opportunity for Battersea Power Station. It is clear that if the building is to be preserved and given a useful new lease of life, then it should either be put into a charitable trust or brought back into full public ownership.

But it's (monkey) business, as usual

The winning bid was put forward by a Malaysian consortium; SP Setia, Sime Darby and a Malaysian pension fund. Treasury Holdings themselves went into liquidation in the summer. The company that promised to do so much at Battersea Power Station from 2006 to 2011 no longer exists.

Whether the Irish bad bank NAMA and state-controlled Lloyds Bank got their money back is still unclear. According to recent reports, the consortium has only invested £25m of its own money in the development. So it seems that Lloyds Bank may still have taxpayers' money invested in the project. Whether Irish bad bank NAMA received its desperately needed cash is also unclear. NAMA is making inquiries in the Channel Islands about Treasury's missing millions. It seems that Ronan and Barrett hid the money offshore.

Key views to be lost



This view from the train will be blocked

Battersea Power Station is an icon of London that was celebrated in the closing ceremony of the London Olympics 2012. But now key views of the Power Station will be lost for ever, so that the consortium that currently owns it can build luxury flats for investors in the Far East. Phase 1 (currently in for planning permission) will block the view of Battersea Power Station from the railway viaduct, enjoyed by commuters and visitors to London since the building was completed in the 1950's.

Send your objection to Borough Planner, Wandsworth Town Hall, London SW18 2PU, ref 2012/4584. Copy it to Mr Simon Thurley, Chief Executive, English Heritage, Waterhouse Sq, London EC1N 2ST.

Appeal

Keep the campaign to preserve Battersea Power Station up and running. Send cash or cheques to 16 DRCA Workshops, Charlotte Despard Ave, SW11. Or email bulletin@batterseapowerstation.org.uk to arrange a bank transfer.

Campaigning since 1983 to save the listed building.

BATTERSEA POWER STATION
COMMUNITY GROUP
16 DRCA WORKSHOPS
CHARLOTTE DESPARD AVENUE
LONDON SW11 5HD
020 7627 5821

www.batterseapowerstation.org.uk